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TEXTILE TRADES, CONSUMER CULTURES, AND THE MATERIAL WORLDS OF THE INDIAN OCEAN

An Ocean of Cloth

Edited by Pedro Machado, Sarah Fee, and Gwyn Campbell

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Over two cold grey days in November, 2012, a group of thirty scholars from around the world gathered in Montreal, Canada to consider the critical role that textiles—as perhaps no other material good—have played in driving and shaping exchange in the Indian Ocean world, in structuring material lives, influencing notions of fashion as cultural and bodily practice, and underpinning social and political structures of association between people.

The conference 'The Textile Trades of the Indian Ocean World, From Early Times to the Present Day' drew an extraordinarily diverse, multi-disciplinary gathering of art historians, museum curators, anthropologists, archaeologists and historians representing a rich mix of senior scholars, junior faculty and Ph.D. students. The result was a vibrant, robust and wide-ranging number of discussions that stimulated lively debate. The present volume emerged out of these exchanges and the contributors are to be thanked for producing such fine final papers.

For making possible this unique opportunity to share sources, perspectives, interpretations and theoretical concerns, we must first thank Gwyn Campbell and the Indian Ocean World Centre (IOWC), McGill University, which organized and hosted the event. Lori Callaghan, IOWC manager at the time, valiantly steered complex travel plans through Hurricane Sandy. Bringing scholars from three continents and ten countries would not have been possible without a generous Conference Grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC). A travel grant from the Pasold Fund

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Abbreviations

AAMM	Antananarivo Annual and Madagascar Magazine
ANOM	Archives Nationales d'Outre Mer
BEFEO	Bulletin de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême Orient
CIF	Cost, Insurance, Freight
CSS	Chūgai Shōgyō Shimpō
ECAI	Ente per il Cotone dell'Africa Italiana
EIC	East India Company
EPLF	Eritrean People's Liberation Front
GHQ	General Headquarters
HS	Hōchi Shimbun
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOWC	Indian Ocean World Centre
JCEA	Japan Cotton Exporters Association
KKS	Kokumin Shimbun
KS	Kōbe Shimbun
MAE	Archives du Ministère des Affaires Etrangères (Paris)
MS	Mainichi Shimbun
NAK	British National Archives, Kew
NASPPE	National Agency for the Supervision and Privatization of Public Enterprises
OAS	Ōsaka Asahi Shimbun
OMS	Ōsaka Jiji Simpō
PEM	Peabody Essex Museum
SCCE	Società per la Coltivazione del Cotone nell'Eritrea
SHY FY	SHY Fanyi
SHY ZG	Songhuiyao jigao (1236), Zhiguan
SIA	Società Imprese Africane

SOAS/LMS-MIL	SOAS/LMS Archives, Madagascar: Incoming Letters
SPS	Sudan Plantation Syndicate
SS	Songshi (1345)
SSHRC	Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada
UAE	United Arab Emirates
USNA	United States National Archives, Washington, DC
VOC	Dutch East India Company (Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie)
WXTK	Ma Duanlin: Wenxian tongkao

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction: The Ocean's Many Cloth Pathways

Pedro Machado and Sarah Fee

Nearly thirty years ago, a collection of essays by eminent scholars reminded readers what had nearly been forgotten after centuries of industrialization: that arguably, more than any other type of material object, cloth has been central to the human experience.[1] From pieces of cotton sheeting dyed with indigo to fabric produced from raffia and finely woven silk textiles, cloths have served myriad commercial, symbolic, representational and cultural purposes throughout all regions of the world. Textiles have been central to the production and reproduction of a wide range of social, cultural and political practices.

[1] Annette Weiner and Jane Schneider eds. *Cloth and Human Experience* (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1989).

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These observations hold true not only for individual communities or societies, but also on translocal and transregional scales, reaching over great distances and waterways, across the basins of the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic and Indian Oceans. Merchants, producers, settlers, state officials, rulers and consumers have utilized cloth as currency to facilitate commercial exchange, created new or reinforced pre-existing adornment practices, supported patronage structures through their diffusion, elaborated ritualistic practices, and forged identities by displaying and wearing cloth in distinctive styles and fashions. Cloth was thus critical in enabling and animating the diverse commercial and cultural terrains of these oceans and their surrounding lands, being traded and consumed not only in local contexts, but also traversing great distances to reach markets throughout Europe, the Americas, Africa and Asia. People wore, displayed, collected and used cloth in bodily practices to reflect status and wealth, and therefore to claim a place in the material worlds in which they found themselves.

Of the world's great ocean basins, it was in areas bordering the Indian Ocean that cloth in the broadest variety and types of finish was most widely produced, exchanged and consumed over the greatest length of time. This vast oceanic space connects over 100,000 km of coastline running the length of eastern Africa, the underside of the Arabian peninsula, tracing the shores of Pakistan, India and Southeast Asia and its thousands of offshore islands, further drawing in the waters of the Red Sea, the Gulf and the China Sea (Map 1.1). From early times, monsoon winds, religion, paper technologies, trade and conflicts encouraged the movements of people, products, and ideas around these waters, deep into the hinterlands of their shores and beyond. Our focus on the Indian Ocean in this book reflects a commitment to furthering the challenge (already well under way) to conventional geographies mapped around either national frameworks or Area Studies divisions. The Indian Ocean has increasingly drawn scholars into excavations of its polyvalent strands of interconnectivity produced historically by the wide-ranging and temporally deep movements of goods, people, ideas and texts. They have been compelled by the possibilities of this "complicating" sea to destabilize spatial scales, undermine "existing templates of transnational history" and thereby identify alternative interpretations of globalization as a multicentric and multilayered process whose valences were not determined by a Euro-American Atlantic

centre.[2] Much of this work has tended to focus, however, on the western reaches of the Indian Ocean, and the circulations and mobilities of intertwined social geographies linking eastern Africa, the Red Sea, the Arabian Peninsula, the Gulf and India, inadvertently eliding the broader currents of connection that stretched across this oceanic space. For instance, these currents brought Kampala in Uganda into relation with Osaka in Japan through the production, distribution and consumption of *kanga* cloths, as discussed in Chap. 5 in this volume by Hideaki Suzuki. Broadening our analytical lenses beyond any sub-oceanic region avoids the danger of geographic segmentation and allows for a more capacious perspective that captures otherwise occluded intra-oceanic histories.

Textile Trades, Consumer Cultures, and the Material Worlds of the Indian Ocean thus endorses an expansive view of the ocean as an 'interaction-based arena' that, while connected to other oceans and seas, had an internal dynamism and historical coherence created by widespread human relationships that were themselves undergirded in significant ways by the kinds of material exchanges and histories represented by the trades and consumption of textiles discussed in this book.[3] In taking such a perspective, we endorse the analytical possibilities and empirical pathways opened up by the Indian Ocean and its social and cultural geographies, from destabilizing nation-based framings of the past to unsettling continental or conventional regional boundaries. Careful to avoid reifying ocean space, the volume traces the connections created along shifting circuits of social, cultural and commercial engagement to chart cloth's many pasts among groups scattered along the coasts and interiors of an

[2] Suggestive recent explorations of the potential of the Indian Ocean to subvert long-established paradigms are provided, for instance, in Isabel Hofmeyr, "South Africa's Indian Ocean: Notes from Johannesburg," *History Compass* 11 no. 7 (2013): pp. 508–512 (the quote is from p. 509); idem, "Universalizing the Indian Ocean," *PMLA* 125, no. 3 (2010): pp. 721–729; Antoinette Burton, Clare Anderson, Isabel Hofmeyr, Christopher J. Lee, Nile Green and Madhavi Kale, "Sea Tracks and Trails: Indian Ocean World as Method," *History Compass*, 11, no. 7 (2013): pp. 497–535; Lindsay Bremner, "Folded Ocean: The Spatial Transformation of the Indian Ocean," *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region* 10, no. 1 (2013): pp. 1–28.

[3] Nile Green, "Rethinking the "Middle East" after the Oceanic Turn," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 34, no. 3 (2014): p. 560.

array of translocal[4] nodes within the Indian Ocean.[5] These were enabled by dense webs of relationships and textiles that moved around the ocean along maritime routes whose contours expanded or contracted according to opportunities afforded by local and, in later periods especially, imperial shipping; the two often co-existed and complemented one another.[6]

The Indian Ocean's deserved status as the historic epicentre of textile innovation and trade is owed in large part to the area which gave the ocean its name. India—and South Asia, more broadly—occupied a privileged place in this ocean's crosscurrents as its artisans produced and supplied textiles of varying qualities and sizes to markets that stretched from insular and island Southeast Asia to the Gulf, Red Sea and the eastern African coast from the Horn of Africa down to the Mozambique Channel, Madagascar and adjacent islands. Indeed, its productive capacities and the widespread involvement and circulation of the subcontinent's maritime merchant networks resulted in Indian textiles reaching markets well beyond the Ocean, including northwestern Europe and West Africa, the eastern Mediterranean and the Americas. Among the greatest strengths of the Indian textile industry was its specialization in serving distinct and well-structured networks of long-distance trade that connected it to multiple regions, its adaptability, the qualities of the cloth—such as design and the durability of dyes, and its capacity for product differentiation. Silk and, especially, cotton cloths were produced in great quantities in distinctive manufacturing areas, with the Coromandel Coast and Gujarat accounting for the bulk of exports

[4] Our understanding of translocality as a complex, multipolar process and 'descriptive tool' is derived from Ulrike Freitag and Achim von Oppen, "Introduction," in *Translocality: The Study of Globalising Phenomena from a Southern Perspective*, ed. Ulrike Freitag and Achim von Oppen (Leiden: Brill, 2010): translocality "is an intermediary concept which helps to better understand and conceptualise connections beyond the local which are, however, neither necessarily global in scale nor necessarily connected to global moments." (p. 3).

[5] Here the volume departs from a similarly themed collection edited by Ruth Barnes, *Textiles in Indian Ocean Societies* (London:Routledge, 2005), that brought together essays examining textiles analytically within single political frames rather than tracing the connections across and beyond them. We note also that Jerry Bentley first warned of the danger of reifying ocean space in his discussion of ocean basins, "Sea and Ocean Basins as Frameworks of Historical Analysis," *Geographical Review* 89, no. 2 (1999): pp. 215–224.

[6] As noted especially by Erik Gilbert, *Dhows and the Colonial Economy of Zanzibar* (Oxford, UK/Zanzibar/Athens, OH/Nairobi: James Currey/Gallery Publications/Ohio University Press/E.A.E.P, 2004).

before the sixteenth century, while Bengal, the Punjab and Sind emerged in later centuries as prominent centres with equally strong connections to global trade networks. With the majority of cotton goods in global trade originating in the Indian subcontinent before the eighteenth century, India thus emerged both as a key nodal point in the textile histories of the ocean and as an important centre in the early modern global economic and material worlds—its cloth serving in one recent assessment as "one of the agents lubricating the wheels of commerce"—that were undergirded by diverse consumer cultures and dense commercial relationships.[7]

India's long histories of textile production—especially cotton textile production—have garnered unsurprisingly much attention among scholars, from early Indian economic nationalist historians, who argued that the exigencies of British rule had resulted in the de-industrialization of the subcontinent's production, to the work of scholars such as K.N. Chaudhuri, whose dense econometric analysis and description of the East India Company's extensive trade in cotton piece goods revealed the extent of their place in its commercial economy both within and beyond the Indian Ocean. As widely traded commodities across a variety of cultural, social and political arenas, their utility enhanced by their function also as currencies of exchange and stores of value in merchant units of account, Indian cottons were arguably the most important material artefact in the economic life of Indian Ocean societies.

More recently, historians have reinvigorated the history of industrialization, long understood to be connected to the mechanization of cotton textile production, by examining the role of consumer demand and notions of fashionability and taste that were shaped by the importation of high volumes of Indian cottons into Europe over the late seventeenth century and, especially, in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Questions of innovation, technology and knowledge transfer, and competition, among others, have been explored anew as scholarship has dramatically reshaped our understandings of the process and praxis of European industrialization. Influenced to no small degree by the global

[7] Giorgio Riello and Tirthankar Roy, "Introduction: The World of South Asian Textiles, 1500–1850," in *How India Clothed the World: The World of South Asian Textiles, 1500–1850,* ed. Giorgio Riello and Tirthankar Roy (Leiden: Brill, 2009), p. 10. See also Giorgio Riello and Prasannan Parthasarathi (eds.), *The Spinning World: A Global History of Cotton Textiles, 1200–1850* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

historical 'turn' of the past decade and a half that has urged the adoption of translocal and relational approaches to pasts once seen to be encompassed by national or regional 'containers', this scholarship has also reappraised the causes and paths of divergent economic development in Eurasia in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Rather than being attributable to a kind of European exceptionalism defined by innate cultural variables and rationalized institutional structures, 'divergence' was caused by a number of historical conjunctures, reciprocities and contingencies that were themselves the products of a long process involving a variety of interactions and encounters among and between different areas of the world. The European 'take-off' in the production and trade of cotton textiles, as argued recently by Giorgio Riello and Tirthankar Roy, is thus regarded increasingly as both the "result of a long, arduous and not always successful deployment of factors of production' and the 'putting in place of complex mechanisms of knowledge transfer, assessment of quality, fashionability, etc."[8] Indian cotton textiles were critical to this process and helped shape the tastes and sensibilities of a growing number of consumers whose identities were informed in new ways by adornment practices expressed through publicly visible clothing choices and reinforced through the rearrangements of domestic furnishings and sartorial imaginaries.[9]

Equally, the importance of cotton textiles—and, especially, cotton more broadly—to our understandings of the emergence of the modern world has in the past few years produced major works that have begun even to question conventional histories of capitalism. Sven Beckert's *Empire of Cotton*, for instance, makes a compelling case for the centrality of cotton—especially American cotton—to our understandings of the origins of capitalism and, hence, to the unfolding of a global economy in which socio-economic inequalities grew amidst struggles over labour,

[8] Riello and Roy, "Introduction", p. 17.

[9] See, for example, John Brewer and Roy Porter eds., *Consumption and the World of Goods* (London: Routledge, 1994); Beverly Lemire, *Fashion's Favourite: The Cotton Trade and Consumer in Britain, 1600–1800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992); Maxine Berg, "In Pursuit of Luxury: Global History and British Consumer Goods in the Eighteenth Century." *Past and Present*, 182, no. 1 (2004): pp. 85–113; *idem*, *Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005). The concept of sartorial imaginary is borrowed from Robert S. DuPlessis, *The Material Atlantic: Clothing, Commerce, and the Colonization of the Atlantic World, 1650–1800* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2016), p. 20.

capital and land, and in which "war capitalism" spawned the later "industrial capitalism" of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[10] *Cotton: The Fabric that Made the Modern World* adopts a more expansive interpretive and temporal framework to chart the role of cotton through a global historical lens in the shaping of large-scale changes in the structure and functioning of economies around the world that ultimately created widely differentiated histories of economic development.[11]

In addition to these historians, increasing numbers of scholars from the disciplines of art history, textile studies, archaeology and anthropology have, in recent decades, advanced our understandings of the movements and interconnections of cloth in the Indian Ocean world (again, particularly cottons via India), especially through their analyses of surviving material objects, all the more important given the frequent lack of textual sources. Mattiebelle Gittinger illustrated fully the genius of Indian textile artisans in creating dyed cloths for niche markets around the globe, while John Guy and Robyn Maxwell, among others, established the material traits and trajectories of the various Indian textiles that flowed to Southeast Asia, their deep influence on local arts, and the reinterpretation or 'domestication' of these cloth imports by local societies.[12] For the western side of the ocean, pioneering work by Ruth Barnes examined the Indian cotton cloths that flowed to the Red Sea; her stylistic comparison and carbon-14 dating of a collection of archaeological textile fragments traded from Gujarat to old Cairo (Fustat), revealed a greater temporal depth (the ninth century CE onwards) and technical sophistication than hitherto imagined—revealing, too, links with cloths traded contemporaneously to Southeast Asia.[13] The general absence of sub-Saharan Africa in this object-based literature has been

[10] Sven Beckert, *Empire of Cotton: A Global History* (New York: Alfred P. Knopft, 2014).

[11] Giorgio Riello, *Cotton: The Fabric that Made the Modern World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013). See also the short but nonetheless useful overview by Beverly Lemire that emphasizes the influence of cottons in the development of Europe's fashion system: *Cotton* (Oxford & New York: Berg, 2011).

[12] Matiebelle Gittinger, *Master Dyers to the World: Technique and Trade in Early Indian Dyed Cotton Textiles* (Washington, D.C.: The Textile Museum, 1982); John Guy, *Woven Cargoes: Indian Textiles in the East* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 1998); Robyn J. Maxwell, *Textiles of Southeast Asia: Tradition, Trade, and Transformation* (Melbourne: Australian National Gallery, 1990).

[13] Ruth Barnes, *Indian Block-Printed Textiles in Egypt: The Newberry Collection in the Ashmolean Museum* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997).

rectified, in part, by three recent themed collections.[14] The major 2013 exhibition and catalogue *Interwoven Globe: The Worldwide Textile Trade, 1500–1800* presented novel material evidence for a hybrid, global textile design vocabulary in the early modern period—much of it filtered through the Indian Ocean—while reintroducing the importance of China and her silks to global commerce and local textile making.

The present volume is grounded in the diverse insights of these scholarly works and shares an affinity with their collective effort to ascribe to textiles a prominent place in histories of industrialization and design, in debates over divergence and in the emergence of globalization as a variegated and multipolar process of intensified social, commercial, cultural, material and economic interconnectivity across areas and regions of the world. This scholarship has enlivened the study of an old subject matter and subverted understandings of once familiar narratives by broadening the methodologies and widening the lenses through which these pasts have been apprehended.

Yet, while the book aligns itself with these intellectual projects, it also aims to pursue new and diverse strands of a long and multilayered story, to move beyond a single fibre, producing area or a fixed time period to address production, distribution and consumption of textiles within and for the lands of the Indian Ocean in all their complex manifestations. It thus offers a consideration of *textiles* and *textile trades* in the plural.

This collection of essays grew out of the conference 'Textile Trades and Consumption in the Indian Ocean World, from Early Times to the Present' that took place in 2012 at McGill University's Indian Ocean World Centre. Its major inspirations were twofold: first, the growing recognition that textiles—in terms of their production, distribution and consumption—were integral to the structuring processes of oceanic interrelation across littorals and interiors, and therefore could offer illuminating material and discursive lenses through which to capture the broad spatial and temporal scales across which the history of the Indian Ocean has unfolded. Second, the belief that the intricacies and complexities of the wide-ranging textile exchanges centred in the Indian Ocean, together with their wide temporal scale, required bringing

[14] Ruth Barnes and David Parkin, eds. *Textiles in Indian Ocean Societies* (London: Routledge, 2005); Rosemary Crill, ed., *Textiles from India: The Global Trade* (Calcutta: Seagull Books, 2006); Sarah Fee and Pedro Machado eds., "The Translocal Textile Trades of Eastern Africa", Special Issue of *Textile History* (May 2017).

together specialists with a range of disciplinary training who draw on different methodologies, from art historians and curators to archaeologists and historians. There is growing appreciation not only of the analytical advantages to such an approach but, perhaps more importantly, it also moves us towards a different model of intellectual labour that has predominated in many fields. While, generally, scholars have sought advice and solicited critique from colleagues beyond their own area of expertise for the enrichment of their work, projects are, overwhelmingly, conceived and written by single authors working essentially on their own in archives, private collections and research sites. This has serious limitations when it comes to apprehending the histories of translocal spaces such as the Indian Ocean. Rather, as emphasized recently by Peter Perdue, Helen Siu and Eric Tagliocozzo, we need to approach "the regions we study [with] a much more interactive, collaborative style of research than the traditional area studies approaches have provided", and, instead of viewing "regions, cultures and peoples as physically bounded units occupying continents and politics, we need to focus on multilayered, interactive processes…"[15] The collaborative effort represented by the authors in this collection around the multilayered and interactive processes of textile exchanges and histories encapsulates the gains to be derived from such an approach.

The book comprises three parts grouped around the grand rubrics of production, distribution and consumption to capture the enmeshments of processes integral to the exchange and circulation of cloths around the Indian Ocean's littorals and interiors. They open with a *longue durée* discussion by Prasannan Parthasarathi that places the Indian Ocean in a global frame to better reveal how "the textiles of the Indian Ocean have shaped, and continue to shape, our global economic order", especially from around the seventeenth century to the present day. While discussing various producers and fibres, Parthasarathi devotes much of Chap. 2 to India's cottons. Dividing his analysis into three major periods, he contends that, largely due to its cotton textile exports in the first phase (1600–1800), the Indian Ocean—rather than Europe—was the dynamic centre of the global economy as "the consumption habits of large parts

[15] Peter Perdue, Helen F. Siu and Eric Tagliocozzo, "Introduction: Structuring Moments in Asian Connections," in *Asia Inside Out: Changing Times*, ed. Peter Perdue, Helen F. Siu and Eric Tagliocozzo (Cambridge, MA & London: Harvard University Press, 2015), p. 6.

of the world were remade in the image of those of the Indian Ocean". The countervailing flow of silver from the Americas was the greatest consequence of European entry into the region—not its mercantile activity itself—for regional and world economies. In the following period (1800–1900), the place of the Indian Ocean in the global economy was redefined as the European textile industry, in its efforts to imitate Indian cloths, made major technological breakthroughs and silver flows subsequently slowed, while the twentieth century was characterized by a resurgence of global textile (and garment) exports from the Indian Ocean although "upon radically different foundations" in which the Indian Ocean was "subsumed to a globalized world order"—but one whose contours are being once again significantly shaped by the manufacturing regions around this oceanic basin.

Focusing the story in Chap. 3 on the late eighteenth century, when one quarter of the world's textiles were produced in India, Lakshmi Subramanian considers the people—often overlooked—who formed the frontline of the supply chain; namely, the Indian weavers who made the cloth "that clothed the world".[16] Examining their social identities, status and shifting abilities to control their economic and private lives, Subramanian also questions the historiographical issues that have caused South Asianists to privilege weavers amongst labouring groups, and why these were the most "vocal and volatile" populations protesting and resisting certain European Company actions. Her case study of the western Indian port town of Surat—a rising weaving centre heavily invested in exports—reveals that its "weavers as a skilled labour group enjoyed a very special position in the social world of urban centres and were by their sheer access to petty levels of finance and political resources able to mobilize resistance". (Map 1.4) Their status of price workers and insistence on maintaining a moral economy that protected their privileges produced both the tensions and bargaining strength that resulted in numerous protests against the increasingly coercive buying policies of European companies and the aggressive procurement tactics of local middlemen. Subramanian proposes that continued demand from Indian Ocean consumers for Surat's cloth, especially rising demand in East Africa, further strengthened weavers by giving them access to alternative (and 'black') markets.

[16] As reflected in the title to the volume, Riello and Roy, *How India Clothed the World*.

Widening our view beyond India, beyond cotton, and beyond the usual artificial (and inherently Eurocentric) periodization of 1800 CE, the next two chapters focus on Japan's little-known textile production from the nineteenth century for the markets of Eastern Africa, West Asia and India. Touched upon by Parthasarathi, Seiko Sugimoto fully explores the important topic of silk textiles, and early synthetics in Chap. 4. Neglected in recent years due to the overriding, predetermined focus on cotton, silk likewise inspired movements of people and goods around the Indian Ocean and far beyond. This had been earlier noted, among others, by K.N. Chaudhuri who saw silk throughout the region as occupying "the premier symbolic position in materials … [as] silk garments signified power and wealth … The aesthetic desire for beauty and colour was fulfilled by no other object at the level of daily life to the same degree as by materials of silk."[17] Illustrating how entrepreneurs and artisans quickly reinvented themselves in the face of economic and political change, creating new technologies, markets and commercial networks, Sugimoto traces how Japanese companies near Yokohama, Kobe and Osaka in the last quarter of the nineteenth century shifted from producing for Japan's domestic markets—the demand for fine kimono collapsing with the Meiji restoration—to exporting woven silk and cotton products geared towards very diverse markets in Southeast Asia, West Asia, Africa and the USA. (Map 1.5) Silks and cottons did not necessarily follow discrete circuits of distribution and consumption but, rather, could enter the same markets and be purchased and acquired by the same buyers but for different purposes and uses. She shows how Japan's producers successfully branched into numerous products and markets ranging from silk souvenir handkerchiefs for Cairo to high-end saris for an emerging Indian middle class, ultimately conquering niche markets for printed cottons and, from the 1960s, for synthetics such as polyester. In addition to the many technological adjustments, commercial innovations over time included public-private collaborations, partnering with Indian exporters settled in the major port cities, and, later, advertisement campaigns and the *keiretsu* business model that brought competitors together under a single organizational umbrella.

[17] K.N. Chaudhuri, *Asia before Europe: Economy and Civilisation in the Indian Ocean from the Rise of Islam to 1750* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 184.

If many aspects of the industrialization of Japanese textile production are well known, Chap. 5 by Hideaki Suzuki uncovers the less well-established emergence, especially during difficult periods, of eastern African markets for Japanese textile companies through textile exports shipped from the port of Osaka (Map 1.5). In a case of successful public-private partnership, the route across the Indian Ocean was opened by private capital but subsidized by the Japanese state, whose missions also accompanied textile companies in their first forays into East Africa. Their interest in Uganda and elsewhere was in circumventing the colonial routes through which raw cotton had arrived in Japan from Africa: rather than receive shipments through India, textile producers sought to import their cotton directly from the British protectorate and to supply its markets with finished textiles manufactured in Japan. By the late 1920s, one third of Uganda's total cotton production was making its way directly to Japan but its exports continued to reach East Africa indirectly, through Bombay and Aden. Japan's deepening involvement in the region was characterized also by the establishment of a consulate in 1932 in Mombasa, which both reflected and enhanced the growing presence of its manufactures in coastal and interior markets. But the intense competition from other producers, especially China and South Korea, among other factors—such as the efforts of postcolonial governments to develop local industries and the appreciation in the value of the yen—had by the 1970s severely undermined the involvement of Japanese-made textiles, although one company has continued to operate as a general importer and exporter in Kango, Lagos and elsewhere.

Three chapters in this volume (by Serels, Hall and Campbell) articulate with long-running issues on the possible 'de-industrializing' effects of imports on local textile making; namely, the impact of mass-produced cloth—from either India or Europe—on hand-crafted goods. Each author reaches different conclusions, underscoring the complex contingencies of place, time, and state intervention. In Chap. 6 Stephen Serels examines the little-known history of Eritrean manufactures from the turn of the twentieth century, from which time textile production and consumption was largely re-oriented from a network centred on the Ethiopian plateau to imported Indian or European goods arriving via Red Sea ports (Map 1.2). Challenging conventional wisdom, Serels argues that neither this shift, nor the gradual abandonment of Eritrea's local hand-weaving at the end of the nineteenth century was due to Italian colonial programmes. Rather, they were the results of

the poverty and dislocations that occurred at the time. Supporting one 'camp' in the de-industrialization debate, Serels holds that, if anything, Indian imports strengthened Eritrea's local hand-weaving, as it supplied weavers with coloured yarns, while European industrial cloth was largely rejected as inferior to local products. Over time, however, the social effects and stresses brought on by the Mahdist uprising, famine, rinderpest, the Italian colonial presence, post-World War II British occupation and Ethiopian–Eritrean conflicts of the 1990s all caused farmers to abandon cotton growing while vastly lowering the purchasing power of the greater population, who reluctantly consumed the cheaper imported European goods they held to be inferior to either local or Indian manufactures. Italy's attempts to impose on Eritrea the classic colonial system of providing raw cotton to the metropole and, in turn, having it consume its industrially made cloth, as well as postcolonial, state-sponsored attempts to create local textile mills, were largely failures due to the same economic and social unrest, and matters of local labour and capital.

Examining silk textiles and textile trades, but focusing more on the critical factor of consumption and the cultural filters that shaped it, Derek Heng in Chap. 7 offers an analysis of the ancient exchanges of silk cloth between China and Southeast Asia (Map 1.5). Although cryptic, Chinese sources for the period from c. 900 to 1400 CE make clear that substantial amounts of valuable silk cloth flowed to Southeast Asia, and more widely to the Indian Ocean, and that the shape of the cloth and its flows was never unidirectional. The high quality and high status of these goods—which included purple gauzes and fine weave brocades, some tailored into garments and accessories—made them particularly appropriate as imperial gifts of state, and they were conferred as such to official counterparts in Champa, India and Java, and to Dashi Arabs. By the eleventh century, this "ritualized" distribution of cloth gave way to overt commercial exchanges of silks as China liberalized global trade. Southeast Asian demand from a wider segment of the population profoundly affected Chinese production, with common silks made for export overtaking the former production of high-quality goods for the imperial court. Moreover, it had to accommodate regional and sub-regional tastes, as the many ports demanded different weaves, colour combinations and motifs, some perhaps replicating the designs of Southeast Asia's own hand-woven textiles. Changing fashions in the fourteenth century led to great diversification in the types of silks demanded in Southeast Asia (most of them of low value), although

Heng maps geo-political clusters of preferences that point to the existence of "material culture zones". Ultimately, sericulture spread and other areas in the Indian Ocean, notably India, overtook China in supplying silks to Indian Ocean societies, although China retained a monopoly on high-end satins.

In Chap. 8, Kenneth Hall finds that imports of Indian cloth (first patterned, then plain) on the island of Java consistently stimulated local cloth production (Map 1.5). Rather than undermining local textile artisans, this development largely reoriented them—at least, in the sector of wax-resist painted and printed batik—making Java a major regional provider of surface patterned cloth. Distilling a growing body of literature on the economic history of batik, Hall usefully considers the cultural dimensions of consumption and draws analytical distinctions based on cloth types according to fibre and finish to trace the different fates of various types of cloth and their textile artisans. Pre-existing high cultural valuations of cloth in Java (and Southeast Asia, more generally), and the links of these to status and well-being, lay behind the island's phenomenal demand for India's fine painted cottons and silks, while aesthetic preferences caused them to reject European imitations. The development of batik—in essence, a local version of India's painted cottons—was made possible by the smooth surface of imported Indian (and, later, Dutch) cloth. Overall cloth imports had a salutary economic impact, inspiring people to gather or produce export goods, providing commercial impetus for regional merchants and cotton growers, and creating opportunities for local weavers and dyers to produce affordable versions. From the seventeenth century, these Java-made textiles—of lower cost and adhering more closely to local aesthetic preferences—out-competed the Indian originals in regional markets, undermining Dutch East India Company (VOC—Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie) and East India Company (EIC) commercial strategies and profits.

As has become increasingly evident, cloth can incorporate multiple and multivalent meanings, whether used as attire or furnishings, displayed to signify particular representational values, incorporated into ritual practice, or utilized to satisfy aspirational and aesthetic desires associated with notions of fashionability.[18] Through the workings of complex social,

[18]The "remarkably protean" qualities of apparel and their use for "multiple expressive and symbolic projects" is clear also beyond the Indian Ocean, most explicitly in the Atlantic as noted by DuPlessis, *Material Atlantic*, p. 4.

cultural and political structures, cloths become inscribed with meaning as they are incorporated into local regimes of signification. Taking processes of consumption or 'domestication' as a critical vantage point allows for an examination of the ways in which the demand for particular styles and patterning of imported textiles shaped commercial circuits in a variety of historical contexts.[19] In essays about eastern Africa which privilege physical artefacts and the significance of fashion—still too often denied Africa—Sarah Fee and MacKenzie Moon Ryan demonstrate how African preferences, both on the coast at Zanzibar and further inland, determined what types of cloths arrived onboard merchant vessels. While Indian textiles dominated early imports, from the 1830s at least 'new' cloths began to enter markets. But while it is often assumed that these were predominantly, if not exclusively, factory-made American and European textiles, in Chap. 9 Fee draws attention to the almost entirely forgotten place of hand-woven Omani cloth and the underappreciated importance of men's dress in studies of the nineteenth-century textile trades of the western Indian Ocean. (Map 1.2) Underscoring the centrality of ideas about cultural authentication and appropriation, she reveals how—especially in the interior around the sinuous caravan routes that brought ivory, slaves and other goods to the coast—people rejected the tailored clothing of Arabs and Swahili in Zanzibar and, instead, desired Omani cloth to wear as wrappers according to local fashions. These were informed by particular socio-political dimensions in which colour choices, the end band on the cloths and striping patterns were critically important and distinguishing markers of Omani cloth, conferring on its wearers an elevated status during a period of changing notions of belonging and identity both on the coast and in the interior.

In Chap. 10, regarding the case of *kanga*, the cloth perhaps most closely associated with the Swahili coast, Moon Ryan traces its development as emerging out of converging Indian Ocean trades in industrially manufactured textiles, as well as late nineteenth-century technological advances in synthetic dyes and printing techniques (Map 1.2). Moon Ryan undertakes the first art historical analysis of *kanga* production,

[19] Jeremy Prestholdt, *Domesticating the World: African Consumerism and the Genealogies of Globalization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008); Pedro Machado, *Ocean of Trade: South Asian Merchants, Africa and the Indian Ocean, c.1750–1850* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

arguing that it grew out of a combination of factors, from earlier demands for Indian indigo-dyed textiles and American unbleached plain-weave cotton cloth to the widespread adoption of newly invented synthetic dyes and advances in printing technology that allowed for the creation of highly defined, repeating patterns at cheap rates. *Kanga* thus emerged late in the final quarter of the nineteenth century by "drawing on both global textile production revolutions and enduring East African aesthetic preferences for printed cloths with crisp, bold and symmetrical designs within a bordered composition". Further demonstrating the centrality of demand in shaping cloth styles, Moon Ryan makes clear how producers in Switzerland, Holland and England had not only to accommodate or *respond* to changes in consumer preferences, but also *predict* fashion trends in order to overcome fierce competition, leading to the creation of complex information networks involving African consumers and Indian merchants.

Recognizing the critical importance of the manufacturing regions around the Indian Ocean in shaping the patterns and dimensions of global exchange, aesthetic preferences, productive structures and socio-culturally inflected consumer preferences—and, thus, identities—of individuals throughout many parts of the world, the volume continues with two contributions that focus squarely on India's historic cloth manufacturing. In Chap. 11, Himanshu Prabha Ray provides an overview of the vast range of Indian textiles that were produced for local consumption and for trade across the Indian Ocean, and some of their pathways and consumption patterns, in early history, from the first to thirteenth centuries (Maps 1.4 and 1.5). Archaeological studies are nearly daily providing new evidence for the longevity and sophistication of the subcontinent's weaving and dyeing of a variety of fibres, and also its overseas connection, with evidence for textile links to Thailand now suggested for the early first millennium CE. Vedic texts likewise reveal how a range of fibres—not only cotton, but also bast, silk, and wool, together with dyes and patterning techniques were produced and associated with different social identities and statuses. Likewise, 'cloth of all kinds', including linens and silks, as well as yarns and indigo, were exported to the Red Sea and elsewhere. Cottons, however, predominated in ancient times, a pattern that would persist from the medieval into the early modern period and beyond.

Another stronghold of hand-weaving in the western Indian Ocean in the nineteenth century was Madagascar; in Chap. 12, Gwyn Campbell finds that regional events in the southern Indian Ocean at the start of the early nineteenth century favoured the consumption of local

hand-weavings in Madagascar, with Indian imports here, too, having a stimulating effect by providing materials and patterns, while local English agents attempted to promote local crafts through technology transfers (Map 1.3). From the 1860s, however, political and economic programmes of the central Merina state ultimately encouraged the consumption of cheap European industrial cloth, a trend that deepened from the late 1870s due to epidemics, economic crisis and French hostilities. Campbell shows that, despite some pockets of stimulation, the overall result of these mass imports—combined with the Merina government policy of forced labour and the effects of periodic dislocations, famine, disease and the resultant growing poverty—caused a slow but steady demise of hand-weaving in Madagascar from the 1820s.

The foregoing discussions of Japanese, Omani and Dutch efforts point to the many elements of innovation and experimentation that characterized Indian Ocean textiles and textile trades in the nineteenth century, painting a picture different from the usual narrative of artisanal 'decline' and monolithic English and European triumph. They also underscore the importance of colour, and the related great technological challenge of dye chemistry, which, as much as spinning or weaving, initially stymied European industry in its attempts to replicate Indian prototypes, a key piece of the story often neglected (or even denied) in historical analyses of globalized textile trades.[20]

In the twenty-first century, equally, questions of colour, fibre and style continue to matter deeply in the consumption of cloth in the Indian Ocean world, just as innovation and change continue to characterize its trades and traders. Chap. 13, by Julia Verne, returns us to the internal dynamism of the Indian Ocean world and reveals the influence today of historical imaginaries of oceanic circulation and mobility that lend social and cultural depth to reimagined relationships across the ocean.[21] In a

[20]Several otherwise authoritative works such as Beckert, *Empire*, erroneously claim that cotton easily takes dyes. On Europeans' difficulties in replicating India's dye palette on cottons, see Riello, *Cotton*, and Hanna Martinsen, *The Chemistry of Fashion: Eighteenth Century French Textile Printing*. (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 2015)

[21]These ethnographic insights provide further instances of what Jeremy Prestholdt has recently termed "basin consciousness," which operates as a "diffuse mode of thought that reflects historical connectivities and the legacies of basin thinking but also informs other imaginaries of linkage [and] is shaping transoceanic relations on multiple scales." Prestholdt, "Locating the Indian Ocean: Notes on the postcolonial reconstitution of space," *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, 9, no. 3 (2015) p. 452.

study of contemporary cloth and clothing vendors in Zanzibar, Verne shows the ways in which they tap old networks and techniques while continually developing new ones, given the Indian Ocean's continued vitality as an arena of translocal exchange through commercial circuits connected both by sea and air. Focusing a keen eye on the shopping practices of Zanzibaris during Ramadhan, and their translocal repercussions, Verne provides sharp ethnographic detail of the commercial strategies of traders from the island in securing the fashions desired by their demanding customers. Arabia was the orientation for both the sellers and consumers of cloth, strengthened by the migratory flows to Oman and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in the aftermath of the Zanzibar Revolution, and the ideas of fashionability that it defined emphasized connections to 'Arab' styles. For traders, Dubai was a key destination as they launched businesses in the 1990s that were facilitated by the Tanzanian government's liberalization of trade in response to World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) pressures for economic restructuring. These well-established circuits of the geographies of fashion, partly structured around translocal family relations to the Arabian Sea and encompassing Muscat as well as Dubai, have broadened recently to include Bangkok, Guangzhou and Jakarta, where garments can often be purchased for lower prices (Maps 1.2 and 1.5). But while the origin of clothing is no longer important, in contrast to earlier periods, it has to conform to the imagined current fashions of the UAE and Oman. For traders such as Yunus, a *mshihiri* (Zanzibari with Hadrami ancestry), their new trajectories evoke the historical imaginaries of the routes mapped by the Hadrami diaspora across the widest reaches of the ocean's rim.

