

Research Report No. 16

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THE INSTITUTION OF SLAVERY IN ZANZIBAR AND PEMBA

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INTRODUCTION

I got interested in the topic of slavery towards the end of 1963 while working with my friend Khalfan Abdalla Biswedi on a Swahili handwritten manuscript dealing with life during the days of slavery and the slave trade. The manuscript was entitled "Maisha ya Mtumwa" (Life of a slave) and was supposed to be an autobiography of an ex-slave from Mangapwani, Zanzibar. Khalfan had come across the said account through one of his relatives in Mangapwani and was translating it into English. Both these Swahili and the partially written English versions, together with another typed Swahili manuscript "Mapenzi na Mauaji" (Love and Murder), a novel dealing with marriage and divorce practices in Zanzibar were destroyed by fire, in the home of Sheik Hemed Hamdan Al-Harathi (Khalfan's grandfather), during the Zanzibar Revolution.

This study was originally prepared in 1967 in Zanzibar. My aim was to assemble information on slavery and slaves in a single short document, excluding as far as possible the topic of Slave Trade which has been treated in detail in several works.

The interested reader is here referred to Edward E. Alpers' "The East African Slave Trade", Historical Association of Tanzania Paper No. 3, E.A.P.H. Nairobi; 1967, and half a dozen other titles suggested therein for further reading.

In the preparation of this paper I have leaned quite heavily on sections dealing with slavery and/or slaves in two major works already published:

- a. Swahili Prose Texts. Edited by Lyndon Harries, Oxford 1965. Originally collected by Carl Velten from 1893 to 1896 and published in two separate works "Safari za Wasuaheli" (1901) and "Desturi za Wasuaheli" (1903) in Göttingen.

- b. The Swahili-Speaking Peoples of Zanzibar and the East African Coast by A.H.J. Prins. London, 1961.

The above two titles, and especially the first one, do not suggest from the outset that material on the institution of slavery, and the imposed traditions among the slaves, is included in them.

Prins, whose above-mentioned study on the Swahili-speaking peoples will remain the greatest single source of reference for many years to come, had in turn found part of his information on slavery mainly in the works of W.W.A. Fitzgerald:

- a. On the spice and other cultivation of Zanzibar and Pemba Islands. (Foreign Office, Mix. Series No. 266.) London, 1892.
- b. Travels in the coastlands of British East Africa and the Islands of Zanzibar and Pemba. London, 1898.

Some other details were personally collected by me at different times, from the following:

- a. The late Sheik Ahmad Sai Sahab Bukhari, Muezzin and keeper of the Hanafi Mosque (Sunni Masjid) in Zanzibar Town until 1965. He claimed that he was born in the vicinity of Bukhara in Uzbekistan in 1872, and served as an interpreter in Arabic and Swahili in the German Army in Tanganyika until the end of World War I.
- b. The late Sheik Hemed Abdalla Fadha, an ex-slave trader who claimed to have worked in one of the last caravans of Tippu Tip (Hamed bin Muhammed el Murjebi). I met Fadha only once, for about two hours in December 1966. At that time he said he was 85 years old. My meeting with Fadha was arranged by Maalim Ahmed Othman of Mwera School, Zanzibar.
- c. Mzee Kairo, a retired farmer near Nkrumah Teachers' College, Zanzibar. A freed slave employed by a German merchant, he was kidnapped by some Turks in Cairo and sold as a slave to an Egyptian during World War I.

He was later freed by some British in Cairo and returned to Zanzibar. I met Mzee Kairo only once, towards the end of 1964 and spoke with him for about an hour. He said he was born "20 years before the War" (around 1894) in the vicinity of Mtwara, Tanzania.

- d. A "khadim" (serf) of Sheik Al Makhtoum, the Ruler of the State of Dubai in the Persian Gulf. Khadim Abdalla spoke a little Swahili which he had learnt in East Africa as a sailor on the Monsoon dhows. Adbulla Omar Bajuni, Staff Nurse at Al Makhtoum Hospital, Dubai, collected some information for me from Khadim Abdalla towards the end of 1968. Khadim claimed he was born around Bagamoyo in Tanzania. At the age of about six he was kidnapped by a Swahili and sold to an Arab sailor who brought Khadim to the Persian Gulf and gave him away as a present to the Sheik of Dubai. Khadim claimed to be 80 years old.

Finally, as a Zanzibari, I have come across a lot of information orally from the elders. A great contribution to my knowledge of Swahili customs has been made also by my late mother who had once been a "mkunga" (midwife) and my father who has worked as a "mtoharu" or a "ngariba" (circumcist) for 45 years in Zanzibar and southern Tanzania.

As stated by Prins in his Preface, I too have felt it to be inconvenient, unnecessary and "impracticable to always quote my sources". Most paragraphs would have consisted of numerous and redundant footnotes if I had done so. However, sources have been quoted wherever it has been found meaningful to do so.

The paternalism, under which domestic slavery thrived, gave rise to a "slave culture", later built in the framework of a feudal system which was uprooted after the Revolution in Zanzibar in January 1964. Hoping that this Paper would stimulate further research and deeper study, it has been attempted here to describe in short the "master-slave" and/or the "landlord-serf" societies of Zanzibar and Pemba.

Uppsala, August 1973

A. Y. L.

1. The origins of slavery and the slave trade

The origins of the institution of slavery and the resulting trade in slaves can best be described by a Swahili* who lived in those circumstances. Hence, the following account is reproduced from Carl Velten's "Desturi za Wasuaheli" edited by Lyndon Harries:

"It begins when one finds things happening like a war being waged between one's own country and another: they do not kill the prisoners, but tie them with rope and take them to the town, saying to them, 'You stay as our slaves.' So they stay and marry among themselves. If they have children, the children are slaves just the same.

Or slavery comes about through a fine for murder. A man has committed a murder, but his people are all poor and he has no money, but he is forced to pay a fine and if he cannot do so he will be taken and sold, going as a slave to the place where the fine is claimed. And if the person he killed is a freeman, then the fine is a big one. If he has a brother or a maternal uncle, he will follow him into slavery.

Or an adulterer has slept with someone's wife, he is made to pay for the offence, and if he has nothing he will become a slave.

Or a witch has killed someone, and the person is known as a witch, so she is killed or goes to where she committed the murder (i.e. to the family of the deceased) and becomes a slave.

Or someone puts his child or his nephew in pawn, but has no money to redeem him, then he (the child or nephew) becomes a slave, but a man cannot pledge his wife nor sell her, even though there be much hunger. If he cannot feed her, she will leave him.

Prisoners-of-war, people in pawn, and adulterers, if their kinsmen have no money to redeem them, they become slaves. When Arabs go up-country or other slave-traders, they buy such slaves and bring them to the coast, and they sell them to other people. This is the origin of slavery. And when they are brought to the coast the one who brought them must watch them carefully, because they run away. Some, on arrival at the coast, claim to be freemen.

* A "Swahili" is meant here to be an islamised inhabitant, either of pure African or Afro-Asian descent, of the East African coast. (See Appendix I.)