The journeys of Yunus and his fellow traders remind us of the salience of understanding the ocean as a broad space, configured socially, culturally and commercially, past and present. In recounting and re-examining the Indian Ocean's myriad and often intersecting cloth histories, it is hoped that this volume will reveal more fully the richly textured and nuanced place of textiles and their many trades in structuring relations between and across its societies.

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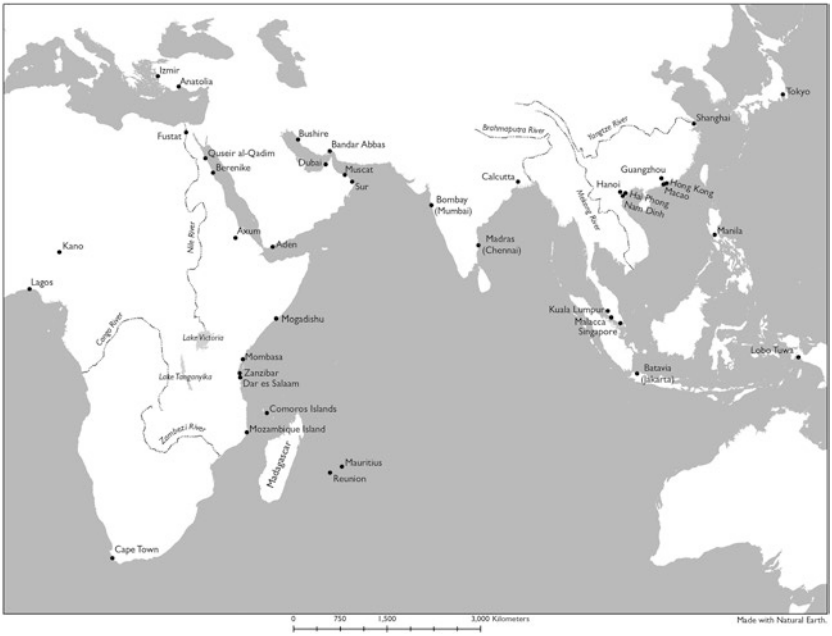
Maps



Map 1.1 The Indian Ocean

Map 1.2 Eastern Africa and Arabian Peninsula

Map 1.3 Madagascar

Map 1.4 South Asia

Map 1.5 Southeast and East Asia

PART I

Regions of Production

CHAPTER 2

Textiles and Silver: The Indian Ocean in a Global Frame

Prasannan Parthasarathi

The textile trade in the Indian Ocean region has been, and continues to be, a rich topic for historical study. In part, this is due to significant gaps in our knowledge. While we know quite a bit about the trade before 1800, for instance, the trade after that date is still hazy, although new studies are beginning to correct this imbalance, of which several are contained in this volume. However, the more important reason for the continued vitality of scholarship on the textile trade of the Indian Ocean is the important role that cloth played in shaping the region and establishing connections within it.

The textile trade of the Indian Ocean also shows the importance of that region for the making of the modern world economy, which is the focus of this chapter. In a nutshell, it will step back from the Indian Ocean and place the textiles that were produced and traded there in a global frame. This larger perspective of the world shows that the Indian Ocean was central to the global economy of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, thus challenging Eurocentric accounts which give pride of place to Europe. It will also begin to throw into relief the dramatic

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shifts that took place in that trading world in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The chapter focuses on the four centuries after 1600, dividing that long stretch of time into three periods. The first period, to which the bulk of the chapter is devoted, runs from the early seventeenth century to the early nineteenth century. This period was the heyday of the Indian Ocean trading system. The reach of the textile world of the Indian Ocean during this period expanded into East Asia on one side, and Europe and the Atlantic on the other. At the same time, the Indian Ocean was reliant upon these broader links for its dynamism, as it was through them that the silver which was needed to fuel commerce came into the region. In the second period, from the early nineteenth century to 1913, the Indian Ocean trading system was eclipsed—in many respects due to its own successes in reshaping cloth consumption habits around the world. I call this the final chapter of southernization. For several decades, cloth production in the Indian Ocean region declined, but saw some revival in the closing decades of the nineteenth century. The chapter concludes with a brief discussion of the third and final period, from 1913 to the present, when cloth production expanded in the Indian Ocean region. However, from the inter-war period the region lost its coherence as a trading system, first, in the wake of nationalism and then, in the last few decades, globalization, which has turned national economies increasingly outward and greatly increased the intercontinental and inter-oceanic exchange of goods. The Indian Ocean is now enmeshed in a global trading order which takes precedence over the regional economy.

Placing the Indian Ocean in a Global Frame

Let me begin with the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In this period, the textile trade of the Indian Ocean was exceptional on the world stage because cotton cloth predominated, in contrast to other trading regions of the world. In Europe and the Mediterranean, there was a lively exchange in woollen and linen goods—to some extent in the fibre itself, but mostly in yarn and cloth.[1] In East Asia, Chinese

[1] Herman van der Wee, "The Western European Woollen Industries, 1500–1750," and Leslie Clarkson, "The Linen Industry in Early Modern Europe," in *The Cambridge History of Western Textiles*, ed. David Jenkins (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 397–472 and pp. 473–492.

silks dominated the trade and silk cloth was exported to Japan and Southeast Asia in sizable quantities. From the late sixteenth century, the Portuguese also purchased silks in Macao for sale in Goa—an important dimension of the early modern textile trade in Asia, which has received little attention from historians.[2] The consumption and production of silk in India has been insufficiently studied, perhaps because of the ubiquity of cotton. But silk was undoubtedly of importance for elite consumption, especially in northern India.[3]

Chinese silk textiles had long been exported to Japan. Some of these cloths are depicted in Nanban screens, which illustrate the arrival of Portuguese ships in the Japanese port of Nagasaki and the goods that the Portuguese brought to that city. The trade between China and Japan in silk textiles began at first because the Chinese originated Bombyx sericulture (the rearing of silkworms of the genus Bombyx, which were the source of the raw material). While the Japanese desired the cloth manufactured from silk, they did not learn the secrets of how to produce the fibre till the third or fourth century BCE when, according to legend, silkworms were smuggled into the archipelago along with four young women who possessed knowledge of sericulture. Even after the technology was transferred, Japan continued to purchase Chinese cloth because of its superior quality. In this we have a parallel with the trade in Indian cottons in the Indian Ocean world, which is explored in several contributions to this volume.

In the sixteenth century, Portuguese ships filled the trade vacuum between China and Japan. China had no official interest in trading with Japan and the Japanese carried on only a limited trade in the East Asian region. Officials in Macao gave tacit approval to the establishment of a Portuguese commercial mission in that port and from there European traders fed the Japanese appetite for Chinese silk cloth. The Nanban screens permit us a glimpse of the kinds of cloth the Japanese imported from China. However, there is no definitive way to confirm the accuracy of these representations because a very limited number of Chinese

[2] Prasannan Parthasarathi, "The Portuguese Textile Trade in Asia," in *Portugal, Jesuits, and Japan: Spiritual Beliefs and Earthly Goods*, ed. Victoria Weston (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), p. 58.

[3] Parthasarathi, "The Portuguese Textile Trade in Asia," p. 59. Also see Vijaya Ramaswamy, "Silk and Weavers of Silk in Medieval Peninsular India," *The Medieval History Journal*, 17 (2014), pp. 145–169.

export silks to Japan from the period have survived. However, we do have a description of the silks from a Spanish memorandum of around 1600 which reports that the Japanese demanded both silk yarn of various colours and fineness and silk cloth 'worked with birds, and other pictures done in silk and unwoven silver'.[4] From other sources we know that brocaded silks, frequently of two colours, and silk woven with gold patterns were consumed in Japan, along with lightweight monochrome woven silks which resembled damasks, which were finished in Japan by dyeing, embroidering, or the application of gold leaf.[5]

The Nanban screens also illustrate that, in the sixteenth century, the trading world of the Indian Ocean was penetrating into that of East Asia. A number of members of the Portuguese entourage, as can be seen in Fig. 2.1, are dressed in the checked and striped cloths which were two of the characteristic cotton cloth manufactures of the Indian subcontinent. Perhaps inspired by Portuguese examples, the Japanese began to consume cottons, as well. In the closing decades of the seventeenth century, the Dutch East India Company imported sizable quantities of Indian textiles into Japan; these comprised checked and striped, and painted and printed fabrics, which came to be an important part of sartorial habits. Simultaneously, on the other side of the world, these same checked and striped Indian cotton textiles were filtering into West Africa, where they became enormously popular by the eighteenth-century. The fashion for these varieties amongst West African buyers led British and French manufacturers to imitate them.

The growing demand for Indian cottons in Japan as well as in West Africa illustrates a major shift in the world economy of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This shift is one of the two most important insights gained from placing the Indian Ocean in a global frame: the consumption habits of large parts of the world were remade in the image of those of the Indian Ocean. This may be seen as the final chapter of what Lynda Shaffer called southernization. I will return to this point shortly but, first, I want to elaborate upon the second important insight

[4] Charles Ralph Boxer, *The Great Ship from Amacon: Annals of Macao and the Old Japan Trade, 1555–1640* (Lisbon: Centro de Estudos Historicos Ultramarinos, 1959), pp. 179–183.

[5] Joyce Denney, "Japan and the Textile Trade in Context," in *Interwoven Globe: The Worldwide Textile Trade, 1500–1800*, ed. Amelia Peck (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2013), pp. 60–65.

Fig. 2.1 The Portuguese landing in Nagasaki. Attrib. Kanō Naizen, Japan, c. 1600. From a pair of six-panel screens: ink, colour, gold, and gold leaf on paper (Private collection)

into the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that putting the Indian Ocean in a global frame brings us. This has to do with where the Indian Ocean stands in the global order in that period. Or—to put this point slightly differently—how important was the trading world of the Indian Ocean in the global economy at that time?

For historians who saw Europe as the centre of the world, this question was of little relevance. Immanuel Wallerstein encapsulated several generations of Eurocentric thinking when he wrote: 'The modern world-system took the form of a capitalist world-economy that had its genesis in Europe in the long sixteenth century … Since that time the capitalist world-economy has geographically expanded to cover the entire globe.'[6]

[6] Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World System II: Mercantilism and the Consolidation of the European World Economy, 1600–1750* (New York: Academic Press Inc., 1980), pp. 7–8.

This passage captures three assumptions that have informed decades of historical scholarship: Europe was dynamic while the rest of the world was static; Europe gave rise to capitalism and brought the rest of the world under its economic ambit; and Europe was at the core of the early-modern trading system.

The scarcity of quantitative information on the size of trade and markets in the Indian Ocean makes it difficult to measure the importance of that commercial world in the global economy and thereby challenge Eurocentric frameworks. However, we are fortunate to possess an estimate of the quantity of Indian cloth demanded in one major market, and that is the Levant, which we may consider to be on the western edge of the Indian Ocean system. We possess nothing like this for any other part of the vast Indian Ocean, so it is a rare source indeed.

While some goods reached the cities and towns of the Levant overland, much of it arrived on ships that sailed across the western part of the Indian Ocean and then travelled up either the Persian Gulf or the Red Sea. The latter, as we know from Ruth Barnes' work, was a very old destination for Indian cotton goods.[7] In the late eighteenth century, vast quantities of Indian textiles travelled up the Red Sea as well as the Persian Gulf to reach markets from North Africa to West Asia and, from there, to points in central and eastern Europe. In the Ottoman Empire itself, and specifically in the Levantine provinces, in 1785, a memoir by one La Prevalye in his 'Communication avec l'Inde par Bassora', hazarded an estimate of the size of this trade. He reported that the total consumption of Indian cloth in the Levant came to 12.6 million *livres-tournois* per year (£550,000). Two thirds of this quantity was consumed in the vast Istanbul market.[8]

To put this figure in perspective, we can compare it with the total quantity of French cloth, mostly woollens, imported into the Levant in the eighteenth century. In the 1780s, French exports came to 6.6 million livres per year (£290,000), a figure which is slightly more than half

[7] Ruth Barnes, *Indian Block-Printed Textiles in Egypt: The Newberry Collection in the Ashmolean*, 2 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

[8] Katsumi Fukasawa, *Toilerie et commerce du Levant: d'Alep à Marseilles* (Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1987), p. 41. The report gives these figures in iz. piastres, which have been converted to livres tournoises on the basis of information Fukasawa gives in Chap. 4, n. 89, pp. 152–153. One pound sterling has been taken as equal to 23 livres tournoises.

of the Indian imports.[9] Another way to put this figure in perspective is to compare it with the quantity of Indian cottons that were sold in West Africa by British and French traders who exchanged them for slaves. I have selected a slightly earlier period, the 1770s, for this trade because that is when data is available for both British and French slave merchants, who together accounted for the bulk of the Atlantic slave trade in that period. The British alone accounted for half the slave trade in that decade and the French for probably one quarter. In the eighteenth century, West Africa was the largest market in the Atlantic world for Indian cotton cloth. Nonetheless, the scale of demand in the Levant dwarfed that of the West African market, which purchased Indian cloth worth £185,000 per year, or one third of the consumption in the Levant.[10]

Let me now return to another dimension of the Levant market, which lay at the western edge of the Indian Ocean world. For the Levant, we have information on the types of cloth consumed and the impact of Indian cloth on the region that is not available for any other part of the vast Indian Ocean trading system. Thanks to a journal kept by Christophe Aubin, an agent for a Glasgow cotton manufacturer, who was dispatched in 1812 to investigate the Ottoman market for cloth, we possess details on the Indian textiles that were consumed in the empire. (Aubin visited Izmir, Bursa and Constantinople in Anatolia. He also ventured to Salonica.) Aubin reported that, while a wide variety of Indian textiles were demanded in the Turkish market, 'muslins', in particular, were 'an article of considerable consumption' and they were 'mostly employed in making turbans, headdresses, for ladies, veils, and etc.'[11] 'Calicoes', 'long cloths' and 'seersuckers' were among the other Indian cloths that the Turks purchased. I should also note that, in addition to cottons, fine wool shawls from India were in demand in the Ottoman Empire.[12]

We also have some price information for the eighteenth century that suggests that the substantial inflows of Indian cottons put pressure on

[9] Robert Paris, *Histoire du commerce de Marseille*, vol. V, *De 1660 à 1789: le Levant* (Paris: Librairie Plon., 1957), pp. 548–556.

[10] Prasannan Parthasarathi, *Why Europe Grew Rich and Asia Did Not: Global Economic Divergence, 1600–1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 26.

[11] Allan B. Cunningham, "The Journal of Christophe Aubin: A Report on the Levant Trade in 1812," *Archivum Ottomanicum*, 7 (1983), pp. 5–127.

[12] Cunningham, "The Journal of Christophe Aubin," pp. 5–127.

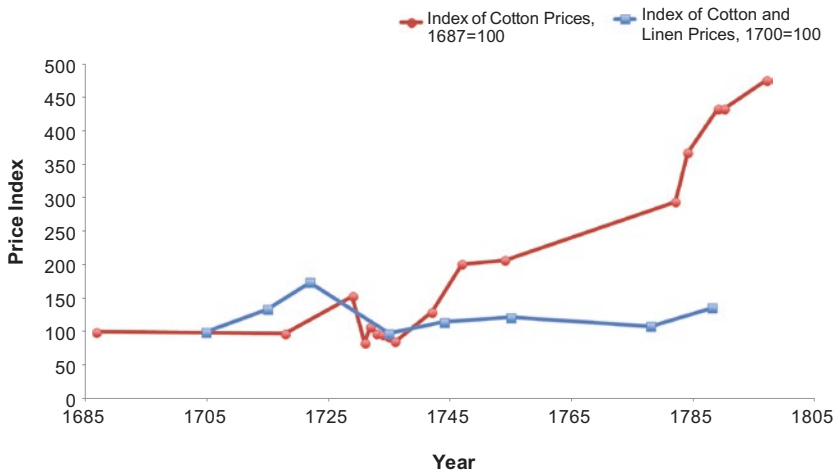

Fig. 2.2 Cotton and cloth prices in Cairo, 1687–1797. *Source* André Raymond, *Artisans and commerçants au Caire au xviii siècle*, 2 vols (Damascus, 1973), vol. 1, p. 65

cloth manufacturers in Egypt, where they were squeezed between rising prices for cotton and stable prices for the final cloth. These divergent trends are illustrated in Fig. 2.2. As the figures show, the price of raw cotton rose dramatically in the eighteenth century. The source of this inflation was booming demand for the fibre in Europe. Large quantities of raw cotton were exported to Marseilles from whence it may have been distributed to other parts of France, the Swiss cantons, and the southern states of Germany where the manufacture of cotton was expanding.

What is surprising about the run-up in cotton prices is that it was not matched by a parallel increase in cloth prices, as may also be seen in Fig. 2.2. What I had available to me was an index of cotton and linen cloth prices. Even such a hybrid index should have shown some increase, given the dramatic inflation in the price of one of the raw materials: cotton. As can be seen in figure, however, there was little change in that price index, or therefore the price of cloth, over the course of the eighteenth century.

The reason for the divergence in the two markets is that the forces that set prices in them were different. While the price of raw cotton was set by demand from Europe, the price of cloth was set by imports from

India. Since they lacked the power to fix prices, Egyptian textile manufacturers were unable to raise them in order to compensate for increasing costs. Not surprisingly, in the eighteenth century the wealth of workers in cloth, including weavers, went down, according to the great historian of eighteenth-century Cairo, André Raymond.[13] It is likely that something similar was happening in Anatolia, especially in the region of Izmir, which became a major cotton exporter in the eighteenth century, but we do not possess price information to assess the changes that were taking place there.[14] What we have in the eighteenth-century Ottoman Empire is the meeting of the Indian Ocean trading system with that of Europe, with profound consequences for textile manufacturing and manufacturers.

The Indian Ocean and European worlds met in Europe itself with the growing import of Indian cottons from the sixteenth century. I will not go over what is, I am sure, familiar terrain for many readers. The import of Indian cottons sparked a growing interest in what was an unfamiliar fibre to many Europeans; it sparked the development of a brand new industry, that of cloth printing, which began as an effort to replicate Indian chintzes; and it sparked the expansion of cotton cloth manufacturing in Europe. Most European markets, in an act that Giorgio Riello calls a 'mercantile closure', shut Indian cloth out in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries and there the story of the encounter between Europe and the Indian Ocean usually ends.[15]

Of course, the story of cotton in Europe does not end with closure of its markets. We know that the manufacture of cotton cloth took root and expanded in several locations, eventually culminating in Britain with a dramatic remaking of cotton manufacturing on the basis of machinery in the closing decades of the eighteenth century. However, the revolutionary development of the European cotton industry is typically not connected to the world of the Indian Ocean but, rather, to industrial

[13] André Raymond, "Les sources de la richesse urbaine au Caire au dix-huitième siècle," in *Studies in Eighteenth Century Islamic History*, ed. Thomas Naff and Roger Owen (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1977), pp. 194–195.

[14] Necmi Ülker, "The Emergence of İzmir as a Mediterranean Commercial Center for the French and English Interests, 1698–1740," *International Journal of Turkish Studies*, 4 (1987), pp. 32–33, and Elena Frangakis-Syrett, *The Commerce of Smyrna in the Eighteenth Century, (1700–1820)* (Athens: Centre for Asia Minor Studies, 1992), pp. 316–317.

[15] Personal communication from Giorgio Riello.

enlightenments, markets, the supply and demand for yarn, and other such factors that are internal to Europe or the nations within it, with perhaps a gesture to the Atlantic Ocean world. In other words, Europe is separate from the Indian Ocean and, as a consequence, the global dimensions of the Indian Ocean trading system have been excised from the historical record.[16]

European Extensions: Silver, Industrial Cloth and Technological Innovation

Let me now elaborate upon this—but, before I do so, I must first examine an extension of the European or Atlantic trading system into that of the Indian Ocean. By this, I do not refer to the familiar story of the coming of the Portuguese, and then the various East India Companies—whether English, Dutch, French, Belgian and so on—into the waters of the Indian Ocean. A European extension into the Indian Ocean that is less discussed is inflows of silver, despite the fact that the precious metal was absolutely central to the dynamism of the Indian Ocean trading world in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It is hard to imagine the dense network of exchange that developed in the region without substantial quantities of silver, for it greased the heavy wheels of commerce.

Global flows of silver in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries have been re-examined in the last fifteen to twenty years, mounting a powerful challenge to Wallersteinian and other approaches that place Europe at the centre of the global economy. This ground-breaking work was done by Sinologists who concluded that a sizable proportion of the world's silver, perhaps as much as eighty percent, flowed into China between 1600 and 1800.[17] This was, of course, the period when massive quantities of

[16] Parthasarathi, *Why Europe Grew Rich and Asia Did Not*, pp. 89–115.

[17] Andre Gunder Frank, *ReOrient: Global Economy in the Asian Age* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), pp. 126–130; Dennis O. Flynn and Arturo Giraldez, "Born with a 'Silver Spoon': The Origin of World Trade," *Journal of World History*, 6 (1995); Richard von Glahn, *Fountain of Fortune: Money and Monetary Policy in China, 1000–1700* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), pp. 231–232; Kenneth Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence: China, Europe and the Making of the Modern World Economy* (Princeton: Princeton Univsersity Press, 2000), p. 160.

the precious metal were infused into the world with the discovery of rich mines in what are today Bolivia and Mexico.

The Sinocentrism of the revisionists overestimates the quantities of silver that flowed into China and underestimates the sizable quantities that remained in the Indian Ocean world, stimulating trade and commerce. I have estimated that, between 1600 and 1800, at least 20 percent of the world's silver ended up in India, primarily in exchange for cotton cloth.[18] The fact that the Indian Ocean world absorbed a significant proportion of the world's supplies of precious metals is a testament to the important position of that area in the world economy of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Such sizable inflows of silver came into the Indian Ocean region where it stimulated trade and economic activity through two major routes. First, Europeans exported large quantities of American silver to the Ottoman Empire and Safavid Iran for the purchase of goods such as carpets, but especially raw silk, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[19] A sizable portion of this silver flowed out of these places into the Indian Ocean area to pay for imports—most notably, the cotton cloths that I have already discussed.[20] Second, large quantities of American silver came directly into India itself on the ships of European traders and trading companies. The bulk of this silver was used to purchase cotton cloth, some of which was then exchanged in East Africa and Southeast Asia for a whole host of goods, ranging from spices to ivory.[21] These examples illustrate the stimulatory effect of American silver on the Indian Ocean region and the deepening global connections that made the Indian Ocean trading world possible.

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[18] Parthasarathi, *Why Europe Grew Rich and Asia Did Not*, pp. 46–50.

[19] Rudolph P. Matthee, *The Politics of Trade in Safavid Iran: Silk for Silver, 1600–1730* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

[20] Halil İnalcık, "The Ottoman Cotton Market and India: The Role of Labor Cost in Market Competition," in *The Middle East and the Balkans under the Ottoman Empire: Essays on Economy and Society* (Bloomington: Indiana University Turkish Studies Department, 1993), pp. 264–306.

[21] Artur Attman, *American Bullion in the European World Trade, 1600–1800*, trans. Eva and Allan Green (Goteborg: Kungl. Vetenskaps-och Vitterhets Samhället, 1986); K.N. Chaudhuri, *The Trading World of Asia and the East India Company, 1660–1760* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978).

Before returning to cottons in Europe, I should also mention that the subject of silver illustrates the extension of the East Asian trading system into the Indian Ocean, as well. In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, when the Japanese mines at Iwami Ginzan were operating at their peak, some of that silver made its way into the Indian Ocean area on Portuguese and Dutch ships. Substantial quantities of Japanese copper also flowed into the Indian Ocean world. American silver, which was carried across the Pacific by the famous Spanish galleon trade, passed through the Straits of Malacca into the trading world of the Indian Ocean, as well—I will have occasion to say a little more about this trade shortly. On the subject of precious metals, I should note, too, that gold from China also made its way into the Indian Ocean area, expanding the liquidity of the region and making possible higher levels of trade.[22]

Now, let me return to the extension of the Indian Ocean trading world into Europe and the development of European cotton manufacturing in the eighteenth century. The mechanization of cotton spinning, which was one of the great technological breakthroughs of the eighteenth-century world, is typically explained as an outcome of changes that were internal to Europe, or to particular nations within Europe. This mechanization consisted of a series of machines, beginning with the spinning jenny, moving on to the water frame and culminating with Samuel Crompton's mule.

The 'textbook explanation' for eighteenth-century British innovation in cotton spinning—found in the great surveys of industrialization written since the 1950s and even earlier—is that the mechanization of spinning was a response to shortages of yarn. Eric Hobsbawm's observation was typical when he wrote in his great work *Industry and Empire*, 'As every schoolchild knows, the technical problem which determined the nature of mechanization in the cotton industry was the imbalance between the efficiency of spinning and weaving.'[23] As is well-known, similar statements from other historians of the British Industrial Revolution have been repeated regularly since the 1960s.[24]

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[22] Parthasarathi, *Why Europe Grew Rich and Asia Did Not*, pp. 46–50.

[23] Eric Hobsbawm, *Industry and Empire: The Birth of the Industrial Revolution*, 2nd ed. (London: The New Press, 1999), p. 36.

[24] For further discussion see Parthasarathi, *Why Europe Grew Rich and Asia Did Not*, pp. 98–103.

Three things are notable about this explanation. First, technological innovation is reduced to the operation of supply and demand: shortages of yarn led to increases in the price which induced the mechanization of spinning. It is an explanation based on the operation of the market. Second, it is purely an internalist explanation in that the forces of change were found purely within Britain itself. It does not consider as important any connection between Britain and other parts of the globe. Finally, it is an explanation for which there is no evidence from the eighteenth century. A link between yarn shortages and mechanization of spinning was first made in the early nineteenth century and no such connection is to be found in the voluminous writings on textile manufacturing in eighteenth-century Britain, whether Parliamentary reports, pamphlets, the papers of cotton masters, and so on.

And what do the eighteenth-century writings tell us about innovation in cotton spinning? First, the problem that cotton manufacturers faced was not one of quantity of yarn but of quality. British spinners were unable to manufacture cotton yarn that was strong enough to withstand the tension of being stretched in the loom as warp yarns. As a result, British cotton masters substituted linen for cotton in the warp, which produced a cloth that was inferior to the all-cotton fabrics of the Indian Ocean world, and India in particular. These mixed fibres took dyes unevenly and were therefore an imperfect ground for printing, for example.[25] Because of this inferior cloth, according to Stanley Chapman and Serge Chassagne, 'The master calico printer's initial problem was to raise the quality of his unprinted fabrics to reach the standards of the oriental imports.'[26] This passage indicates that it was the cotton cloth of the Indian Ocean world, chiefly those of India, which set the quality standard for European cotton manufacturers.

The spinning inventions of the late eighteenth century were propelled by the need to produce yarn that was strong enough for the warp, which would enable the manufacture of an all-cotton cloth. In turn, these inventions made it possible for Europeans to match Indian cloth

[25] Parthasarathi, *Why Europe Grew Rich and Asia Did Not*, pp. 103–109.

[26] Stanley D. Chapman and Serge Chassagne, *European Textile Printers in the Eighteenth Century: A Study of Peel and Oberkampf* (London: Ashgate Publishing, 1981), pp. 194–195.

in quality. This is revealed in the following passage from a petition by Samuel Crompton:

> When your petitioner surrendered his invention to the Public, the East India Company supplied Great Britain and Ireland with fine muslins and calicoes, all preceding attempts to establish the muslin manufacture having failed, through the want of such yarn as the Mule afterwards supplied, which rapidly superseding Bengal muslins, speedily became a leading article of home consumption [and of an] advantageous export trade of British-manufactured muslins and cottons.[27]

From this perspective, the mechanization of cotton spinning may be seen as the final chapter in the southernization of the world, a concept Lynda Shaffer outlined in the mid-1990s. Shaffer used the term 'southernization' to refer to 'a multifaceted process that began in Southern Asia [and here she means the Indian subcontinent and Southeast Asia] and spread from there to various other places around the globe'.[28] Because of the inventions they sparked, the diffusion of cottons from the trading world of the Indian Ocean to Europe was of world historical importance. As a consequence of these inventions, by the early twentieth century, cotton, a quintessential southern crop, ruled the world, accounting for 80 percent of global fibre consumption.[29]

These technological breakthroughs in textile manufacturing marked a new phase in the global history of textiles. It also set in motion a transformation of the Indian Ocean's place in the world order and a relative, and perhaps even absolute, decline in the trade of that ocean in global terms. We can see this as the remaking of the world in the wake of the British Industrial Revolution, which may appear to be a well-known story. This may be the case in broad brush-strokes but the details of that remaking are not worked out so thoroughly. In part, this is a legacy of anti-colonial movements in India and elsewhere that focused on

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[27] Petition from Samuel Crompton to the House of Commons, Bolton, 29 May 1825, Bolton Central Library, ZCR/45/3.

[28] Lynda Shaffer, "Southernization," *Journal of World History*, 5 (1994), p. 1.

[29] Prasannan Parthasarathi, "Global Trade and Textile Workers," in *The Ashgate Companion to the History of Textile Workers, 1650–2000*, ed. Lex Heerma Van Voss, Els Hiemstra-Kuperus, and Elise van Nederveen Meerkerk (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2010), p. 574.

de-industrialization as being the major European impact. This is not to minimize the decline of textile manufacturing in the Indian Ocean region, but the focus on this issue has led to the neglect of other equally critical ones.

The European extension into the Indian Ocean trading system in the nineteenth century had a number of consequences. One of the first was the supplanting of Indian and other locally made goods. Some of the most detailed evidence for this comes from the Ottoman Empire. The great Ottoman historian Halil İnalcık has described how, in the early nineteenth century, the cotton cloth that the British exported to the Empire had Indian names, which suggests that they were imitations of Indian cloth and designed to replace an Indian import.[30]

Aubin amplifies İnalcık's account. He notes on several occasions in his journal that Indian goods, both cloth and yarn, were formerly in great demand, but that lower-priced British goods displaced them. The following assessment by Aubin is typical: 'India Muslins were five or six years ago of great consumption … The Turks were in those days very much prejudiced against all English Manufacture in imitation of India goods; but they have now changed their mind and buy what is cheapest. Thus the English goods have almost replaced the India Muslins.'[31]

The nineteenth-century decline in the consumption of Indian cloth in west Asia is captured in Fig. 2.3, which gives details of exports of chintz from Masulipatnam, in northern Coromandel, to the Iranian market. Iran had long been a destination for fine painted and printed cloth from South India (as well as from Gujarat), much of the trade in the hands of 'Moghul merchants', as the English labelled them. As can be seen from the figures, between 1812 and 1835 the sale of South Indian cloth fell by about two thirds. This decline is emblematic of larger shifts in the trading world of the Indian Ocean.

Of course, it was not only Indian cloth manufacturers that were overwhelmed by the juggernaut of European competition. If we shift our gaze to the far eastern limits of the Indian Ocean's trading world, to the islands of the Philippines, we discover that a similar story was unfolding

[30] Halil İnalcık, "When and How British Cotton Goods Invaded the Levant Markets," in *The Ottoman Empire and the World- Economy*, ed. Huri İslamoğlu-İnan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 374–383.

[31] Cunningham, "The Journal of Christophe Aubin," p. 68.

Fig. 2.3 Value of chintz exports (millions of rupees) from Machilipatnam (South India) to Iran, 1812–1836. *Source* P. Sudhir and P. Swarnalatha, 'Textile traders and territorial imperatives: Masulipatnam, 1750–1850', *Indian Economic and Social History Review* (1992)

there as well. Alfred McCoy has documented the shifting fortunes of Iloilo City which, after Manila, was the second largest urban area on the islands. The city experienced a textile manufacturing boom from the mid-eighteenth century and a French visitor in the 1840s wrote that 'the combination of designs and colours [of the cloth made in the city] is so bright and varied that they have the admiration of the whole world'.[32]

[32] Alfred W. McCoy, "A Queen Dies Slowly: The Rise and Decline of Iloilo City," in *Philippine Social History: Global Trade and Local Transformations*, ed. Alfred W. McCoy, and Ed. C. de Jesus (Manila: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1982), p. 302.

Shortly after this visit, though, Chinese merchants began to sell British cloth in Iloilo and, in the 1850s, these textiles found a growing market among the labouring populations of the city, who were attracted by their lower prices. In the 1860s, local textile manufacturers received a reprieve when the Civil War in the United States reduced imports of Manchester manufactures, but the revival of Lancashire after the conclusion of the conflict and the establishment of direct shipping links between Liverpool and Iloilo spelled the end. In the early 1870s, the Spanish governor of the region wrote, 'Twenty years ago manufactured cloth from Europe and America was introduced into the market gradually at the outset, and then, produced to look like the native varieties and sold in the market at much lower prices, it provided severe competition for the native textiles.'[33] (Once again, a combination of price and quality explains success in textile manufacturing.) In 1879, the British vice-consul at Iloilo reported that the "trade in *sinamay* fabric [which had been one of the staple exports of the area], which used to be very large with the island of Luzon, and was a great industry in this province, has dwindled down to a mere nothing."[34] In the closing decades of the nineteenth century, Iloilo shifted from textiles to sugar as its major export, a classic colonial pattern of trade.

Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Reorientations

The entry of European cloth was only one of the two ways in which the Indian Ocean trading world came to be reshaped in the nineteenth century. The other has to do with the new global flows of silver that were established at the same time. Since we have just been examining the Philippines, let us begin with an example from that place. In the early nineteenth century, flows of silver from Mexico to Manila came to a halt and, as a consequence, a source of silver to the Indian Ocean trading world dried up.[35] Although Sinologists believe that the silver that was carried across the Pacific from the Americas eventually flowed into

[33] McCoy, "A Queen Dies Slowly," p. 307.

[34] McCoy, "A Queen Dies Slowly," p. 307.

[35] Benito Legarda, *After the Galleons: Foreign Trade, Economic Change & Entrepreneurship in the Nineteenth Century Philippines* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Center for Southeast Asian Studies, 1999).

China, there is evidence that in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries a certain proportion of the precious metal entered South Asia. In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, for instance, the English East India Company exchanged cloth from the Coromandel Coast for silver, which they then infused into the South Indian economy.[36]

The Manila route was a minor source of silver for the commercial world of the Indian Ocean, but its disappearance is symbolic of the larger decline in liquidity in the region. Less silver flowed from the Ottoman territories and Iran. Less silver was brought on the ships of the European trading companies and traders. In fact, there was an outflow of silver from the Indian Ocean world in European holds, both to Europe itself as well as to China, which began to import silver from India in exchange for tea.[37]

By the mid-nineteenth century, the trading world of the Indian Ocean was transformed and the position of that region in the global economy was redefined. However, from the 1850s, cotton spinning mills were set up in Bombay and then in other cities in India on the basis of steam power and imported machinery. We may say that this marked the beginning of the return of the world's centre of cotton to India, but this was a shift that would really take place many decades later. Nevertheless, Indian cotton goods began to be exported to the Indian Ocean trading world again—this time mainly as yarn, but also as cloth—on an expanding scale.

Markets were limited for Indian exports, however. In island Southeast Asia, a region that had long been a destination for Indian cotton cloth, the market was shut out through protection for Dutch exports. According to D.J.M. Tate, in the Dutch East Indies 'tariff manipulation in favour of the textiles of Twante led to Dutch domination of the market.'[38] Local cotton production itself was not encouraged, Tate writes, '[U]ntil 1919 when the Government Textile Institute of Bandoeng was set up, followed in 1926 by the first cotton-wool factory.'[39] We shall

[36] Parthasarathi, *Why Europe Grew Rich and Asia Did Not*, p. 48.

[37] H.V. Bowen, "Bullion for Trade, War, and Debt-Relief: British Movements of Silver to, around, and from Asia, 1760–1833," *Modern Asian Studies*, 44 (2010), pp. 445–475.

[38] Desmond J.M. Tate, *The Making of Modern South-East Asia*, vol. 2 (Kuala Lumpur, 1979), p. 79.

[39] Tate, *The Making of Modern South-East Asia*, p. 79.

return to these developments shortly, but must first return to our survey of the late nineteenth century.

A slightly different story unfolded in northern Vietnam, which was occupied by the French in the mid-1880s. The French found that local weavers in the region relied upon large quantities of low-priced yarn imports from India, against which the more expensive French yarn was unable to compete. To break into this market, French interests established a modern spinning mill in northern Vietnam, which took advantage of cheap locally grown cotton and cheap local labour. The first cotton-spinning mill was built in Hanoi in 1894 and others appeared in Haiphong and Nam Dinh, which employed more workers than any other factory in French Indo-China. These local mills also benefited from tariffs on imports. Northern Vietnam under French rule forged a protectionist path that created a national market—a path that would be taken elsewhere in the twentieth century.[40]

East Africa was one place where the industrial cotton manufacturers of Bombay found some success. Zanzibar, for instance, had long been a market for Indian hand-loom cotton cloth, which was exchanged for ivory and other goods, but the Indian goods were outcompeted in the wake of nineteenth-century industrialization. The machine-made cloth came not from Britain but from the United States, which on the eve of the US Civil War sold in Zanzibar two and half times the cloth that the British did, in terms of value. The Civil War disrupted the US trade with East Africa, however, which opened the door to the manufactures of Britain and India. Initially, large quantities of British-made cloth were exported from Bombay by Indian (chiefly Gujarati) traders. But the British consul in Zanzibar reported in 1885 that from the 1870s 'cottons of Indian manufacture have seriously interfered with our goods.'[41] This was due purely to a cost advantage for Indian cloth: 'The comparatively flimsy material which the rising manufacturing industry of India is now producing can be sold at little more than half the cost of the heavier

[40] Ian Brown, *Economic Change in South-East Asia, c.1830–1980* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 210–211.

[41] Thomas R. Metcalf, *Imperial Connections: India in the Indian Ocean Arena, 1860–1920* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), p. 168.

and more durable fabrics of Manchester and Massachusetts', the consul complained.[42]

Before 1800, Indian cotton cloth found markets in the trading world of the Indian Ocean in part due to cost—we should not underestimate the sizable quantities of low-quality and low-priced cloth that was demanded by far-flung consumers. But, at the same time, high-quality cloth of superior weave (such as the muslins that were used as turbans in the Ottoman Empire), or cloths of superior design and finish (such as the high-end painted and printed cloths that were distributed all over west and Southeast Asia) comprised a sizable part of the exports of Indian textiles. Therefore, the skill of weavers and cloth finishers together with the knowledge of dyers, printers and painters were essential to the success of Indian cloth in markets around the world. In the nineteenth century, these Indian artisans' attributes were less important; what mattered much more was price, which rested on low wages. Of course, there were exceptions such as the Madras handkerchiefs, which were in demand in East and West Africa, and striped and checked lungis, which were consumed in Southeast Asia.[43]

In the nineteenth century, Indian cloth, which had long been the currency of the Indian Ocean region, diminished in importance. This did not mean that the movement of goods and people within the region declined; it simply changed. India in the nineteenth century sent vast numbers of coolies, labourers and soldiers across the waters of the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea. Accompanying them were Indian merchants with their capital, entrepreneurial, financial and commercial skills.[44] This was the trading world of the Indian Ocean till the inter-war period when the Great Depression dramatically broke it up. In the aftermath, a more

[42] Metcalf, *Imperial Connections,* p. 168. Also see Jeremy Prestholdt, "On the Global Repercussions of East African Consumerism," *American Historical Review* 109 (2004), pp. 755–781; Jeremy Presthold, *Domesticating the World: African Consumerism and the Genealogies of Globalization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008).

[43] Charles Stewart Crole, *The Chingleput, Late Madras, District: A Manual Compiled Under the Orders of the Madras Government* (Madras: Lawrence Asylum Press, 1879), p. 56; *Southern India: Its History, People, Commerce, and Industrial Resources*, compiled by Somerset Playne, assisted by J.W. Bond, edited by Arnold Wright (London, 1914–1915), p. 628.

[44] Metcalf, *Imperial Connections*; Rajat Kanta Ray, "Asian Capital in the Age of European Domination: The Rise of the Bazaar," *Modern Asian Studies*, 29 (1995), pp. 449–554.

Table 2.1 World's leading clothing and textile exporters (billions of US Dollars), 2012

Country	*Textiles*	*Clothing*	*Total*
China	95.5	159.6	255.1
EU	69.4	108.9	178.3
India	15.3	13.8	29.1
Turkey	11.1	14.3	25.4
Bangladesh	1.6	19.9	21.5
United States	13.5	5.6	19.1
Vietnam	4.1	14.1	18.2
Republic of Korea	12.0	1.9	13.9
Pakistan	8.7	4.2	12.9
Indonesia	4.5	7.5	12.0

Source World Trade Organization, *International Trade Statistics 2013*, p. 56

national and a more inward-looking world emerged, which continued into the post-World War II decades. For many who lived on the waters of the Indian Ocean, the connections that had shaped the lives of their ancestors were now relegated to the pages of history.[45]

In the twentieth century, three developments reshaped the global textile manufacturing order. First, man-made fibres began to make inroads against cotton. At the end of the twentieth century, synthetics accounted for 40 percent of global fibre consumption and king cotton had been reduced to 50 percent.[46] (On the eve of World War I, cotton represented 80 percent of the world's fibre use.)[47] Second, the trade in textiles gave way to a trade in garments. From the 1950s to the 1980s, "exports of clothing began to expand more rapidly than exports of textiles proper and increased nearly seven times as fast."[48] In 1987, the world trade in garments overtook that in textiles. Finally, by the end of the twentieth

[45] Christopher Baker, "Economic Reorganization and the Slump in South and Southeast Asia," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 23 (1981), pp. 325–349; Sunil Amrith, *Crossing the Bay of Bengal: The Furies of Nature and the Fortunes of Migrants* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2013).

[46] Parthasarathi, "Global Trade and Textile Workers," p. 574.

[47] Donald Coleman, "Man-Made Fibres before 1945," in *The Cambridge History of Western Textiles*, vol. 2, ed. David Jenkins (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 933–947.

[48] Richard M. Jones, *The Apparel Industry* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2002), pp. 81–82.

century, Asia had become the undisputed centre of the new global order in textiles and clothing. This was a return to a pre-modern order in which Asia was at the heart of the world's textile economy, so to speak, but upon radically different foundations. The centre of the pre-modern textile order was in South Asia, but it now lies in East Asia, which may be seen from the distribution of both textile and clothing exports by country in the early twenty-first century, given in Table 2.1.

However, the revival of textile manufacturing (and the rise of garment production) in the Indian Ocean world has not led to a revival of the Indian Ocean trade. There are some minor exceptions to this general rule, such as lungis which were manufactured in the far southern part of India for export to Southeast Asia after World War II, mainly to supply South Indians who lived in the region. Some other exports that fell into this category were "bleeding" Madras cloth in which the colours were not fast, which went to the United States, and checked and striped cloth from Madras that found demand in West Africa.[49]

In a striking echo of the eighteenth century, however, imports of textiles from South Asia (and, this time, Southeast Asia, as well) have contributed to the economic dislocation and loss of jobs in Egypt since the mid-2000s. According to Joel Beinin, the wave of strikes that has gripped Egypt for several years, and contributed to the Arab Spring protests, were organized by textile workers who were thrown into unemployment due to the displacement of local cloth by imports from the Indian Ocean. These imports come chiefly from South and Southeast Asia.[50]

[49] Haruka Yanagisawa, "The Handloom Industry and Its Market Structure: The Case of the Madras Presidency in the First Half of the Twentieth Century," in *Cloth and Commerce: Textiles in Colonial India*, ed. Tirthankar Roy (Walnut Creek: Sage Publications, 1996), pp. 250–253; Joanne B. Eicher, "Kalabari Identiy and Indian Textiles in the Niger Delta," in *Textiles from India: The Global Trade*, ed. Rosemary Crill (Calcutta: Seagull Books, 2006), pp. 153–171.

[50] Joel Beinin, "Workers and Egypt's January 25th Revolution," *International Labor and WorkingClass History,* 80 (2011), pp. 189–196.

Conclusion

Despite these few examples of a continued Indian Ocean trade, for the most part, the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea have been subsumed to a globalized world order. Whether this will continue to be the case is an open question. Perhaps a new economy that is not premised on cheap fossil fuel, emerging as a solution to climate change, will regionalize our world and lead to a twenty-first century Indian Ocean world. Nevertheless, we should not lose sight of the fact that, since 1600, the trading world of the Indian Ocean has played a central role in global economic life. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Indian Ocean trade overflowed its boundaries into East Asia and the Atlantic. In the Atlantic Ocean, cottons from the Indian Ocean propelled some of the major technological breakthroughs of the eighteenth century. The dynamism of that Indian Ocean system was dependent upon silver, which came from outside its waters. In the nineteenth century, exports of machine-made cotton yarn and cloth dramatically remade the economic links of the Indian Ocean. In the twentieth century, especially after World War II, the Indian Ocean region became an important centre of textile and garment manufacturing. The textiles of Indian Ocean trade have shaped, and continue to shape, our global economic order.

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CHAPTER 3

Cloth and Commerce: Understanding Indian Economic History

Lakshmi Subramanian

The following observations by Marx on the 'British intruder who broke up the Indian handloom' are more than familiar to many of us:

> From 1818 to 1836 the export of twist from Great Britain to India rose in the proportion of 1–5200. In 1824, the export of British muslins to India hardly amounted to 6,000,000 yards, while in 1837 it surpassed 64,000,000 yards. But at the same time, the population of Dacca decreased from 150,000 inhabitants to 20,000. This decline of Indian towns celebrated for their fabrics was by no means the worst consequence. British steam and science uprooted, over the whole surface of Hindostan, the union between agricultural and manufacturing industry.[1]

Not only have these ideas framed the narratives of Indian economic nationalism and of economic history that were written under its shadow

[1] Quoted in Rajani Palme Dutt, *India Today* (New Delhi: People's Publishing House, 1949; reprint, Calcutta: Manisha, 1997), pp. 89–90.

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for more than five decades, they have continued to tease historians in their attempts to ask fresh questions from a limited and over-used archive. Notwithstanding efforts by scholars to recuperate the story of the Indian handloom, its weavers and their adaptation to the mechanized power loom thereafter—by stressing the fact of regional variations, of creative responses to enclave based growth and towards strengthening their legal and juridical position—the history of cloth and its producers has tended to follow a predictable trajectory. Most of the debates, whether between Hameeda Hossain and D.B. Mitra, or that of Amiya Bagchi and Tirthankar Ray, had to do with the very fact of de-industrialization and have invariably argued for and against the decline of weavers in the context of coercive mechanisms adopted by the colonial state.[2]

More recently, Douglas Haynes, in an important work on small town capitalism in the nineteenth century, provides an alternative framework to the de-industrialization paradigm by looking at a long history of artisanal choices and responses to changing situations.[3] Another line of enquiry has come from Global History scholars studying global commodities that include textiles, cotton and opium (as well as sugar and slaves), which have been instrumental in shifting our enquiry to more fundamental questions of structure, design, production process and social function, not to speak of larger economic determinants of demand and supply. None of these interventions, however, say much about the extraordinary and symbolic currency that cloth and weavers have enjoyed in the writing of colonial histories about subaltern groups[4] and it is on this aspect that I will focus my attention.

What was it about cloth and the symbol of the spinning wheel and the clacking loom that made it especially amenable to ideological

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[2] See Hameeda Hossain, *The Company Weavers of Bengal. The East India Company and the Organization of Textile Production in Bengal* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1988); Debendra Bijoy Mitra, *The Cotton Weavers of Bengal, 1757–1833* (Calcutta: Firma KLM, 1978); Tirthankar Roy, *Artisans and Industrialization: Indian Weaving in the Twentieth Century* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1993); and Amiya Bagchi, 'De-Industrialization in Gangetic Bihar, 1809–1901,' in *Essays in Honor of Professor S.C. Sarkar*, ed. Susobhan Chandra Sarkar. (New Delhi: People's Publishing House, 1976).

[3] Douglas Haynes, *Small Town Capitalism in Western India: Artisans, Merchants and the Making of the Informal Economy, 1870–1960* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

[4] Gyandendra Pandey, "The Bogited Julaha," *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 18, No. 5, January 29, 1983.

appropriation, as well as to being a site of resistance and protest—a question that has been asked by scholars such as Lisa Trivedi in connection with Gandhi and the politics of Khadi.[5] Was it to do with the greater inter-sectoral linkages that weavers and manufacturers enjoyed with agrarian production and which gave them greater social access? Was the very structure of textile production that accommodated several stages and several groups more amenable to mobilization and leadership possibilities? Did the possession of skills make some weaving groups especially powerful, enabling them to rise as social actors even if in a limited arena? These are some questions that we will attempt to address through the experiences of eighteenth-century Surat while keeping in general focus the larger historiography that has emerged around weavers and textile production, especially in the century of transition to colonial rule.

This chapter is thus an attempt to revisit historical scholarship on Indian textiles, focusing on the challenges of writing the social history of its producers. It is here that this contribution departs from my earlier work, where the focus was on actual production, on the changes in the material context of manufacture coming in the wake of the early colonial system of controls, and the responses from the workmen and cotton producers. This essay looks more squarely at resistance and at the ways in which the textile manufacturing system emerged as the site of subaltern response, and how this enables us to think more critically of the social and sociological dimensions of the textile industry in early modern South Asia. The essay draws inspiration from the moral economy model of E.P. Thompson and provides a micro-history of the Surat weavers in the critical years of transition.

Weavers in Early Colonial India: Historiographical Issues

Scholarship on weavers and artisans in early modern India has at once stressed their resilience and bargaining strength, and their vulnerability to the disciplining apparatus of colonial rule. Prasannan Parthasarathi's work on South India argues that weavers, in terms of their wage and productivity, were comparable to their counterparts in Britain and that it

[5] Lisa Trivedi, *Clothing Gandhi's Nation: Homespun and Modern India* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007).

was the sheer impact of colonial institutions that undermined their status and cut into their bargaining strengths.[6] Implicit in this position is not only a reiteration of the argument that it was not collapse of demand that lay behind the failure of the weavers, but also a combination of institutional mechanisms that undermined their links with agricultural production and weakened their bargaining abilities in the market, depriving them of the earlier advantages they had enjoyed by virtue of certain features in the contract arrangements that they entered into with merchants and European companies. The contract, according to Parthasarathi, had certain asymmetries; for instance, weavers could cancel a contract as and when they wished, while merchants and procurers were obligated to accept whatever produce was turned out by the weaver.[7]

The advantages of the weavers, were however, counter-balanced by other factors including their state of indebtedness to local merchants and money lenders, their vulnerability to famine and drought conditions, and to political dislocation. The expanding power of the English East India Company as well as that of the private traders and the subsequent implications for local mercantile and artisanal networks has been the subject of much scholarly attention. Even in western India, where formal colonial controls were late in coming, there were growing pressures as a range of controls instituted by the English East India Company had critical implications for the weavers and their contracts, as well as their legal status. Peter Harnetty's important contribution[8] to the debate on de-industrialization examines the fate of handlooms in Central India between 1800 and 1947. Adopting a long-term approach to the problem of de-industrialization, he examines how weavers responded to the political changes that had an impact on consumption and, subsequently, on artisanal production; the dispossession that certain groups underwent as a result of the colonial impact; and how British efforts to revive handlooms produced yet another set of stimuli affecting the weaver. What is striking about his work is the way Harnetty avoids needlessly polemical

[6] Prasannan Parthasarathi, *The Transition to a Colonial Economy Weavers, Merchants and Kings in South India, 1720–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 23–24, 26–27.

[7] Parthasarathi, *Transition to a Colonial Economy,* pp. 26–27.

[8] Peter Harnetty, "'*Deindustrialization*' Revisited: The Handloom Weavers of the Central Provinces of India, c. 1800-1947," *Modern Asian Studies* 25 (1991).

positions and also how he dismantles the idea of treating and looking at weavers as a homogenous bloc.

My own investigation of the experience of the Surat weavers—who as a group have been understudied, especially in the period of transition to colonial rule—follows a micro-historical approach by looking at weavers in Surat city between the closing decades of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century, focusing on their politics of resistance. I am not trying to recuperate a very specific history of subaltern weaver response here, but I do believe that the politics of protest among weavers and artisanal groups in the eighteenth century offers us important insights about the prevailing moral economy in late eighteenth-century India, which was subsequently overturned by the articulation of a formal colonial regime. I am not in any sense coming up with a startling observation here except to indicate that more detailed studies of urban centres and the protests of urban groups within them would help us tease out the complexities of late Mughal politics and the working of early Company mechanisms of control, the benefits of which were not uniformly distributed. This chapter thus looks squarely at Surat, arguably the most important precolonial trading city of India which, by the 1780s, had increasingly become a centre of manufacture in addition to its role as a centre of banking and retail. It was in this city that we witness violent confrontations involving manufacturers and the urban poor pitted against merchants and bankers, identified as the most visible clients of the English East India Company. It is here, again, that we see weavers largely as independent artisans who operated in a buyer's market based on price and not as waged workers; weavers fully capable of negotiating the changing political situation and resorting to everyday practices of resistance and to occasional instances of organized violence and rioting, as in 1788 and 1795.[9] The more closely one examines the evidence building up to the escalation of pressure on the weavers, the more the dimensions of rioting in Surat become evident; these were clearly not episodic outbursts but, rather, manifestations of a moral economy that was coming apart.

[9] Lakshmi Subramanian, "The Eighteenth Century Social Order in Surat. An excursus into the riots of 1788 and 1795," *Modern Asian Studies* 25, no. 2 (1991).

Protest and Politics: The Case of the Surat Weavers

The most striking feature of Surat's history after 1780 was a growing concentration of manufacture within the city, the influx of weavers into the city rendering it a weaving centre much more than had been the case earlier in the period. Second, we also have instances of escalating street violence and of two major riots in 1788 and 1795. In the first instance, the riots targeted the Parsi population in the city, a community that by this time was principally engaged as textile contractors and suppliers, providing cloth to European buyers—the Dutch, French and English companies and private traders, as well as other Asian buyers who flocked into the city during the season. These riots also spoke of greater community mobilization; instances of community dinners where members vented their grievances increased forcing the city authorities to consider their regulation especially after 1795. Other forms of mobilization involved everyday practices of resistance; after the 1780s and until the first decade of the nineteenth century, weavers were accused of resorting to go-slow tactics and smuggling cloth to be sold at higher prices to new buyers other than those with whom they had contracted. In fact, in and from the late 1780s, the city saw an influx of Portuguese buyers whose demand for cloth for the East African market represented a new line of business for the city's manufacturers. This chapter does not really look at the implications of the growing linkages between western India and Eastern Africa, but does suggest that the East African factor is important in raising new questions of connected histories in the Indian Ocean region involving subaltern agency, local leadership and multi-site developments. I will allude to the Portuguese demand for textiles in tracking the politics of everyday resistance among weavers and in looking more closely at the various mechanisms that were in place for weavers and merchants to work in a city where political control was fragmented; the private trade of multiple agents—including, notably, the Portuguese and Asian merchants—introduced new elements into the moral economy of manufacture and protection that artisans were used to customarily.

By the 1780s, Surat city had lost the lustre of times past; no longer was its merchant fleet the pride of the harbour and no longer were its local merchants the principal carrying traders in the Indian Ocean. The city had been battered by the Marathas, whose occupation of the surrounding twenty-eight villages (the Athavisi) strained the resources of the city administration which, in desperation, turned to the merchants

for additional taxes. The latter, in their efforts to withstand state pressure at a time when their commercial ventures were functioning at less than optimum levels, made common cause with the European traders and companies in the city. In 1759, the English East India Company took the offensive and, supported by a substantial section of the city's Bania (merchant-broker) community, replaced the ruling Nawab and installed themselves as Qiladars. The post did not carry any remuneration but it gave the English East India Company a voice in the selection of the governor and senior officials in the administration. It also enabled them gradually to acquire an edge over the city's flagging export and freight trade to the West Asian markets and to persuade the city's Parsi and Bania contractors to provide them with textiles. While this did not immediately translate into greater controls and coercion over weavers and their production, it certainly amounted to a growing pressure on the city's weavers—who were, in any case, battling political insecurity, growing prices of yarn (indicating, in all probability, a lag in spinning, or possibly scarcity of cotton fibre) and famine that pushed up food prices.

The weaving industry in Surat would seem to have resembled the proto-industrial centres of southern England in the late seventeenth century, with manufacturers working for a substantial and regular domestic market, as well as for overseas trade. The latter included markets in West Asia as well as the requirements of European trading Companies which invested in cloth for the trade in the Indian Ocean region, and of the Portuguese whose interest seems to have been African markets. We have a contemporary description of looms and their produce, as well as the intended markets for those goods, that gives us valuable details of communities and the markets for which their cloths were produced. The weavers—who were always men—would appear to have been owners of their looms and worked along with members of the family. One does hear occasionally of master weavers who worked with subordinate labour but this, by and large, seems to have been the exception rather than the rule. Among the Muslim castes, the Momnas, Boras and Bhandarrahs were the most visible occupational groups engaged in the production and manufacture of both coarse cloths for domestic consumption, as well as pieces that involved gold embroidery (*zari*). Khatris, a Hindu weaving caste, seem to have specialized in the manufacture of fine-piece goods—the red variety was especially prized—while the Koombees, another Hindu weaving caste, manufactured *musroo* of different kinds (striped

silk and cotton in satin weave), *patolas* (double *ikat* silks) and *chaders* (broad rectangular cloth) with silk borders.[10]

Weaving followed its own rhythm—determined largely by the timing of the export trade, as well as that of the domestic market—and partly by seasonal conditions that facilitated certain stages in the manufacturing process. The best variety of *necanees* (low-priced striped cotton cloth), for instance, was manufactured in Surat and was worked early in the year and wholly finished before the dry winds of November. Blue and red *chelloes*, on the other hand, were best manufactured in the rainy season, just after having been dyed in April. Placing orders for these goods therefore had to take into consideration a number of factors, which made the exercise of controlling the supply chain more difficult.[11]

We do not have many details on the social organization of the weavers, or, indeed, of their everyday experiences of living in Surat city. Like most medieval and Mughal cities, there was a designated quarter for artisan castes. Mohallas were divided on lines of community, although there were points of intersection and contact. These lines of segregation came into focus during public disturbances—which, in both 1788 and 1795, targeted those sections that were identified as ancillaries of the new dispensation associated with the English East India Company. The weavers in Surat worked closely with subcontractors or dealers, who were the local agents immediately responsible for procuring cloth from the looms and sending it over to their principals, who were in touch with the big buyers. As observed earlier, weavers worked within an asymmetrical contract, accepting advances for the textiles they contracted for; however, they were not bound to turn the finished product to the original buyer provided they returned the cash advance.[12] As price-based workers, they were technically free to sell their finished goods in the open market and pay back the advance. That they were able to do so is illustrated time

[10] Lakshmi Subramanian, *Indigenous Capital and Imperial Expansion Bombay, Surat and the West Coast* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 206–231. See also Commercial Department Diary of the Bombay Government, hereafter C.D.D. (Maharashtra State Archives, Mumbai) No. 7 of 1792, pp. 87–91, for a tabular representation of the species of goods, place of manufacture and time when best made.

[11] Ibid. For a convenient glossary of Indian Textiles see Giorgio Riello and Tirthankar Roy eds., *How India Clothed the World The World of South Asian textiles, 1500–1850* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), pp. 437–441.

[12] Parthasarathi, *The Transition to a Colonial Economy.*

and again; in fact, it posed a genuine problem for the English authorities who found weavers wilfully turning out deficient cloth (in length and quality) just to be able to sell it to other buyers. Checking this required a great deal of vigilance and monitoring, and it was due to the deployment of peons and armed supervisors that scuffles and artisanal action became common. We have extensive references to Parsi and Bania subcontractors who were involved in the business of rounding up textiles woven in individual houses with looms. Some worked for the English East India Company, while others worked for individual merchants—including the Portuguese, whose investments in cloth in and after the 1790s became especially significant.

If dealing with several buyers in what was a competitive market was one of the options for weavers, there was also a tendency to improve their social mobility by taking up production of those varieties of cloth that required greater skill and, by extension, greater remuneration. This was best illustrated by the instance of Khatri-Koombi rivalry during this period, as they competed for the right to manufacture certain varieties of silk cloth requiring a special mordant—thereby, attempting to improve their position by moving into certain skilled occupations that had greater social prestige, as well as greater market value.[13] Thus, if there were disputes between weavers and men of capital, there were also intra-community disputes that reflected the social tensions of the period. Understanding these processes of negotiation and resistance offers us a useful perspective on the strength and status of artisan groups in a premodern Indian Ocean city and what it was about their social functions and status that made them such a vocal and volatile group. Answering this is not easy, especially as there seems such a gap in our understanding of late eighteenth-century weavers and their subsequent experience almost a century thereafter. What happened to weavers in the period between 1805 and 1857 has remained bogged down in the debates on de-industrialization and imports of British yarn and textiles[14]; while it is recognized that Indian industry benefited from imported yarn, no further reference is made. This chapter does not invoke these debates and,

[13]For further details see Lakshmi Subramanian, "The Political Economy of Textiles in Western India: Weavers, Merchants and the Transition to a colonial economy," in *How India clothed the World The World of South Asian Textiles, 1500–1850*, eds. Giorgio Riello and Tirthankar Roy (Leiden: Brill, 2009), pp. 253–280.

[14]See *Indian Economic and Social History Review* 5, no. 1 (1968).

instead, urges a closer look at the social experiences of weavers in Surat in the early nineteenth century. It does so by focusing on their diurnal regimen and leisure activities, their religious practices and their collective concerns, which constituted a particular moral economy which found itself confronting the tenets and challenges of a political economy represented by the East India Company in its new avatar after 1780.

By the 1780s, as observed earlier, Surat had emerged as a major centre of textile manufacture. Around this time, the city boasted a total of 15,777 looms worked by specific weaving groups—we have references to 849 looms worked by Boras who manufactured textiles referred to in contemporary documentation as *pachoras*, *putkahs*, *turbans* and *dooria* of various sorts for immediate consumption in the city. Other varieties such as *salloes*, *seylas* and *dhotis* were also manufactured on these looms, some of which production was exported to west Asia. Among the principal weaving communities were Koombees and Khatris, who were found working on a large number of looms, turning out cloth specifically for the export market. Communities depended on the state to help retain their exclusive caste and community-based privileges of manufacture and to press for revocation of new cesses and duties. Predictably under conditions of stress, it was precisely around the issue of manufacturing privilege that inter-community disputes broke out. Due to its commitment to more rational procurement systems, the English East India Company intervened. In terms of structure, the community was by and large entirely dependent on the immediate subcontractors who provided them with advances of money to buy raw materials and also to tide over day-to-day cash requirements. We do not come across many references to the subcontractors providing leadership to the weavers in times of crisis and confrontation; on the contrary, we often hear of them absconding with advances they received from the Company or other contracting merchants, rendering the condition of the workmen even more vulnerable. Weavers were represented by their headmen when there were specific complaints to which they wished to bring attention. In general, what seems fairly evident is how insistent weavers were about safeguarding their customary rights, which included not merely the right to manufacture a particular variety of cloth, but also to be able to sell whatever they produced to a free buyer in the market. In other words, the insistence on being price-based workers informed their responses; notwithstanding the debt obligations under which they suffered, they were able to operate in a buyer's market quite robustly for the greater part of the

eighteenth century. Indeed, after the 1780s, when the procurement system of the English East India Company underwent a major change and when new controls were instituted to restrain the 'clandestine' operations of the weavers through a system of armed peons, we come across major instances of altercation that were manifested through spasmodic riots and through more everyday practices of resistance.[15]

It was in and after these years that the demand for Surat textiles as a constituent element of the Company's official investment expanded and coincided with an increasing demand for the same on the part of private traders, especially the Portuguese. This had important implications, particularly for procurement. The Company's servants soon began to experience shortfalls—weavers were increasingly reluctant to complete their commitments and obligations; as they realized all too well, a market for even rejected goods existed among foreign buyers and they were quick to seize the opportunity. Predictably, the Company responded initially by empowering their servants and peons to round up finished cloth pieces from the loom and to force the weavers to complete their contractual obligations before they took on other orders. They also persuaded the ruling Nawab of Surat to impose fines and penalties on merchants and manufacturers found guilty of dishonouring contracts, or of persuading a section of weavers to help with their investment even if this involved a violation of customary arrangements, or of enforcing an actual seal on cloths manufactured and turned out in the loom. All these measures spelt varying degrees of coercion and invited the resistance of weavers even as they grappled with the more fundamental problems of rising food prices, famine conditions, spiralling yarn prices and actual physical restraint exercised by Company procurers.[16]

It was in this context that Surat city witnessed periodic scuffles involving weavers and their contractors and a phase of recurrent everyday acts of resistance. These instances, as in the case of the Muslim–Parsi riot of 1788, involved actual violence, but also more mundane acts such as

[15] Lakshmi Subramanian, "Power and the Weave: Weavers, Merchants and Rulers in Eighteenth Century Surat", in *Trade and the Indian Ocean World: Essays in Honor of Ashin Dasgupta*, ed. Rudrangshu Mukherjee and Lakshmi Subramanian (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998).

[16] This section and the following one is based on the long negotiations between the East India Company and the Portuguese in Surat in 1797. See Public Department Diary of the Bombay Government (hereafter P.D.D.) No. 127 of 1797, pp. 1811ff.

going slow, clandestine traffic and resistance to any sort of branding of cloth in the looms.[17] This involved the tacit cooperation of other segments of the city's population including potters, washermen and the lower echelons of the city's ruling administration.[18] It is in this connection that the question arises as to how weavers were able to solicit and mobilize such support and solidarity, and why the Company authorities were so ambivalent in imposing the same draconian controls that they affected in Bengal. Admittedly, the nature and limits of Company power in the region precluded the kind of hegemonic control that they enjoyed in Bengal, thereby giving greater scope to local agents and actors. Yet, to invoke this explanation as the only one seems unsatisfactory and unconvincing. Could it be that weavers as a group in the region enjoyed closer links with the administration, were better organized in terms of community ties and linkages, and were also in a better position to move and migrate to centres of manufacture and thereby keep the Company authorities on tenterhooks? Recall the observation in 1797 of the Commercial Resident of the English East India Company: 'if found fault with and threatened with punishment on a just enforcement of their agreements, they boycott and cease working. If their goods are received with more strictness they will not bring any and if on the contrary they are treated with mildness they never fail to impute it to a dread of their leaving the place.'[19] Even if the Resident always prefaced such comments by observations on the indigence and indebtedness of the weavers, he was always sensitive to the bargaining skills of the weavers and careful to distance himself from any decision that smacked of discrimination. On such occasions, the English East India Company tended

[17] Lakshmi Subramanian, "The Eighteenth Century Social order in Surat: A Reply and an Excursus on the Riots of 1788 and 1795," *Modern Asian Studies* 25, no. 2 (1991), pp. 321–365.

[18] P.D.D. No. 130 of 1798. Report of proceedings with the Portuguese merchant Jose Gomes Loreiro. This carried the representation of the contractors of the English Company who maintained that the Portuguese brokers adopted clandestine means to procure goods form people engaged in the manufacture of the Company's Investment. Some of these means were through potters who brought loads of empty pots into the city from their kilns and which were employed by the weavers who deposited cloths at the very bottom and covered them up with straw. Many female potters and washermen were thus employed to smuggle out cloth.

[19] P.D.D. No. 127 of 1797. Detailed Representation of the Commercial Resident. Dated 20 October, 1796.

to shift the blame to the ruling Nawab. The other important feature that emerges from Company documentation is the role subcontractors played in textile-related negotiations, which suggests their growing influence. Understandably, they became targets of artisanal disaffection. While we do not have direct evidence on the mobilizing strategies of the weavers or their immediate bosses, there are tangential references to the anger that weavers expressed against Bania and Parsi procurers in Surat city, as well as to small-time leaders who played a key role in smuggling cloth out of the weavers' establishments.[20]

This is clear from about the late 1780s; when the Company administration in Surat began to consider greater controls over supplies to make up their expanding cloth investment, the question of enforcement of the contracts became a major issue of contention. Technically, every contract that the Company factors entered into with the broker (in charge of the supply) carried a penalty clause that was calculated in accordance with the value of the investment. In practice, enforcing the penalty had always been difficult. The conditions existing after the 1780s made the issue even more contentious, as contracting brokers complained of the complications introduced by the rising demand for textiles and the cash crunch they faced, which made advances difficult and in the absence of which they were not able to hold workmen to any kind of commitment. To make matters worse, the weavers turned out cloth that did not always meet with Company specifications, forcing the rejection of supplies. These were promptly bought by other merchants at favourable prices, thereby encouraging workmen to continue to flout the specifications of the East India Company. Under these circumstances, the latter had no option but to try and tighten controls over the contracting brokers, as well as the chain of under-brokers who were physically in charge of collecting individual pieces from weavers and their looms. The use of armed peons (those belonging to the Company and distinguished by brass badges) became common practice and was responsible for an escalating degree of tension in the city's weaving quarters.

[20] Subramanian, "The Political Economy of Textiles in Western India."

Rioting in Surat: Weavers in Rearguard Action

The growing disaffection of weavers tended to come into play during disturbances and scuffles in the city. Some of these involved minor instances of theft, or petty fights on street corners which occasionally had the potential to escalate into fully fledged riots. This was especially evident during the riots of 1788 which involved Parsis and Muslims of the city. Most of the attacks were against the former community, especially merchants and cloth contractors, while the rioters consisted of Muslim weavers and a section of the *sepoys* (Company guards) armed with muskets and swords. The principal targets seem to have been Nasserwanjee Byramjee, Rustamjee Manekjee and Shapoorjee Burjorjee, who were all in the process of visiting weavers and securing cloth from their looms. This was not simply serendipitous; tensions between weavers and merchants had been simmering for a while and all it took was a minor scuffle to ignite a serious communal brawl. Rioting was concentrated in some localities, such as Syedpura; Parsis were dragged out and attacked, and rioting continued unabated for more than twelve hours before it was finally contained.[21] What was especially striking about the riots was the tacit support the rioters, mostly weavers, seem to have enjoyed from certain sections of the city's ruling Muslim administration—a fact that underscores the points of contact that they could maintain with the larger population and the social influence they seem to have enjoyed in this regard. The Company, on its part, remained oblivious to the pressures that weavers faced in the form of rising yarn prices, growing controls over the procurement business and the falling demand for textiles in the domestic sector. The aftermath of the riots continued to see growing pressures on the weavers and the Company's recourse to coercion and even restraint of the weavers by confining them in their quarters. These instances of policing could hardly prove conducive to municipal harmony—with the result that scuffles and altercations, as well as instances of clandestine and illicit trading, increased steadily.

In August 1795, rioting assumed more violent dimensions, this time involving Bania merchants and bankers. The riots exposed the underbelly of the city as hundreds of disaffected weavers took to the streets

[21] Lakshmi Subramanian, "The Eighteenth Century Social Order in Surat: A Reply and an Excursus on the Riots of 1788 and 1795," *Modern Asian Studies* 25, no. 2 (1991), pp. 321–365.

and voiced their resentment against the merchants and the East India Company, whose dispensation had torn the social fabric of the city asunder. Weavers constituted the main segment of the rioting crowd and seemed to have been able to mobilize through community dinners as well as informal linkages with the lower levels of the Muslim ruling administration.[22] Even if the rioters represented only one segment within the weaving population, the fact that they were able to draw on linkages within the city reflected their centrality in its economic life. They boycotted work, refused to labour on contracts and it became increasingly clear to the Company that a new and more effective system of controls had to be set in place. These had to fulfil two things: to ensure that the actual demand of the Company in relation to its standard investment was fully met, and to neutralize the competition of rival buyers whose offer of better prices seduced the workmen into ignoring the Company's contract. For the former, it was necessary to control both contracting merchants and workmen, by disallowing the latter to work for other buyers until their contracts were completed. For the latter, it was necessary to set up checkpoints to prevent clandestine sales while getting the ruling Nawab to prevent other buyers from negotiating with the weavers. Neither of these were easy conditions to meet and (as we shall see) the history of the Company's negotiations with the weavers in the closing decades of the eighteenth century was marked by growing disaffection and frustration. Weavers would appear to have held their own right through the period—skilled weavers were even able to pressure the Company into giving back some of the privileges they had lost, while the rest continued to produce for rival buyers and wriggle out of their contractual obligations.

From the closing years of the eighteenth century, the sudden demand for Surat goods in the East African markets and the influx of foreign buyers (primarily Portuguese private traders) into Surat exerted considerable pressure on the English Company's investment business:

> You cannot be ignorant of the great encouragement given by foreign nations, the Dutch, French and the Portuguese as well as native merchants to workmen to fail in their engagements with the Company for pieces inferior in every respect and particularly in point of dimension, where the

[22] Subramanian, "Eighteenth Century Social Order."

> Company are very strict, they will give 4 p.c. more than Company prices by which it become the weavers' advantages to have the pieces rejected.[23]

This is what Mayaram Atmaram, a principal contracting merchant, told the Company authorities in 1790, urging the latter to think of extra-economic measures to ensure regular supplies. The Company was asked to make use of its special position in Surat to persuade the ruling Nawab to force weavers to fulfil their obligations, failing which they would have to pay a penalty; to persuade certain groups of weavers to jettison their exclusive privileges of manufacturing certain varieties of textiles; and to enforce the Company brand (the *Chaap*) on products that were turned out in the loom to prevent clandestine purchases and smuggling. On the latter, the weavers stood firm and it was found impossible to get them to agree to the *Chaap*. A new system of procurement was officially instituted under the leadership of the Commercial Resident who worked along with a board that looked into the issue of supplies. The background to the introduction of this new system was the riots of 1795, once more a predominantly weavers' uprising centred on the growing failure of supplies.[24] These riots, too, were dominated by weavers who targeted sections of the Bania community in the city, destroying their shops, damaging their account books, and mobilizing considerable sections of the city's poor and the lower echelons of the ruling administration. In every sense, it embodied the disaffection of the city's artisan population to the new order that barely protected their interests and seriously constrained their working conditions. The growing power of the contract merchants and under-brokers, who were more vigilant about the penalty clause, seriously eroded the bargaining abilities of the manufacturers, whose non-cooperation affected supplies to the Company thereby forcing the latter to reconstitute the procurement system.

[23] C.D.D. No. 5 of 1790. Letter from Mayaram Atmaram, p. 97ff.

[24] Subramanian, "The Eighteenth Century Social Order in Surat," pp. 321–365.

Towards a New System of Procurement: Limits and Possibilities

It was around 1795/6 that a new system was thought out and put into operation. Under this system, a Commercial Board (comprised of European members) headed by a Commercial Resident was constituted in Surat to work closely with the contracting merchants (Indians). The Company's official investment in textiles (separate from the private trade of the Company servants) was divided into several categories of standard and inferior assortments over which the Board had greater control. This was intended to prevent weavers from deliberately turning over substandard goods and selling them to other foreign merchants. Further, the use of peons and armed supervisors was introduced—a feature that was already common practice. In its essentials, the new system aimed at binding the weavers to their agreements with the Company and preventing them from entering into fresh agreements until they had discharged all their debt obligations to the Company. All agreements were henceforth to be made in writing and attested by two creditable witnesses. Weavers under agreement to the Company and who did not wish to avail themselves of fresh advances in the future had to give a fortnight's notice of their intentions. In cases where a weaver failed to deliver cloths for which he had been contracted by the stipulated period, the Commercial Resident was given the liberty to set his peons upon the erring manufacturer. Weavers guilty of clandestine transactions were liable to prosecution and could have their products confiscated by the Company. Those in the Company's employ who were found guilty of changing Company cloth or accepting advances were also liable to forfeit double the amount of the value of the property or money that they may have embezzled. At the same time, the regulations endorsed the primacy of the commercial resident in the business of procuring the Standard Investment. In fact, the system was perceived as an important beginning in paving the way for the abolition of a contractor or any intermediary. For the rest, the Investment was to be subdivided into distinct branches and let out by public advertisement to contract merchants.[25] Contracts were made out with prominent brokers, dealers and manufacturers; agreements were negotiated with dealers and manufacturers who promised to forswear

[25] C.D.D. No. 16 of 1797, pp. 932ff. and pp. 942ff.

working on any other investment until they had completed their obligations to the Company. These agreements were buttressed by an official embargo introduced by the Nawab of Surat, who compelled the manufacturers and dealers to sign in writing that they would not (under penalty of payment of 10,000 rupees) sell any goods to the Portuguese.[26]

How effective were these arrangements? Technically, these put enormous pressure on the contractors as well as manufacturers but, in practice, the new arrangements hardly made a dent on the business of trading in cloth. Weavers continued to bypass the regulations and a black market of sorts thrived in the city, where merchant protests added to the growing instances of scuffles and public disorder. The Portuguese were among the most voluble of the protesting traders against the monopoly system of the English East India Company. This came into the open in 1796/7 when the Portuguese Resident complained about the monopoly which the Company was trying to enforce, how this went against the natural laws of free trading and how his representatives were being prevented from procuring cloth. The representation was made when four dealers who had been party to the agreement signed with the English East India Company continued to do business with the Portuguese brokers. The English East India Company found this unacceptable and, from the long and contentious dialogue that followed, it was clear that the Company was, at every stage, prepared to exploit its special position in Surat to claim 'extraordinary' privileges, and how, even though weavers theoretically were free to work with anyone, they had to be restrained if the Company's investment were to be safeguarded. It justified the use of armed peons and even attacks on defaulting weavers who smuggled goods out of the loom, saying that they were an unreliable lot and that given the impossibility of branding the cloths in the looms whereby 'the property could be described beyond the reach of chance', there were no options except the enforcement of coercive measures.[27]

On the ground, however, clandestine trading was the order of the day, as peons were hopelessly inadequate with regard to intercepting the

[26] Subramanian, "The Political Economy of Textiles in Western India," pp. 253–281.