During the reign of Saiyid Barghash there was famine in the Mrima country, and the Zaramu were selling one another and putting one another in pledge. The Arabs heard in Zanzibar that slaves were cheap in Mrima country, so they came to buy Zaramu slaves. They would sleep the night through, and next morning the Zaramu slave would have run away home, and once there it was difficult to get him again. Those dispatched (lit. loaded) to Zanzibar would stay a month, then in the second month, would make a claim saying, 'I am not a slave, I am a freeman.' There was always trouble (lit. doubts) in the court. Saiyid Barghash learned that the Arabs were going to Mrima and buying Zaramu children, so he forbade them, and said, 'Whoever goes to Mrima to buy Zaramu children has put his money in the sea, and I will put him in handcuffs for six months.' And actually they were not being bought at all, but (the Arabs) would go away from a village into the bush, and when they saw Zaramu children or women they would seize them and gag them lest they make a din, then they would bring them to the town and sell them to traders.

Many Arabs travel up-country to fight against the tribal peoples, and they make the prisoners-of-war into slaves. Or a tribesman goes to an Arab and tells him, 'I have come to join you.' And the Arab agrees. If the man has relations they follow him, and in the end he (the Arab) makes them slaves. This is why some slaves from up-country or from Manyema always make trouble at the coast; they say, 'This Arab did not buy me; I just followed him, and now he wants to make me a slave.'¹

"... children whose parents are both slaves remain in slavery. If a freeman marries a slave woman and has a child, it is a slave. But if the free-woman marries a slave, her child is not a slave, because its freedom is obtained from the mother."²

2. The categories of slaves and their work

The slaves were classified as:

- a. "watumwa wa nyumbani" - house slaves, domestic slaves
- b. "watumwa wa shamba" - plantation slaves, agricultural slaves
- c. "watumwa wa maji" - ship's slaves

To the first group belonged also "masuria" (concubines), "besar" (children of concubines) and certain slaves who held special positions of trust and responsibility, e.g.

"mtumwa mtumishi"	- envoy, servant
"mtumwa mtumwaji"	- agent
"mtumwa mfuasi"	- bodyguard, soldier
"mtumwa wa shauri"	- councillor
"akida"	- keeper of money

The "msimamizi" was head of all the plantation slaves and was responsible only to the master. He was followed by the "noko" who were reputed for their harshness to their fellow slaves. Overseers of the individual slave-gangs working on different parts of the plantation or on construction sites were called "kadamu" who saw to it that the required work was done.

"The required output in threshing and harvesting was reckoned on an "hour" basis, slaves working from eight till five. For sowing they had to be out at early dawn. But for groundwork an acreage basis was followed, in clearing and weeding the daily tasks being 100 yd by 4 for clearing new land, and 200 by 4 for hoeing land under cultivation. The responsibility for the completion of the allotted tasks by each gang of slaves (5 to 20 persons) rested with the nako, or head slave. Women slaves were often used to sell the produce of the master's gardens in the market.

Also in the early days of western enterprise, when systems of free and of slave labour were impinging upon each other, slaves were hired out by their masters for wages, the entrepreneur paying half to the slaves (plus food) and half to the slave owner."³

Agricultural slaves usually worked for their master for 2 - 5 days a week. On the other days, usually Thursdays and Fridays, they could work for themselves, either cultivating their own plots (see the following section on The cultivation and land rights of slaves), or offering their labour for low wages working as porters, cleaners, washermen, and assisting carpenters and blacksmiths. The master had no right to this income of the slave, but if the master had found the employer for the slave, the slave was obliged to pay a small fee to the master. On the free days other than Friday (the holiday), the slave usually did not receive any food from the master.

The ship's slaves provided most of the crew of the Swahili trading vessels. On many occasions, the master of the ship,

"nahodha", and the mate, "nahodha mdogo", were also slaves who usually had inherited those posts from their own owners.

Non-agricultural slaves received wages and/or payment in kind since they did not grow their own food and could not get free days on board a ship or on caravan safaries. High ranking slaves working on ships or in caravans occasionally shared the profits of the enterprise with the master.

The Arab sultan's bodyguard did not have many slaves. It consisted of mercenaries from Persia and Afghanistan. The navy had many Arabs; and the cavalry consisted mostly of Makranis and Baluchis, commonly known in Swahili as "Mabulushi".

Slaves were distinguished as

"mzalia"	- born slave, born into the household
"mjinga"	- raw, unskilled slave
"mateka"	- prisoner of war
"mtwana"	- man slave
"kitwana"	- boy slave
"mjakazi"	- woman slave
"kijakazi"	- girl slave
"mtoro"	- runaway slave

The slaves did not regard one another as fellow slaves, "njoli", unless they were of the same rank which counted even among runaway slaves, "watoro", who usually established a hierarchy among themselves based upon their previous ranks as slaves.

The home-born slave, "mzalia", was one born in slavery and whose father, mother, or both parents were born in a coastal town, or a recognised coastal tribal area such as the Zaramu country. "Mzalia wa mara moja" had one parent born in a coastal town. If both parents came from the coast, the home-born slave was known as "mzalia wa mara mbili". A "mzalia" whose grandparents also were born along the East African coast was called "mzalia wa mara nyingi". Home-born slaves were partly treated as free-born in that they could not always be sold. They lived very much like freemen but attached to the house of their parents' or grandparents' master.

After working for the master for a couple of years, a "mzalia" could formally become free and also marry a free-born husband or wife. However, such a legally emancipated slave was usually employed by the former master and this tended to perpetuate the master-slave relationship in the form of "uhadimu" (serfdom).

Slaves holding positions of trust and responsibility were usually children of concubines, "besar", or "wazalia wa mara nyingi".

Home-born slaves served in the house doing domestic work, fetching water from the well, going to a market or a shop, or were taught cooking, sewing, embroidery, and how to make mats and baskets.

The woman slave worked mostly in the kitchen and served the food. With the wife's permission, the female slave would hold the water-jug for the master to wash his hands and feet. She accompanied the wife when the latter went to participate in a mourning session or a wedding ceremony. She also carried the umbrella or the parasol for the wife. Old female slaves did most of the wailing at the mourning sessions.

The male home-born slave accompanied his master on a journey and ran all errands for him. His task was to make the journey comfortable. He was taught to sew the long white gowns ("kanzu") and to embroider garments worn over the "kanzu", the black "joho" or the brown "bushuti". Some male slaves specialised in making shoes or caps, or carved doors with very fine design. Such craftsmen were allowed to spend what they earned; however, they were expected to give gifts to their masters.

An unskilled slave, "mjinga", when first bought, was given new clothes, a hoe and a machete for himself. He was also given a place to sleep. He was then given his own piece of land to cultivate and grow his own food, usually cassava, beans, rice or millet. The master gave him food until he had harvested

his own crops, at which time the master expected to receive a gift from the new slave. The gift consisted of a portion of the harvest. Some masters expected a gift after every harvest, and would even ask for it.

Agricultural or plantation slaves usually worked between 6 - 11 and 2 - 5. A sick slave was not supposed to do any work and the master was responsible for his treatment until he was cured. When a slave died, the master paid for the funeral expenses. However, the master did not attend the funeral of all slaves. The master was personally involved only in the funerals of home-born slaves, concubines, their children, and slaves who held important positions

Women agricultural slaves were used to sell the produce of the master's farm in the market or in the street.

3. The cultivation and land rights of slaves

As mentioned earlier, a new unskilled slave was given his plot of land on which to grow his own food. "A slave had customarily cultivation rights on plots varying in size from 200 by 10 to 200 by 50 yards, the produce from which he owned entirely."⁴

A slave had his customary cultivation right on his master's land which was usually planted with coconut, cloves or other spices. This cultivation of food crops by the slaves prevented the growth of weeds under the trees in the plantation, a practice which developed into the "squatter" system when slavery was abolished in Zanzibar and Pemba.

When the land cultivated by a slave for his own use was not "plantation" land, it was usually of very poor quality, or else it was good land newly cleared which was being opened up for future development, i.e. clove planting. (See Section 11. From slavery to serfdom.)

A slave could sometimes through marriage come into possession of land, usually referred to as "kiambo", i.e. the "family

building site".

Areas other than plantation lands were collectively owned by a clan, a village or all the members of the Shirazi nation.⁵

4. The social rights of slaves

All slaves had to follow strict discipline. There were many things a slave was supposed to do without being told. If he saw that his master was holding something, he was supposed to take it immediately from him. When he entered his master's room, or the "baraza" (place of public audience or reception), he took off his cap. He always walked behind the master. He did not sit on a chair or stool. He went to greet his master every morning and evening. Only home-born slaves could shake hands with the master and with other freemen. An ordinary slave did not eat with his master, though often they ate the same food. At ceremonial feasts, only male slaves with rank sat with free-men, and concubines sat with free-women.

Agricultural slaves did not wear caps, shoes, nor the long white "kanzu". No slave could call a freeman by name. A freeman was addressed as "Mwinyi" or "Bwana" meaning Master. A slave did not carry an umbrella for his own shelter. All home-born slaves and others holding important positions in a master's house, his business or on a plantation, attended the evening "madarasa" (classes) at the local mosque where they learned to read, write and do simple arithmetic. Koran classes were held at a "chuo" (school) every morning except on Fridays. Unskilled slaves could not attend these classes until they had gained the confidence of their master.

5. The marriage of slaves and their children

The marriage of slaves did generally not involve the ceremonies found customarily among the coastal people of East Africa. A man slave would agree with a woman slave to marry, and they would then approach their common master and inform him of their intention. If the woman slave belonged to another household the master of the man slave bought her into his own house so

that the couple could live together in the same house. For this, the man slave had to pay his master a special fee from his own private income. If the slave husband and wife belonged to different masters, their children belonged to the house of the wife's master.

For the marriage itself, the master asked for one Rial (dollar) from an unskilled slave. This fee was known as "kilemba" (turban fee). The dowry ("mahari") for the woman was a minimum of five dollars which was usually kept in custody with her master. In this way, she could not spend the dowry. If the couple separated without having had a child, the dowry was returned to the man. The woman kept the dowry in the event of her husband's death, or if the couple separated and she had a child, or if she was pregnant when they separated.

The marriage ceremony of unskilled slaves was very brief. While the bride in question was waiting in her room, the master told the groom in the presence of all living in the house, or on the plantation, "I, so-and-so, have married you, so-and-so, to so-and-so your fellow slave!". The man was then allowed to consummate the marriage without further delay.

In the case of marriages of other slaves, the "maalim" (Muslim teacher) was invited to perform the normal Muslim wedding ceremony, "nikaha", in front of witnesses.

Slaves with the rank of "mtumishi", "mtumwaji", "mtumwa wa shauri", "akida", "nahodha", "nahodha mdogo", "msimamizi", "noko" and "kadamu", after consulting the master, had varying degrees of the ceremonial, of having a feast and inviting people, usually of the same rank.

The legally emancipated slave did not have to consult his master or his employer. However, he was customarily expected to inform his former master or his employer of the wedding, which would then be supervised by the employer (who frequently happened to be the former master) who acted as father to

the man. (A legally emancipated slave always lived like a serf whether he worked for the former master or not.) If he could afford it, his wedding was celebrated like that of a freeman. The dowry was usually between 10 and 20 dollars. The bride's father or brother received the turban fee of 5 dollars, if she happened to be a slave. If she did not have a father or a brother, the bride kept the fee or her master kept the fee. If the bride were a free-born woman, no turban fee was involved.

A slave or a freeman could marry a woman slave. An unskilled male slave could only marry a slave woman. Sons of concubines, or home-born slaves could marry a free woman.

Slavery and freedom were issues based on the status of the mother. If both parents were slaves, the child was a born slave who could be sold if the master so wished. If a free-man married a slave woman, their child was a half-slave, i.e. he could not be sold, and he could very easily gain his freedom. Half slaves did not have the right to inherit their fathers. If a free woman married a slave man, their child was a freeman. Children of concubines could not inherit their fathers either.

Slaves could also intermarry with members of the Arab Sultan's bodyguard and army (who were mostly Asians other than Arabs) who customarily did not intermarry with the Arabs and the Shirazi. Seyyid Said, the first Omani Sultan of Zanzibar (who had himself usurped power in Oman), did not want his soldiers to intermarry with his subject.

Divorce ("talaka") among unskilled slaves was granted by their master. The husband would ask the master to grant divorce and the master would pronounce the divorce in the presence of the rest of the household, "I have separated you, so-and-so, from your fellow slave, so-and-so". After the "talaka" had been pronounced by the master 3 times in this manner, whether all on the same occasion or each time on three different occasions, the divorce would come into effect. The woman in this case,

after being divorced, did not remain in a state of "eda" (period of prohibition), and she could re-marry her ex-husband, or any other man, the very next day.

Marriages among other categories of slaves, or among slaves and freemen, could be dissolved only in the established manner as done by freemen.⁶

6. The concubines and their children

A man would buy a woman slave, "mjakazi", and keep her at home as a concubine, "suria". Sometimes a man would buy a "kijakazi" (young slave girl) and bring her home to be taught the customary housework. When the girl reached puberty, she was separated from the other female slaves and given a room for herself. She thus became a concubine and was not allowed to go out alone. She then commanded the same respect from other slaves as the wife of the master did. The master slept every fourth night with the concubine. This fourth night was shared by the other concubines also, if the master had more than one. If the master did not have a wife, the concubine ran the house as a wife would do. A man could not have a concubine if he lived in his father's house. Only the head of the household, or head of the family, could have a concubine.

The children of a concubine were known as "besar", and though they were considered half free-born, the male "besar" could not always marry a free-born woman of high birth.⁷ A nobleman could marry a "besar" woman. "Besar" had no right of inheritance.