[27] C.D.D. of 1797, p. 111, See letter and enclosures from the Commercial Board at Surat read on 3 February 1797. Also see C.D.D. No. 36 of 1803, p. 698 for details of the Company establishment that included peons. Also see C.D.D. No. 35 of 1802, pp. 1196–1197 Consideration of the Commercial Resident's measures by the Governor Genral in Council.

traffic. Weavers and under-brokers employed innovative means for this; one strategy was for eight or nine people to go out together with four or five of them having fastened a piece of cloth around each leg and the others fastening a price list around their waists.[28] They were escorted by a small party of Parsis armed with sticks. They sang and danced, thereby simultaneously drawing public attention and eluding the Company's peons. Among the under-dealers who took an active role in such clandestine sales was Vamalchand Bania, who drove a thriving trade in supplying textiles to the Portuguese.[29] In 1798, we are told how he used potters and washermen to smuggle cloths out and how these were the consequence of coercive tactics employed by the Company's peons. Weavers were often locked in their homes and prevented from leaving until the investments were ready. The Portuguese Resident insisted that these acts terrorized weavers and under-dealers and that, 'by this system of terrorism, they secure every hand that can assist in the manufacture and can fix prices at will … manufacturers complained that they are beaten by sepoys and degraded from their castes by peons'.[30] For their part, the Company and its chief brokers insisted that the Portuguese were responsible for impeding their official investment. In 1800, the Contracting Brokers stated that the agents of the Portuguese had, for the previous five years, carried a traffic not less than '25 to 40 lakhs of rupees per annum'.[31] What was necessary, therefore, was to exercise judicial authority over weavers committed to manufacturing for the Company, a course of action that was facilitated by the annexation of Surat by the English East India Company. Underthe new regulations of 1800, defaulting weavers and manufacturers were liable to prosecution at the *Adalat* in Surat.[32] At the same time, the Company successfully detached large sections of weavers and persuaded them to work on parts of the Company investment. The number of superintendents was increased to go daily around

[28] C.D.D. No. 25 of 1800, pp. 125–126ff, pp. 1150–151. Representation from the Contracting Brokers dated 10 November 1799.

[29] P.D.D. No. 147 of 1800, pp. 627–630. Letter and enclosures from Surat read by the Bombay Council on 2 April 1800.

[30] P.D.D. No. 130 of 1798, p. 135. Copy of a letter from Jose Gomes Loureiro.

[31] C.D.D. No. 27 of 1800, pp. 558–559ff. Letter in reply to the Commercial Board at Surat dated 26 December 1800.

[32] Ibid. Also see C.D.D. No. 36 of 1803, p. 698 for a list of the establishment required for the office of the Commercial Resident.

different streets and visit the houses of merchants and manufacturers, in order to keep regular accounts of the time when 'each weaver placed in his loom a new piece of good and when it was taken up and carried to the company's warehouse'.[33]

The new regulations, however, did not extend to the under-dealers. As the Commercial Board observed in 1802, the new regulations could not be of much efficacy 'when applied to Banyan merchants who neither weave nor have looms in their houses and can consequently be under no check, were peons to be placed over them'.[34] It was, therefore, essential to introduce the Bengal system of direct procurement. 'Some means', it was argued, 'had to be devised of breaking the claims these intermediate agents have upon the weavers from the debts they nearly one and all are involved in for advances made to them a different times.'[35] The Company now emerged as the champion of the oppressed weaver who had to be rescued from the clutches of the rapacious bania. If the weaver instead of the bania received the advance, he would be able to save a portion, liquidate his previous debts and improve his material position. Weavers were therefore approached to come forward to accept Company advances and work on the investment.

Conclusion

Whether the benefits of the system convinced all manufacturers is debatable. While we do come across instances of weavers deserting their looms in search of alternative employment in the Company's army, which was perceived as a more stable occupation, it is also important to remember that Indian cloth would, a few years later, no longer be an object of official scrutiny. The declining importance of textiles in the Company in the first quarter of the nineteenth century rendered much of the new system irrelevant, as the Company's investment in cloth exports from India declined dramatically. Not that this spelt the end of the story for

[33] Ibid.

[34] C.D.D. No. 35 of 1802, pp. 1196–1197. Consideration of the Commercial Resident's measures by the Governor General in Council.

[35] Ibid. pp. 1282–84ff. Minute of the Commercial Resident considered on 16 November 1802.

the Indian weaver, who was called upon to operate in new conditions of yarn imports coming in from England. Thus, if we go by the fact that increasing imports of English yarn were used to advantage by the Indian weaver working for an enduring domestic market, then we would need to see how this important substitution helped the weaver in preserving his status and economic profile in the first half of the nineteenth century. That, as a group, weavers were able to draw on the support of the ruling administration and to rely on linkages within the urban population of service providers and occupational groups is amply clear and certainly speaks of their relative strength and bargaining position. How we wish to factor this experience in tracking their history in the succeeding decades is something that we need to consider more seriously and it is here that perhaps a comparative approach might help. Can we try and study the production sector in western India through the vantage point of a buyer's market in East Africa? Would a connected histories perspective help develop new lines of enquiry about the social location of weavers and their negotiation of translocal and global realities? Would such an approach offer a corrective to the excessively nationalist bias that has informed writings of textile histories? If so, what methodologies could we adopt in attempting such a history of production and distribution, and the associated social factors? What is the kind of archive we would need to handle and how would we read it?

I do not have answers to these questions. I raise them partly because of a conviction that the polemical positions that have been written into histories of weaving in colonial India preclude us from a more balanced appreciation of what it meant to weave, sell and consume in an Indian Ocean world that valued Indian textiles, whose actors fought to capture procurement channels, and whose range and diversity continued to penetrate domestic and international markets. It is also my contention that weavers as a skilled labour group enjoyed a very special position in the social world of urban centres and were, by their sheer access to petty levels of finance and political resources, able to mobilize resistance and initiate important movements of protest and rioting. Their adherence to a particular moral economy which emphasized protection of caste and occupation-based privileges (akin to guild-like entitlement), revocation of penalty clauses during moments of extreme crises, insistence on being treated as price-based workers and on the freedom of contracting and working for as many buyers as possible without restraint was evident throughout the period under review. What the implications of this

resistance were and how the politics of the weaving groups manifested in the first quarter of the nineteenth century are questions that merit further attention.

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CHAPTER 4

Handkerchiefs, Scarves, Sarees and Cotton Printed Fabrics: Japanese Traders and Producers and the Challenges of Global Markets

Seiko Sugimoto

Immediately following the Meiji Restoration in 1868, the main Japanese export goods were silk floss and tea. At that time, Japan produced hand-woven fabrics mainly for kimonos, Japan's historic costume, and lacked the technical expertise needed to work with industrial weaving machinery and chemical dyes. However, just a few decades later, by the end of the nineteenth century, as Moses E. Ochonu describes in his book *The Colonial Meltdown: Northern Nigeria in the Great Depression*, Japanese merchants had flooded East African markets with factory-made Japanese textiles, taking advantage of the 1884–1885 Congo Basin Agreement; in West Africa, meanwhile, smugglers profited from the Anglo-French Free Trade Convention of 1898 to traffic Japanese cotton goods into Nigeria through the eastern borders with the French colonies of Cameroon,

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Chad, Dahomey and Niger.[1] It may thus be seen that, in this short time, the Japanese textile trade had swept African markets. Ochonu suggests that this expansion of Japanese textile exports was aided by a combination of cheap labour, the devaluation of the yen and export-promoting fiscal policies. It is true that Japanese textiles were accepted as substitutes for British textiles, whose prices were quite expensive for the income and purchasing power of common Nigerians.[2] Still, are these three factors sufficient to explain the increased popularity of Japanese fabrics? How did Japanese textile merchants make inroads into global markets so rapidly? In any event, how could Japanese textile production have developed in such a short period?

In this chapter, I examine the history of the global trade in Japanese handkerchiefs, scarves, sarees and cotton printed fabrics, taking as case studies a number of textile brokers who were able to modernize the manufacturing of printed textiles for export. These individuals worked in partnership with skilled weavers and dyers in historic centres of kimono production, on the one hand, and with foreign buyers, especially those of Indian origin, settled in the two biggest port cities, Yokohama and Kobe, on the other hand. We find that the success of Yokohama's production of patterned printed silk fabrics in the late nineteenth century was due to the producers' ability to adapt easily to modern methods thanks to the abundance of specialized expertise associated with the venerable tradition of kimono manufacturing in the Jyoshu region located inland in Edo (Tokyo), Gunma and Tochigi prefectures today. We also find that the great success of Osaka's brokers of patterned printed cotton fabrics in late nineteenth century was due to their association with cotton kimono manufacturing in two regions: The Senshu area, a famous cotton production centre during the Edo period, located in the southern part of Osaka; and the Fukui region, another local centre of kimono silk weaving, located in the northeast of Osaka. The modernized textile industry in Japan eventually drew on such expertise to develop the synthetic fabric industry of the twentieth century. Certainly, we must take into consideration as well the quality of Japanese fabrics and their value-for-price in

[1] Moses E. Ochonu, *Colonial Meltdown: Northern Nigeria in the Great Depression* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2009), pp. 38–39.

[2] Ochonu, *Colonial Meltdown*, p. 38.

order to explain the long lasting popularity of Japanese printed fabrics with consumers in the Indian Ocean World, even after World War II.

The Historical Context and the Beginning of the Export of Japanese Printed Fabrics for the International Market

The Treaty of Amity and Commerce between the USA and Japan, signed in 1858, abolished the Japanese isolation policy that had lasted for 200 years. In 1859, the port of Yokohama was officially opened, with the area of Motomachi adjoining the harbour set aside for the settlement of foreign merchants. The port was developed for trading silk mainly produced in the Jyoshu region. Not long after, in 1866, Kizaemon Onozato, a broker of textile products, began producing handkerchiefs for sale to foreigners settled in Motomachi. In 1873, Shobey Shiina, a silk trader of Yokohama, attended the Vienna Exposition as a representative of producers and, in that same year, exported silk handkerchiefs from Japan for the first time. It is not an accident that Kizaemon and Shobey started their export of silk goods with handkerchiefs. At that time in Japan, only looms for weaving kimonos existed. They were narrow-width looms, set up to produce the long, narrow cloths (about thirty-six centimeters wide and twelve meters long) from which T-shaped kimonos are tailored. The narrow-width cloth produced by Japanese looms was thus suitable only for handkerchiefs and long scarves, not for dress yardage. However, during the long history of kimono production, varieties of fine silk fabrics had already been realized in Japan. After the World Exhibition at Vienna, the silk merchants of Yokohama started exporting handkerchiefs made of a fabric named *habutae* to European countries. *Habutae* is a kind of plain, thin, smooth and glossy silk textile with a fine weave, which had been used as a lining material for high-quality kimonos since the early nineteenth century. Shobey and Isetoku, pioneering silk traders of Yokohama, discovered that the quality of this fabric was well-suited to handkerchiefs and started producing it in large quantities in the 1870s, in cooperation with weavers in Kiryu, Kyoto and Fukui, all traditional silk weaving centres for kimonos. The collection at Silk Museum in Yokohama includes some silk scarves with beautifully embroidered floral motifs produced by the Shobey shop for European markets, which show fine embroidery techniques and sophisticated designs developed in the kimono production at Kyoto. As trade with foreign countries grew,

the export—first, of silk floss and, later, of silk products—came to account for a large portion of the country's exports, leading Japan to be regarded as the world's silk supplier. The techniques for machine weaving *habutae* in wider widths for dress yardage for export were also developed, especially in Fukui and Kiryu in the second half of the 1880s.

When handkerchief production began in Yokohama, local craftsmen employed two different methods of printing handkerchiefs. The first was block printing called *tonton-nassen* (*tonton* pattern printing). It evolved out of the *ukiyo-e*[3] paper printing technique which, in the Edo period, used engraved wooden blocks to make the famous 'Japanese prints'; these depicted popular Kabuki actors, beautiful women and landscapes (Fig. 4.1). *Tonton-nassen* used similar engraved woodblocks to print on silk fabric (Fig. 4.2). In fact, most of the craftsmen of *tonton-nasse*n were trained as paper printers of *ukiyo-es.* The second technique, *sarasa-nassen*, entailed the traditional techniques of *katazome*, or paper-stencil dyeing, normally used to produce *sarasa* kimonos. One of the oldest objects in the Narita collection at the Silk Museum is a handkerchief with motifs of typical Japanese images—cherry blossoms and the rising sun—made for the North American market using paper stencil and hand-brush dyeing. *Sarasa* is the name of a type of printed kimono fabric with exotic floral motifs, inspired by mordant-painted and resist-dyed cottons (chintz) imported from India in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and which was later imitated with techniques of *katazome* or *yuzen*[4] originally developed in Japan. From the end of the nineteenth century, another method termed *katazome* became popular. It was also adapted from a traditional technique of kimono dyeing known as '*kata-yuzen*', a process employing engraved paper and glue. Anyway, whatever technique they used, the craftsmen who printed handkerchiefs were all addressed as *sarasa-ya* (sarasa-makers) in Yokohama. A primitive technique of

[3] 'Ukiyo-e' is a genre of woodblock prints that developed into a popular art and flourished due to the achievement of well-known artists such as Utamaro, Hokusai and Sharaku from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries. After the Meiji Restoration of 1868, ukiyo-e production went into steep decline.

[4] *Yuzen* is a process of dyeing, drawing white patterns with glue made of rice flour at first and adding colours inside patterns later. *Kata-Yuzen* is a process of dyeing, using engraved papers and glue.

Fig. 4.1 Calendar distributed to customers, based on a Japanese woodblock print. Kawamata Silk Refining Co. Ltd., ca. 1910. Ukiyo-e, hand-print with woodblock on paper, 375 mm × 250 mm. (With permission and courtesy of Silk Museum, Narita collection, no number)

Fig. 4.2 Handkerchief for North American markets, Narita Co. Ltd., ca. 1924–1926. Silk printed with engraved woodblocks (*tonton-nassen*), 215 mm × 210 mm. (With permission and courtesy of Silk Museum, Narita collection No. 128)

screen-printing, using silk gauze plastered on carving paper, was also invented in the 1910s.[5]

Most handkerchief entrepreneurs were Yokohama silk traders who enjoyed close connections with weavers in Kiryu, a centre of silk kimono weaving in the Jyoshu region. The production of handkerchiefs and

[5] Yokohama City Labor and Welfare Foundation, *A Special Exhibition of Yokohama Scarves: from Wooden Printed Sarasa to Contemporaries* (Yokohama: Yokohama City Labor and Welfare Foundation, 1989), pp. 9–25.

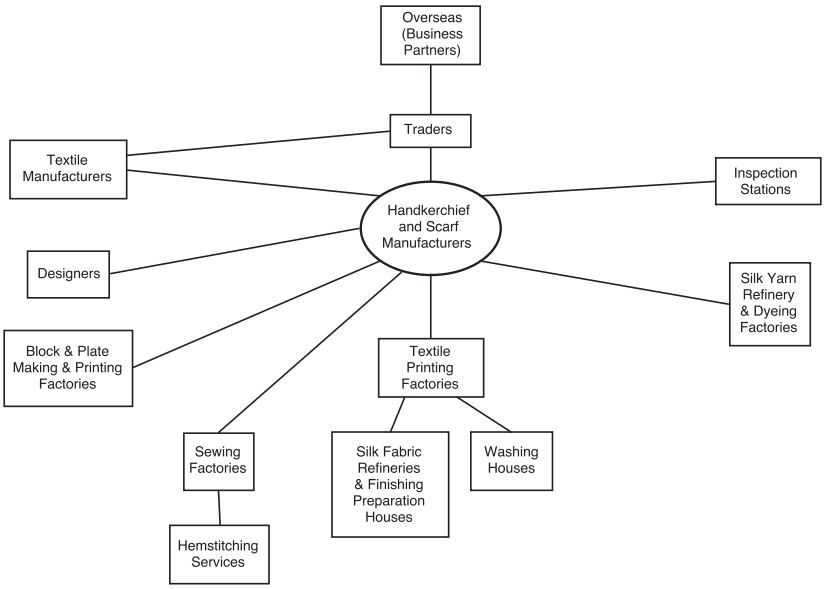

Fig. 4.3 The specialized production system of handkerchiefs and scarves based on historic kimono production system. (Research center of the economy of Kanagawa 1981a: 2)

scarves grew out of the longstanding and specialized system of traditional kimono production (Fig. 4.3). Some of the producers established their own dyeing factories, but most of them subcontracted to small factories in Yokohama specialized in each specific field in order to meet the orders placed by foreign merchants. It appears that the traditional organization of kimono production largely guided and aided this division of labour in the production of handkerchiefs and scarves for export. Yokohama manufacturers also benefited from the fact that craftsmen and labourers flocked to Yokohama from far and wide; unfortunately, during the political upheavals of the Meiji Restoration, many of the craftsmen and workers, who had moved to Yokohama in the hopes of making a fortune in a new field, lost their jobs. In addition, because Yokohama was the biggest port town in eastern Japan, these producers were able to tap the labour

of local women for tasks such as hemstitching handkerchiefs at home as their seafaring husbands were often away on lengthy sea voyages.[6]

On the other hand, the Meiji government pursued a policy of promoting the modernization of the textile industry, sending delegations and students to Western countries to learn of modern machinery and the latest techniques for producing textiles. In 1872, five years after the Meiji Restoration, the Tomioka Silk Mill was established by the Japanese government in Tomioka City in Joshu so as to improve the quality of raw silk, as a model filature facility equipped with modern reeling machinery with 300 basins. It was the biggest silk reeling factory in the world at that time, employing large numbers of female workers from across Japan to work on the silk-reeling machines; most of these women were sponsored by their local governments or local entrepreneurs, who sent them in the hopes that they might learn and then, on their return, teach modern reeling techniques to their homeland facilities. Hirobumi Ito, the first Prime Minister of Japan, was mainly responsible for planning the Tomioka Silk Mill; another leader associated with this project was Eiich Shibusawa, an industrialist widely known as the 'Father of Japanese Capitalism', who founded hundreds of joint-stock corporations, including Japan's first modern bank, based on joint-stock ownership. Sibusawa established another modern spinning industry, too; this was the Osaka-Boseki (Osaka Spinning Company, later Touyou-bou) in Osaka in 1882, equipped with mule spinning machines with 10,500 spindles driven by steam turbines. He later founded more than twenty spinning companies in Osaka. Due to this growth in textile industries, Osaka became known as 'The Manchester of the Orient'. At the same time, the import of synthetic dyestuffs increased yearly after the opening of the Yokohama port, as the new vivid colours gained great popularity. However, the dyers in Kyoto and Hachioji who adopted these new dyestuffs quickly developed bad reputations because their colours were not initially colourfast, due

[6]Yokohama used to be noted for these women workers, called 'Hankechi Onna' (handkerchief women), who earned as much as men and could be seen dressing up and attending a Kabuki theatre in the centre of Yokohama during the two monthly holidays; they became so well-known for this that the theatre was called 'Hankechi-za' (handkerchief theatre) and their favourite actors were known as 'Hankechi.Yakusha' (handkerchief actors). See Yokohama City Labor and Welfare Foundation, *A Special Exhibition of Yokohama Scarves*, p. 27.

to inadequate knowledge of chemical dyes. In 1885, Katsutaro Inabata,[7] who had been sent on scholarship to the La Martinière technical school in Lyon by the Kyoto prefecture, returned to Japan and introduced the weaving and dying techniques learned during his stay in France for eight years. He also taught at the Dyer Training School of Kyoto Prefecture, and later started his own company specialized in importing dyestuffs.

Like the silk traders of Yokohama who worked in close cooperation with people in the silk weaving centres of northern Japan, traders in the port of Kobe, the second biggest port in Japan, developed close ties to the Senshu area, a great cotton producing area located in the southern part of Osaka, the largest economic centre in western Japan, and to Fukui, located in the northeast of Osaka. After 1893, when a regular shipping service from Bombay to Kobe began, locally grown cotton was replaced with imported cotton yarn, mainly from India, but Osaka remained the major producer of cotton cloth. Printed fabrics of silk were then exported mainly from the port of Yokohama, and printed fabrics of cotton mainly from the port of Kobe.

The Sharp Increase in the Export of Silk Handkerchiefs and Scarves from Japan in the Interwar Period

In 1885, Japanese merchants began exporting silk handkerchiefs of *habutae* to India.[8] Soon, India became one of the most important destination countries for Japanese textile exports. A French silk trader named Menir exported *habutae* silk handkerchiefs with designs printed using woodblocks, causing a sensation in France in 1890.[9] The export volume of Japanese handkerchiefs gradually increased. By 1903, silk handkerchiefs, scarves and textiles were exported on a large scale from Yokohama to Burma, marking the beginning of Japan's export en masse of silk

[7] Inabata had made the acquaintance of Auguste Lumière, attending the same school in Lyon. After establishing himself as a successful businessman, he was followed by François-Constant Girel, a Lumière Cinématographe operator, on his return from his second journey to France in 1896 and showed the first projected film in Japan at the Nanchi Theatre in Osaka in 1897.

[8] Yokohama City Labor and Welfare Foundation, *A Special Exhibition of Yokohama Scarves,* p. 9.

[9] Gilda Yokohama *Scarf, Yokohama Printing: The Path of 120 Years* (Yokohama: Kagennsha, 1997), p. 9.

handkerchiefs and scarves intended for Asian and African markets. In 1910, Japanese silk textiles decorated with *sarasa* patterns found promising markets in Singapore and Manila. In 1918, the effects of World War I slowed the export of silk goods from France, Italy and Switzerland, forcing a sudden spike in demand for Japanese silk goods in the international market. At that time, some 2.5 million handkerchiefs were exported, comprising two thirds of the total volume of all Japanese silk goods exported.[10]

Many European, American, Chinese and Indian traders involved in the silk trade converged on Yokohama at this time. Indian merchants made up one of the largest foreign communities in this port town. In 1918, there were about sixty Indian trading houses in Yokohama, at first manned mainly by Parsis, who shipped about 30 percent of the total volume of Yokohama's silk textiles exports.[11] After the regular shipping service between Yokohama and Bombay began in 1893, the number of Indian traders from the province of Sind inhabiting this city increased. They specialized in the trade of silk cloth and oriental curios. They aimed their trade, at first, towards Egypt in the 1860s, and expanded their business to Japan in the 1890s.[12] In 1923, the city of Yokohama was destroyed by the Kanto Earthquake and many Indian merchants moved from Yokohama to Kobe. However, a collection of export scarves and

[10] Research on the history and economics of the Yokohama silk handkerchief industry increased especially over these thirty years. For examples of such scholarship, see The Society for the Publication of the History of Yokohama Silk Industry for Export, *The History of the Export Silk Industry of Yokohama* (Yokohama: The Society of Publication of the History of Silk Industry for Export of Yokohama, 1958); The Industrial Guild of Japanese Scarves for Export, *The History and Development of Printing Industry in Yokohama* (Yokohama: Industrial Guild of Japanese Scarves for Export, 1980); The Industrial Guild of Japanese Scarves for Export, *The Genealogy of the Industry of Yokohama Scarves: Its Organization and Members* (Yokohama: Industrial Guild of Japanese Scarves for Export, 1989); The Research Center of the Economy of Kanagawa, *Outline of Yokohama Scarves, The Handbook of Yokohama Scarves* (Yokohama: Research Center of the Economy of Kanagawa, 1981); The Research Center of the Economy of Kanagawa, *The History of Yokohama Scarves: The Handbook of Yokohama Scarves* (Yokohama: Research Center of the Economy of Kanagawa, 1981); Gilda Yokohama *Scarf, Yokohama Printing: The Path of 120 Years* (Yokohama: Kagenn-sha, 1997).

[11] The Society for the Publication of the History of Yokohama Silk Industry for Export, *The History of the Export Silk Industry of Yokohama*, pp. 110–121.

[12] Claude Markovits, *The Global World of Indian Merchants 1750–1947: Traders of Sind from Bukhara to Panama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 195.

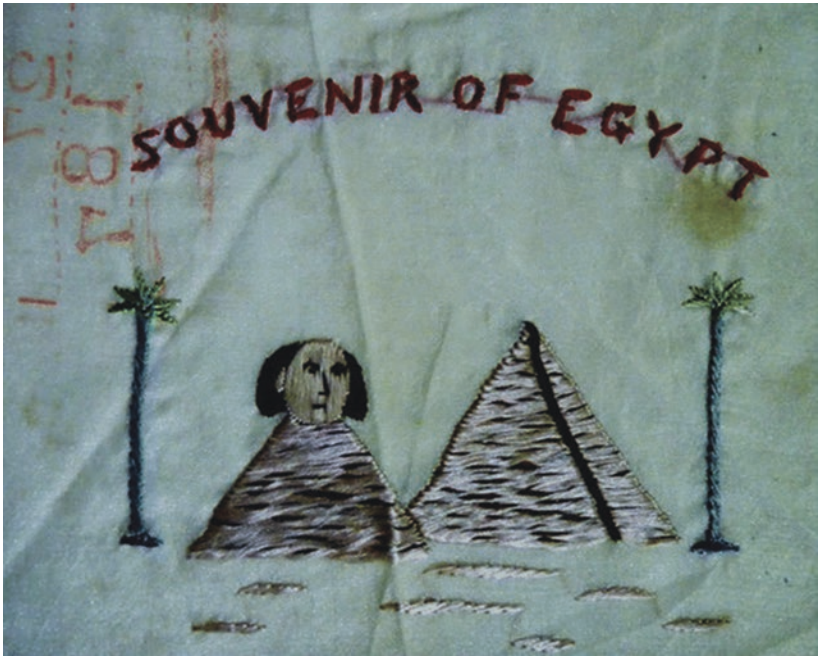

Fig. 4.4 Embroidered handkerchief for the Egyptian souvenir market, Narita Co. Ltd., ca. the end of the 1920s. Embroidered silk, 220 mm × 193 mm. (With permission and courtesy of Silk Museum, Narita collection No. 225)

handkerchiefs produced by the Yokohama-based Narita Co. Ltd., now in the Silk Museum, includes two silk pieces hand-embroidered with the words 'Souvenir of Egypt', probably made at the end of the 1920s (Fig. 4.4). These artefacts indicate that the overseas market for Japanese handkerchiefs and scarves extended through global networks of Indian traders, and that Yokohama remained an important production centre of souvenir handkerchiefs for the world market well into the 1920s.

In 1927, the modern technique of screen-printing for applying colour to silk textiles was introduced from America to Japan and quickly embraced. By 1932, Japanese screen-printed silk goods were already exported to fifty-two countries, while the quantity of handkerchiefs exported increased to about 6.6 million. In the 1930s, the Japanese silk

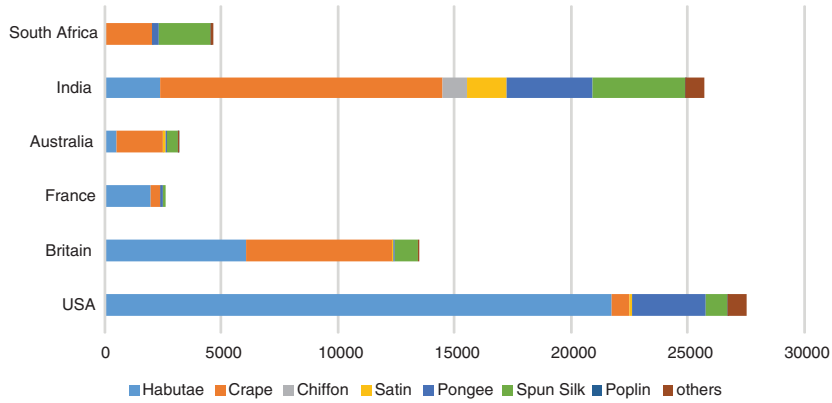

Fig. 4.5 Quantities and varieties of Japan's exported fabrics in 1937 (unit: 1,000 yen; based on the statistics of Futami ed. 1958: 13–19)

textile industry made great progress in technological innovation and developed a variety of silk textile weaves. In addition to *habutae*, *chirimen* (crêpe), satin, taffeta, *mon-habutae* (jacquard-habutae) and *kabe-chirimen* (bumpy textured crêpe), mixed satin and poplin were produced.

Distinct regional and national markets emerged for different types of Japanese products. The table in Fig. 4.5 demonstrates that, in European and American markets, scarves made of *habutae* were preferred in the 1930s, whereas in African markets those of spun silk were in demand. In India, Japanese silk crêpe fabrics were in highest demand.

The export of cotton printed fabric increased even more dramatically in the 1910s, outpacing that of silk by 1915 (Fig. 4.5). Till that time, between the Japan–China war of 1894 and World War I, big spinning factories-cum-trading companies of cotton—such as Osaka Boseki; Nihon Menka, founded in 1892; and Kanebo, founded in 1888—enlarged the scale by merger and acquisition of affiliated companies and established a multifarious mass-production system with a number of factories, each specialized in the production of specific yarn counts. They then went into the business of weaving fabrics, thereafter advancing into the dyeing industry and thereby developing a characteristic Japanese production system with production management devices,

improved productivity through technological development and motivation enhancement of factory workers in the 1920s.[13]

Trading firms of many nationalities specialized in exports to specific markets. Chinese and English traders exported a large volume of handkerchiefs and scarves from Japan to China and Southeast Asia, while Indian traders mainly sent Japanese silks goods to the USA, Bombay, Calcutta, Burma, Europe and South Africa via Shanghai and Singapore. European and American trading firms started exporting Japanese silk goods to West African countries—at first via London or Belgium, though later Japanese trading companies overtook these firms. One of these traders, Nishizawa Ltd., established in 1915 in Osaka, became a pioneer export trader specialized in cotton printing for African markets.[14] Osaka Shosen Kaihsa opened the first line to South Africa in 1916, followed by an East African line in 1926. This inspired three large trading companies—Nihon Menka; Toyo Menka, founded in 1920; and Gosho, founded in 1891—to establish branch offices in East Africa in order to promote the import of cotton and artificial silk fabric in African countries.[15] So, Japanese companies, too, opened outlets in East and Southern Africa. Japanese traders' rapid advance into these local markets was due, in part, to the proactive role of Japanese consulates, which conducted market research in each country as soon as diplomatic relations were established and also, in part, to their close relationship with Indian merchants settled in Yokohama and Kobe who had worldwide trade networks including East and West Africa.

From the 1930s onward, in response to changing African consumer demand, Japan no longer simply replicated European fabrics but, rather, actively created and produced new design lines for niche ethnic markets. During the 1930s, the dramatic increase in Japanese exports to Africa led European colonial powers, Britain in particular, to try to halt Japan's penetration into that continent. Across Africa, they erected barriers to Japanese exports in an attempt to retain markets for their own goods.[16]

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[13] K. Kitagawa, 'Japan's Economic Relations with Africa between the Wars: A Study of Japanese Consular Reports,' *African Study Monographs*, vol. 11–13 (1990).

[14] S. Nishizawa, *A Monologue* (Yokohama: Matrix Co. Ltd., 1953).

[15] Kitagawa, 'Japan's Economic Relations with Africa between the Wars', pp. 133–136.

[16] Ochonu, *Colonial Meltdown*, pp. 38–39.

However, so popular was the fabric, it was only the outbreak of World War II that finally put a near stop to Japan's exports to Africa.

The Export of Japanese Scarves and Printed Cotton Fabrics in the Postwar Period

After World War II, policy makers hoped the restoration of the textile industry would be a main driver in Japan's postwar rehabilitation. In 1947, to support reconstruction of the Japanese economy, the GHQ and the Japanese government negotiated the importing of American cotton fabrics in order to promote Japan's textile dyeing industry for export. Many dyeing factories, including those which had previously mainly supplied domestic markets before the War, started to produce printed cotton textiles for export. For example, the Daido-Senko (Daido Dying Factory), which was founded in Kyoto in 1942 and enjoyed a good reputation for its high-quality dyeing, received the first postwar order for striped printed fabrics for Indonesia. This was a turning point that quickly led to the expansion of production for export to other niche markets elsewhere in Asia and Africa: wax prints, blue prints, *kanga* prints for African markets, sarees for Indian markets, batik salons for Indonesian markets, and pha-sins for Thai and Burmese markets.[17] The accelerated export growth of the Japanese printed cotton fabrics is discussed in detail later in the chapter.

During the period of the American occupation of Japan following World War II, a female American officer took notice of the hand-printed scarves of Yokohama and approached a department store in the USA about marketing them. The response was favourable and thus the export of Japanese handkerchiefs and scarves was renewed. In particular, handkerchiefs and scarves hand-painted with exotic Japanese scenery and motifs became very popular souvenirs with US Army personnel, and consequently the export of scarves for the American market from the port of Yokohama increased quite rapidly.

However, Japan's success in the export of scarves caused deep resentment among American merchants in the same line of business. They

[17] A. Nomoto, 'My memories of the days when I joined the company at the time of postwar economic rehabilitation', *Reminiscence, Memories of Daido Maruta Dyeing Factory Co. Ltd.* (Kyoto: Daido Maruta-Kai, 2009), p. 11.

pushed the US government to restrict the import of Japanese scarves, leading in 1954 to the enactment of the Law of Inflammable Weaving, which all but prohibited the import of cheaper lightweight silk scarves. Yokohama silk scarf traders were thus forced to shift their export priorities away from the American market to other markets, not only those of Europe, but also those of Africa, South Asia and the Middle East. A table of cloth categories used by the Cooperative Society of Yokohama Scarves for Export reveals that a scarf was defined as having one side longer than 10 inches (25.4cm) and the other greater than 24 inches (60.96cm); listings under the general term 'scarves' included *duppatas* and *odanis*, types of women's shawls worn in South Asia, and *kanga*, wrappers used as dress in East Africa, while sarees were excluded from this category of fabrics.[18]

Most Yokohama factories printed scarf designs based on orders from traders who were well-informed about the tastes and preferences of consumers in each market. A survey of the collection of the Industrial Guild of Japanese Scarves for Export housed at the Industrial Technique Promotion Center at Yokohama,[19] which consists of the samples of scarves exported from Yokohama between the 1950s and the 1980s, shows that, at that time, Japan exported to African countries various printed designs inspired by local tastes. For example, Islamic motifs such as Mosques were mainly exported to the Middle East and North Africa; imitations of the patterns of local textiles and various kinds of African prints, originally derived from Indonesian batik dyeing, were mainly exported to West Africa (Fig. 4.6), with specific designs of *kanga*, exported to East Africa. Scarf designs and motifs could also relate to ethnic identities, political messages and colonial patriotism (Fig. 4.7).[20]

[18] Research Centre of the Economy of Kanagawa 1981: front page.

[19] A study is currently being conducted on 40,000 samples from the collection of the Industrial Guild of Japanese Scarves for Export by the research group organized by Yokohama Industrial Technique Promotion Center.

[20] S. Sugimoto, 'Product Distribution of Japanese Scarves for Export to Asian and African Markets and Change of Local Fashions – a research on the collection of sample scarves for export of Yokohama Industrial Technique Promotion Center' (*Research Report-Project for Revitalizing Industry with Effective Utilization of Regional Resources* (Yokohama: Economic Affairs Bureau of Yokohama City, 2013), pp. 50–53.

Fig. 4.6 Sample fabric of a scarf for export to West Africa, with feather pattern, in imitation of batik printing. Sanwa Trading Company, ca. 1957. Synthetic fabric, 35 inches × 35 inches. (With permission and courtesy of Industrial Technique Promotion Center, Economic Affairs Bureau of Yokohama City No. 11762)

Japan's production of printed scarves for foreign niche markets continued to grow, especially in the 1960s and in the 1970s. The shift in export from American markets to Asian and African markets prompted a change in the materials used to manufacture scarves, as African consumers tended to prefer fabrics of artificial fiber. According to statistics compiled by the Industrial Guild of Japanese Scarves for Export, Japanese rayon scarves became incredibly popular in African markets between 1959 and 1965, leading to a boom in the production of nylon and polyester scarves (Fig. 4.8). In the markets of South Asia and the Middle East, the demand for synthetic scarves grew only during the latter half of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s (Fig. 4.9) so that, in 1984,

Fig. 4.7 Sample fabric of a scarf for export to Mombasa, Kenya, with imagery of Queen Elizabeth and her children. Sanyo Sangyo Co. Ltd., ca. 1957. Silk Satin. Half of a square 29 inches × 29 inches. (With permission and courtesy of Industrial Technique Promotion Center, Economic Affairs Bureau of Yokohama City No. 4649c)

these markets continued to absorb the majority of all Japan's exported silk products.

Another example of a successful 'ethnic' costume made of polyester fabric produced in Japan especially for foreign markets was the *abaya*, a tunic worn by Muslim women in many parts of the world. For creating its *abaya*, the Teijin company transferred dyeing techniques used traditionally for making black mourning kimonos, and the resulting high-quality 'Teijin black' earned a high reputation in the markets of the Muslim world.