If a man was doing a lot of travelling, he preferred to have a concubine to a wife, since tradition among many coastal people forbade a wife to accompany her husband on a journey without permission from her own parents or guardians. Moreover, the fear of losing a wife, to the enemy or pirates, was always present on a journey, especially among those on safari inland.

If a man married a concubine or a freed slave, their children were considered free-born but with a lower social status since they did not have a female line of relations as slaves were usually brought from 'foreign' lands.

7. Pawning and hiring out slaves

Putting a slave in pawn was forbidden by law since Islam forbids the system of pawning. Since slaves were considered by Arabs and Swahilis as property that could be bought and sold, by traditional usage, a person in great debt was allowed to make a pledge and put his slaves in pawn to pay his debts. By another tradition, a person in urgent need of cash was also allowed to pawn his slaves. However, the slaves were not allowed to be kept in pawn for more than one month. Often, a slave-owner who could not redeem his pledge and settle the affair within a month, could make a fresh pledge at the end of the period and so delay redemption.

If a slave in pawn ran away, or died, the pawnbroker was not obliged to pay for the loss. For beating or threatening a slave in pawn, the pawnbroker paid a fine to the slave-owner. If the slave ran away because of the beatings, or threats of being tortured or killed, the pawnbroker paid yet another fine to the slave-owner. Usually the two fines together were equal to the loan taken by the slave-owner. Hence, when a pawnbroker caused a slave to run away because of his beatings or threats, the slave-owner did not have to pay the loan back. In such cases the slave-owner was required to bring witnesses to the Kadhi (the Muslim judge) to testify against the pawnbroker.

Once or twice a week a slave in pawn was allowed to visit his master, or his wife - who could also be placed in pawn together with the husband or separately. Pawned slaves were supposed to work in the same way for the pawnbroker as they worked for their masters. If the pawnbroker was not satisfied with them, he could send them back and demand his money.

A slave of low rank could not raise a loan without his master's permission. A merchant giving a loan to a slave, without the consent of the master of the slave concerned, had no right to demand the money from the master if the slave ran away, died, or simply could not pay back the loan. Usually, the master's consent was in writing.

Slaves of high rank such as "akida" and "mtumwaji" did not need their master's consent when borrowing money from money-lenders. In fact, slaves of higher rank always lent money to their juniors and inferiors especially for marriage expenses. No written contract was made among the slaves themselves, and the loans among slaves were as a rule interest free.

Slaves could be hired out by their master for wages. The employer paid half the wage to the slave and half to the master. The employer also gave lunch to the slaves. Hired-out slaves received no meals from their master except on Fridays.

Towards the end of the last century, when the supply of new slaves was diminishing in Zanzibar and Pemba and when the demand for plantation labour was increasing, more and more slaves of all categories were being hired out to plantation owners, especially during the clove picking season. The practice of pawning slaves had virtually disappeared by the time slavery itself came to be abolished as slaves were being emancipated, and some slaves were buying their freedom from their masters.

The professional pawnbrokers and money-lenders were mostly Banyani, the Hindu merchants, and some members of the Ismaili sect.

8. The running away of slaves

When a slave ran way, the master reported the case first to the person from whom he had bought the slave; secondly he informed the people at the harbour and the ferrymen and gave them a description of the runaway slave ("mtoro") as best he

could. If a runaway slave was later found, he was returned to his owner for a redemption fee of one dollar. If the master had not reported the running away of his slave, then whoever caught the "mtoro" owned him or her.

A "mtoro" who had been found, was usually beaten very hard and locked up for two or three days. The only food he received was left-overs and water once a day. As a further punishment, his personal belongings could be confiscated by the master.

Domestic slaves did not usually run away. Running away was common among plantation slaves who would sometimes run away in whole gangs led by the "kadamu" or the "nokoa". The "nokoa" was responsible for inflicting punishment on the individual runaway slave who had been brought back. Plantation slaves occasionally rose against the "nokoa", and even killed him at times, should he be very cruel. Rank was strictly recognised among runaway slaves.

"When a slave runs away a rope of twisted coconut fibre is bought, and the chapter Ya sini is read over seven knots of the rope by the teacher, then the owner of the slave who has run away is given the rope and he takes it home; on arrival there he stands in the doorway to call his slave by name seven times. The rope is also hung up above the door, and if the luck is good the slave comes back or he is caught and people bring him back."8

9. The penalty for murder⁹

- a. When the killer and the killed both belong to the same master:-

When an unskilled slave killed another unskilled slave, the killer was punished by severe beating and solitary confinement and had to pay a part of his private income to the master for several years.

When an unskilled slave killed with intent a slave with rank, he was executed summarily. If he had killed unintentionally, he had to pay a fine by working for his master on the free

days other than Fridays for a number of years.

If a slave of rank killed with or without intent an unskilled slave, he had to pay a fee to the master. The fee was usually the market price of an unskilled slave.

When one slave of rank killed another slave of rank, whether equal, senior or junior, he automatically lost his rank and was imprisoned for some weeks and had to pay a fine to the master. Sometimes his private property was confiscated and he was even sold away. The punishment depended upon the status of both the accused and the victim and their relations with the master. The killing of a slave of rank was considered sabotage and was dealt with severely.

b. When the killer and the killed belonged to different masters:-

When an unskilled slave killed another unskilled slave, the killer was beaten and then given away to the master of the killed slave.

When an unskilled slave killed with intent a slave with rank, he was executed after being handed over to the master of the killed slave of rank. If he had killed without intent, he was beaten and given away to the master of the killed slave. His personal belongings were confiscated by his own master. He was put in solitary confinement by his new master for a maximum of one week. Upon release, for a period of about a year, he was allowed only one free day a week to earn for himself.

When a slave with rank killed an unskilled slave, he had to pay a fine to his own master who in turn gave one of his unskilled slaves to the master of the killed unskilled slave. The fine was usually equivalent to the market price of an unskilled slave.

When a slave of rank killed another slave of rank, he had to pay a large fine to his own master who in turn gave 2 or 3 unskilled slaves to the master of the killed slave, or he

gave a slave of the same category as the killed slave. If a slave of rank had been guilty of murder a second time, he was demoted and sold away, or handed over to the master of the killed slave.

If a slave of any category killed a freeman, the slave in question was executed in public after having been tried at the Baraza of a Kadhi.

If a master killed his own slave, he was not punished. Usually, his other slaves would then run away, and slaves of other owners would not work for him during their free days. Also, other slave owners would not keep their own slaves in pawn with a master who had killed his own slave, nor would they hire slaves out to him.

If a freeman killed a slave, customarily he had to compensate for the killed slave by giving in payment a slave of the same category as the one killed. But if the slave killed had been holding a position of trust or responsibility, the customary compensation was not accepted without much haggling. Many times bloody family feuds were caused by such cases.

In later days, cases of a slave killing a fellow slave or a freeman, or a freeman killing a slave, were dealt with by the Kadhi who treated them as the case of a freeman killing another freeman.

10. Freedom from slavery

After a long confrontation with the European Abolitionists and many threats from the British, the Sultan of Zanzibar, Seyyid Barghash, signed a treaty on June 5, 1873 that made the slave trade finally illegal in his dominions. But the legal status of slavery was not abolished until 1897 in Zanzibar, 1904 in Kenya, and 1919 in Tanganyika.

However, a slave could be given freedom by his owner of the owner's free will long before the institution of slavery came to be finally abolished. If a slave had lived and behaved to

the satisfaction of the master for a long period, especially if he were holding some important position in the master's household, the master wrote him a document of freedom. The freed slave ("mhuru") and the master each kept a copy of the document. A master would grant freedom to his slaves when he, the master, had grown old and wanted to thank God and get His reward. Some masters would grant freedom before going on the pilgrimage to Mecca, or when they returned from Mecca.¹⁰

Slaves were freed in the name of God since Islam, though it sanctioned slavery, did not present any serious obstacle to its abolition.

"A religion which declares the manumission of slaves to be an act of the highest conceivable merit in this world, and one that even gives a title to happiness in the next, cannot be considered a stronghold of slavery."¹¹

However, thousands of slaves continued to live in servitude in spite of having embraced the Islamic faith. It is so even to-day in parts of Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf. (According to several of my Ethiopian friends, classical slavery can still be found in the remote districts of Ethiopia.)

After the slave trade was declared illegal, many slave owners expected the abolition of slavery to follow suit. Shrewd slave owners thus made some slaves buy their freedom from their masters. The price of freedom was usually a large part of the little land the slave had acquired through the "kiambo" ownership. (See Section 3 and Footnote 5.) This kind of 'trade in freedom' developed out of the custom whereby a slave owner wilfully freeing a slave was given a present by the freed slave and his relations if he had any. The present was usually part of the land owned by the slave through his marriage to a free-woman. This system increased the Arab possession of arable land which the Arabs customarily could not buy from the Waunguja, the original inhabitants of Zanzibar island.

A slave thus freed was made a "brother" or a "son" by the former master, and the ex-slave continued to be attached to the house-

hold of his former master.

The Certificate of Freedom ("Hati ya Uhuru") would read as follows:

"I, So-and-So, state that I have granted in writing to So-and-So freedom before Almighty God, which means he is a freeman. No one may interfere in his affairs while I am alive, and even when I am dead there is no way of interfering with him. And whosoever upsets what I have written in this document will be accounted sinful before God for upsetting this document; it is I who have made him a freeman. If anyone comes and makes him a slave in spite of my certificate, he will be accounted sinful." 12

Originally, the Certificate of Freedom was not required to be endorsed by any official authority, however, some parties involved would have the Certificate stamped by the Kadhi. After 1873 (Abolition of the Slave Trade), and especially after 1890 (when Zanzibar came under the British Protection), the necessary documents were written at a Government office and the official stamp put on them.

British official policy in Zanzibar was to bring about a gradual abolition of slavery to avoid the situation where the laziest slaves would seek emancipation first and mass liberation would lead to lawlessness and destruction of the plantation economy.

However, in 1890 Sultan Seyyid Ali bin Said was made to declare that slaves could buy their freedom. Since only a few slaves had the cash or the land with which to buy their freedom, the declaration did not help to reduce substantially the number of the slaves. Seyyid Ali also decreed that all slaves entering his dominions (Zanzibar, Pemba and Kipini, the part of Kenya coast under the flag of Zanzibar) and all slaves born after 1890 were to be free.

Seyyid Hamoud emancipated the slaves in Zanzibar and Pemba (not the Kenya coast) in 1897 and agreed to pay compensation to the slave owners. Concubines were to become legal wives.

However, freedom was granted only upon application to the Government. Since the Government did not have any records on the slaves, and since most of the slaves were illiterate, comparatively few slaves applied for their freedom. Two other factors contributed to the perpetuation of slavery on the plantations despite legal possibilities for a slave to obtain freedom. Firstly, slave owners argued that the compensation paid by the Sultan's Government was too little, hence they did not either inform their slaves, or encourage them, to apply for freedom. Secondly, many plantation owners threatened their slaves that upon becoming free the ex-slaves would lose their cultivation rights and would not be employed for wages. Many slaves thus remained in slavery until 1909 when Seyyid Ali bin Hamoud definitely abolished slavery, and compensation for slaves could not be paid after 1911. Contrary to the horrors associated with the Slave Trade, and the brutal punishments inflicted on disobedient slaves especially on the plantations, domestic slavery is known to have been comparatively benign. This may explain why no mass uprising by slaves occurred in Zanzibar, and the emancipation of slaves did not result in lawlessness and the disruption of the plantation economy. In fact, during the years following the abolition of slavery "clove production rose and the prosperity of Zanzibar did not seriously decline".¹³

The economy declined considerably along the Kenya coast through loss of slaves as a result of abolition and rebellions led by the local Sultans.¹⁴

11. From slavery to serfdom

In 1960, Prins wrote in his great work on the Swahilis:

"The descendents of freed slaves (wahuru) are known as "wahadimu" and are still attached in some sort of bondage to the parent's or grandparent's master's house, consisting of obligations during wedding and funeral ceremonies and in the observance of special rules of etiquette. Distinct from these are those styled wad'inasi, born of a freed man (either parents or father alone)."¹⁵

The "master" was obliged to assist the "hadimu" financially

during wedding and funeral ceremonies.

"The Arabs, as slave owners, especially since 1800 or so, cultivated cloves and coconuts, long-term crops without returns in the first few years, though capital had to be invested. This may explain why most land in the so-called "developed" area of (western) Zanzibar and Pemba is individually owned. On these lands, since the abolition of slavery, squatter tenants are accepted on sufferance, often against no other security than that of the owner's interest in the common agreement whereby the squatter is allowed to build his homestead and to cultivate annual crops (which prevents the growing of weeds under the tree crop) against counter-pretation of picking cloves and nuts and of weeding during a number of days in the owner's groves, for which he gets pay into the bargain. The agreement is not usually made in writing and a verbal bond is the only deed, although some squatters obtain written permits countersigned by Kadhi or Mudir. A slave had customarily cultivation rights on plots varying in size from 200 by 10 to 200 by 50 yd, the produce from which he owned entirely. Moreover, the fruits of his own labour on the free days during each week (or on one day in the wet season) belong to him, even if he continues working (collecting, especially) for his master."16

The original owners of clove plantations were in all cases Arabs of Oman, either fresh settlers from Oman or members of long-established Omani families in Zanzibar. As agreed between Seyyid Said of the Arabs and Mwinyi Mkuu of the Waunguja, forest lands could be granted to Arabs who cleared them and planted them mostly with cloves and coconuts using slave labour. The Shirazi, who were farmers and fishermen, entered the plantation economy after the abolition of slavery.

Since plantation slaves received very little food from their masters, they had to cultivate under the trees to grow their own food and keep the trees weeded.