Cotton Printed Fabrics Exported to African Markets

A large degree of overlap existed between the manufacturers and traders of synthetic scarves and those who dealt in silk textiles in Yokohama. However, the producers of synthetic and cotton fabric were mainly companies based in the Kansai region, who sold their products to big trading

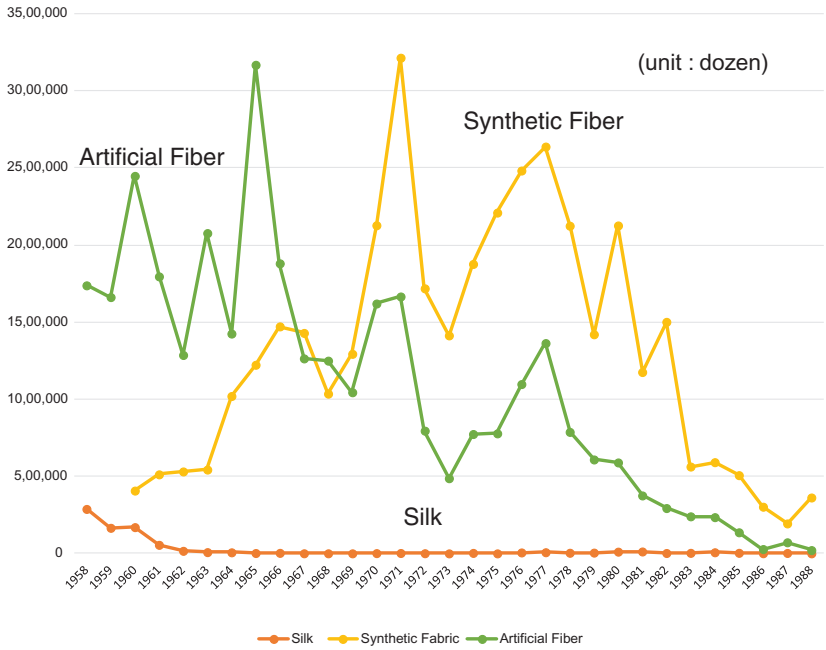

Fig. 4.8 Gross volume of exported scarves for African markets classified by materials (based on the statistics of the Industrial Guild of Japanese Scarves for Export 1989: pp. 145–155)

firms generally called '*shosha*', notably Itochu, Marubeni, Toyo Cotton and Nichimen (Nihon Menka), all originally textile traders. In the 1950s and 1960s, most of these big trading companies, in competition with one another, became core components of the *keiretsu* (series, grouping of enterprises) business model, in which they exchanged contracts with a set of local companies with interlocking business relationships. The *keiretsu* system for textile production was also modelled on the specialized production system based on the traditional kimono production system. To meet orders for specific types or qualities, big trading companies outsourced, depending on the *keiretsu*, to specific weaving factories in Fukui and to specific dyeing factories in Kyoto, Shiga and Wakayama. Even for such limited production runs as printed fabrics for African markets, various dyeing factories—such as Shonan Kogyo, Daido Senko, Osaka Senko, and Toyo Boseki, who each had a favourite technical field

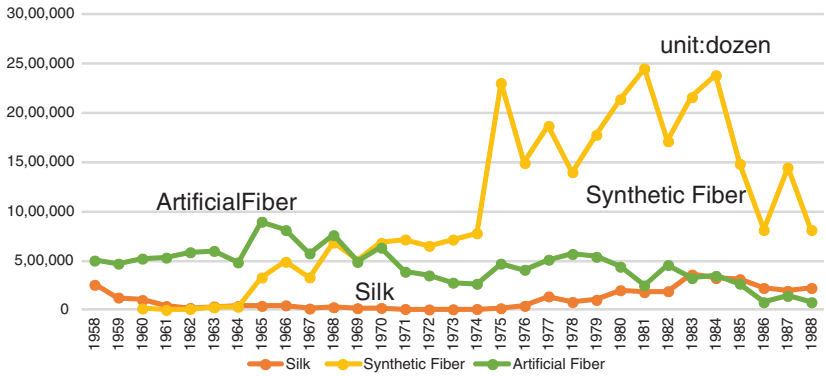

Fig. 4.9 Gross volume of exported scarves for Middle East markets classified by materials (based on the statistics of the Industrial Guild of Japanese Scarves for Export 1989: pp. 145–155)

of production—competed for the volumes for export and the techniques of dyeing under this *keiretsu* system. For example, Shonan Kogyo far surpassed other companies in *kanga* printing for East African markets, while Daido Senko, excelled in 'Wax' (imitation wax) printing for West African markets.

In 1958, Daido Senko (from 1975, Daido Maruta Senko) produced three million yards of printed cotton fabrics per month, one third of which was for export to the African market, with two thirds of this export being 'Wax' prints for Nigerian markets.[21] Daido Senko initially learned the imitation wax techniques from Dutch companies, and soon surpassed them in quality. Their imitation wax printing was intended to recreate delicate nuances like those of hand-printed *Java batik*, with cracks, smudges, blurs and shaded colour all reproduced with six or seven rolls carved by skilled engravers in Kyoto, the most famous centre of *kata-zome* kimono dyeing. The company also invented an original technique for 'Green Wax' printing, which produced a vivid green colour highly sought-after in East Africa in the 1960s and 1970s (Fig. 4.10). At the height of the production for African markets, Daido Senko

[21] M. Matsui, 'The Construction of the Production System of Japanese Spinning Industry—with a view of International Comparison' (*Tokyo University Manufacturing Management Research Center, Discussion Paper* No. 31 (2009), p. 41.

Fig. 4.10 Printed wrapper for African market, with fish and flower motifs. Cotton printed and dyed with the 'Green Wax' printing technique, 1098 mm × 1610 mm. (With permission and courtesy of the Kyoto Institute of Technology Museum and Archivse, Daido-Maruta Collection No. AN.5680-356)

exported 'Wax' prints to West Africa (Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Ghana, Liberia, Congo and Togo) through Marubeni, who signed a deal mainly with Lebanese buyers, totalling 900 thousand yards per year; and to East Africa (Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania) it exported *kanga* through Nishizawa, who negotiated mainly with Indian buyers for eleven thousand yards per year, with new or repeated designs during the run. At particular times—for example, on the occasions of presidential elections, birthdays of presidents, state anniversaries, national holidays, and so on—the company got orders for more than fifty thousand yards per design. However, the boom of 'Green Wax' printing ended in the second half of the 1970s, when companies were forced to give up the chemical dyes necessary for achieving the colour by the Japanese government's imposition of strict environmental standards. To this day, no producer has been able to develop a superior method for dyeing a vivid

green colour which the company had realized in their earlier 'Green Wax' printing. In this context, the Ministry of International Trade and Industry started encouraging the textile companies to shift production from cotton goods, whose raw material was entirely imported, to those made of synthetic fibre, whose raw material requirement was fully met by domestic production. All the same, cotton fabrics remained the largest export item between 1972 and 1976.

In 1986, the value of the yen rose drastically, striking a serious blow to Japanese export industries. Dido Senko changed its management policies to place greater weight on the production of high-quality articles for European and American markets or domestic markets. Most Japanese companies withdrew altogether from the export business of scarves in the 1990s. A reflection of the decline may be noted in the fact that the Industrial Guild of Japanese Scarves for Export stopped asking traders to submit samples of scarves manufactured for export. Consequently, Yokohama scarf manufacturers were forced to turn to the domestic market.

The Export of 'Japan Sarees (Japanese Sarees)'

The origin of the exportation of sarees from Japan may be traced back to the export of *habutae* textiles to India at the end of the nineteenth century. From this time onward, many printing factories in the Yokohama region filled orders for sarees and *dupattas* through dyeing and printing them by hand alongside the manufacturing of handkerchiefs and scarves. As noted previously, India was the major consumer of Japanese crêpe silk. So important was the Indian market that even the development of synthetic textiles in Japan was driven more by the demand of Indian consumers than by the domestic market. In 1925, Fukui began the production of fabrics made of rayon for export and this was well-developed in the 1930s. Synthetic sarees were likely also exported before World War II by other textile companies—such as Teikoku Jinzo Kensi, founded in 1918; Toyo Rayon, founded in 1926; Toyobo (originally Osaka Boseki), which started producing Rayon textiles in 1927; and Kanebo, founded as a cotton spinning-cum-trading company in 1887 before it moved into synthetic textile production in 1934.

However, the real boom for Japanese synthetic sarees—generally called 'Japan sarees' today—started in the 1960s, when large textile companies such as Teijin, Toyobo, To-Re (Toyo Rayon) and Kanebo

promoted the large-scale direct trade of sarees and other items produced for foreign markets to South Asia, the Middle East and Africa. Most of these big textile companies produced machine-made and machine-dyed cotton and synthetic textiles at their large factories in the Kansai region, or outsourced to factories in Fukui.

High-quality Japanese synthetic sarees were usually more expensive than ordinary synthetic sarees, and sometimes even more expensive than Indian printed silk sarees. However, soon after the introduction of Japan sarees, they were widely accepted by the trendsetters of the upper class as luxury products. Japanese sarees were avidly sought by women in India as well as by the Indian diaspora all over the world, especially in Singapore, East Africa, South Africa, Mauritius and North America during the 1970s. The dyeing and printing techniques employed in the manufacture of Japan sarees—honed over centuries of kimono production—were highly acclaimed by Indian consumers. The design of many Japan sarees, especially hand-painted floral motifs that were typical patterns of *yuzen* kimonos, appealed to Indian consumers' taste for exotic designs. As new motifs such as paisley, polka dots and geometric patterns had already been adopted into kimono designs after the Meiji Restoration, Japanese designers were eager and adept at experimenting with redesigning sarees with modern patterns.

Japanese textile companies also developed new fabrics for sarees. Kanebo created new varieties of textiles, for instance, by combining different weaving techniques such as lacing plain fabric with gold thread and using dobby and jacquard looms to create delicate nuances. During this time, the local demand for kimonos was declining, and so factories employing skilled textile craftsmen redirected their energies to developing synthetic materials for sarees.

Along with technological innovations in textile production, Japanese textile companies adopted also successful publicity strategies. For example, to advertise its new sarees, Kanebo created posters with India's most famous film star of the day, Hema Malini, modelling its wares. In response, Teijin hired Rekha, another young rising actress in Mumbai, as a model for its new transparent polyester sarees (Fig. 4.11). These advertisements not only impressed Indian consumers with the visual qualities of their products, but also communicated the idea that Japan sarees were not just substitutes for silk sarees but, rather, were high-quality modern versions.

Fig. 4.11 Photo made for a poster advertising Japanese synthetic sarees featuring the actress Rekha. Teijin Co. Ltd., ca. 1970s. (Collection of the author)

The export boom of Japanese sarees came to an end with the aforementioned increase in value of the yen at the end of the 1980s. A few firms have continued the trade of Japanese synthetic sarees to this very day, however, maintaining a stable trade with the Indian market.

Conclusion

In spite of its expertise in kimono production and trade, Japan lacked both the technical expertise required for power looms and chemical dyes when the port of Yokohama was opened for external trade in 1859. This chapter has highlighted the issues in the ensuing evolution of the textile industry in Japan, focusing mainly on the technological developments and changing fashion trends that drove it. So, too, it has underscored the importance of recognizing the contributions from historic kimono manufacturing—the expertise of Japanese weavers and traders gained over centuries—in the rapid development of Japan's modern textile industry after the Meiji Restoration. The volume and fashion contours of consumer demand in Asian and African markets also shaped the development of the Japanese textile industry. At the end of the nineteenth century, Japanese companies expanded their business by using cheaper labour and by exporting cheap substitutions of European (originally Indian or Indonesian) printed fabrics for dress in Africa. Then, to meet the stiff competition not only with Western countries, but also with competing Japanese firms, Japanese traders developed a specific fabric production system characterized by a scheme of multifarious mass-production, later organizing the *keiretsu* system, corresponding to the variegated niche costume markets and changing fashion trends in Asian and African countries. Another good example of the strong influence of these niche-clothing markets to the development of the Japanese textile industry was illustrated in the export of synthetic textiles to Indian markets. Taking advantage of the export of fabrics in artificial silk to India in the 1920s, Japan promoted its synthetic textile production, improving the technology and supply system for exports, with a resultant boom in Japan sarees that gained popularity with high-end users as a high-quality product in the 1960s.

In the 1960s and the 1970s, Asian and African countries demanded that the Japanese government provide a technology transfer through the creation of joint ventures of textile factories to counterbalance the unfavourable balance of trade, with a great excess of imports from Japan over exports. Most of the Japanese *shoshas* (big trading companies) engaged in these aid programmes planned by inter-governmental agreements. It is well-known that Nishizawa established a joint factory to help the developing textile industry in Nigeria. With the decline in the volume of textile exports to Asian and African countries, *shoshas* obliged Japanese

textile factories to join these programmes, and to send their engineers to Asian and African countries to teach management and techniques to local people and thus to make good use of the latest weaving or dyeing equipment with the help of the aid programmes. As the domestic textile industry grew in Asian and African regions in the 1980s and 1990s, the markets for Japanese export textiles gradually declined. Thus the flourishing export trade of Japanese textiles eventually came to an end. Most of the large dyeing companies, including Daido Maruta and Showas Sangyo, were closed at the beginning of the twenty-first century. However, companies such as Teijin and To-Re have continued to this day to sell high-quality synthetic sarees, *abaya* and *thawb* to Middle Eastern countries. In 2014, Asahi-Kasei decided to accelerate the production of a branded material named '*bemberg*', again for sarees, targeting the developing Indian middle-class population, which still appreciates Japanese textiles. Thus, Japanese textile companies seem to owe their survival to specializing in exporting top-quality textiles for niche clothing markets in the Indian Ocean world.

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CHAPTER 5

Kanga Made in Japan: The Flow from the Eastern to the Western End of the Indian Ocean World

Hideaki Suzuki

Introduction

While in Kachchh, western India, interviewing veteran members of the mercantile communities who had engaged in business along the East African coast, I was often told stories of Japanese businessmen who sold cotton cloth there. My informants said the Japanese regularly visited their shops with samples and, if orders were placed, then, after a few months, finished products would arrive in their shops. My Indian interviewees were all over eighty years old and some had definitively left the east coast of Africa in the mid-twentieth century. Not surprisingly, they were unable to remember exact dates or further details such as the names of the Japanese businessmen or the companies they belonged to. However, all agreed that this took place sometime before the 1970s. Later, I was fortunate enough to connect with two Japanese businessmen who had sold Japanese cotton textiles in East Africa between the 1960s and 1980s, and found that *kanga*, a printed cotton textile commonly

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worn by women, was one of their most important items. This chapter aims to recapture the history of Japanese *kanga* in the context of the Indian Ocean world.

Japanese *kanga* is an interesting lens through which to explore Japanese–African relations, as the existing Japanese literature shows.[1] However, it is an interesting subject, too, for the history of the Indian Ocean world more widely as it encompasses the eastern and western ends of the region. As a historical sphere, the Indian Ocean world is often extended beyond its strict geographical definition and, frequently, historians choose to draw the map of this world so as to cover the whole of the maritime region between the east coast of Africa and East Asia, including Japan.[2] Nonetheless, evidence of close contact between these two far ends—the east coast of Africa and Japan—has thus far not been presented clearly in the context of Indian Ocean world history. Although early modern Japanese ceramics have been found at archaeological sites along the East African coast, we do not know precisely how they got there.[3]

And yet, studying the *kanga* within the framework of the Indian Ocean world is not so straightforward: until recently, conventional wisdom held that this maritime world began to collapse from the mid-eighteenth century as it was subsumed by the expanding global economy and colonialism.[4] Thus, one might claim that Japanese *kanga*, appearing only in the 1920s, lies outside the scope of that conventional wisdom.

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[1] Toshi Okakura and Katsuhiko Kitagawa, *Nihon-Afurika kōryū-shi: Meiji-ki kara dai-ni-ji sekai taisen made* (Tokyo: Dōbunsha, 1993); Chieko Orimoto, *Kanga ni miserarte: Higashi-Afurika no mahou no nuno* (Tokyo: Rengō Shuppan, 1998).

[2] For example, see Kirti N. Chaudhuri, *Trade and Civilisation in the Indian Ocean: An Economic History from the Rise of Islam to 1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Hikoichi Yajima, *Umi ga tsukuru bunmei: Indo- yo kaiiki sekai no rekishi* (Tokyo: Asahi Shinbun, 1992); Kenneth McPherson, *The Indian Ocean: a History of People and the Sea* (Delhi and New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); Milo Kearney, *The Indian Ocean in World History* (New York: Routledge, 2004).

[3] John Kirkman, *Fort Jesus: A Portuguese Fortress on East African Coast* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), p. 107; Chapurukha Kusimba, 'The Archaeology and Ethnography of Iron Metallurgy on the Kenya Coast' (Ph.D. diss., Bryn Mawr College, 1993), pp. 154–155.

[4] The work of Pedro Machado provides an excellent corrective to this view, for which see *Ocean of Trade: South Asian Merchants, Africa and the Indian Ocean, c. 1750–1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

Scholars have recently begun to reinterpret evidence, positing that the structural changes that occurred after the mid-eighteenth century were not detrimental but, rather, strengthened existing connections and even created new ones within the sphere of the Indian Ocean world.[5] For instance, Ned Bertz has recently challenged the conventional periodization of the Indian Ocean world and argued that, 'instead of being "destroyed" by colonial power, indigenous residents of the Indian Ocean adapted to the new political structures and continued to travel, trade and interact across the sea in altered relationships mediated, but not dominated, by Europeans'.[6] The spread of South Asian merchant networks, using the British imperial system, is a notable example of this process.[7] Nonetheless, additional case studies are still needed to show the continuation of these dynamics past the mid-eighteenth century, the period that—despite the recent work of scholars such as Pedro Machado—for many is still seen as having resulted in the end of this maritime world.

This study of *kanga* offers one such case study—another example of an 'altered relationship' that can reveal further dynamics in this wider maritime region. In this chapter, I trace the history of Japanese *kanga*, taking up the challenge of disentangling the knotted threads of the relations and connections that contributed to the cloth's invention and distribution. It is a challenge that will reveal that certain accumulations of connections in the Indian Ocean became entangled in new connections between the eastern and western ends of that world. Following this introduction, the chapter looks briefly at the birth of *kanga* on the East African coast and at the export of Japanese cotton products in general. It then considers Japanese interests in East African markets in the early twentieth century, and explores the origin of Japanese *kanga* production by focusing on H. Nishizawa Shōten, a pioneer of Japanese *kanga*

[5] Machado, *Ocean of Trade*.

[6] Ned Bertz, "Indian Ocean World Travellers: Moving Models in Multi-Sited Research," in *Journeys and Dwellings: Indian Ocean Themes in South Asia*, ed. Helen Basu (Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 2008), p. 28.

[7] See, for example, Claude Markovits, *Global World of Indian Merchants, 1750–1947: Traders of Sind from Bukhara to Panama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Hideaki Suzuki, "Standing on the Borderline: The Indian Merchants in the Nineteenth Century East Coast of Africa," in *Empires and Networks: Maritime Asian Experiences, 9th to 19th Century*, eds. Kayoko Fujita and Geoffrey Wade (Singapore: Singapore University Press, forthcoming).

production. The final section shifts to the postwar period; by making use of interviews, private papers provided by my informants, and articles from the trade press, I discuss the market's structure as well as the experience of Japanese businessmen selling *kanga*. Throughout this chapter, I have relied heavily on Japanese sources to capture more vividly the view from the eastern towards the western end of the Indian Ocean world.

The Birth of *Kanga* on the East African Coast and the Development of the Cotton Textile Industry in the Osaka Region

The *kanga* is a rectangular printed cotton cloth widely found throughout East Africa, particularly in coastal regions, where most women wear a matching pair, one wrapped around the waist or chest and the other over the head. A *kanga* measures about 100 centimetres by 150 centimetres and the standard design consists of a patterned border (*pindo*) running along each outer edge and a large centre-field (*mji*) emblazoned with motifs. A Swahili saying is often printed along the bottom hem. Anthropologists have ascertained that, in many cases, women use the sayings printed on the *kanga* to address others, such as husbands, friends, rivals and children, so the *kanga* is therefore not only an important part of the clothing culture of the region, but also plays an important social role as visual communication.[8]

The design origins of *kanga*, as we know the cloth today, long remained obscure, but new art historical studies have brought increasing clarity.[9] The boldly coloured and printed cloth likely appeared in its modern day incarnation in Zanzibar sometime during the 1880s, having emerged out of the convergence of African design demands and Indian

[8] Rose M. Beck, *Texte auf Textilien in Ostafrika* (Cologne: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag, 2001); Elisabeth Linnebuhr, "Kanga: Popular Cloths with Messages," in *Sokomoko: Popular Culture in East Africa*, ed. Wemer Graebner, Special Issue of *Matatu*, 9 (1992), pp. 81–90; Sherifa Zawawi, *Kanga: The Cloth that Speaks* (Bronx: Azaniya Hills Press, 2005); David Parkin, "Textile as Commodity, Dress as Text: Swahili Kanga and Women's Statements," in *Textiles in Indian Ocean* Societies, ed. Ruth Barnes (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), pp. 47–67.

[9] MacKenzie Moon Ryan, "The Global Reach of a Fashionable Commodity: A Manufacturing and Design History of *Kanga* Textiles" (Ph.D. diss., University of Florida, 2013); and Moon Ryan this volume.

and European competition for the cloth market. The wide and rapid spread of *kanga* fashion was ostensibly linked to the freeing of a large number of slaves in 1892. The social importance of *kanga* textiles on the post-abolition East African coast has been studied extensively by scholars. Laura Fair, for instance, argues that 'brightly colored *kangas*' were much preferred by female ex-slaves who 'were redefining their ethnic identities and beginning to call themselves Swahili'.[10] Similarly, Jeremy Prestholdt points out that, in post-abolition society, ex-slaves were keen to invest their resources in clothing, including *kanga*.[11] The *kanga* was thus an important element in the creation of post-abolition society on the East African coast.

Almost simultaneously with the appearance of *kanga*, Japan began to export cotton textiles. Cotton textile production is regarded as Japan's first major 'modern' industry and it continued to be its largest manufacturing sector from the late nineteenth century until the middle of the twentieth century.[12] By the end of the nineteenth century, following the success of an import substitution policy and industrial modernization while relying on a labour-intensive system, manufactured textiles became Japan's main export item.[13] Later—for example, between 1933 and 1935—textiles made up 48.2 per cent of total exports from Japan, with cotton textiles alone accounting for 20.6 per cent.[14] The export centre for cotton products was Osaka, which was the commercial capital of Japan and home to a good port suitable for large ships. Osaka's hinterland had long been an area of cotton cultivation, and the town and its neighbours had for centuries developed a high degree of craftsmanship

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[10] Laura Fair, *Pastime and Politics: Culture, Community and Identity in Post-Abolition Urban Zanzibar, 1890–1945* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2001), p. 79.

[11] Jeremy Prestholdt, *Domesticating the World: African Consumerism and the Genealogies of Globalization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), pp. 135–136.

[12] Michael Smitka, *The Textile Industry and the Rise of the Japanese Economy: Japanese Economic History 1600–1960* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1998), p. 6.

[13] Ian Inkster, *The Japanese Industrial Economy: Late Development and Cultural Causation* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), p. 200; Katsuo Iwata, *Nihon sen'i sangyō to kokusai kankei* (Kyoto: Hōritsu Bunka-sha, 1984), p. 1; Nihon sen'i kyōgi-kai nai Nihon sen'i sangyō-shi kankou iinkai, *Nihon sen'i sangyō-shi* (Tokyo: Nihon sen'i kyōgi-kai nai sen'i nenkan kankō-kai, 1958), vol. 1, p. 50; Yamada, *Nihon shihon-syugi bunseki* (Tokyo: Iwanami, 1934), pp. 19–25.

[14] "Nihon ginkō meiji-ikō honpō syuyō keizai tōkei," accessed December 23, 2016, www.nikkei.co.jp/needs/senzen/contents/index.html.

in textile production. Even after the early 1890s, when imported cotton replaced Japanese-grown cotton as the major material for textile production,[15] Osaka's pool of experienced labour enabled it to remain the centre for both the production and export of Japanese cotton textiles.[16]

The East African Boom in the 1920s and East Africa Through Japanese Eyes

It was around the 1920s that Japanese exporters began to show an interest in East African markets. Regardless of the items concerned, Japanese industrial exports had always relied largely on American, European, and Asian markets but, after World War I, the Japanese export trade took a turn for the worse due to the creation of the block economy, Chinese boycotts of Japanese products and tariff increases in British India. Pressured to find new markets, Japanese exporters looked further afield, including to East Africa.[17] Their interest in the latter further accelerated with the opening of a regular shipping route to East Africa by the Ōsaka Shōsen Kaisya (OSK Line).[18] The route was paid for by the Japanese government who, keen to extend commercial opportunities in East Africa, a market for Japanese products until then barely explored, gave the OSK an annual subsidy of 400,000 yen to operate a monthly passage.

[15] Nihon sen'i kyōgi-kai nai Nihon sen'i sangyō-shi kankou iinkai, *Nihon sen'i sangyō-shi*, p. 72.

[16] Ibid.

[17] For example, see Kikuzaburō Fukui, "Kōkeiki no tōrai wo kisuruniha mizukara kaitakushi setsuyakushi doryokuseyo," January 11–12, 1925, *Chūgai Shōgyō Shimpō* (hereafter *CSS*); "Higashi-Afurika toha," March 1–6, 14–24, 1926, Ō*saka Mainichi Shimbun* (*OMS*). See also Okakura and Kitagawa, *Nihon-Afurika kōryū-shi*, pp. 103–104.

[18] Ships set sail from Kobe and always stopped at Osaka. After that, according to demand, they stopped at Yokohama, Nagoya, and Yokkaichi before leaving Japan. After leaving Japan, they sailed on to Mombasa, arriving after thirty-five days, via Hong Kong, Singapore, and Colombo. After Mombasa, ships proceeded to Durban via Zanzibar, Dar es Salaam, Beira and Lourenço Marques. For more on this, see Ikai Shirakawa, *Jicchi tōsa Higashi-Afurika no tabi* (Tokyo: Hakubun-kan, 1928), pp. 338–339. In the same month that OSK started this regular route, the Nihon Yusen began stopping at East African ports, notably Mombasa and Lourenço Marques, on its regular route to South America.

The OSK dispatched its first ship—the *Kanada-maru*—in April 1926[19] and one of the passengers on board was Ikai Shirakawa, a journalist for the *Ōsaka Asahi Shimbun* (*OAS*), who travelled in East Africa for a couple of months with a fellow journalist. In 1928, he published the first well-informed Japanese book about East Africa entitled *Jicchi tōsa Higashi Afurika no tabi* ('A Field Report of an East African Journey'). At first glance, the book looks to be intended for general readers, but it also contained much practical information for anyone interested in exploring business opportunities in East Africa. Almost simultaneously, at least two government missions were dispatched to East Africa.[20] A year after the first voyage of the *Kanada-maru* another government mission was organized and led by Ujirō Ōyama. The members of that mission included Tei Irie, a member of the Nihon Menshifu Menka Dōgyō Kumiai (Japanese Trade Association of Cotton Textile and Raw Cotton), and they spent five months visiting Kenya, Uganda, Tanganyika, Zanzibar, Portuguese East Africa, Madagascar and Abyssinia.[21] Three reports by the Gaimushō Tsūshō-kyoku (Trade Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) were published in 1928 as a result of this mission. Following these reports, Japanese commercial interests in East Africa were further developed, particularly by Osaka-based merchants and entrepreneurs. In 1930, the Ōsaka-furitsu Bōekikan (Osaka Prefectural Institute of Trade) organized an exhibition on Africa[22] and East Africa as those markets became more deeply integrated into general Japanese commercial interests.

As Japan's main export sector was the textile industry in general, it was leaders in that sector who led the way into the East African market. For example, many of the participants at a roundtable discussion that took place at the Osaka Exhibition in 1930 were members of missions that had been sent to East Africa by textile companies such as Nihon Menka and Tōyō Menka. The Japanese textile industry was

[19] Ibid., 6. In the same month, the Nihon Yusen Kaisya (Japan Mail Steamer Company) also started to stop at Mombasa en route to South America. Ibid.

[20] "Ryoshō-tai no hakenchi," May 16, 1926, *OMS*; "Higashi-Afurika he waga shōhin hanro wo kakuchō," November 23, 1926, *CSS*; "Ryoshō miyage banashi," 1–5, June 1–5, 1927, *OMS*.

[21] Gaimushō Tsūshō-kyoku, ed., *Eiryō Higashi-Afurika Jijyō* (Tokyo: Gaimushō Tsūshō-kyoku), p. 1.

[22] Okakura and Kitagawa, *Nihon-Afurika kōryū-shi*, pp. 99–103.

seeking to find new markets for its finished products, as well as to find sources of raw cotton. In both senses, East Africa offered huge potential, and Shirakawa devoted many pages in his book to providing detailed information about cotton cultivation in East Africa; he also discussed the potential purchasing power of African consumers.[23] As for the latter, there were several reasons why Japanese exporters found the large local market ripe for rapid development, despite racialized views of the continent based on western evolutionary classifications that were prevalent at the time. For instance, the Japanese representatives classified the locals as 'uncivilized', with Nagato Yagi, another correspondent for the *OAS*, explaining the large demand for textiles in East Africa in familiar racist language; 'Their emerging demand for goods is not for shelter or for food, but first of all for clothing. This tendency is likely based on the ease of imitating appearance when the uncivilized savages come across the civilized. When they are given money, the first thing they purchase is cloth […].'[24] African consumer interest in Japanese textiles, clearly, was enough to prompt growing business interests.

Japanese Products in East Africa Before World War II

In the mid-1920s, when Shirakawa and Ōyama visited East Africa, Nihon Menka established a branch office in Mombasa, while the Bombay offices of Tōyō Menka and Kōnan Ltd. sent representatives to buy raw cotton. Furthermore, in 1926 Nihon Menka purchased a cotton gin factory near Kampala and, during the buying season, it set up a temporary office in Jinja, where Tōyō Menka had also established itself. Nihon Menka also had an office in Kampala.[25] Following World War I, the Japanese cotton industry grew rapidly enough to compete in international markets, while Uganda also increased its raw cotton production after 1903. Before Japanese companies established offices in Uganda, they had acquired raw cotton via India. Japanese interest in Uganda was thus to buy raw cotton directly and their total purchases amounted to nearly one third of

[23] Shirakawa, *Jicchi tōsa Higashi-Afurika no tabi*, pp. 6, 10, 22–25.

[24] Nagato Yagi, "Dojin no kaumono ha mazu dai-ichi ni ifuku," August 28, 1930, *OAS*. See also Kenji Kodama, "Honpō yusyutsu bōeki no Shimbunya ha higashi-Afurika," January 6, 1926, *CSS*.

[25] "Tōa to nihon", pp. 1–6, 15–25 October 1927, *OAS*.

its total cotton production.[26] As for Japanese exports, it is unclear when and how Japanese cotton products started to gain a share in East African markets although when Shirakawa visited East Africa in 1926 he noticed that Japanese textiles were already popular among the locals, writing (in the same racist language) that:

> While we Japanese feel we are far away, our products are eagerly purchased in great numbers in this East Africa. What an irony it is! Kanzu [tailored tunics for men] and Shukas [waist wraps], which primitive savages are wearing, are simply cheap clothes made in Japan. A modern savage boy wearing Japanese knitted undershirts speeds along on a bicycle […] African savages whom we recognize as specimens of savages call Japanese cheap cloth "Japani".[27]

Although this description might have been exaggerated to some extent in order to both engage the interest of Japanese readers and to encourage businessmen to extend their endeavours into East Africa, it would have been true that Japanese textiles were already fairly entrenched in the market by the time of his visit. For instance, the *OAS* reported that in both 1923 and 1924 Japanese cotton textiles accounted for over 30 per cent in monetary terms of total cotton textile imports in British East Africa[28] and, in 1925—as quoted by Shirakawa from official statistics, Kenya and Uganda together imported 275,000 lb of Japanese cotton products, amounting to 18 per cent of total imports to those markets.[29] Japan's market share in Kenya and Uganda at that time was the third largest after Britain and the Netherlands. By the following year, 1926, Japanese products had increased their share to 23 per cent, again in monetary terms—although, in terms of volume, demand actually declined between 1925 and 1926. Moreover, a fall in the price of cotton

[26] Katsuhiko Kitagawa, "*Nihon-Minami Afurika tsusho kankei-shi kenkyu*" (Ph.D diss., Graduate University for Advanced Studies, 1999), p. 137; Ujirō Ōyama, *Afurika-miyage: kidan issoku* (Tokyo: Sekirokaku shobō, 1930), pp. 120–121. These cottons were normally sent to Japan; however, if raw cotton price increased significantly in the international market, some of them were sent to Bombay or Hong Kong for resale.

[27] Shirakawa, *Jicchi tōsa Higashi-Afurika no tabi*, pp. 4–5.

[28] "Nihon-hin ga dai-ichii," September 4, 1925, *OAS*.

[29] Shirakawa, *Jicchi tōsa Higashi-Afurika no tabi*, p. 296.

reduced the value of individual transactions.[30] However, it is also possible that statistics in Kenya and Uganda did not reflect the whole picture. This is because, as Shirakawa pointed out, Japanese products were at that time often flown to East Africa via British India, mainly through Bombay, or Aden[31]; in general, Japanese exports that passed through these regions were recorded as exports from British India or its Arabian or Aden protectorates. The actual flow of Japanese products must therefore have been much greater than the official statistics suggest.[32]

A large proportion of the Japanese cotton sold in the East African market of the 1920s was far from being high-end; in fact, it was very much low-end, with unbleached cotton the strongest-selling Japanese item. In the case of high-end products, though Japanese bleached cotton accounted for the third or fourth largest market share between 1923 and 1925, the gap between the total value of imported Japanese products and British and Dutch products was still considerable. While British (61 per cent) and Dutch (29 per cent) bleached cotton textiles accounted for 90 per cent of total imports by value, Japanese products accounted for only 6 per cent.[33]

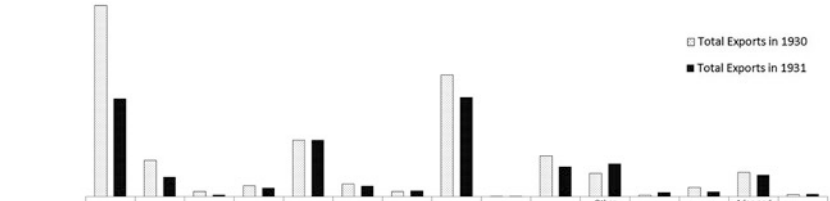
With rising demand from the mid-1920s, and given Japan's exclusion from its established markets, East Africa emerged as a major market for its producers. Figure 5.1 compares Japanese exports of cotton products in 1930 and 1931. While Japanese exports to China and Hong Kong (the foremost markets for Japanese products) dropped tremendously in 1931 in comparison with the previous year, exports to Africa increased by a factor of 1.4—the second largest increase in market share after the Balkans. Newspapers frequently featured East Africa as one of the most promising markets, one where Japanese products could still be expected

[30] *Ibid*; Gaimushō Tsūshō-kyoku, ed., *Eiryō Higashi-Afurika Jijyō*.

[31] On February 15,1928, *Kōbe Shimbun* (*KS*) explained the appearance of the first Japanese cotton products in East Africa as follows; "The first Japanese products imported into East Africa were sent by merchants in Bombay, who sold over-stocked Japanese products at a loss there." See also Ōyama, *Afurika-miyage*, pp. 145–146.

[32] Shirakawa, *Jicchi tōsa Higashi-Afurika no tabi*, p. 297. See also "Afurika kōro dai-issen," March 23, 1926, *OAS*.

[33] Shirakawa, *Jicchi tōsa Higashi-Afurika no tabi*, p. 298. This pattern of the British taking a large market share in bleached cotton and Japan holding a large market share in unbleached cotton was one that characterized not only the East African market, but also other markets such as India (ibid., p. 299).



	China	Hong Kong	Burma	Philippines	Dutch Indies	Strait Colony	Australia	Biritish India	French India	Egypt	Other African Countries	Balkans	South America	Aden and other Arab Countries	Others
Total Exports in 1930	96099	18232	2568	5425	28259	6227	2447	61152	47	20481	11653	541	4528	12180	979
Total Exports in 1931	49200	9712	785	4178	28318	5217	2913	49819	16	14880	16369	2019	2266	10715	1077

Fig. 5.1 Total exports of Japanese cotton products, in 1000 yards, 1930–1931 (based on statistics provided in *Kōbe Yūshi Nippō*, 17 January 1932)

to increase their market share at a time when they were being excluded from many other markets.[34]

Following Japan's development of bleaching, dyeing and printing techniques, which enabled Japanese textiles to perform better in weaker fields such as bleached textiles,[35] and the opening of a Japanese consulate in Mombasa in 1932, Japanese products increased their market share in East Africa (as shown in Fig. 5.2) even though the international situation became increasingly unfavourable for Japanese products as the global trend moved towards higher tariffs.[36] Specific duties were introduced for various imported goods including cotton textiles, which were levied in addition to the existing ad valorem duty in British East Africa (1933).[37] Even though Japan withdrew from the League of Nations in

[34] For example, "Waga shōhin no shin hanro chōsa," April 7, 1926, *OAS*; pp. 24–26 September 1939, *Kokumin Shimbun* (*KKS*).

[35] Around the beginning of the 1930s, Japanese bleached textiles began to gain market share. See "Dageki wo kōmuru Oranda bōseki," August 1, 1932, *CSS*. In addition, artificial silk rayon textiles, an item in which the Japanese had an advantage, simultaneously began to circulate widely in East Africa ("Higashi-Afurika ni daishinsyutu," November 8, 1932, *Hōchi Shimbun* (*HS*)).

[36] For example, see "Sekai kanzei sen," March 31–April 16, 1933, *OMS*; "Nihon yusyutu bōeki no hijyouji," June 7–21, 1933, *OAS*.

[37] "Keizai kaigi shūhō," June 19, 1933, *OAS*; "Malā Afurika kanzei hikiage de Ei hongoku ni kougisu," June 28, 1933, *ibid*.; "Eiryō higashi Afurika mo kanzei hikiage," June 28, 1933, *ibid*.; "Tō-A kanzei hikiage de Kadono komon kougi," June 29, 1933, *ibid*.; "Ware otoraji to nihon-hin haiseki," July 24, 1933, *ibid*.; "Zanjibaru kanzei wo hikiage," August 16, 1933, *OMS*; "Tō-A Zanjibaruu mo houhin nerau kanzei hikiage," August 16, 1933, *OJS*; "Tō-A kanzei hikiage," August 18, 1933, *OAS*.

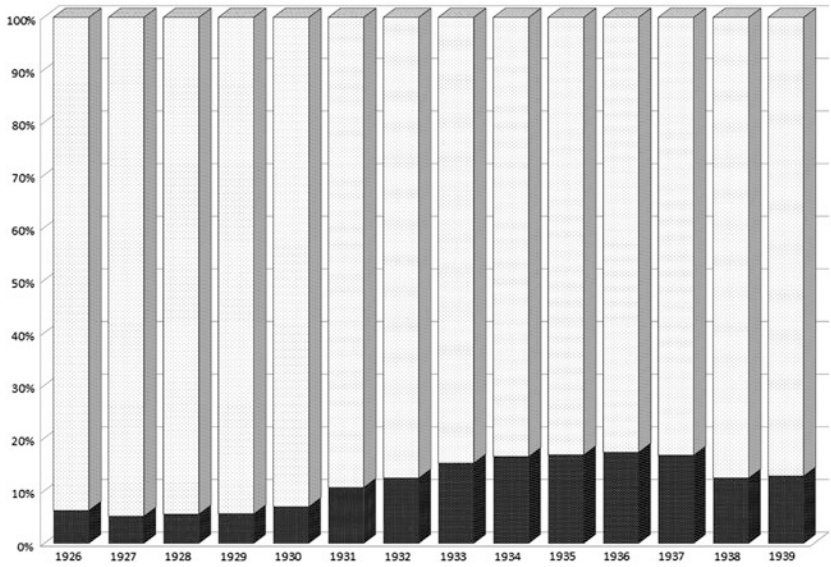


Fig. 5.2 East African share in total exports of Japanese cotton products, 1926–1939 (based on statistics provided in *Nihon menshifu yusyutu kumiai* 1957)

1935, it did not suffer commercially as far as East African textile market was concerned.[38]

However, the wartime economic measures imposed by the Japanese government following the outbreak of the second Sino-Japanese War in July 1937 did negatively impact sales. In December 1937, ginned cotton and raw cotton were listed as articles subject to import restriction[39] and, subsequently, various wartime policies restricted the production of cotton textiles.[40] After 1941 in particular, when the war in the Pacific began, many businesses were integrated under the wartime government programme to rationalize and consolidate small business enterprises

[38] On the international situation regarding the export of Japanese cotton products, see also Nihon orimono shimbun-sha hensan-bu, ed., *Dai-nihon orimono nisen roppyakunen-shi* (Osaka: Nihon orimono shimbun-sha, 1940), vol. 2, p. 387.