After the abolition of slavery, the pattern of life on the plantations did not change substantially. Slaves were emancipated but the "shambas" (plantations) remained the property of the Arabs, and to a certain extent Shirazi and Indians. The ex-slaves were thus landless. Some large plantation owners left a couple of small plantations as "waqf" (trust)

for the use of the owners' former slaves. A few were bought by Christian missions to rehabilitate some ex-slaves. The great majority of ex-slaves carried on their old employment or took out plots in the "no-man's-lands" between the Arab plantations and the Shirazi settlements. Very few, who had marriage ties with the Shirazi, settled in the Shirazi villages.

Those who stayed on, or moved into the shambas, became squatters. The system of squatting had much in common with the institution of slavery on the plantations. Traditionally, squatters could build houses on the shamba and plant food crops (including banana plants which were not considered trees). Squatters, like slaves, could not plant or own trees. Squatters were expected to help the shamba owner pick the cloves at harvest time for a small payment. Squatters did not pay rent, nor did they share their own crops with the owner of the shamba; and they could not be expelled except for when there had been a breach of personal relations between owner and squatter. The squatter did not have any economic obligations to the owner. Some owners allowed the squatter to plant fruit trees such as mangos, oranges, limes, lemons, pawpaws, bread-fruit, jackfruit and tropical apples. The squatter looked after these plants and picked the fruit. Both the owner and the squatter had an equal share of the produce. (In Oman and the former Trucial Oman States, the landlord owns the trees in the garden of the house he has rented out. The tenant is obliged to take care of the trees - usually the Indian almond trees, "terminalia catappa" - and the landlord has the right to half the crop.)

A squatter did not have to customarily ask for permission to settle on a shamba. He was expected to have friendly relations with the owner, his agent, or his overseer on the shamba. A squatter was always welcome as long as there was room for him on the shamba. The area a squatter could cultivate was not limited to any one part of a shamba, or to any one shamba.

The rights of a squatter could be inherited by his children and/or relatives if permission was granted by the owner.

Customarily, the owner did not refuse. Squatters however could not sell their rights, but could delegate their duties and obligations to their relatives and friends.

Frequently, squatters were referred to as "Wasimamizi" (overseers) as relations between owners and squatters had been generally good. However, between the period 1957 - 63, Arab and Indian landowners had strongly expressed their wish to dispense with the squatters system and replace it with total wage labour to cultivate trees and cash crops such as chillies. This move was contrary to the customary rights of squatters and it created fears and insecurity among them. This situation was exploited by many ZNP (Zanzibar Nationalist Party) supporters who threatened to expel those squatters who did not join the landlord dominated ZNP.¹⁷

It should be distinguished here between "hadimu" (plural - "mahadimu") and "mhadimu" (plural - "wahadimu"). Hadimu was an ex-slave or a person of ex-slave origin. Mhadimu was a Shirazi of Zanzibar Island, i.e. Mwumguja or Muunguja (plural - Waunguja).

The terms "wahuru" or "mahadimu" for freed-slaves had in fact become almost extinct by the 1950's, and both groups, the wahuru/mahadimu (of which only a handful remain now) and the Wahadimu, had come to be known as Wahadimu and confused with the original Wahadimu inhabitants of Zanzibar, the Waunguja. Partly because of this confusion, many of the younger generation of the Waunguja Shirazi mistook themselves to be of ex-slave descent and joined forces with the ASP (Afro-Shirazi Party). The Wapemba and the Watumbatu joined the ZNP - ZPPP (Zanzibar and Pemba Peoples' Party) coalition. Some Wahadimu preferred the name Washirazi to Wahadimu since the term Shirazi was devoid of any derogatory connotations and at the same time it did not distinguish one Shirazi "tribe" from another.

The term "Waunguja" is again used wrongly as a synonym of "Wazanzibari" (Zanzibaris). This is obviously from the

English name "Zanzibar" for both the island of "Unguja" and for the country as a whole.

The squatter-landlord relationship based on the old slave-master system continued with varying degrees of bondage and attachment for more than half a century until 1964 when the Revolution changed the social equilibrium.

The distinct system of slavery, after its abolition, had left its mark on all sorts of activity. Households employed servant boys and girls to a great extent for menial tasks and for shopping and going to the market. This is the case even to-day, to some extent. Hundreds of youths are employed as "domestic servants" for very low wages. Before the Revolution in Zanzibar, formally organised enterprise of to-day and slavery of the past showed traits of an intimate character. Slavery had been considered as part and parcel of the feudal and commercial households, and Swahili sailors often spoke of the shipowner's firm as their "mlango" or extended family.¹⁸

After the Revolution in 1964, all land was nationalised together with all large plantations. Owners of small plantations were allowed to own the trees. All squatters were given a minimum of three acres each of plantation land. The surplus plantation lands were turned into state farms.

Appendix I

Categories of Africans and ArabsThe Swahili

The term "Mswahili" has been used to mean many different categories of people in East Africa. Generally, in the not too distant past, it referred to any African from the coast who spoke Kiswahili and who was a Muslim. While locally in the coastal towns and islands not many liked to be called "Waswahili". Kiswahili-speaking Africans and Afro-Arabs of lower social strata were referred to as "Waswahili" by their superiors. Immigrant Arabs referred to all Africans (except Ethiopians and Somalis) as "Waswahili". The Asians referred to Africans as "Habsi" or "Habshi" (Abyssinian) or as "Golo" (slave). As Prins notes, the term Swahili was "essentially an epithet of reference and hence an important sociological pointer".

It was seldom used for self-identification, for it invoked much deprivation of social status. As a result, alternative identities such as Arab or Shirazi, or to a lesser extent Indian, were always preferred. Since the late 1950's the term Swahili has been used to refer to any coastal inhabitant of whatever origin who spoke the Swahili language as his mother tongue. However, this definition was not formally applied to any particular ethnic group. The Waswahili therefore included Africans from various tribes, Arabs and Asians also. Hence a person was a Swahili and/but an African (Zaramu, Nyamwezi, etc.), a Swahili and/but an Arab, a Swahili and/but an Indian, etc.

The term Swahili has been used indiscriminately by historians and travellers, but carefully avoided by colonial administrators since "there were no clear boundaries differentiating the Swahilis from members of adjacent tribal communities".

To-day, after the rise of Swahili as a National Language, all coastal and Swahili-speaking people of different ethnic origins, and following different religions, take pride in identifying themselves as Swahili. However, one could define a Swahili as a member of a Swahili cultural group(s). The Swahili cultural area has Islamic maritime, agricultural and fishing communities which have blended African, Arab, and to a lesser extent Persian, Indian and Indonesian cultural elements. The bearers of this culture are not homogeneous as far as descent or physique is concerned. Their cultural uniformity is shown by their history.

Lofchie describes the Swahili as "a mixture of African and Arab cultural elements. Arab architecture, art and dress, the Muslim religion and the Swahili language - essentially African in grammar and vocabulary, but heavily infused with Arabic".

The Arabs of Zanzibar and Pemba consisted of 3 main groups:

1. The original settlers, or "native Arabs" (Waarabu), mostly settled in Zanzibar Town and the clove areas of western Zanzibar Island. They were the landowning class and had been in Zanzibar for many generations. Almost all are of mixed Arab-African blood and speak Swahili at home.
2. Arabs from Oman (Wamanga) who continued to arrive with the monsoon dhows, or after a long stay in Zaire (the Congo), Rwanda or Burundi where they would make a fortune and then some of the richer ones would buy property in Zanzibar. The Congo Arabs (Wamanga/Waarabu wa Kongo) arrived in Zanzibar in the late 1950's and after the Civil War in the Congo. The older generation of these spoke Arabic among themselves. Most of these have, since the Revolution, sought refuge in Oman and the Persian Gulf states where they have been offered much official assistance.
3. Washihiri, or Hadhrami Arabs, from Aden, Dhofar, Mukalla, Sheher and the island of Sokotra in South Yemen (Arabia). These engaged in small trade such as running retail shops and

coffee-houses. The older generation of these also spoke Arabic among themselves. Many of them have moved back to South Yemen with their Swahili-speaking wives and children.

Three other very small groups - Somali, Barawa (Somali Arabs) and Shia Persians from Iran, Iraq and the island state of Bahrein - socially, economically and politically identified themselves with the Arabs.

The Africans could be put into four classes in order of social status:

1. The Washirazi (people from Shiraz in Persia), descendents of Persian immigrants who settled along the coast during the tenth century A.D., and who were regarded as the indigenous people.²⁰ They were mostly farmers and fishermen and were involved in the coconut/copra industry.
2. Swahili immigrants from the Tanganyika and Kenya coasts, mainly from the islands of Mafia and Lamu.
3. The Mahadimu (serfs, from Arabic "khadim"), descendents of freed slaves. These were mostly squatters or domestic servants. They usually identified themselves as Washirazi or Wahadimu.
4. Wabara (Mainlanders) who had only recently emigrated from the mainland of east and central Africa. These formed The African Association for Immigrant Workers in 1934. The name was later shortened to The African Association which gave the ASP a strong urban support. Chiefly from the Zaramu, Nyamwezi and Makonde tribes, they had initially come to Zanzibar during the clove-picking seasons. Mainlanders began to enter the islands as factory and plantation workers since the Shirazi did not join the labour force demanded by the plantation economy, when, after the abolition of the slave trade and slavery, labour supply could not be increased but through immigration.

The Comorians (Wangazija)¹⁹ formed a distinct ethnic group self-conscious of a separate identity. They were never officially referred to as Africans or Arabs. They had immigrated to Zanzibar from the Comoro Archipelago. Until very recently they had been mostly French subjects. They are a mixture of African and Arab strain and formed a middle-class group comparable to the Asians with whom they shared power in the Civil Service immediately under the Arabs during the wave of Zanzibarisation between 1960 - 63. Many Comorians have since the Revolution left Zanzibar for the Comoro Islands and quite a few of them have joined the various political organisations there.

(Asians other than Arabs and Persians are not treated in this study for various reasons. However, it may be observed here that ASP had Hindu and Ismaili candidates in the Elections, whereas the ZNP/ZPPP alliance had the open support of the Bohora, Ithnasheri and Sunni communities with Ithnasheri and Sunni candidates. Both ASP and ZNP had a Parsee candidate each at different times.

In a statement issued by the Zanzibar Revolutionary Council in January 1964 with reference to the quota for entrance to secondary schools and higher educational institutions, the population of the Peoples' Republic of Zanzibar and Pemba was described as "80% African, 15% Arab, 4% Asians other than Arabs, and 1% Comorians". No reference was made to Shirazi or Swahili. In political speeches, many leaders have asked the people to forget such distinctions and refer to themselves as "Wana wa Afro-Shirazi", literally the "Children of Afro-Shirazi.)

The Shirazi in their turn could be distinguished as

1. Wapemba of Pemba Island, related to the Swahili of north Tanganyika and Kenya coasts and greatly mixed with Arabs.
2. Watumbatu of Tumbatu Island, some parts of Pemba and Unguja (Zanzibar) Islands. These are supposed to be the most ancient of the Swahili peoples.

3. Wahadimu, the "first arrived" people of Zanzibar Island,²¹ also known as Waunguja.

According to Sheik Thabit Kombo, Secretary General of ASP, the name Wahadimu for the original inhabitants of Unguja Island comes from the "huduma" (service) the Waunguja provided for the Arab Sultan of Zanzibar Town and the western parts of Unguja Island.²² The Mwinyi Mkuu (Prime Minister and Regent of the Waunguja) and the Busaidi Sultan of Zanzibar Town shared the taxes levied by the Mwinyi Mkuu equally.²³ The Mwinyi Mkuu was also responsible for recruiting workers for the Sultan to work with the Sultan's slave gangs which were clearing the forests for planting cloves. When this agreement came into force, the Waunguja came to be known as Wahadimu, i.e. those who provided and/or paid tribute.

Since the Shirazi claimed both Asiatic and African blood, they were put immediately after the Arabs. During World War II, when imported foodstuff such as sugar was rationed, the Shirazi, together with the Arabs and Indians, received larger portions than did the "Africans".

"However, inasmuch as they were Africans, they would occupy the lower echelons of the racial scale vis-à-vis the Arabs. Economically and socially they were believed to be some degree above the descendants of the ex-slaves and the newcomers from the mainland. In the slave trade days, some Shirazis owned slaves. A few important land-owning Shirazis lived mainly on the Pemba island.

Social mixing between the races existed in varying degrees. Thus the Shirazis, by virtue perhaps of their lighter colour and wealth, had a greater, albeit superficial, social intercourse with Arabs than the rest of the Africans. The descendants of ex-slaves and the newcomers vied with each other for the social position below the Shirazis."²⁴

The growth of black nationalism, the suspicion of continuity of Arab domination coupled with propaganda that refreshed memories on slavery and the slave trade era, caused great disruption in the social equilibrium with the determination of the lower classes to end the long years of inferiority through a violent

revolution. The Zanzibar Revolution of 1964, though basically a class revolution, has constantly echoed many racial tones for the socio-economic classes followed closely the weak - but traditional - ethnic distinctions.

The institution of slavery, though not foreign to East Africa, was escalated by non-African peoples and commercialised with de-humanising effects on the African populations. In Zanzibar, which had been the citadel for the East African slavery and slave trade in the last century, and where servitude in some form continued to exist, the last vestiges of slavery were formally destroyed in 1964.