[39] Nihon sen'i kyōgi-kai nai Nihon sen'i sangyō-shi kankou iinkai, *Nihon sen'i sangyō-shi*, p. 71.

[40] Ibid., pp. 71–92.

and the cotton textile industry was no exception.[41] While integration in the cotton textile industry progressed, the Metal Collection Act was passed into Japanese law in August 1941 in response to the lack of metals for military purposes following the American prohibition of cast iron exports to Japan imposed in the previous year. That led to the large-scale impounding of looms, spinning machines and other equipment from the textile industry[42] until, eventually, total exports of Japanese cotton textiles fell dramatically to a mere 9.4 per cent of the averages seen between 1935 and 1937.[43] Combining losses through war damage such as bombing, by the end of the war barely 16.21 per cent of Japanese looms were in workable condition compared with late 1940.[44] It is within this context that we need to place the early history of H. Nishizawa Shōten Co., a leading *kanga* export company.

H. Nishizawa Shōten and the Invention of Japanese *Kanga*

Hachisaburō Nishizawa founded the company Nishizawa Hachisaburō Shōten Co. (H. Nishizawa Shōten) in 1915 in Osaka as one of the pioneers specializing in cotton textile exports. Hachisaburō, originally from the modern-day prefecture of Shiga, started his career as a cotton merchant as the *bantō* (head clerk) of the Yamaguchi Shōten (later Yamaguchigen Ltd.) led by Gendō Yamaguchi, who made his fortune from imported textiles.[45] By the time he set up his own firm, Hachisaburō had likely already acquired some knowledge of the international trade in cotton textiles as the Japanese cotton textile export sector was growing, and he would have known something of the state of the foreign markets. H. Nishizawa Shōten established a branch in Bangkok to trade textiles manufactured by the Japanese, although part of its business was in batik, too, which was exported to the Dutch East Indies.

[41] Ibid., pp. 82–84.

[42] Ibid., pp. 84–85.

[43] Ibid., p. 92.

[44] Takahiro Ōhata, *GHQ no senryō seisaku to keizai fukkō: saikō suru Nihon bōseki-gyō* (Kyoto: Kyoto University Press, 2013), p. 3.

[45] Mataji Miyamoto, "Yamaguchi Gendō no kotodomo to kokyō hōshi," *Ōsaka Daigaku-shi Kiyō* 2 (1982), p. 7; Nihon menshifu yusyutu kumiai, *Nihon mengyō bōeki shōshi* (Osaka: Nihon menshifu yusyutu kumiai, 1957), p. 51.

The firm was reorganized in 1931 as a joint stock company and, in 1949, it was renamed Nishizawa Ltd.

Owing to a lack of sources, we know little of the early history of H. Nishizawa Shōten. The firm has not preserved its earliest records according to my research, but much useful information can be gleaned from several newspaper articles and from my interviews with some of the various actors concerned. According to a private memoir written by Mamoru Hirata,[46] entitled 'Khanga tono deai' ('Encountering *kanga*'), the originators of *kanga* production in Japan were Hachisaburō and his adopted son Sirō Nishizawa,[47] who founded the company and began production of *kanga* sometime between the end of the Taishō era (1912–1926) and the early Shōwa era (1926–1989).[48] Alternatively, an article on the company in *Mainichi Shimbun* (*MS*) on 3 November 1963, identified 1928 as the year it began to export *kanga*.[49]

According to Hirata, Hachisaburō and Sirō learned about *kanga* from information provided by 'Indian merchant(s)'.[50] It is unclear who the 'Indian merchant(s)' were but, given Hachisaburō and Sirō's location in Osaka, they were most probably Sindis living in nearby Kobe. Since the Meiji era (1868–1912), an important Indian community resided in Kobe, among them Sindi merchants who were engaged in the textile business.[51] To date, I have been unable to find any direct evidence in sources as to why Sindi merchants might have encouraged the Japanese to produce *kanga*. However, given that Sindi merchant communities resided in East Africa as well as in Bombay, Sindi merchants could have contacted Japanese textile company branches there as early as the first

[46] Mamoru Hirata, *Kanga tono deai* (private typed manuscript, 2003). He joined the firm in 1956, two years after its Mombasa branch was established. He was subsequently stationed twice in East Africa, the first time being in 1963.

[47] Ibid., p. 2.

[48] Ibid.

[49] "Chiisai hanagata," November 3, 1963, *MS*.

[50] Hirata, *Kanga tono deai*, p. 2. See also, "Chiisai hanagata," November 3, 1963, *MS*.

[51] Kobe was the centre of an Indian merchant community, since the regular service between Bombay and Kobe that opened in 1893, and the Kantō earthquake (1923) led many Indian merchants in Yokohama to relocate to Kobe, which had an important trading port as well as a large foreign community. For further details of the history of the Indian community in Kobe, see Sawa and Minamino, "Zainichi Indo-jin shakai no hensen: Teijyū-chi Kōbe wo jirei ni shite," *Hyōgo Chiri* 50 (2005). For Sindi merchants in Kobe and Yokohama, see Markovits, *Global World of Indian Merchants,* pp. 124, 142–147.

decades of the twentieth century.[52] It is also not clear from the sources available as to why Hachisaburō and Sirō were interested in *kanga*, although the article in *MS* mentioned above suggests a reason. It cited a remark by Sirō that, 'after researching, we understood that Kanga is an ancient ethnic costume and seemed to be promising. We therefore invested 50,000 to 100,000 yen for further research into the textile itself.'[53] In order to understand their decision, it is important to remember the Osaka exporters' particular interest in the East African market (noted earlier), and also to note that the company already specialized in double-width cloth. As Ōyama pointed out, there was great demand in the East African market for broad cloth, usually about 116 centimetres wide, while standard Japanese cloth was about 111 centimetres wide. That difference made it difficult for standard Japanese textile products to gain a greater share of the market.[54] But H. Nishizawa Shōten's specialization in double-width cloth meant it was well-suited to apply its unique expertise to the production of *kanga*. It therefore held an advantage in the East African market over rival Japanese textile exporters who had recently become much more active.[55]

This *kanga*-making project required collaboration with Osaka's leading firms in related fields. The Sumitomo Shindō Kōkan (later Sumitomo Metal Industries Ltd. and now Nippon Steel and Sumitomo Metal after

[52] Another possibility is direct contact between Sindi merchants based in East Africa and Japanese merchants. More likely is an intermediary connecting the two parties, and the most likely would be Sindi merchants in Kobe given their specialty and network. For more on Sindi merchants in East Africa, see Markovits, *Global World of Indian Merchants*, pp. 123–124.

[53] "Chiisai hanagata," November 3, 1963, *MS*.

[54] Ōyama, *Afurika-miyage*, p. 149. See also "Afurika kakuchi no honpō men pin no Shōrai," February 20, 1931, *KS*.

[55] As for unbleached cotton textiles, short width was accepted but for printed textiles the locals preferred relatively larger widths. According to the article "Afurika kakuchi no honpō menpin no shōrai" which appeared on February 20, 1931, in *KS*, a recent report from a foreign market researcher sent by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry pointed out several items "which manufacturers should make an effort [to export]. Firstly, unbleached and bleached cotton 34 or 66 inches wide by 40 or 42 yards in length. Secondly, printed and dyed cotton textiles (for kaniki or khaki drill, black shiny cotton 46 inches wide by 132 inches in length). Thirdly, colored cotton textiles 27 inches wide in general, but also 26 inches wide is in demand. And lastly, yarn dyed cotton textiles 46 inches wide by 66 inches in length".

the merging of the two companies) manufactured the copper rollers needed for printing *kanga* that had a circumference of about 167 centimetres, while Nippon Seifu (later integrated into Tōyōbō) contributed special cotton fabric required for the *kanga*.[56]

The oral histories I gathered also reveal Dutch connections. Hirata contends that Hachisaburō and Sirō were inspired in part by the *kanga* produced by the Dutch firm P.F. van Vlissingen and Co. (today the Vlisco Group), which was widely distributed at that time. P.F. van Vlissingen and Co. was founded in 1846 in Helmond, the Netherlands, by Pieter Fentener van Vlissingen, who sought to mass produce batik in the Netherlands and throughout Europe. Sometime later the company shifted its business to Africa and, in 1870, it began to sell wax-print cloth in West Africa. But it was not until 1875 that the company showed an interest in the East African market.[57] My interviews with Fumio Tomie, another employee of H. Nishizawa Shōten, who was stationed at its East African branches in the 1970s, indicate that other Dutch firms were involved in the early distribution of Japanese *kanga*. While visiting the storehouse of a leading *kanga* wholesaler in Mombasa, Tomie found a sample *kanga* that had been exported by H. Nishizawa Shōten in the 1930s; he was told it had been brought to Mombasa by a Dutch firm based in Southeast Asia.[58] While H. Nishizawa Co. itself had no direct connection with the East African market, its products reached East Africa through the hands of other merchants, who were probably from either Bangkok or Batavia. Although a regular route from Kobe to East Africa had already been opened up by OSK, Tomie pointed out that the matter of payment was an obstacle to direct business transactions between H. Nishizawa Co. and East African dealers. The lack of an adequate financial system would have prevented relatively small firms such as Nishizawa from establishing direct links with East African dealers. Both Shirakawa

[56] "Chiisai hanagata," November 3, 1963, *MS*.

[57] Beck, *Texte auf Textilien in Ostafrika*, p. 47.

[58] According to Tomie, the company name sounded something like "Twitches Overseas," but I have so far been unable to trace the particular name of this firm or obtain further information about it. Another source on the system for distributing Nishizawa *kanga* to East Africa is an article "Chiisai hanagata," November 3, 1963, *MS*, featuring the H. Nishizawa Shōten. This article claimed that a British firm that acted as an agent for Dutch products in East Africa distributed the products manufactured by the Nishizawa using the same route it used to distribute Dutch products.

and Ōyama insisted that Japanese banks should have branches in East Africa to facilitate more active and direct transactions between there and Japan.[59] Even though Japanese export indemnity legislation took effect in 1930 and the Yokohama Specie Bank began an export bill service that was applied to East African trade,[60] the bank's unenterprising attitude apparently failed to encourage direct trade.[61] For Japanese exporters—apart from large firms such as Toyo Menka—dealing with European firms in Southeast Asia, particularly Dutch firms, which were keen to handle inexpensive Japanese products[62] was a more realistic choice than taking the risk of dealing directly with East African merchants.

In the earlier period of Japanese *kanga* exports up to the end of World War II, as far as the Nishizawa firm was concerned, *kanga* were flown into East Africa by Dutch firms based in Southeast Asia, and the direct connection between Japan and East Africa commenced only after World War II had ended.

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[59] Shirakawa, *Jicchi tōsa Higashi-Afurika no tabi*, pp. 307–309; Ōyama, *Afurika-miyage*, p. 153; "Tōa houmen no bōeki shinten wo sakusu," December 6, 1927, *CSS*. According to Ōyama, at the time he wrote, exchange settlement was carried out in either Bombay or London. There were British-based banks in East Africa, such as the National Bank of India, Barclays Bank, and the Standard Bank of South Africa. However, Ōyama also noted that it would be quite difficult for firms to deal with them unless those firms were large (Ōyama, *Afurika-miyage*, p. 153).

Banks were not, however, sufficiently attracted by East Africa to open branches there. See Hiroshi Kaijō's contribution to *KKS* on June 15, 1926, entitled "Afurika higashi kaigan no keizaiteki no sinkachi." Kaijō was deputy manager of the Tokyo branch of the Yokohama Specie Bank and contributed this article after his visit to East Africa. He concluded that there was no urgency in opening branches in East Africa because Japanese firms were few and the monetary economy was not widespread locally.

[60] "Hoshō-hō tekiyou aite-shō shōkin ginkō no bu kettei," August 23, 1930, *OMS*. As for East African trade, the role of the Yokohama Specie Bank was limited to transactions only if conducted with one of fifty-four listed counterparts.

[61] Shigeki Shōji, "Afurika touha no tabi," 26 May–26 June 1931, Ō*saka Jiji Simpō* (*OJS*).

[62] Peter Post, "Tai-ran'in keizai kakuchō to Oranda no taiou," in *Iwanami Kouza Kindai Nihon to Syokuminchi 3: Shokuminchi-ka to Sangyō-ka*, eds. Shinobu Ōe and Kyoji Asada (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1993), p. 67; Naoto Kagotani, "1940 nendai shotō no Nihon menpu wo meguru Ajia tsūshōmou: Nihon mensifu yusyutu kumiai 'nanpō chiiki muke torihiki shirabe' no kentou," *Jinbungaku-hō* 79 (1997), p. 204.

Business, Markets, Restrictions: The Postwar Experience of Selling Japanese *Kanga*

H. Nishizawa Shōten re-established an export route as late as the early 1950s following the re-opening of private foreign trade in Japan in 1948. It opened branches in Mombasa in 1958 and in Dar es Salaam in 1965. Tomie believed a research mission to foreign markets organized by the Japan Cotton Exporters Association (JCEA) would be important in enabling H. Nishizawa Shōten to establish its business in East Africa. Although I was unable to obtain further details of the actual mission by the JCEA, H. Nishizawa Shōten seems to have conducted its own research in Africa, or perhaps its efforts were part of the JCEA's market research. Kyōsaburō Nishizawa, a member of the family that founded H. Nishizawa Shōten, contributed several articles on updated market reports to *Yusyutsu menshifu geppō* (*Export Cotton Textiles—YMG*), the monthly trade periodical published by the JCEA. Nishizawa's reports covered the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, the Belgian Congo and even the Gold Coast and Nigeria.[63] Apart from articles contributed by Nishizawa employees, the periodical included reports from overseas residents of other companies, as well as translations of articles in foreign-language trade magazines, so that readers could obtain up-to-date information on all overseas markets, including East Africa.[64]

Even after General Headquarters (GHQ) allowed private foreign trade, transactions were closely regulated. Following orders from GHQ, the Ministry of International Trade and Industry encouraged exporters to conclude business agreements among themselves. Several companies, including H. Nishizawa Shōten, concluded an agreement concerning the export of *kanga* to Kenya, Uganda, Tanganyika (Tanzania), Zanzibar and Madagascar, creating a sort of cartel called 'Kanga yusyutsu

[63] Kyōsaburō Nishizawa, "Haku-ryō Kongo zuiken," *YMG* 3 (February 1953), p. 5; *idem*, "Haku-ryō Kongo, Gōrudo Kōsuto, Naigeria no menpu yunyū tōkei", *YMG* 3 (March 1953), pp. 22–27; *idem*, "Shinkō shijyō Rōdeshia Nyasalando renpō 1", *YMG* 5 (April 1955), pp. 38–43; *idem*, "Shinkō shijyō Rōdeshia Nyasalando renpō 2", *YMG* 5 (May 1955), pp. 38–42; *idem*, "Afurika tokoro-dokoro", *YMG* 5 (September 1955), pp. 38–43.

[64] See for example "Kanga shijyō to shiteno Somalī Lando oyobi Echiopia: Indo-hin urikomi no kouki," *YMG* 6 (July 1956); Shōzō Sekiya, "Afurika sijyō mite-aruki," *YMG* 8 (May 1958); Yasumitsu Sasaki, "Eiryō higashi-Afurika sijyō ni okeru Nihon Kanga," *YMG* 9 (April 1959); Shigeo Sagusa, "Tai higashi-Afurika bōeki no mondaiten," *YMG* 9 (December 1959).

kyōgi-kai' (Council for Exporting *kanga*) in December 1956, and a cartel called 'Kanga konwa-kai' (*kanga* Council) in July 1957.[65] The former was intended to facilitate agreements on domestic deals for the export of *kanga* and waste pieces from the cutting of *kanga* cloth,[66] while the latter cartel was developed and later reorganized as the 'Tōwa-kai'.[67] The regulations of the Tōwa-kai were varied. Material quality was regulated,[68] with the cotton yarn count being set at forty and the textile density being fifty-eight picks per inch and fifty-eight ends per inch. Minimum orders were fixed at 12,000 yards per pattern, which in the case of *kanga* was equal to 6000 pieces; furthermore, total export quantity was regulated. According to Hirata, H. Nishizawa Shōten's quota was usually more than 30 per cent.[69] Furthermore, transactions were conducted under CIF (cost, insurance, freight) rules,[70] fixed under the Tōwa-kai. Although these regulations limited a firm's freedom to operate, they

[65] *Yusyutsu mengyōkai* 32, *Nihon mengyō bōeki shōshi*, p. 70.

[66] Ibid.

[67] Hirata, *Kanga tono deai*, p. 6; *Yusyutsu mengyōkai* 33 (1958), p. 148. According to *Yusyutsu mengyōkai* 33 (1958), p. 148, the birth of "Tōwa-kai" also saw several companies make agreements on rayon and cotton African print cloths over forty-two inches wide, specializing in their export to African markets, especially to West Africa, and they formed the "Seiwa-kai" (ibid.). It is difficult to translate "Tōwa-kai" into English because it is an abbreviation. Literally, *tō* means "east, *wa* means "peace" or "coexistence" and *kai* is "meeting" or "group". Regarding "Seiwa-kai" (*sei* means "west") which was formed for export for West Africa, one might be able to translate "Tōwa-kai" as "group for co-existing cloth exporters to East Africa".

[68] Hirata, *Kanga tono deai*, p. 2; interview with Tomie; "Chiisai hanagata," November 3, 1963, *MS*.

[69] Hirata, *Kanga tono deai*, p. 6. East African countries imposed import restrictions in order to protect local industries. For example, in 1957, basically following the policies of Britain, East African governments issued licences for companies on the recommendation of the East Africa High Commission. The licensing policy was changed from year to year, but, according to a report by Yoshimitsu Sasaki, the process was as follows. First, the import target was set through Anglo-Japanese trade talks; then the British Colonial Office communicated the target to East African governments, following which East African governments decided, on the recommendation of the East Africa High Commission, whether to grant a licence (Yasumitsu Sasaki, "Eiryō higashi-Afurika sijyō ni okeru Nihon Kanga," *YMG* 9 (April 1959), 21).

In 1963, fourteen Japanese companies were engaged in trading *kanga*, and according to "Chiisai hanagata," November 3, 1963, *MS*, the Nishizawa's quota was 20 per cent.

[70] Yasumitsu Sasaki, "Eiryō higashi-Afurika sijyō ni okeru Nihon Kanga", *YMG* 9 (April 1959), pp. 26–27.

did ensure product quality and prevented excessive competition, especially on prices.[71] In addition, even for *kanga*, the regulation of materials worked beneficially in the context of international competition, because Tōwa-kai regulated *kanga* were finer and softer than the other *kanga* material in circulation on the market.[72]

As the information from my informants accumulated, the mechanism of the entire process became clear, from order to delivery, as far as H. Nishizawa Shōten was concerned. First, staff at Mombasa, and later at the Dar es Salaam branch, took orders from local retailers. Due to the regulations fixed by the Tōwa-kai, no discount was allowed so, as Hirata wrote, representatives in East Africa negotiated only the quantity, design and delivery date.[73] According to Hirata, in Mombasa they succeeded in establishing strong working relationships with the two largest firms, Smith Mackenzie and Kaderdina Haji Essak (both large distributors to local retailers), as well as with other local distributors, including Suleiman Versi, Juthalal Verji and Jivan Hirjee.[74] Indeed, business seemed to be looking up. However, they not only worked with those large distributors, but also tried to find new customers, including small retailers. According to Tomie, such small retailers were mostly Gujarati merchants and their orders were too small to meet the minimum requirement established by the cartel. Tomie and his colleagues were therefore obliged to travel through East Africa, and even into Aden and the Persian Gulf, to gather enough orders. Here, we find the possibility of connecting the two narratives that I heard in Kachchh and Osaka, though, needless to say, there is no guarantee that my informants from H. Nishizawa Shōten ever met my Kachchhi informants, since

[71] Excessive competition came to a head in the early 1950s. For details see Junko Watanabe, "Sengo fukkō-ki men-kōgyō ni okeru kigyō-kan kyōsō" (MMRC Discussion Paper Series, MMRC-J-173, presented at Manufacturing Management Research Center, University of Tokyo, Tokyo, Japan, August, 2007), pp. 12–30.

[72] In Japan, this same cotton textile standard for thread count and weight has generally been used for gauze, and thus, manufacturers were able to use existing material for *kanga*. In addition, West African prints made in Japan also had the same thread count per cotton yard as was used for *kanga*, being pp. 128–136 threads per square inch. Compared with these West African print textiles, Japanese *kanga* were even thinner (Hirata, *Kanga tono deai,* p. 6).

[73] Ibid.

[74] Private letter received by Mamoru Hirata from one of his senior colleagues on February 17, 2003.

H. Nishizawa Shōten was not the only Japanese firm to sell *kanga* in East Africa. Based on his experience, Tomie divided the market for *kanga* into several zones, with Aden as the centre for Yemen and the Horn of Africa, Mombasa covering Kenya and Uganda, Dar es Salaam for Tanzania and Lourenço Marques for Mozambique. Zambia and Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) were covered from Beira.[75]

Usually, employees of the East Africa branches travelled with samples and cutting boards, on which designs were drawn. According to Hirata, the designs were originally made by Kaderdina Haji Essak and were referred to as 'rough sketches'. A Goan clerk employed by Smith Mackenzie then set them out with an English inscription, at which point Japanese designers drew counter-sketches based on the designs.[76] The process of choosing a Swahili saying was the same; Kaderdina Haji Essak chose the phrases and the Goan clerk at Smith Mackenzie translated them into English so that the Nishizawa side could understand their meaning.[77] While Tomie was in charge, he also proposed designs made by Japanese designers to his customers. Japanese *kanga* designs were registered with the Nihon Sen'i Ishō Sentā (Japanese Textile Design Centre), which was established to prevent copyright violation following the first International Cotton Conference in January 1950.[78]

Kanga require large printing machines combined with large rollers, which only Daidō Senkōin Kyoto and Shōnan Kōgyō in Wakayama were capable of providing in the 1950s. After printing, *kanga* material was sent to the head office of H. Nishizawa Shōten in Osaka. Given all the different processes, it took at least three months for an order for *kanga* to reach customers in East Africa.

In the 1950s and 1960s, *kanga* made in Japan accounted for a large market share, but that was dramatically reduced by the 1970s and the last order to H. Nishizawa Shōten was placed in 1980. The decline is not so surprising when one considers the fate of the Japanese textile industry as a whole, the decline of which is explained by the increase in its

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[75] For a similar observation on regional markets in East Africa, see Yasumitsu Sasaki, "Eiryō Higashi-Afurika sijyō ni okeru Nihon Kanga," *YMG* 9 (April 1959), pp. 22–25.

[76] Hirata, *Kanga tono deai*, p. 7.

[77] Ibid.

[78] Futatsu Report, No. 869, pp. 1–2 (a source provided by Hirata). For the conference, see Nihon sen'i kyōgi-kai nai Nihon sen'i sangyō-shi kankou iinkai, *Nihon sen'i sangyō-shi*, pp. 97–98.

prices due to higher labour costs, the rise in the value of the Japanese yen and trade friction over textiles between Japan and the US. Another important factor was the emergence in the 1970s of other producers, notably China and South Korea.[79] There were various local reasons, too, for the decline of Japanese *kanga*, one being the strong encouragement given by national governments to develop local industries, such as when, in April 1965, Kenya, Uganda, and Tanganyika announced a prohibition on imports of Japanese cotton products.[80] Unstable political and economic conditions stemming from the expulsion of Asians from Uganda (1972), the Uganda–Tanzania War (1978–1979), the failure of economic growth in Tanzania under Ujamaa policy and the oil crisis in the 1970s were, of course, other contributing factors. However, the most obvious of all is technological transfer. Machine-made textiles such as *kanga* can be produced anywhere, once the requisite equipment is in place, and H. Nishizawa Shōten itself exported the first printing equipment to East Africa in 1972. Later, through technological cooperation, the firm supported the local production of *kanga*. Likely realizing the growing unfavourable conditions for exporting cotton products from Japan and increasing instability in East Africa, they sought a way to transfer their technology without losing profits from their long-established East African market. The Japanese Overseas Development Agency to Africa likewise increased rapidly after the early 1970s, almost simultaneous to Nishizawa's shift to technological transfer.[81]

H. Nishizawa Shōten seems to have foreseen the fate of the Japanese textile industry. While it continued to sell *kanga*, from the 1960s onwards it built factories in Kano and Lagos and, since the 1980s, it has entered into a series of technical cooperation and construction projects for electricity production in Africa. Beginning with the export of cotton textiles—like other textile-related companies in Japan, such as

[79] For a detailed case study of the South Korean textile industry, see Iwata, *Nihon sen'i sangyō to kokusai kankei*.

[80] Nihon bōseki kyōkai, *Zoku-sengo bōeki-shi* (Osaka: Nihon bōseki kyōkai, 1979), p. 679.

[81] Ken'ichi Imai, "Nihon," in *Kokusai kaihatsu kyōryoku mondai no chōryu*, ed. Kayoko Kitamura (Tokyo: Ajia Keizai Kenkyujyo, 1993), pp. 193–194; Makoto Sato "Nihon no Afurika gaikō: Rekishi ni miru sono tokushitsu," Shin'ichi Takeuchi (ed.) *Seichō suru Afurika: Nihon to Chugoku no shiten* (Chiba: Institute of Developing Economies, Japan External Trade Organization, 2007: http://www.ide.go.jp/Japanese/Publish/Download/Kidou/2007_03_03.html; last viewed on December 23, 2016), pp. 4–7.

Toyota—H. Nishizawa Shōten shifted its business focus elsewhere, and nowadays the company identifies itself as a general import-export firm.

Conclusion

The industrialization of Japan was not necessarily associated with the Indian Ocean world; neither did Japanese entrepreneurs interested in East Africa during the 1920s see themselves as being the eastern end of this world, with East Africa representing the western end of a historical business chain spanning the Indian Ocean. It is equally impossible to assert that the Japanese somehow 'invented' the mass production of *kanga*. In fact, the rise of the textile industry in Japan and the birth of *kanga* on the East African coast appeared without any direct connection between the two areas. Nonetheless, by unveiling the newly established link between East Africa and Japan that came about through *kanga*, we can witness the intensity of their connections in the Indian Ocean region. The arrival of Sindi merchants in Japan in the late nineteenth century is a good example of how local merchants engineered and thrived in altered relationships. It was the *kanga* produced by the Dutch firm P.F. van Vlissingen & Co. upon which H. Nishizawa Shōten modelled its products, and Vlissingen's *kanga* was itself the fruit of a long struggle to capture markets around the Indian Ocean. Southeast Asia was an important market for Japanese textile exporters and also a location in which they encountered European companies with established routes through which Japanese *kanga* could be distributed to the East African market. Connections were created in the sphere of this maritime world, but they were not necessarily always clearly and tightly interrelated; in fact, it is usually better to understand them as separate, individual commercial relationships. Thus, one might usefully frame each connection in the context of much smaller frameworks than the Indian Ocean world. Nevertheless, in the case of Japanese *kanga*, all the many single threads of the various connections became entangled until, finally, *kanga* made in Japan found its way to East Africa across the vast Indian Ocean.

Following World War II, Japanese companies were able to establish a closer direct connection with the East African market by sending representatives there. This proved enormously helpful for their understanding of East Africa, not just in terms of the economies, but also the politics and society. The astute publication of articles in trade periodicals

helped to disseminate that newfound knowledge within the Japanese textile industry. More research is needed to establish the extent to which their locally acquired knowledge contributed to the market supremacy of Japanese *kanga*, especially in comparison with the production of rival Dutch and Indian companies. However, it would be fair to note that the institution of Japan's Tōwa-kai rules contributed greatly to establishing the position of their *kanga* in the market, for the regulations were crucial in maintaining the material's superior quality (see Chap. 4 by Sugimoto in this volume).[82]

This chapter has relied almost exclusively on information found in Japan. Needless to say, the perspective from the eastern end of the Indian Ocean should be compared particularly with the East African perspective of local consumers at the western end. How did the locals regard Japanese *kanga*, and why did they choose it? What did governments do—especially after independence—to encourage local entrepreneurs to produce *kanga* so that, in time, local production supplanted imports from Japan? There is also scope to investigate local distribution systems further. These are all questions that must be addressed with reference to sources more closely reflecting the East African perspective.

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[82] Following the conference "Textiles in the Indian Ocean" at McGill University in 2012, at which I read a draft of this essay on Japanese *kanga*, Edward A. Alpers, Professor Emeritus at UCLA, kindly sent me a piece of Japanese *kanga* which he and his wife had purchased in the 1970s in Dar es Salaam. This kanga, coloured black, purple, and yellow has two inscriptions at the bottom. One reads "REGD. FOR H.G. PIRA (MIWANI) DESIGN PD 49612" and the other "MITSUI DESIGN NO.PD 49612." The second inscription indicates that this *kanga* is Japanese. The printing on this *kanga* was of a fairly high-quality compared with the *kanga* currently available. The colours are thicker and remain well defined at colour intersections. I thank Professor Alpers and his wife Annie for this kind contribution.

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CHAPTER 6

A Worn Insecurity: Textiles, Industrialization and Colonial Rule in Eritrea During the Long Twentieth Century

Steven Serels

In the 1950s and 1960s, Eritrea was in the early stages of an industrial revolution driven, in no small part, by state-supported investment in textile manufacturing. These early stages of industrialization did not organically evolve out of indigenous systems of textile production and consumption. Rather, they were driven by the needs of the state. Official interest in this form of industrialization was motivated by instability in the local currency. The end of European rule in Eritrea changed the country's fiscal relationship with Europe and the high level of textile imports were a drain on the foreign currency reserves of the federated

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states of Ethiopia and Eritrea. To reverse this economic trend, officials adopted a programme of supporting development through import substitution. This programme included channelling investment into expanding industrial textile manufacturing.

Though the Eritrean highlands had a long history of weaving cotton cloth, this tradition could not serve as the basis for industrialization. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, local textile production collapsed and Eritrea became a consumer of foreign-produced cotton cloth. The transformation of Eritrea from a producer to a consumer of cotton textiles occurred at the same time as the expansion and consolidation of Italian colonial rule. Historians have linked these two events. Working from theories developed through the study of British imperial expansion, some scholars have argued that Italian colonization was motivated by the needs of Italian industry. Surplus factory production threatened the growth of the metropolitan economy. So, politicians, with the aid and support of capitalists, established overseas colonies in order to open new markets. As a result, political colonization had to be coupled with economic programmes that remade the colonized into consumers of metropolitan industrial products.[1]

However, as this chapter will show, Italian rule did not bring about the end of local textile manufacturing. Rather, the very conditions that transformed Eritrea's textile culture at the end of the nineteenth century also created the opening for European military and political penetration. The collapse of local textile production was the result of an environmental crisis that led to famine, widespread poverty and profound social dislocation. Italian military officers and political leaders seized the chaos that followed this crisis to expand Italy territorially into the Eritrean highlands from its foothold on the Red Sea coast.

This chapter examines the relationship in Eritrea between textile production, industrialization and colonization during the long twentieth century. This period is often divided into four distinct political sub-periods: (1) Italian rule (1884–1941); (2) British rule (1941–1951); (3) Ethiopian rule (1951–1991); and (4) Independence (1991–present). This sub-periodization masks other political transformations, such as the

[1]For an early, paradigmatic application of Lenin's theory of imperial expansion to the Italian case, see Emilio Sereni, *Capitalismo e mercato nazionale in Italia* (Rome, Editori Runiti, 1966).

1961 termination of Eritrea's status as an autonomous state federated with Ethiopia, or the 1974 rise to power of the *Derg* (the Coordinating Committee of the Armed Forces, Police and Territorial Army that ruled Ethiopia from 1974 to 1987). Despite all of Eritrea's political changes, the state remained just one of a number of actors participating in the transformation of Eritrea's economy since the end of the nineteenth century. A partial list of these actors includes Italian, British and Ethiopian state officials; Eritrean nationalist leaders; indigenous peasant producers and Indian merchants. Each of these groups, at differing times and with differing impacts, influenced the course of the transformation of the Eritrean economy. Only one of these groups linked economic colonialism to the European textile industry. At the start of the early twentieth century, Italian officials recognized that Eritrea could play an important role in Italy's industrialization. But colonial programmes to develop Eritrea into a supplier of raw cotton for Italian mills and a consumer of Italian textiles failed, in large part, to achieve their goals. Other groups had different ideas about the link between the international textile trade, local cloth production, and political and economic control. Some saw local textile production as a threat to their power and others as a basis for their continued local dominance. Both state-sponsored and privately backed attempts to shape the pattern of textile production and consumption in Eritrea were only ever partially successful in achieving their goals. The more powerful force in determining modes of textile production and patterns of trade was the force of instability, which progressively pushed the Eritrean population into endemic food insecurity and poverty.

Eritrea and the Global Textile Trade

Until the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Eritrea was fully incorporated into a textile production and consumption network centred on the Ethiopian plateau. Christian agriculturalists in the Eritrean highlands historically shared many of northern Ethiopia's customs and cultural practices, including spinning cotton thread and weaving cotton textiles. Cotton was traditionally grown in Eritrea as a multi-year, rain crop on farms between 900 and 1800 m above sea level, where average annual

rainfall is in excess of 600 mm.[2] As was the case in northern Ethiopia, spinning cotton thread was a home industry practised primarily by women, but weaving was exclusively the purview of men. Women either turned over their thread to male relatives, or sold their thread in local markets.[3] Home-woven cloth was frequently supplemented by purchased cloth produced elsewhere in Eritrea and Ethiopia. The Ethiopian cities of Gondar, Adowa, Ankobar and Harar were centres of textile production where a range of textiles of differing quality were manufactured.[4] The variety of textiles produced in Eritrea and Ethiopia met a diverse array of functions and local tastes. Though the Muslim population in the Eritrean lowlands had different styles of dress and tastes from the Christian communities in the plateau, both groups primarily wore cloth produced in the region.[5] Cloth also served a number of social, symbolic and ritual purposes and was, at times, used as a form of currency[6] and in burying the dead.[7]

Locally produced cotton cloth maintained its dominant market position against imports of Indian and European textiles even as the volume of foreign trade increased over the nineteenth century. As was the case elsewhere in the Red Sea and Indian Ocean worlds, the increasing

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[2] For the first two years, cotton plants shared the land with grain crops, but in the successive two or three years they were the sole crop on the land. Guido Mangano, *La Cotonicoltura e le Iniziative Cotoniere nell'Eritrea* (Rome: 1945) FASC2435. Istituto Agrinomio per l'Oltremare, Florence (IAO).

[3] In Eritrea, women and minors were customarily allowed to engage in trade, although with some restrictions. Women needed to have the consent of their husbands. However, it was customarily accepted that a woman had this consent unless the husband indicated otherwise. Renato Paoli, *Le Condizioni Commerciali dell'Eritrea*. (Novara: Istituto Geografico de Agostini, 1913), pp. 37–39.

[4] Richard Pankhurst, *Economic History of Ethiopia, 1800-1935* (Addis Ababa: Haile Sellassie I University Press, 1968), pp. 257–260.

[5] For a description of dress in the Ethiopian plateau see: Pankhurst, *Economic History of Ethiopia, 1800-1935*, pp. 263–269. For a description of some clothing styles on the Eritrean coast see: Mansfield Parkyns, *Life in Abyssinia: Being Notes Collected During Three Years' Residence and Travels in That Country* (London: John Murray, 1868), p. 19. Henry Salt, *A Voyage to Abyssinian and Travels into the Interior of that Country*, 2nd Edition (London: Frank Cass, 1967), p. 178.

[6] Stephen Longrigg, *A Short History of Eritrea*, reprint of the 1945 edition (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1974), p. 104.

[7] Parkyns, *Life in Abyssinia*, p. 37.

importation of Indian textiles strengthened local production.[8] Indian textiles were prized in Eritrean and Ethiopian markets for their colours. Local cloth dyeing techniques were not well-developed and, as a result, dyes were limited in palate. To overcome this deficiency, Eritrean weavers often unravelled imported Indian textiles and used the coloured thread to finish locally produced cloth. As a result, the trade in Indian textiles allowed weavers and tailors to manufacture a variety of prized products.[9]

Similarly, Eritrean fabrics held their own in the market against industrially-produced European fabrics. Until the end of the nineteenth century, Eritrean consumers were, for the most part, uninterested in industrially produced fabrics because they saw these textiles as being of a lesser quality than other available types. Strong demand for cheap foreign textiles such as those produced in industrial mills in Europe and America only emerged in the 1880s when war and political instability led to a decline in the indigenous population's purchasing power and precipitated a raw cotton supply crisis. In 1883, Muhammad Ahmad ibn'Abd Allah, a Sudanese *ṣūfī* leader residing on Aba Island in the White Nile south of Khartoum, proclaimed himself al-Mahdi (the Muslim eschatological leader who will usher in the end of days) and announced a *jihad* against the Turko-Egyptian rulers of Sudan. The Turko-Egyptian government quickly proved itself unable to effectively counter Muhammad Ahmad's growing religious rebellion and, in 1884, Britain forced Egypt to withdraw from its African empire. The withdrawal led to a four-way armed confrontation between Italy, Britain, Abyssinia (Ethiopia) and Mahdist Sudan for control of Eastern Sudan, Northern Ethiopia and Eritrea. Local cultivators responded to the increasing military instability by abandoning cotton, an inedible crop that required years of attention. As local harvests of raw cotton declined in 1884, 1885 and 1886, cotton spinners and weavers were forced to suspend or slow down production. However, demand for cotton cloth did not disappear. Enterprising

[8] See: William Gervese Clarence-Smith, "Locally produced textiles on the Indian Ocean periphery 1500-1850: East Africa, the Middle East and Southeast Asia," paper presented at the 8th Global Economic History Network Conference, Pune, December 2005; Pedro Machado, "Cloths of a New Fashion: Indian Ocean Networks of Exchange and Cloth Zones of Contact in Africa and India in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries" in *How India Clothed the World: The World of South Asian Textiles, 1500–1850,* Giorgio Riello and Tirthankar Roy, eds. (Leiden and Boston, Brill, 2009), pp. 53–84.

[9] Pankhurst, *Economic History of Ethiopia, 1800–1935*, p. 260.

pastoralists from the Eritrean lowlands responded to the continued demand for cloth during the war by purchasing imported cloth at the coast and selling their stocks in inland markets. Merchants based in Massawa, Eritrea's Red Sea port, quickly began exploiting the trade links established by these pastoralists either by hiring them as their commercial representatives,[10] or by, on occasion, forming caravans and travelling to large markets in the interior.[11] However, war had changed the demand for imported cloth. Indigenous consumers were neither willing nor able to purchase beautifully dyed Indian textiles. Rather, the greatest demand was for grey cotton sheeting and, in 1889, cotton fabric worth approximately 100,000 Maria Theresa thalers was imported through Masswa into the African interior.[12]

Though the fighting played an important role in this transation, the driver for this change was really an environmental disaster that occured years after the fighting had begun. In 1887, Italian military officials trying to provision their large standing force in Massawa unknowingly imported cattle infected with rinderpest, a cattle disease that kills up to 90 per cent of infected cattle in virgin populations. The disease took hold and quickly spread along trade routes through Eritrea into Eastern Sudan and northern Ethiopia.[13] In the Eritrean and Ethiopian plateau, agriculture was dependent on cattle-drawn ploughs. As a result, the epizootic disrupted agricultural patterns and helped precipitate a deadly famine during which one third of the population in some highland agricultural regions died.[14] Though the acute crisis ended in the early 1890s, the recovery was slow. By the beginning of the twentieth century, the cattle population was estimated to be only one sixth of what it had been

[10] By 1894, the principal merchants from Massawa had representatives in Kassala, Qadarif and Khartoum. *Agordat: Note E Documenti*. Estratto dall *Revista Militare Italiana, 1894* (Rome: Tipografo delle L.L. M.M. il Re e La Regina, 1894), p. 10.

[11] *Agordat*, pp. 10–12.

[12] Ennio Quirino Mario Alamanni, *La Colonia Eritrea e i Suoi Commerci* (Torino: Fratelli Bocca Editori, 1891), p. 240.

[13] See C. A. Spinage, *Cattle Plague: A History* (New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, 2003); John Rowe and Kjell Hødnebø. 'Rinderpest in the Sudan 1888–1890: The Mystery of the Missing Panzootic', *Sudanic Africa*, 5 (1994), pp. 149–179.

[14] Richard Pankhurst and Douglas Johnson, 'The Great Drought and Famine of 1888–92 in Northeast Africa', *The Ecology of Survival: Case Studies from Northeast African History*, Douglas Johnson and David Anderson, eds. (Colorado: Westview Press, 1988), pp. 47–73.

in the early 1880s.[15] Without draft animals, the remaining population was unable to resume cultivation on the scale that had been previously practised and crop yields remained low. At the same time, Italian military officials seized on the dislocation caused by the famine and its aftermath to conquer the Eritrean plateau and the western lowlands. The increased Italian military presence and the decreased agricultural output led to extremely high grain prices that lasted into the twentieth century.[16] Indigenous cultivators tried to maximize the economic potential of their limited resources by adapting to the new economic situation. As a result, they narrowly focused on producing grain and, in so doing, abandoned other cash crops, such as cotton. The extent of cotton cultivation remained small and only slowly increased as the economy recovered. By 1912, cotton was only cultivated in the traditional zones on a couple of hundred small, indigenously worked fields.[17] Due to the slow pace of the recovery, for decades after the famine there was little raw cotton for local cotton textile production. In addition, indigenous weavers could not simply resume their craft using imported thread because the nature of demand had shifted. The famine in the late 1880s and early 1890s led to widespread impoverishment. With the exception of a limited number of elites, indigenous consumers could no longer afford the more prized locally produced, hand-woven cotton textiles. Rather, their only option was to purchase cheap foreign imports.

Indian merchants seized on the new trading opportunity opened up by the increased demand for cheap European and American industrial manufactured cotton fabrics. Massawa, and through it the Eritrean plateau, was at the periphery of the vast Indian trading network. The population of Indian merchants in Massawa had been very small—just 18 people at the start of the nineteenth century. By 1886, this community had grown to 86 people, but only a limited number were engaged in the import/export trade. Many of the Indians living in Massawa were

[15] Ezio Marchi, *Studi sulla Pastorizia della Colonia Eritrea*, 2nd Edition (Firenze; Istituto Agricolo Coloniale Italiano 1929), p. 113.

[16] Gino Bartolimmei Gioli, 'La Produzione Frumentaria in Eritrea di Fronte alle Relazioni Doganali fra Metropoli e Colonia', *Atti della R. Academia dei Geografili* Series V. 1:1 (1904), p. 89.

[17] Guido Mangano, *La Cotonicoltura e le Iniziative Cotoniere nell'Eritrea* FASC2435 IAO.

artisans, producing goods for local consumption.[18] In 1889, there were only 8 major Indian merchant houses with representatives in Massawa.[19] Though these houses had an effective monopoly on the importation of textiles, Massawa had no direct trade with India. Foreign goods were imported into Massawa from Turkish-controlled ports in Arabia or British-controlled Aden. Regardless of the origin of the imported goods, Indian merchant networks controlled the last leg of the trade to the Eritrean Red Sea coast.[20] Until the 1890s, Indian merchants did not travel into the Eritrean interior. Rather, they preferred to sell their goods at the coast, or to use indigenous intermediaries. However, following the Italian occupation of the interior, Indian merchants began to travel throughout the colony and to develop widespread trading networks in the interior.[21] At first, these merchants imported cheap, industrially manufactured cotton cloth via Aden. However, these Indian merchants were well-positioned to benefit from the recovery of the indigenous economy when it started in the twentieth century. As the indigenous population recovered from the social and economic dislocation associated with the 1888–1892 famine, demand for textiles increased. Indian merchants responded by expanding the range of textiles that they offered by also importing Indian textiles of varying colours, styles and qualities.[22]

The new Italian rulers of Eritrea had an ambivalent attitude towards Indian commercial penetration, in general, and the expansion of the trade in Indian textiles, in particular. On the one hand, officials recognized that the trade in Indian fabrics influenced the pattern of trade in other important import/export commodities. These officials saw Massawa and the Sudanese Red Sea ports of Sawakin and Port Sudan as being in direct competition for the import/export trade with Eritrea's western lowlands and Eastern Sudan. Therefore, some officials wanted to promote Indian textile imports through Eritrean ports as a way of capturing regional trade. These officials believed that the best way to do so was to establish a favourable tariff regime. Textiles imported into Eritrea

[18] Richard Pankhurst, 'Indian Trade with Ethiopia, the Gulf of Aden and the Horn of Africa in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries', *Cahiers d'Études Africaines* 14:55 (1974), pp. 469–478.

[19] Alamanni, *La Colonia Eritrea*, p. 191.

[20] *Relazioni Commerciali fra Trieste e Massaua* [nd1888]. Pacco27 AEMAE.

[21] Pankhurst, 'Indian Trade with Ethiopia', pp. 453–497.

[22] Commissario Regionale di Massaua to Governo 6 October 1904. Pacco412 AEMAE.

were subject to a 10 per cent duty. In Sudan, the official rate was 8 per cent. However, the British rulers of Sudan systematically undervalued textile imports when assessing customs duties, rendering the effective rate approximately 5 per cent. Some Italian officials argued that reducing import duties on textiles would redirect the export trade in gum and other African produce to Massawa and, in so doing, increase government revenues.[23] The incentives to reduce tariffs on Indian textiles at Massawa were counter-balanced by other Italian concerns. Many Italian officials saw Eritrea—and, through, it northern Ethiopia—as a market for Italian industry. These officials recognized that Indian textiles outcompeted Italian textiles in these markets and wanted to create a tariff regime that favoured Italian industry. By 1905, this internal administrative debate had been resolved in favour of Italian industry. Italian officials recognized that the construction of railroads linking the Sudanese ports to the Nile by the British and Djibouti to central Ethiopia by the French would siphon away trade from Eritrean ports.[24] So, these officials sought the effective exploitation of their colonial possession by ensuring that it would be developed as a market for Italian industrial products. To this end, Italian officials modified Eritrea's import tariffs, reducing the duty levied on Italian textiles to 1 per cent while maintaining the duty levied on textiles from all other countries at 10 per cent.[25]

Following the modification of the tariff regime in 1905, Italian manufacturers were able to capture the market in grey cotton sheeting, but could not penetrate other sectors of the textile market. Eritrean and Ethiopian consumers continued to see European industrially manufactured cloth as of a lower quality and, therefore, undesirable. Those that could were still willing to pay a premium for Indian manufactured printed and coloured cotton textiles.[26] Those that could not pay this premium purchased industrially produced grey cotton sheeting. Eritrean consumers were, in general, uninterested in purchasing other types of industrially manufactured textiles. However, the new tariff regime did

[23] Commissario Regionale di Massaua to Governo 6 October 1904. Pacco412 AEMAE.

[24] Renato, *Le Condizioni Commerciali dell'Eritrea*, pp. 4–6.

[25] Michele Checchi, *Movimento Commerciale della Colonia Eritrea* (Rome: Istituto Coloniale Italiano, 1912), pp. 20–1.

[26] G. E. Boselli, *Nota Sul commercio della colonia Eritrea* (Rome: Istituto Coloniale Italiano, 1910), p. 13.

not break up the Indian monopoly of the fabric trade. Italian merchants did not benefit from this change in the textile market. Rather, Indian merchants continued to dominate even the trade in Italian grey cotton sheeting. These merchants purchased this fabric directly from Italian manufacturers and sold it through their, by now, well-established trading networks in Eritrea and Ethiopia.[27] As a result of the initiative of these Indian trading networks, the total annual value of Italian cotton goods imported through Eritrean ports rose from 90,251 L in 1899 to 3,361,591 L in 1910 as the total annual value of imported cotton goods from elsewhere declined from 3,231,345 L to 1,124,306 L over the same period.[28] Over the next two and a half decades, the value of Italian textiles imported through Eritrean ports increased steadily, reaching 67,665,490 L in 1934.[29]

Developing Eritrea as a Supplier of Raw Cotton for the Italian Textile Industry

In addition to remaking Eritrea into a market for Italian textiles, Italian officials sought to develop their possession into a source of supply of raw materials for Italian industry. This domestic industry-focused understanding of the goals of colonization supplanted earlier plans for Italian rule in Africa. In the late nineteenth century, Italian politicians imagined their new colony as the solution to Italy's 'southern problem'. These politicians were concerned about the low level of development in southern Italy and about the immigration of peasants from southern Italy to northern Italian cities, where unemployment was high, or to the Americas, where they were of little benefit to the Italian economy. To address these issues, Italian politicians hoped to coerce poor southern Italian peasants to establish agricultural settlements in the Eritrean highlands. This policy, which was formulated by Leopoldo Franchetti in 1889

[27] Boselli, *Nota Sul commercio*, pp. 9–10.

[28] Checchi, *Movimento Commerciale*, p. 20. Part of this increase is a result of inflation. For a study of rates of inflation for the Italian Lira over this time period, see Filippo Cesarano, Giulio Cifarelli and Gianni Toniolo, "Exchange Rate Regimes and Reserve Policy on the Periphery: The Italian Lira 1883–1911," *Working Paper Series,* Dipartimento di Scienze Economiche, Università degli Studi di Firenze, 11/2009 (October 2009).

[29] Direzione Generale Degli Affari Generali, Ministero Delle Colonie, *Statistica del Commercio Estero delle Colonie Italiane Anni 1933–1934* (1936), pp. 89–148.

at the behest of Prime Minister Francesco Crispi, was formally adopted by the Italian government on 1 July 1890. A series of subsequent decrees over the next five years reserved 300,000 hectares in the Eritrean highlands for Italian colonization. Despite official sanction for this plan, few peasants migrated to Eritrea. Those that did were unable to establish economically viable agricultural settlements. By the start of the twentieth century, Italian officials in both Asmara and Rome were forced to recognize that this policy was a failure.[30]

In an effort to develop a new programme for economically developing Eritrea, Ferdinando Martini, the Governor of Eritrea, invited Gino Bartolommei Gioli, the famed agronomist and future founder of the Istituto Agricolo Coloniale Italiano, to tour the colony in 1901 and complete the first, in-depth agronomic study of the region.[31] Following his tour, Gioli crafted a two-pronged development strategy for Eritrea. Gioli determined that the highlands should be reserved for indigenous cultivators to grow grain. He believed that these cultivators would be able to use traditional methods to produce sufficient grain yields both to meet local demand and to have surpluses to supply European and Red Sea markets.[32] Gioli also determined that the lowlands should be opened to Italian investment in commercial cultivation. He highlighted the potential for this region of Eritrea to become a major supplier of raw cotton for European industry.[33]

Gioli's research and subsequent work to promote agricultural development in Eritrea inspired a consortium of Milanese cotton mill owners to establish the Società per la Coltivazione del Cotone nell'Eritrea (SCCE) in 1904, with a mandate to develop Eritrea into a stable source of cheap raw cotton for Italian mills. The SCCE immediately began operations in Eritrea. Over the next few years, the company focused on developing new cotton strains suitable for both the needs of Italian mills and the Eritrean climate, on working its own plantations, and on

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[30] *L'Economia Eritrea; Nel Cinquatennio dell'Occupazione di Assab (1882–1932)* (Florence: Istituto Agricolo Coloniale Italiano, 1932), pp. 7–8.

[31] Comitato per la Documentazione delle Attività Italians in Africa, Ministro Degli Affari Esteri,*L'Avvaloramento e la Colonizazione*, Vol. 2, *L'Opera di Avvaloramento Agricolo e Zootecnico in Eritrea, in Somalia e in Etiopia* (Rome, 1970), p. 27.

[32] Gino Bartolommei Gioli, *Le Attitudini della Colonia Eritrea all'Agricultura* (Florence: Tipographia di M. Ricci, 1902), p. 20.

[33] Bartolommei Gioli, *Le Attitudini della Colonia Eritrea all'Agricultura*, p. 34.

providing seed and cash advances to indigenous cultivators. As a result of the SCCE's initiative, seed cotton yields rose from 285 quintals in 1904/5[34] to nearly 5000 quintals in 1910/11. Despite the SCCE's early success, the company soon floundered. In September 1911, the Italo-Turkish War broke out. The transformation of the Eritrean economy during the war rendered the SCCE's operations unprofitable. Italian officials heavily recruited indigenous men for the army and stationed them in Libya; this lead to a labour shortage in Eritrea that drove up wages. At the same time, disruptions in shipping in the Red Sea caused transportation prices to increase. Though the war ended in October 1912, the SCCE continued to operate at a loss over the next few years. With their capital reserves dwindling, the company's management sought out new sources of capital to support its operations. However, the start of World War I led European capital markets to seize. Without new funding, the SCCE closed.[35] After the War ended, direct Italian investment in commercial cotton cultivation resumed. In 1919, the newly formed Società 'Gossypium' restarted the SCCE's abandoned operations. However, this company also proved unprofitable and quickly closed. The company's initiatives were then taken over by its former director, A. Tittoni, who was subsequently unable to increase cotton yields to prewar levels.[36] Other cotton cultivation companies were established in Eritrea by Italian backers after the war, including the Società Imprese Coloniali Caramelli & Co. and the Compagnia Mineraria Coloniale. However, they all proved similarly commercially unviable and quickly failed.[37]

Despite these commercial failures, Italian officials remained committed to developing Eritrea into a supplier of raw cotton for Italian cotton mills. These officials were driven, in part, by developments in Sudan. In 1913, the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan's government entered into an agreement with the Sudan Plantation Syndicate (SPS) to establish a large cotton plantation in the fertile Jazira plain between the White and Blue

[34] Guido Mangano, *La Cotonicoltura e le Iniziative Cotoniere nell'Eritrea* FASC2435 IAO.

[35] G. de Ponti. *Il Cotone in Eritrea*. 27 August 1930. FASC1962 IAO.

[36] Ufficio Agrario dell'Eritrea. *Attività Agricola in Eritrea dal 1923*. December 1931 FASC1965 IAO.

[37] See Guido Mangano, *La Cotonicoltura e le Iniziative Cotoniere nell'Eritrea* FASC2435 IAO; F. Cappelleti. *Rapporto Sulle Zone Agricole di Zula, Uangabò, Bardoli e Badda (Bassopiano Orientale) nel Periode 3–8 Febraio 1947*. FASC2201 IAO.

Niles south of Khartoum. This initiative, which came to be called the Gezira Scheme, was delayed as a result of World War I and was only begun in earnest in the early 1920s.[38] In the years following its opening, more and more land was incorporated into the Gezira Scheme and cotton yields in Sudan increased rapidly. SPS management began to seek out new Sudanese regions that could support other, similar cotton development schemes, ultimately settling on the Qash Delta, an inland delta in Eastern Sudan. The delta is fed by the Mareb River, which begins in the Eritrean highlands. Italian officials feared that the commercial development of cotton cultivation in the Qash Delta would limit Eritrea's ability to profit from the Mareb's waters. To ensure their claim, Italian officials rushed to establish a state-owned cotton plantation on a couple of thousand acres at Tessenei.[39] On 11 May 1931, the plantation was turned over to the Società Imprese Africane (SIA),[40] a private company founded the previous year with capital invested by the Banca Commerciale Italiana and a group of private Italian capitalists. Yet, this plantation, like earlier similar private efforts, proved unprofitable. In order to keep operations going and maintain Italy's claim to the waters of the Mareb River, the Italian Ministero delle Finanze was forced to purchase a majority stake in the SIA.[41]

Though the Tessenei plantation was a commercial failure, the Italian government remained committed to developing Eritrea into a major supplier of raw cotton for the Italian textile industry. Italian officials' commitment to this ideal only deepened in the 1920s and 1930s. The rise of Fascism and the increased diplomatic tensions between Italy, France and Britain resulting from the Italian conquest of Ethiopia in 1935/6 inspired Italian officials to search out programmes that promoted Italian industrial and agricultural autarchy. In the late 1930s, the Italian textile

[38] For a history of this scheme, see Arthur Gaitskell, *Gezira: A Story of Development in the Sudan* (London: Faber and Faber, 1959).

[39] The establishment of this plantation was seen as the first step to the opening of negotiations about the division of the waters of the Mareb River. Marcello Gubellini, *Un Triennio di osservazioni economiche nell'azienda agrarian della socetà imprese africane a tessenei*. June 1936 FASC1245 IAO.

[40] Marcello Gubellini. *Un Triennio di osservazioni economiche nell'azienda agrarian della socetà imprese africane a tessenei*. June 1936 FASC1245 IAO.

[41] Guido Mangano, *La Cotonicoltura e le Iniziative Cotoniere nell'Eritrea* FASC2435 IAO.

industry needed 1.6 million quintals of cotton per year, only 7.5 per cent of which was supplied by Italy and its colonies. Italy annually imported nearly 1 million quintals from the United States, 260,000 quintals from Egypt and 320,000 quintals from India. To promote the development of more stable, Italian-controlled sources of supply, in April 1934 the Italian government established the Ente per il Cotone dell'Africa Italiana (ECAI). The ECAI had a starting capital of 25 million lire and was charged with expanding cotton production in Italy's African empire by undertaking scientific studies, promoting useful initiatives and consulting with Italian officials in Rome and in the colonies. The ECAI subsequently laid out a number of policy goals, including bringing an additional 300,000 hectares under cotton in Ethiopia, Eritrea and Somalia in order to increase the quantity of cotton imported annually into Italy from the region to 500,000 quintals. To meet this goal, Italian officials created a set of Distretti Cotonieri, which were concessions granted to Italian companies to purchase and market cotton from a specific colonial region. In addition, the Eritrean government expanded the size of the land concession granted to the Tessenei plantation from 3500 to 16,000 hectares in 1936.[42] Despite these programmes, little was actually accomplished because the outbreak of World War II prevented Italian firms from fully exploiting their concessions.

The Failed Industrialization of Textile Production in Eritrea

Efforts to incorporate Eritrea into the chain of Italian textile production, as both supplier of raw material and market for finished goods, came to an abrupt end in 1941 when British-led troops conquered Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia. Nonetheless, the policies implemented in the final years of Italian rule laid the groundwork for the revival of textile production in Eritrea. Between 1936 and 1943, Eritrea began to industrialize rapidly. This process was initiated during the last years of Italian rule. Starting in 1936, Italian officials imported large quantities of mechanical equipment, construction material and capital in order to facilitate the construction of an elaborate network of roads, airports, warehouses, workshops, offices and encampments that linked remote parts of Eritrea,

[42] Ibid.

Ethiopia and Somalia with export ports on the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden and Indian Ocean. In addition, officials facilitated the immigration of thousands of Italian skilled workers to staff the developing facilities. These Italian initiatives were halted during the 1941 British-led conquest of the Italian-controlled territories in northeast Africa. Following this conquest, the new British rulers of Eritrea, using funding and personnel provided by their American allies, capitalized on the facilities and skilled labour in Eritrea by establishing a number of industrial projects that focused, primarily, on the manufacture and repair of airplanes, arms and ammunition. The influx of American money, equipment and expertise stimulated private industry, and soon factories manufacturing soap, matches, paper, glue and margarine opened in Eritrea. In 1943, the American projects closed and 14,000 Italians and Eritreans were laid off from their jobs with government sponsored projects. However, these skilled and semi-skilled workers quickly found employment in the expanding industrial manufacturing sector.[43]

While some Eritrean industries grew rapidly in the 1940s, British policy ultimately led to the de-industrialization of the Eritrean economy. Disruptions in cultivation and trade caused by the Italian invasion of Sudan in 1940 and the subsequent British-led conquest of Eritrea in 1941 led to an acute food crisis in the African Red Sea littoral. As a result of the ongoing global war, British officials were unable to call on international grain markets to meet local supply deficiencies and, therefore, turned their attention to the rapid increase of grain production. British officials ordered that the plantation at Tessenei be cultivated with sorghum, the staple crop,[44] and, as a result, the extent of cotton cultivation in Eritrea decreased from 6500 acres in 1937[45] to 908 acres in 1948.[46] Following the Allied conquest of Italy and the collapse of Fascism, British officials encouraged the immigration to Italy of tens of thousands

[43] G. K. N. Trevaskis. *Eritrea: A Colony in Transition, 1941–1952* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1960), pp. 37–39.

[44] Giuseppe Jannone, *Rapporto Confidenziale sull'Attività della Popolazione Italiana dell'Eritrea dal 1942 all'Agosto 1946 e sulle Condizion Economiche di Essa Durante lo Stesso Periodo* (1946) FASC592 IAO.

[45] Guido Mangano, *La Cotonicoltura e le Iniziative Cotoniere nell'Eritrea* FASC2435 IAO.

[46] British Administration, Eritrea. *Eritrea. Annual Report for 1949* (1949), p. 113.

of Italians living in Eritrea so as to decrease local demand for food.[47] The repatriation of Italian workers led to a steep decline in the availability of skilled labour. Industrialization was further hindered as a result of policies imposed by the British to shore up imperial currencies. In the early 1940s, British officials replaced the Italian Lire with the British East African Shilling as the official currency of Eritrea.[48] Following the War, British officials feared that imports of raw materials and machinery into Eritrea were depleting foreign cash reserves and, therefore, restricted these imports.[49] Since factories were not able to secure the labour, raw materials and spare machine parts necessary to maintain production, many were forced to close. Labour and supply problems also prevented new factories from opening.

The end of British rule did not lead to the re-industrialization of the Eritrean economy. In 1951, following United Nations recommendations, Eritrea was federated with Ethiopia as an autonomous state under the rule of the Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie. Though the two federated states had differing political structures, they shared a common currency—the Ethiopian Dollar. Following federation, the value of foreign imports into Eritrea and Ethiopia increased as exports stagnated. Officials in both Eritrea and Ethiopia became concerned about foreign currency reserves and adopted economic development strategies focused on import substitution.[50] In the late 1950s, textiles accounted for approximately 33 per cent by value of all imports into Eritrea and Ethiopia.[51] As a result, officials focused on industrializing textile manufacturing.[52] Unfortunately, officials could not induce local capital

[47] Office of Minister Resident, Cairo. *Report on Eritrea*, 19 June 1944. FO 921/304 National Archive, London (NA).

[48] R. N. P. Lewin to M. Lynch, 3 January 1952. FO 371/96766 NA.

[49] For an analysis of the role of monetary policy in determining imperial policy after World War II, see Allister Hinds, *Britain's Sterling Colonial Policy and Decolonization, 1939–1958* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001).

[50] Bulti Terfassa, "Recent Trends in the Development of Manufacturing Industries in Ethiopia", *The Ethiopian Economy: Structure, Problems and Policy Issues. Proceedings of the First Annual Conference on the Ethiopian Economy*, Mekonen Taddesse, ed. (Addis Ababa, 1992), pp. 142–143.

[51] Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Ethiopian Government. *Economic Review*. No 5, p. 101.

[52] Bahru Zewde, *A History of Modern Ethiopia 1855–1991*, 2nd Edition (Oxford: James Currey, 2001), p. 198.

to invest in manufacturing because the level of private savings in these two federated states was low and local capitalists preferred to invest in the construction sector, where profits could be realized faster.[53] As a result, this programme of import substitution was financed by foreign investment.

Though many foreign investors chose to establish factories near Ethiopian commercial centres,[54] some sought to capitalize on the well-developed infrastructure network in Eritrea. In 1957, the Cotonificio Barrattolo opened in Asmara, focusing exclusively on the production of cotton yarns for export. As a result of the company's efforts, the amount of yarn produced industrially in Eritrea rose rapidly from zero in 1956 to over 1200 tons in 1959.[55] The Cotonificio Barrattolo's factory quickly became the largest industrial plant in Eritrea and the second largest cotton company in the two federated states.[56]

The rapidly expanding industrial potential of Eritrea and its attractiveness for foreign investors contributed to the Ethiopian government's 1962 decision to dissolve the federation and to formally annex Eritrea to Ethiopia. Despite these political changes, the industrial sector continued to grow. The manufacture of cotton goods remained one of the fastest growing industrial sectors. By 1965, there were 23 textile factories in Ethiopia (including Eritrea, which was then considered the 14th province), with 9 in Addis Ababa, 10 in Asmara and 1 each in Dire Dawa, Debre Marqos, Bahir Dar and Debre Birhan.[57] The Asmara-based companies included Cotonificio Barattolo, which had expanded operations and now also produced fabrics; Ethiofibres, which produced cotton yarns and fabrics; and Ethiotextile, which specialized in the production

[53] Terfassa, "Recent Trends in the Development", pp. 142–143.

[54] The two most important textile factories established during this time were the Indo-Ethiopian Textile Mills near Addis Ababa and the Bahr Dar Textile Mills in northern Gojjam. Zewde, *A History of Modern Ethiopia*, p. 198.

[55] Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Ethiopian Government. *Economic Review* No 5, p. 101.

[56] Other goods manufactured on an industrial basis included buttons, nails, plywood, matches and paper-goods. Richard Sherman, *Eritrea: The Unfinished Revolution* (New York: Praeger, 1980), p. 114.

[57] Assefa Bequele and Eshetu Chole, *A Profile of the Ethiopian Economy* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 53.

of cotton underwear.[58] By the late 1960s, Ethiopian textile factories employed 13,800 people, or nearly 38 per cent of Ethiopia's industrial workforce.[59] They annually produced over 1.5 million piece goods[60] and 43 million square metres of cloth.[61] To supply this growing industry, the Ethiopian government channelled investment into the rapid expansion of cotton cultivation, including initiatives in the province of Eritrea. In 1965, the SIA sold its interest in the Tessenei plantation to a new company started with Ethiopian and Italian capital. The new company immediately invested nearly Eth. $2,000,000 in purchasing machinery and other inputs.[62] As a result of this and other, similar investments, yields of seed cotton in the province of Eritrea rose from 2960 tons in 1965 to 11,002 tons in 1972.[63]

Increased industrial output did not stabilize the Ethiopian economy. Industrialization required the importation of machinery, which further widened the unfavourable balance of trade. The Ethiopian economy became increasingly dependent on infusions of foreign capital[64] and, in the early 1970s, the annual rate of inflation increased to 9 per cent.[65] Instability in the Ethiopian economy led to widespread protests and contributed to the toppling of the Ethiopian government in September 1974. Shortly after the Provisional Military Administrative Council, also known as the *Derg*, assumed power in a coup, the new rulers of Ethiopia embraced a Marxist-Leninist political ideology and nationalized all banks and financial organizations. In addition, the *Derg* nationalized 72 of Ethiopia's largest companies. The new government claimed a monopoly

[58] Provincial Government of Eritrea, *Social and Economic Development of Eritrea since 1962* (1966), pp. 129–130.

[59] Bequele and Chole, p. 52.

[60] Provincial Government of Eritrea, p. 130.

[61] The Technical Agency. Imperial Ethiopian Government, *The Resources an Economy of Ethiopia*, Report No 13 (February 1969), p. 64.

[62] Provincial Government of Eritrea, pp. 86–89.

[63] Sherman, *Eritrea*, p. 116.

[64] Zewde, *A History of Modern Ethiopia*, p. 196.

[65] Mulatu Wubneh and Yohannis Abate, *Ethiopia: Transition and Development in the Horn of Africa* (Boulder CO: Westview Press, 1988), p. 87.

over a number of economic sectors, including the industrial production of textiles.[66]

Political instability in Ethiopia escalated tensions between the Ethiopian state and the Eritrean nationalist rebels. The armed Eritrean nationalist movement had begun in the early 1960s and had been focused on attacking Ethiopian government facilities, and engaging the Ethiopian military and police forces.[67] Following its rise to power, the *Derg* escalated many of the previous Ethiopian government's counter-insurgency operations. As part of the campaign against Eritrean separatism, the *Derg* started systematically to cripple the Eritrean economy. State officials ordered the dismantling of factories in Eritrea and had the industrial machinery shipped to other parts of Ethiopia. The remaining industrial plants in Eritrea were not maintained and the machinery quickly either became outdated, or fell into disrepair.[68]

Despite the *Derg*'s efforts, Eritrean separatist organizations managed to capture Asmara in 1991 and, in so doing, brought about an end to Ethiopian rule. The new independent Eritrean government publicly adopted an open-market economy and quickly established procedures for privatizing the 42 large-scale factories and 650 small-scale enterprises that it inherited from the Ethiopian government.[69] However, these efforts did not lead to a private capital-funded economic recovery. The government agency charged with facilitating privatization, known as the National Agency for the Supervision and Privatization of Public Enterprises (NASPPE), was dominated by members of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF). The NASPPE privatized only a limited number of establishments and, in general, ensured that ownership was transferred to members of the ruling party. The remaining public establishments remained under state control.[70] In 1998, a

[66] Other industries reserved for the state were mining of precious minerals, petroleum refinery, leather and rubber products, tobacco, glass, electricity, gas, water and telecommunications. Wubneh and Abate, *Ethiopia*, pp. 90–91.

[67] For an analysis of the progression of the armed conflict between Ethiopia and the Eritrean rebel groups and of the human rights violations committed on both sides, see Africa Watch. *Evil Days: Thirty Years of War and Famine in Ethiopia* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1991).

[68] Mussie Tesfagiorgis G., *Eritrea* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2010), p. 111.

[69] Tesfagiorgis, *Eritrea*, p. 111.

[70] Tesfagiorgis, *Eritrea*, pp. 119–120.

border conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia led to a two-year war that resulted in over 100,000 casualties and widespread internal displacement.[71] The economic devastation caused by the war led to the bankruptcy of many privately owned Eritrean commercial establishments. Those that stayed open routinely lacked the supplies and skilled labour necessary to expand, or even maintain, production levels. Nonetheless, a small number of enterprises continued production. In 2010, the narrow manufacturing sector was dominated by cotton textile production and goods were produced at a number of establishments, including the privately owned Lalemba Sack Factory, the Asmara Sweater Factory, the state-owned Baratollo/Asmara Textile Factory and the Eritrea Textile Factory.[72]

Though the Eritrean economy grew in the years that followed independence, demand for imported clothing and textiles remained low as a result of widespread poverty. Articles of apparel, along with other non-durable goods, accounted for just 3.4 per cent by value of reported imports in 2003. Low levels of textile and clothing imports were a function of endemic food insecurity and not of high levels of local production. During the armed struggle for Eritrean independence, military tactics, including the widespread use of landmines, drove many cultivators from their land. As a result, large tracts of previously cultivated land became permanently fallow and the agricultural sector of the Eritrean economy, which had accounted for up to 70 per cent of the country's GDP in the early 1960s, collapsed.[73] In the years immediately following independence, the demand for grain in Eritrea exceeded local supplies by as much as 310,000 metric tons per annum. Due to the weak state of the Eritrean economy, this deficit had to be made up for by international food aid. Unfortunately, food aid in the 1990s never exceeded more than 80 per cent of the total grain deficit as estimated by the Eritrean government.[74] As a result, grain prices more than tripled in the years

[71] Göte Hansoon, "Building New States: Lessons From Eritrea", United Nations University, World Institute for Development Economics Research, Discussion Paper No2001/66 (August 2001), p. 12.

[72] Tesfagiorgis, *Eritrea*, pp. 112–116.

[73] Haile Awalom, "Food Security: Problems, Policies and Programmes". In *Post-conflict Eritrea: Prospects for Reconstruction and Development*, ed. Martin Doornbos and Alemseged Tesfai (Lawrenceville, NJ: The Red Sea Press, 1999), p. 142.

[74] Awalom, "Food Security", p. 145.

following independence.[75] The 1998–2000 Eritrean–Ethiopian War exacerbated the food crisis in Eritrea by again disrupting cultivation systems. By 2002, it was estimated that 58 per cent of the Eritrean population suffered from chronic undernutrition.[76] Eritrea was, and still is, unable to produce sufficient food to feed its growing population and the country is dependent on food imports. As a result, in 2003 food and beverages accounted for 42.2 per cent of all imports by value.[77] This persistent food crisis continues to prevent Eritrea from fully participating in the global textile trade.

Conclusion

Independence did not usher in a period of rapid industrialization in Eritrea because, by the end of the twentieth century, political dependence was not the factor that was holding back economic development. In the years preceding independence, political dependence was, in itself, a symptom of a greater problem—widespread poverty. At the end of the nineteenth century, an ecological catastrophe led to widespread social dislocation and to the collapse of local systems of production and trade. The chaos caused by this catastrophe created the opportunity for European powers to establish political control over Eritrea. At the same time, the widespread poverty created by this catastrophe fundamentally changed Eritrean material culture. Local consumers were no longer able to purchase the desired domestically produced textiles and, instead, had to purchase cheap, industrially produced alternatives. As a result, local textile production collapsed. Economic recovery took decades and was only ever partial. Negative trade balances, caused in part by high imports of foreign textiles, further weakened the local economy. Following World War II, this trade deficit led to a foreign exchange crisis and contributed to military instability. Throughout this process, Eritrean peasant producers and transhumant pastoralists sunk further and further into poverty and food insecurity. Undernutrition and malnutrition became

[75] Awalom, "Food Security", p. 191.

[76] Philip White, "Sovereignty and Starvation: The Food Security Dimensions of the Eritrean–Ethiopian War", in *Unfinished Business: Eritrea and Ethiopia at War*, ed. Dominique Jaquin-Berdal and Martin Plaut (eds). (Lawrenceville, NJ: Red Sea Press, 2005), p. 203.

[77] United Nations Commodity Trade Statistics Database. *Eritrea* (2003).

widespread. Eritrean independence could not immediately resolve the underlying structural problems in the local economy. By independence in 1991, widespread poverty had cut the Eritrean economy off from the means to redevelop textile manufacturing and, at the same time, ensured that Eritreans lacked the resources necessary to purchase foreign imports. Despite government-supported initiatives, Eritrea is still not a country of clothing producers.

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PART II

Trade, Exchange and Networks of Distribution

CHAPTER 7

Distributive Networks, Sub-Regional Tastes and Ethnicity: The Trade in Chinese Textiles in Southeast Asia from the Tenth to Fourteenth Centuries CE

Derek Heng

Introduction

Silks have been one of China's most important products. As early as the first millennium CE, these textiles made their way to Southeast Asia, initially into such mainland Southeast Asian states as Tonkin, Annam and Champa, and, by the end of the first millennium CE, to such areas as Sumatra, Java and the Malay Peninsula. By the beginning of the second millennium CE, Chinese silks had gained a substantial reputation in Southeast Asia, such that they began first to feature as items of exchange in state-level interactions between the Song Dynastic court (960–1278) and the Southeast Asia polities and states with which it maintained relations. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, silks featured as a key export commodity to Southeast Asia.

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The exact nature of the silk trade into Southeast Asia can, at present, only be ascertained almost entirely through textual analysis. The organic nature of silks has meant that there are almost no remains from the early second millennium CE, even though recent discoveries of textiles from such Southeast Asian areas as Sulawesi dated to the fifteeenth century provide a hint of what that trade may have been in the preceding centuries.[1] As the dynamic nature of Sino–Southeast Asian trade changed, Chinese silk—in terms of the types of silk exported, the volume and value of the silks, as well as the geographical reach of the product—evolved in tandem with the changed economic and commercial contexts within both China and in Southeast Asia.

This chapter seeks to trace this important economic product and its place in Sino–Southeast Asian relations and trade over the tenth to fourteenth centuries. Several pertinent questions will be answered: What were the channels through which silk was introduced and fed into Southeast Asia? What was the nature of the evolution of the types of silks traded into the Southeast Asian market? How, and to what extent, did the pre-existing textile consumption and production patterns and methods in the different parts of Southeast Asia affect the types of silk imported into these various sub-regions over the course of time? Did different silks come to embody differing status upon their receipt by the different Southeast Asian societies? The chapter will also trace the evolution of the types, values and status of different silk textiles and items, and elucidate the implications on the socio-cultural life of Southeast Asian societies. This will be achieved through studying three chronological phases:– the tenth to twelfth centuries, when silk was noted primarily within the context of state-level exchanges; the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, when significant documentation on its trade into Southeast Asia begins to emerge; and the fourteenth century, when major changes in the nature of the silk trade occurred.

[1] http://www.acm.org.sg/pressrelease_docs/62_doc1_MEDIA_RELEASE__Patterns_of_Trade__Indian_Textiles_for_Export_14001900.pdf, accessed on 25 August 2014.

Silk Cloths as Status Items in Southeast Asia

Even though the production and weaving of silk textiles in Chinese history may be dated well into the late Neolithic period, its role in China's interactions and trade with the societies and states of Southeast Asia are largely unknown up to the end of the first millenium CE. The earliest record of its use in China's southern trade dates to 966, when silk garments, along with cash and wares, were given as reciprocal gifts to the envoys of Champa who had presented ivory and aromatic products.[2] In 987, a diplomatic mission was dispatched by the Song court to Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean littoral to encourage the states of these regions to trans-ship products to China. The mission officials carried with them silk cloth as one of the two types of product to be used both as courtly gifts and as items of barter for high-value foreign products at the ports of call.[3] By the late tenth century, silk textiles were used as a barter item and traded for high-value foreign goods brought by state-level trade missions,[4] and, by the beginning of the eleventh century, refined silks were recognized by the Mercantile Shipping Superintendencies as one of the five categories of goods used in China's international maritime trade.[5]

Despite the limited textual record of silk cloth as a trade product, it is clear from the reciprocal gifts made by China to state-level trade and diplomatic missions from foreign states that refined (presumably high-quality) silks were highly valued by the recipient states. Recipients of silk cloth in state-level exchanges included Champa (modern-day coastal Vietnam), the Dashi Arabs, India and Java during the tenth and early eleventh centuries. The record of silk textiles as a reciprocal gift from

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[2] Grace Wong, *A Commentary on the Tributary Trade between China and Southeast Asia, and the Place of Porcelain in This Trade During the Period of the Song Dynasty in China* (Singapore: Southeast Asian Ceramics Society, 1979), p. 6.