Appendix II

Swahili words connected with slavery

adinasi (wad'inasi)	- a freeman
akida (ma)	- keeper of money
Banyani (ma)	- a Hindu (money-lender)
besar (ma)	- a child of a concubine
biashara ya watumwa	- slave trade
bwana (ma)	- master, slave-owner
hadimu (ma), khadim (ma)	- a serf
huduma (-)	- service, tribute
kadamu (ma)	- a slave leading a gang of plantation slaves
khadim (ma), hadimu (ma)	- a serf
kijakazi (vi)	- a girl slave
kitwana (vi)	- a boy slave
mateka (-)	- a captive, a prisoner of war
Mhadimu (wa)	- "Hadimu" Shirazi of Zanzibar Island
Mhindi (wa)	- an Indian (money-lender)
mhuru (wa)	- a freed slave
mjakazi (wa)	- a woman slave
mjoli (wa), njoli (-)	- a fellow slave
Mmanga (wa)	- an Omani Arab
Mshihiri (wa)	- a Hadhrami Arab
Mshirazi (wa)	- a Shirazi
msimamizi (wa)	- a squatter
mtoro (wa)	- a runaway slave
mtumishi (wa)	- a servant, an employee
Mtumwa (wa)	- a slave
mtumwa mfuasi	- a slave working as a bodyguard or soldier
mtumwa mjinga	- a raw/unskilled slave
mtumwa msimamizi	- a slave who is head of all plantation slaves
mtumwa mtumishi	- a slave employed as an evoy or messenger
mtumwa mtumwaji	- a slave working as an agent
mtumwa mzalia	- a slave born into the household, a born slave

mtumwa wa maji	- a slave working as a sailor
mtumwa wa nyumbani	- domestic slave
mtumwa wa shamba	- an agricultural/plantation slave
mtumwa wa shauri	- a slave employed as an advisor or councillor
mtwana (wa)	- a man slave
Mwarabu (wa)	- an Arab
Mwinyi!	- Master!
mzalia wa mara moja	- a slave whose one parent was born in a coastal town
mzalia wa mara mbili	- a slave both of whose parents were born in (a) coastal town(s)
mzalia wa mara nyingi	- a slave whose grandparents were born in (a) coastal town(s)
nahodha (mtumwa)	- a slave working as a ship's Master
nahodha mdogo (mtumwa)	- a slave working as a ship's Mate
njoli (-), mjoli (wa)	- a fellow slave
nokoa (ma), nakoa (ma)	- a slave working as an overseer on a plantation
suria (ma)	- a concubine
uhadimu, ukhadim	- serfdom
utumwa	- slavery
uhuru wa watumwa	- the abolition of slavery (lit. freedom of the slaves)

NOTES

1. Swahili Prose Texts, ed. by Lyndon Harries, (Nairobi, 1965), pp. 206-207.
2. Harries, p. 210.
3. A.H.J. Prins, The Swahili-Speaking Peoples of Zanzibar and the East African Coast, (London, 1961), p. 69.
4. Prins, p. 62.
5. Prins, p. 62.

"The other lands in the island are claimed to be largely communally owned, either by a kin group, a village, or, so it is said, a whole "tribe". Here it is necessary to distinguish between the following types of land: the bush land, wanda, used for shifting cultivation; the "family building site" or kiambo, the best type of soil available and on which also a few permanent crops are planted; the grave yards; and the msitu, or village shrub land. Kiambo ownership is shared by all who are patrilineally descended from the man with the first right of occupancy, either historical or mythical. Women also belong to this category of owners, and in case a man contracts for some reason an uxorilocal marriage he, as a husband, has rights of usage and building. In some areas, though the husband cannot inherit, children can through their mother, thus making a breach in an alleged patriline of succession to land rights. Where the influence of the Sharia as against customary law has been strong, a husband too becomes heir to his deceased wife. It is probably true that the villages in which a widower does not inherit either land, trees, or even his "own" (but in fact his wife's) house are in a minority nowadays, and there are intermediate areas where a man may inherit his wife's trees in the kiambo, though he does not get a share in the land on which they stand. However, in most cases where Islamic law has prevailed, a stranger will nevertheless be bought out by the traditional owners. Whenever a shareholder vacates a plot in his kiambo strangers as well as kinsmen may obtain permission to plant crops on the abandoned site, but this does not vitiate any claims of priority of the owners, who might wish to return. The term kiambo, though said to be of Persian origin, is not known in Tumbatu Island, notwithstanding the claims of the islanders to be of Persian ancestry, deriving their ethnonym from the Persian Gulf.

Plots in kiambo land have been known to have been bought and sold, but it is supposed to be not the proper thing to do."

For more information, refer to Prins, pp. 62-64, and J. Middleton, Land Tenure in Zanzibar, (London, 1961).

6. For divorce among the Swahili of Kenya Coast, refer to Prins, p. 89.
7. According to a rumour circulated in Zanzibar Town, the marriage between the famous artist Ustaad Seif Salim and Alawiya of the Al Riyami family was delayed for over a year due to opposition from certain influential members of the Riyami clan who claimed that the artist was a descendent of a "besar". This happened in 1965, more than a year after the Revolution.
8. Harries, p. 221.
9. My major source of information here has been the late Mr. Mohamed Ayub Wakil of the Ministry of Home Affairs, Zanzibar. I had discussed this topic with him on several occasions during 1965-66.
10. Sheik Ahmad Bukhari informed me of several cases of slave owners going on pilgrimages to Mecca with a large retinue of slaves who were sold in Jedda, Saudi Arabi, after the slave trade had been restricted to Zanzibar. Sheik Ahmad recalled that when he himself went to Mecca soon after World War I, more than 10 years after slavery itself had been abolished in Zanzibar, his companions on board the dhows had dozens of "watumishi" (servants) with them. These 'servants', mostly young women, were sold secretly to merchants in Jedda, Mecca and Medina. It seems this was a common practice among wealthy former slave owners who, after 1897, employed their former slaves at minimal wages and continued to consider them as slaves, and the only way of selling them abroad appears to have been the pretext of going to Mecca where the "watumishi" were sold away as Khadims.
11. Joseph Cooper, The Lost Continent (or Slavery and the Slave Trade in Africa, 1875), (London, 1875), pp. 129-130.
12. Harries, pp. 212-213.
13. John D. Anderson, East Africa in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries, (London, 1972), p. 263.
14. A.I. Salim, Swahili-Speaking Peoples of Kenya's Coast, 1895-1965, (Nairobi, 1973), p. 102.
15. Prins, p. 70.
16. Prins, pp. 61-62.
17. M.F. Lofchie, Zanzibar: Background to Revolution, (Oxford, 1965), p. 185.
18. Prins, p. 69.

19. For a closer analysis of the relations between Africans, Arabs and Asians, refer to
Lofchie, Zanzibar: Background to Revolution. Part I, Ch. III.
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20. For a detailed history of the Shirazi refer to Neville Chittick, "The 'Shirazi' Colonisation of East Africa", in: Journal of African History, VI 3 (1965), pp. 275-294.
21. Prins, p. 18.
22. Sheik Thabit Kombo, during the second reading of the White Paper on National Service (Huduma ya Taifa). The information was collected by me, in person, on 3.10.66 at the Public Gallery of the National Assembly in Dar es Salaam.
23. Prins, p. 98.
24. S.G. Ayany, A History of Zanzibar - A Study in Constitutional Development 1934-1964, EALB, 1970, p. 56.

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