[3] Xu Song, *Songhuiyao jigao* (1236), Zhiguan (henceforth SHY ZG) 44:2b.

[4] For a detailed study of the types of Chinese and Southeast Asian textiles traded during the Song to Ming period, see Lee Chor Lin, *Textile Trade between China and Southeast Asia during the Song, Yuan and Ming Dynasties* (MA thesis, University of Singapore, 1994). On textiles in medieval Java, see Jan Wisseman Christie, 'Texts and Textiles in "Medieval" Java', *Bulletin de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême Orient* (henceforth *BEFEO*) 80, no. 1 (1993): pp. 181–211.

[5] SHY ZG 44:1a-b & SS 186:23a.

China to the Southeast Asian missions that arrived at the Song court provides a glimpse of these textiles as status objects in Southeast Asia.

Examples of the types of silk item offered by China in state-level exchanges may be seen in the reciprocal exchanges between the Song court and its foreign counterparts. The case of Champa, a Southeast Asian state that dispatched a consistent stream of envoys to the Song court from the tenth through the twelfth century, provides some insight into these exchanges. Between the reignal periods of Qiande and Xiangfu (966 and 1016), Champa was conferred blankets, overcoats (襲衣), clothes (衣服) and headdresses.[6] Between 1010 and 1049, gifts of flags (旗) were also made.[7] Specifics of these items are absent. However, given that the textile industry, being under state purview in China during this period, was producing silks that were to be used by the court and officialdom primarily for ceremonial purposes, we can assume that these items would have been of high quality and viewed, both in China and, presumably, in Champa, as status articles. It may also be elucidated that finished textile items (as opposed to bolts of cloth or floss) featured as an important part of this exchange. Amongst such items were blankets (被褥), garments and flags. Specific types of items were conferred upon different states, even though the general classification of the silk items may have been the same.

Details of the different items of ceremonial clothing conferred on visiting envoys become available only in the mid-eleventh century. In 1053, the Cham mission to the Song court was conferred a significant variety of silk items, all of which have been recorded in the *Songhuiyao zigao* (*Veritable Records of the Song*). The chief envoy was granted a broad purple gauze (羅) robe, tight purple gauze sleeves, a tight small twill damask (绫) undergarment, a broad small twill damask undergarment, large twill damask socks, a headdress (presumably of silk), small twill damask shoes, silk shoes, a purple open-work variegated thin silk (dyed after it is woven) blanket and small twill damask tight-woven silk. The deputy envoy was also presented with a broad purple gauze robe, a tight purple gauze robe, a broad small twill damask undergarment, large twill damask socks, a tight small damask undergarment, a headdress, silk shoes, clothes (no description given) and a small twill damask tight-woven silk.

[6]Wong, *A Commentary on the Tributary Trade*, p. 7.

[7]Wong, *A Commentary on the Tributary Trade*, p. 7.

The second deputy envoy was conferred a broad purple gauze robe, a tight purple gauze robe, a tight small twill damask undergarment, a broad tabby-weave (絹) pongee undergarment, small twill damask socks, a headdress, silk shoes and clothes (no description given). The other accompanying officials were each given a coarse purple official's robe, a tabby-weave pongee undergarment (not broad, presumably in reference to the width of the cloth used), tabby-weave pongee socks, a headdress, a tabby-weave pongee turban, hemp shoes and clothes.[8]

It is apparent from the list above that different items had different status in the eyes of the Song court. There were two value-registers of silks accorded to the envoys of Southeast Asian states. The high-value silks included twill damask, gauze and open-work variegated silk items. The lower-value silks comprised primarily tabby-weave pongees. Whereas tabby-weave pongees were reserved for lower-ranking officials, twill damask clothes were reserved for higher-ranking officials. Those reserved only for the highest officials included items of open-work variegated silk and twill damask tight-woven silks.

The finesse and resulting high price of some of these materials, such as damask and gauze, given the complexity of the weave and the amount of silk needed to produce these different textiles, would no doubt have conferred upon different silk textiles their respective status in the eyes of the court. In 1187, for example, official weavers produced 1500 bolts of twill damask using around 30,000 liang (about 1200 kilograms) of silk, indicative of the fact that the cost of producing such textiles was very high.[9] It may also be noted that the use of cheaper silks for lower ranking officials—in particular, tabby-wave pongees—appears to have foreshadowed the Song court's move, by the 1080s, towards the use of such silks as a form of payment of soldiers' salaries and for the provision of materials for uniforms.[10]

The ceremonial use of silk in China was carried into Southeast Asia, where the textile acquired an elevated status and became a means of socio-political distinction. According to a Cham envoy's report on

[8] SHY Fanyi (henceforth SHY FY) 4:70.

[9] Dieter Kuhn, "Reading the Magnificance of Ancient and Medieval Chinese Silks," in *Chinese Silks,* ed. Dieter Kuhn (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), p. 263.

[10] Kuhn, "Reading the Magnificance of Ancient and Medieval Chinese Silks", pp. 12 & 50.

Champa dated to 1076, the king of that Southeast Asian state would be dressed in a robe made of Sichuan tabby-weave silk.[11] The practice of rulers wearing silks was not confined to Southeast Asia alone. The *Zhufanzhi* (1225) by Zhao Rugua notes that the rulers of Java, the Kingdoms of India, of the Arabs and the Persians all dressed themselves in robes made from textiles of compound weave (锦).[12] These may have been Chinese brocades, given that this term has only been used in Chinese texts in reference to Chinese compound weave textiles (including gold brocade, as well as patterned compound weave on plain patterned weave[13]), although during this time there were other centres that produced luxurious complex silks on draw-looms, including in Iran, Italy, Spain and Central Asia. For Champa, however, the likelihood that Chinese silks were referred to in the *Zhufanzhi* is a distinct possiblity, and would have served as a mark of royal status in this part of maritime Asia during this time.

Within Southeast Asia, the use of Chinese silks as a marker of royalty extended in other ways. According to a report presented by a mission from Zhenlifu (真里富), a Southeast Asian polity located near Ligor along the coast of the Gulf of Siam, to the Song court, the chieftain of that polity used a tent made of 'Tang Dynasty red silk floss' and a screen made from 'white gauze enmeshed with gold'.[14] It is possible that the red silk floss was known as 'Tang' because it was during the preceding dynastic period that Chinese silk floss began to be made available to this part of the Gulf of Siam. More importantly, however, this information suggests that, in Southeast Asian societies, the use of specific types of silk within specific local contexts, tied to that of one's status, was an early development in the silk exchange from China to Southeast Asia.

Information recorded on the 1209 Zhenlifu mission also suggests that changes to the nature of the trade in silk between China and Southeast Asia were under way by the early thirteenth century. The mention of raw silk and finished silk products by Zhenlifu's envoy to the Song court may have been an attempt by the envoy at securing supplies of silks from

[11] SHY FY 4:72.

[12] Chen Jiarong & Qian Jiang, *Zhufanzhi zhupu* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2000), pp. 88, 127–173 & 222.

[13] Dieter Kuhn, "Appendix", in *Chinese Silks*, p. 523.

[14] SHY FY 4:99.

China, which would have been highly profitable when brought back to Southeast Asia. This would have been reflective of the changes in the silk export trade that China was undergoing by the late eleventh century. During this time, foreign missions arriving from Southeast Asia were no longer treated by the Song court as diplomatic embassies.[15] The gifts dispatched by such missions were reciprocated with copper coins and silver equal to the value of the products presented to the court. Consequently, this change in the Chinese procedure in dealing with Southeast Asian state-level exchanges resulted in a shift in emphasis, from the conferring of ceremonial textile items upon envoys to the provision of commercially available textiles to these missions. Srivijaya's 1082 mission, led by a Srivijayan princess and which presented a large quantity of camphor and textiles to the Mercantile Shipping Superintendency at Guangzhou, was reciprocated by the Song court with commercial silks.[16] Although generic silks, denoted by the character bo (帛), had already been presented to Southeast Asian missions as early as the 960s, they clearly did not feature as being an important aspect of the exchanges in the eyes of the Song court. Instead, detailed information of commercial silks as part of state-level exchanges only begin to appear in the latter half of the twelfth century. In 1180, the mission from Zhenlifu was conferred reciprocal gifts comprising red gauze (羅) tabby-weave pongees, dark red resist-dyed pongees, red floss resist-dyed gauze and dark resist-dyed tabby-weave pongees.[17] The commercialization of the export of Chinese silk to Southeast Asia was proceeding in earnest by the late twelfth century.

[15] Derek Heng, *Sino-Malay Trade and Diplomacy from the Tenth through the Fourteenth Century*. Ohio University Research in International Studies, Southeast Asia Series no. 121 (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2009), p. 41.

[16] Wang Yunwu (ed.), *Ma Duanlin: Wenxian tongkao* (henceforth WXTK) (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1936), 332: 2610.

[17] SHY FY 4:101.

Silks as Trade Items in the Eleventh to Thirteenth Centuries

The commercialization of the silk trade—in particular, its international trade via the sea—came in the wake of a number of developments in China's domestic and international economic policies. To begin with, international trade was increasingly encouraged from the early eleventh century onwards, reflected in the decentralization and de-ritualization of the reception of foreign state-level trade missions by the Song court. By the mid-eleventh century, these exchanges were accounted for in currency terms, as opposed to reciprocation in kind, as has been the practice for centuries prior to this change. In 1072, reforms to the trade and barter regulations were instituted, which had the effect of encouraging private trade in China while, at the same time, scaling back the proportion of direct state involvement in the Chinese commodities market. By 1090, Chinese international shipping was fully liberalized, with all coastal ports accorded permission to register outgoing and incoming vessels.[18] Together, these changes led to a shift towards lower-value, higher-volume trade between China and its maritime economic partners. Demand for Chinese wares, particularly by Southeast Asian states, increased. These changes had the effect of causing the production along the Chinese coastal hinterland of such items as ceramics, metalware and textiles to increase significantly.[19]

These changes were profound. As early as the 1080s, there was a shift in the national silk production in China, from one that was dominated primarily by the national production centres that were producing high-quality and high-value silks for official and courtly use, to one whereby tabby-weave cloths and pongees came to dominate the industry. This expansion may be linked directly to the development of the silk industry in the eleventh century, during which time state-managed silk production shifted dramatically from the production primarily of high-quality silks for imperial use to the production primarily of plain tabby weave pongees, or *juan* (絹) and *chou* (綢) silk fabrics to be used for the

[18] SHY ZG 44:8a–b.

[19] Derek Heng, *Sino-Malay*, p. 150.

payment of soldiers' salaries and for the provision of materials for uniforms.[20] Supplementing this lower-value silk trade would have been the higher-value silks produced by the imperial textiles centres maintained by the Song court.

Following the Song court's liberalization of Chinese shipping in 1090, silk cloth became a key product carried by traders, including Chinese, to Southeast Asia. The *Pingzhou ketan* by Zhu Yu, written in the early twelfth century and based on observations by the author and his father in the province of Guangdong and the port city of Guangzhou, notes that Chinese traders would amass silks, along with other manufactured items, on credit before embarking on a commercial trip to maritime Southeast Asia.[21] The value of the Chinese products carried by individual traders was presumably not normally very high. The bulk of the trade was likely to have been lower value silks, mirroring the increase in the wider production of lower value tabby-weave cloths and pongees evident by the 1080s.[22] While small-scale traders were probably carrying small batches of silks to the international ports of call in Southeast Asia, collectively the overall volume, given the exponential increase in the volume of shipping from China, was probably much more significant than that exported in earlier periods.

Increasingly, the demand for status-conferring silks by the elite of Southeast Asia's polities was met by commercial imports of Chinese silks. Information on the 1209 Zhenlifu mission to China suggests that the categories of people using silk as tentage material broadened to include Zhenlifu's nobility. In this case, patterned silk constructed of blue warp thread and blue-white weft thread was used for such purposes.[23] This type of silk fabric was not noted to have been obtained through diplomatic exchanges. Instead, the *Zhufanzhi* notes that this silk product was imported by a number of mainland Southeast Asian polities, including Langkasuka and Tambralingga, both located in the Gulf of Siam and neighbours of Zhenlifu, and by Srivijaya (southeastern Sumatra) and

[20] Kuhn, "Reading the Magnificance of Ancient and Medieval Chinese Silks", pp. 12 & 50.

[21] Zhu Yu, *Pingzhou ketan* (1116), 2:1a & b.

[22] Kuhn, "Reading the Magnificance of Ancient and Medieval Chinese Silks", pp. 12 & 50.

[23] SHY FY 4:99.

Java,[24] both of which were major maritime Southeast Asian trade centres with commercial links to the ports in the Gulf of Siam.

As an indication of the growing importance of silk cloth as a Chinese export item to Southeast Asia, a 1219 memorial recorded in the *Songhuiyao* recommended that the use of metals in China's maritime trade cease, and that silk be used as a key commodity to barter for the foreign products coming into the Chinese ports instead. Three types of silk were specifically mentioned: silk cloths, presumably plain dyed; silks with decorative patterns applied through dye methods (presumably such methods as resist-dye and gradated dyeing); and silks with printed decorative patterns.[25] The recommendation is an indication of the Song administration's awareness of the breadth of the market tastes for silk fabrics that had developed amongst China's trading partners by the early thirteenth century.

The range of silk products exported to maritime Southeast Asia was, in fact, much wider than the three types listed in the 1219 memorial. Herein, the *Zhufanzhi* provides some valuable insight and also the first detailed information on the Chinese silk trade in the Indian Ocean littoral. Chinese textiles were varied in terms of the quality, value and types that were demanded.

To begin with, apart from the mainland Southeast Asian polities of Champa and Khmer Cambodia, all the other ports in Southeast Asia known to the Chinese based at Quanzhou were noted in the *Zhufanzhi* to have maintained a demand for silks. Within this general interest, however, some sub-regional variations may be discerned. First, Java, Borneo and the Sunda area were noted in the same text to have imported multi-coloured resist-dyed silk. The ports under the purview of Borneo, on the other hand, imported silk resist-dyed pongee that was white or 'un-dyed'. Tambralingga, Langkasuka and Lambri, all of which were located in or near the northern part of the Malay Peninsula, were known to have imported lotus motif-decorated silk constructed of blue warp thread and blue-white weft thread, and resist-dyed silks.

Differences in local tastes, and possibly in regional political status, appears to have driven the differences in the hues imported by the ports in Borneo's sphere of influence, on the one hand, and those imported

[24] Chen & Qian, *Zhufanzhi*, pp. 66, 71, 46 & 88.

[25] Tuo Tuo et al., *Songshi* (1345) (henceforth SS), 185: 32b.

by Borneo and Java, on the other. With regards to Tambralingga, Langkasuka and Lambri, however, it is also possible that this differentiation reflected, to some extent, the more direct access to, and influence from, the markets and tastes of the Indian Ocean littoral—particularly the Bay of Bengal—than did the polities and states in the Indonesian Archipelago. The first two ports were located at the northeastern end of the Malay Peninsula, while Lambri was located at the northeastern tip of Sumatra. All three were situated in the nexus of the Isthmus of Kra overland route that had connected the Bay of Bengal to the South China Sea since the early first millenium CE. This Indian Ocean factor as an additional dimension to Southeast Asia's silk imports should not be overlooked as, according the the *Zhufanzhi*, Lambri, Tambralingga, Langkasuka and the South Asian port of Kollam imported lotus motif-decorated silk with blue warp thread and blue-white weft thread construction.

Apart from sub-regional tastes that were possibly driven by the demand for textiles not produced locally, ports in island Southeast Asia were also importing silks that mirrored the types of textiles that were produced in situ. One important example is silk damask, which was in great demand in the ports located in the Sulu Sea Zone and the Eastern Indonesian maritime sphere, including Java and the Southern Philippines. It shared visual similarities with the well-known prehistoric traditions of ikat textiles that were produced in this same Eastern Indoensian archipelago and the later wax-resist textiles, where the patternation appears primarily on one side, but is also visible on the other. In both instances, the decorations are much more clearly defined than by those produced on poly-chrome tabby-weave silks (decorations woven into the textile itself, typically with three to five colours). In the case of ikat textiles, they were visible on both sides of the cloth. As such, damasks may have been in demand because they aligned better with the aesthetics of the textiles produced locally in this part of Southeast Asia.

Similar demand patterns may be discerned in the case of the western Indonesian archipelago markets, although the types of silk textiles in demand here were markedly different. Tambralingga and Langkasuka in the Gulf of Siam, Lambri and Srivijaya-Palembang in Sumatra, and the ports on the north coast of Borneo, all imported poly-chrome tabby-weave silks from China. The unique feature of such poly-chrome silks, as opposed to damask, suggests again that contemporary textiles production in Southeast Asia—in this case, the use of resist-dye techniques,

including ikat, as the key means of decorating dyed textiles particularly in what may be termed the 'Malay region' (Sumatra, Borneo and the Malay Peninsula)—may have informed traders as to the types of silks that were to be made available to specific ports and sub-regions of Southeast Asia.

This is not to suggest that there was no demand for silk textiles of the highest value, or at least, silks that appeared to mimic those of extremely high value. Srivijaya-Palembang, for example, was noted in the *Zhufanzhi* to have imported brocade from Jianyang (near Fuzhou, Fujian province).[26] It is possible that a large proportion of these textiles were then re-exported to ports in the Indian Ocean littoral. It is important to note that, apart from Kollam, in the entries of the ports and countries of the Indian Ocean found in the *Zhufanzhi*, none of them were noted to have maintained any demand for Chinese silks. This is clearly an erroneous omission. The missions from north India to China, which arrived in 1010 and 1036, were conferred bolts of silks in return for the missions' gifts of Buddhist sutras to the Song court.[27] The missions from the Abbasid Dynasty, in 977, 984, 1012 and 1134, were noted to have been conferred bolts of silk yardage by the Song court in return for the gifts that these missions presented to the Song court.[28] Additionally, silk garments and ceremonial attire, including headgear, were conferred upon the various missions dispatched by states in the Indian Ocean littoral and the Middle East. In other words, Indian Ocean and Middle Eastern demand for Chinese silk was already well-established by the tenth and eleventh centuries, and this would have continued well into the early thirteenth century. The absence in the *Zhufanzhi* of Chinese knowledge of the specific types of silks demanded by the Indian Ocean littoral states was more a reflection of the Chinese mercantile shipping regulations that were in place during this time, which imposed a nine-month limit on all Chinese shipping being abroad, thereby limiting the southward scope of the operation of Chinese merchant shipping to Southeast Asia.[29] Chinese silks had to be relayed westwards beyond Southeast Asia by both Southeast Asian and Indian Ocean merchants. The silk products demanded by Southeast Asia ports that had access

[26] Chen & Qian, *Zhufanzhi*, p. 46.

[27] Wong, *A Commentary on the Tributary Trade*, p. 16.

[28] Wong, *A Commentary on the Tributary Trade*, pp. 17–19.

[29] Heng, *Sino-Malay Trade and Diplomacy*, p. 52.

to the Indian Ocean trade would have partially reflected the nature of Indian Ocean demand, as well.

At the same time, several geographical areas—namely, Borneo and Khmer Cambodia—were noted to have imported imitation brocade. It is possible that silks embroidered with repeating patterns to mimic brocaded silks were exported to these Southeast Asian areas to meet the demand for visually attractive and socially important textiles, as these areas may not have been able to afford actual Chinese silk brocade. Such product substitution practices were not unknown, as even China was importing such products as imitation dragon's blood, a manufactured item produced in Srivijaya-Palembang specifically for the Chinese market, and which was intended to mimic the red resin of the *Dracaena draco*, a North African plant.[30]

An interesting variation to the patterns of silk imports maintained by Southeast Asian ports was that maintained by Champa and Khmer Cambodia, both of which were significant mainland Southeast Asian political entities during this time. Both were noted by the *Zhufanzhi* not to import any silk textiles, but only silk umbrellas and parasols. Champa also demanded fans made of silk of blue warp thread and blue-white weft thread construction, while Tambralingga demanded umbrellas as well as parasols made of silk of blue warp thread and blue-white weft thread construction. The demand for finished textile-based manufactures may be understood in light of the textile status items conferred by the Song court on missions from these states in the previous centuries, a practice that appears to have been confined by the Song court to its interactions with mainland Southeast Asian states, including Annam and Tonkin.

Finally, it is important to note that resist-dyed silks were widely consumed in Southeast Asia during this time. While such important Southeast Asian ports as Langkasuka, Tambralingga and Srivijaya, together with such economically important states as Java and Borneo, imported the more expensive chiffons of blue warp thread and blue-white weft thread construction or silk floss, resist-dyed pongees, which were of lower value, were imported by almost all ports in Southeast Asia.

[30] Derek Heng, "The trade in lakawood products between South China and the Malay world from the twelfth to fifteenth centuries AD", *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, vol. 32, no. 2 (2001): pp. 144–145.

This stands as a testament to the level of success in market penetration through the course of the late eleventh and twelfth centuries.[31]

By the late thirteenth century, however, several changes were afoot. Between 1290 and 1292, the Mongol invasion of Java caused a disruption in maritime Southeast Asia that had both geo-political and economic implications.[32] Furthermore, this event was situated in the context of an on-and-off maritime ban instituted by the Yuan court (1279–1368) that lasted between 1281 and 1323.[33] These disruptions, followed by what was likely a less prosperous Chinese economic cycle that was presided over by the Yuan dynasty, resulted in a number of changes in the nature of Southeast Asia's textile trade during the fourteenth century.

Diversification of the Silk Trade in the Fourteenth Century

By the mid-fourteenth century, significant developments had taken place in the silk trade in Southeast Asia. The *Daoyi zhilue* (c. 1349), written by Wang Dayuan, records a range of textiles that were traded in Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean littoral.[34] Six types of silks were imported by Southeast Asia. These were damask (綾), gauze (羅), complex-weave silks (錦; possibly brocade), tabby-weave pongees (絹), satin (緞) and generic silk cloths (絲布). Of these, only two types of damask were noted: watered damask (水綾, presumably translucent or thin), and damask gauze cloth (綾羅帛). Six types of satins were noted: satin with dragon motifs, coloured satin, oiled satin, high-quality satin, satin on tabby-weave silk and gold matted satin.

At first glance, there appears to have been a broadening of the range of silks imported by Southeast Asia. However, several characteristics of this trade needs to be noted. The bulk of the range of silks were pongees, tabby-weave silks and generic silks. Seven types of pongee, three

[31] Heng, *Sino-Malay Trade and Diplomacy*, pp. 167–171.

[32] For a more detailed study of the impact of the Mongol invasion of island Southeast Asia, refer to Jan Wisseman Christie, "The Medieval Tamil-Language Inscriptions in Southeast Asia and China", *JSEAS* 29, 2 (1998): pp. 259–261.

[33] Heng, *Sino-Malay Trade and Diplomacy*, pp. 63–71; Song Lian, *Economic Structure of the Yuan Dynasty,* trans. Herbert Franz Schurmann (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967), p. 224.

[34] Su Jiqing, *Daoyi zhilue xiaozhu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981).

types of tabby-weave silk and six types of generic silk were noted. Indeed, the trade in high-value silks had declined dramatically by the mid-fourteenth century. Unlike during the Song period, only two types of damask were imported. Damask gauze silk was imported by Tonkin, while watered damask was imported by Maluku and Banda. Tonkin had, since the Tang period, been noted to have imported high-value silks such as damask from China, and therefore reflected the resilience of demand in this area for this particular type of Chinese silk. Maluku and Banda's import of watered damask, on the other hand, appears to be reflective of a general decline in the Sulu Sea zone and the Eastern Indonesian archipelago's earlier demand for damask. Additionally, while Srivijaya-Palembang and Java were noted to have demanded damask during the early thirteenth century, by the mid-fourteenth century no Southeast Asian port other than Maluku and Banda were noted to have imported damask. It would appear that the consumption of this high-value silk had declined dramatically.

A case in point on the decline in the high-value silk trade is the nature of the silk satin trade. The earliest example of satin in China dates to the Daiqintala tomb of the Liao Dynasty (mid-eleventh century), from which a satin samit-weave robe was unearthed in an archaeological excavation.[35] Mention of satin production began to appear in textual documents by the Song period. However, it is only during the Yuan dynasty that satin, denoted by the character (緞), became a nomenclature in the Chinese textile vocabulary. It began to be exported to Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean littoral only during the mid-fourteenth century.[36]

The Southeast Asian ports noted to have imported satin included Khmer Cambodia, which demanded satins with dragon motifs; Tangjong Pura, the Keppel Straits (Singapore Island) and Java, which were known to have demanded blue satins; Semudra was known to have imported poly-chrome satins, while Borneo, Natuna, Tanjung Datu and Bali were noted to have imported satins of unspecified colour.[37]

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[35] Lynette Su-Ling Gremli, "The Status of Research on Liao-Dynasty Textiles", in *Dragons of Silk, Flowers of Gold; A Group of Liao Dynasty Textiles at the Abegg-Stiftung*, ed. Regula Schorta (Abegg-Stiftung: 2007), pp. 26–27.

[36] Su Jiqing, *Daoyi zhilue xiaozhu*.

[37] Su Jiqing, *Daoyi zhilue*, pp. 120, 148, 172 and 173, 213 and 240.

The geographical distribution of this demand appears to have been confined to island Southeast Asia, in particular the key ports located in the Java Sea region. Given that the other ports importing satins were located in the Indian Ocean littoral, it would appear that the textile tastes of the Java Sea region were more closely aligned to those of the Indian Ocean littoral than perhaps with mainland Southeast Asia. It is also important to note that, with the exception of Semudra and Khmer Cambodia, all the Southeast Asian ports that imported satins were within the sphere of influence of Majapahit Java. This zone mirrors that of the distribution and use of Chinese copper cash in island Southeast Asia. This may therefore reflect not just a geographical taste, but also a material cultural zone, anchored by the key regional state of Majapahit Java.

However, other than Majapahit's sphere of influence, Southeast Asian demand for these satins was extremely limited. The bulk of the demand for satins was centred in the Indian Ocean littoral, with all the ports of the Indian subcontinent and Middle East being importers of such textiles. This demand for satins by the Indian Ocean littoral markets continued into the early fifteenth century. The *Xingcha shenglan* notes that, apart from Palembang, Siam, Borneo and Pahang, the importers of satin were located in the Indian Ocean region.[38] Indeed, satin was beginning to supplant flat-woven textiles as the most demanded type of silk textile to be consumed in the Indian Ocean littoral from the fifteenth century onwards. This reflected not only the development in satin production, presumably in response to the international market's demand for this textile, but also the increased availability of this textile in China in response to the rising aesthetic tastes for satin textiles during the early Ming period due to the growth of wealth in China's coastal urban centres and, in particular, embroidery using the satin stitch during the Yongle period (1360–1424).[39]

The bulk of the silk textiles exported to Southeast Asia during this time were of fairly low value—tabby-weave pongees (*juan*, 絹), and generic silk cloths (*sibu*, 絲布). To a large extent, this mirrors the changes that characterized the Chinese ceramics trade in Southeast

[38] Roderich Ptak, ed., *Hsing-Ch'a Sheng-Lan; The overall Survey of the Star Raft by Fei Hsin, trans. J. V. G. Mills* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1996), pp. 41–42, 51 & 94.

[39] James C. T. Watt, "Foreword", in Dieter Kuhn (ed.), *Chinese Silks* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), p. xviii.

Asia, for which we do have a detailed archaeological record to substantiate such conclusions. Similarly to the ceramics archaeological record, within each of these two generic types of silks, traders appear to have been able to observe specific tastes in the Southeast Asian markets. It is not clear how these observations would have then been relayed to the textile producers in China. However, Chinese ceramics from the Tang period onwards have repeatedly demonstrated that ceramics producers in China have been consistently meeting the tastes of the international market, both in kilns located in the Chinese coast, as well as those located far inland.[40] Almost all mainland Southeast Asian ports that imported *juan* silks were keen on red ones, while those in island Southeast Asia were interested in blue, poly-chrome silks or those decorated with motifs. While the *Daoyi zhilue* utilizes descriptors such as 'dog [paw] print' (狗跡) and 'local/native oiled' (土油) amongst the type of *juan* silks imported by Southeast Asia, these were confined to particular ports—Aru in the case of the former and an unidentified port (possibly somewhere in the Sulu zone) in the case of the latter.

In the case of generic silks (*sibu*; 丝布), three types were of significance: those with no description, those of southern manufacture and those of northern manufacture. Southern generic silks would appear to have been a reference to tabby-weave silks produced in the south which were characterized by delicate decorative patterns such as floral scrolls and sprays, while northern generic silks may be a reference to the Nasij-type decorated textiles produced in north China, which were visually bold. Again, whereas the first type was more generally imported, the other two appear to have been isolated observations made by the author of the *Daoyi zhilue*. Khmer Cambodia, Natuna, Jambi and the Singapore River Basin (Singapore) imported the first type, while Natuna and Dabadan (South China Sea littoral) imported southern *si* silk, and Jiajiangmenli and Pengjiala (polities in the Indian Ocean littoral) imported northern *si* silk.[41]

While most of the silks were likely to have been supplied by China, silks were also beginning to be made available from the Indian Ocean littoral. The Mongol military campaigns in Southeast Asia and the overall reduction in economic interaction across maritime Asia—which resulted

[40] Derek Heng, *Sino-Malay Trade and Diplomacy*, pp. 178 & 179.

[41] Su, *Daoyi zhilue*, pp. 69, 130, 141, 196, 280, 297 and 330.

from the general instability of Central Asia following the establishment of the Mongol Khanates in the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries—led to changes in the textiles trade within maritime Asia itself. This, in turn, led to changes in Southeast Asia's textile consumption patterns and sources.

The *Daoyi zhilue* notes that a number of ports, including Timor located in the Eastern Indonesian archipelago, and several along the Malacca Straits, including the settlements at the Keppel Straits (Singapore) and Tamiang, were known to import Indian Ocean generic silk cloth (西洋絲布), or silk that was produced in the Indian Ocean littoral.[42] This development mirrors the data accrued from archaeological excavations at these sites. However, this aspect of the silk trade appears to have still been in its infancy, and did not become an important aspect of the Indian Ocean littoral's trade with Southeast Asia until at least the fifteenth century, when Gujarati merchants became important in the latter region, and in the seventeenth century by Middle Eastern merchants under the auspices of the Ottoman Empire.[43]

The diversification of textile sources also reflected the different types of materials that may have been available. The majority of the textiles traded in Southeast Asia during this time were denoted by the term '*bu*' (布), meaning cloth. It is likely that this was not a reference solely to silk, since there were other types of textiles, including cotton, that were being exchanged during this time. Neither was there a discernible pattern of demand. Several ports in the sub-regions of Southeast Asia—including such key ones as Semudra, Tambralingga, Palembang and Sukhothia (Thailand)—were noted to have imported this type of textile. In addition, while interest in poly-chrome and blue cloths predominated, no other sub-regional preferences may be discerned.

The decline in the trade in higher-value silks from China did not imply that the demand for such textiles had decreased. In fact, there

[42] Su, *Daoyi zhilue*, pp. 213 and 237. The *Dade nanhaizhi* 大德南海志 by Chen Dazhen (c. 1307) has denoted the Eastern Ocean to comprise of Gulf of Siam, the Malacca Straits, the Bay of Bengal into the Arabian Sea. While silk was clearly not produced in the first three regions, it is likely that silk textiles may have been sourced from Central Asia and the Middle East via ports located in the Arabian Sea. Chen Dazhen, *Daide nanhaizhi* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju bianjiaobu, 1990), vol. 8, pp. 8413–8453.

[43] Cortesao, *The Suma Oriental of Tome Pires* (New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 2005), pp. 135–223.

appears to have been a substantial diversification of the sources of similar textiles made available to the Southeast Asian and Indian Ocean littoral markets during the mid-fourteenth century. A broad range of textiles—from locally produced Southeast Asian textiles attributed by traders specifically to individual ports and polities, to generic cotton plain, dyed and printed textiles—was circulating within and between these two economic zones during this time. The somewhat limited interest in Chinese textiles with decorative patterns may be accounted for by the demand maintained by the ports of the Malay Peninsula and north Borneo for textiles produced in Java, including such major textile production sites as Pekalonggan, which were reknowned for its wax resist-dye cloths; textiles from Champa, which were primarily tie-resist dyed; textiles from Hainan; and Austronesian-type textiles (likely to be textiles produced from plant fibres) from within Southeast Asia.[44]

In addition, textiles with woodblock-printed decoration—the source of which was not noted in the *Daoyi zhilue*, but which was likely from Gujarat and traded out of Calicut—were imported by a few ports in the Malacca Straits, the Gulf of Siam, on the north Java coast and in the southern Philippines.[45] Even such lesser-known textiles as those from Camiguin in the southern Philippines were traded across Southeast Asia and imported by the port of Tambralingga in the northeast Malay Peninsula. This trade in Southeast Asian and Indian textiles would have been evident to Chinese traders operating in the Malay region. The detailed knowledge of the preferences of specific Malay ports embodied in the *Daoyi zhilue*, reflecting the inherent commercial knowledge of Chinese traders operating in maritime Asia during the first-half of the fourteenth century, suggests that such traders most likely adjusted their offerings of textiles bearing in mind both the availability of sources as well as the tastes of the recipient markets. It may also have been likely that, whereas Chinese traders had previously operated primarily between China and certain ports in Southeast Asia, they had, by the mid-fourteenth century, begun to operate within Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean littoral itself.[46]

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[44] Su Jiqing, *Daoyi zhilue*, pp. 55 and 159.

[45] Heng, *Sino-Malay Trade and Diplomacy*, Tables 5.1 and 5.2.

[46] Heng, *Sino-Malay Trade and Diplomacy*, p. 130.

A final point to note is that it is likely the rise in popularity of Southeast Asian and Indian Ocean cloths in the Southeast Asian textile trade, as exemplified in the information from the *Daoyi zhilue*, that was reflective of trade patterns that had already existed for centuries, but which only appear to have begun to grow exponentially during the fourteenth century. Nonetheless, data on ceramics recovered from shipwrecks dated to between the tenth and fifteenth centuries would suggest that Southeast Asian manufactured items that could potentially replace the equivalent Chinese products did not feature as the bulk of a ship's cargo until the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. This is particularly evident from the cargo of the Turiang wreck, a vessel that foundered off the northeast coast of the Malay Peninsula in the Gulf of Siam.[47] The changes in the textiles trade would likely have resembled the shifts in the Southeast Asian ceramics trade.

Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to trace the development of the transference of Chinese silks into Southeast Asia over the course of the tenth to fourteenth centuries. This flow of silks was initially recorded, duing the tenth to twelfth centuries, primarily within the premise of state-level exchanges between the Song court and the various Southeast Asian state and polities with which the Song court had relations. This does not means that there was no 'regular' commercial trade in silks, as the oblique references in such texts as the *Pingzhou ketan* suggest. However, given that state-level exchanges were the predominant means of exchange captured in the textual record, the richness in the details of the ceremonial silks and silks of status, as well as the social status they conferred upon those in Southeast Asia who had access to them, was limited to that level of exchange.

The types of silks, as well as the development of the silk trade—initially as one that was largely of high-unit value in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, to one that was characterized by the dominance of lower unit value silks by the fourteenth century—suggests that Chinese silks had become more widespread in their use by societies in

[47] Roxanna Brown & Sten Sjostrand, *Turiang: A Fourteenth-Century Shipwreck in Southeast Asian Waters* (Pasadena: Pacific Asia Museum, 2000).

Southeast Asia over the course of the four hundred years in question. It is not apparent that this development was necessarily accompanied by a decrease in the costs of production. In addition, sub-regional preferences and cultural idiosyncracies in the consumption of silk can be observed, particularly in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, when trade between China and Southeast Asia became more diffused.

By the fourteenth century, there was a decline in the overall value of silk textiles demanded by Southeast Asian ports, along with a decrease in the total number of ports in the region that maintained specific demand for silks from China. At the same time, the rise of the silk satin trade to the Indian Ocean littoral—which would have accompanied pre-existing Chinese demand for such high-value Indian Ocean littoral products as frankincense, coral, myrhh and dragon's blood (*Dracaena schizantha* and *D. cinnabari*), as well as the growth of the pepper trade from India to China during this time—reflects a shift in the Chinese textiles trade from lower-unit-value textiles to higher-unit-value textiles, accompanied by a decline in its relative volume. In other words, while Chinese silks were generally losing market presence in the lower-value commodities trade, other silks of higher quality—in this case, represented by satins—were on the rise as Chinese exports. In this regard, Chinese satins continued to occupy a privileged position as a unique type of textile that was in demand across the whole of maritime Asia.

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CHAPTER 8

Textile Reorientations: The Manufacture and Trade of Cottons in Java c. 1600–1850

Kenneth R. Hall

Introduction

This study negates the prior assumed 'underdevelopment' of Java from the late seventeenth century consequential to Dutch colonial rule, which is linked to the decline of the once vibrant Javanese economy and, especially, its textile industry. In this late colonial and postcolonial view, the Netherlands delivered the final blow when it purposefully marketed Dutch industrial textiles from the early 1800s. This was said to have interrupted demand and negated further technological development of Java's previously vital cotton industry. Revisionist research from the 1990s instead proposed that local consumption of less expensive and lower-quality Javanese batik was the alternative source for an impoverished society that could no longer afford to buy Indian, British, or Dutch textile imports. This new work, using Dutch East India Company and colonial records, instead documented the decline of labour intensive yarn-spinning and textile weaving in the nineteenth century that released Javanese textile labourers to produce commercial crops for an

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increasingly profitable marketplace. Yet, well into the mid-nineteenth century the Javanese cotton textile industry remained productive, as Java's cloth producers had once again endured post-1600 Western disruptions of Java's textile production.

In this chapter, I argue that Dutch (and British) imported textiles from the seventeenth century did not produce a permanent decline in local textile productivity and profitability but, instead, encouraged renewals and reorientations of Javanese batik production against its displacement by alien textiles. Rather than the product of a 'factory', the making of batik in Java remained domestically based and small-scale, depending on 'putting out' and 'part-time' networking to spin thread, and dying and weaving local textiles during the non-peak periods in the local agricultural cycle. The textiles were, in turn, sold by Chinese traders among local and regional marketing networks, who provided connection to Chinese and other diaspora merchants and seafarers based in Java's north coast trading ports, from which Javanese batik, which was much in demand, reached wider Indonesian archipelago marketplaces.

Java Textile Traditions

Prior to the widespread adoption of cotton (and silk), and well into the sixteenth century, Southeast Asians commonly wore high-quality indigenous textiles made from the inner bark (bast) of trees and shrubs. Beaten or woven bark cloth of everyday use was plain or very simply decorated with dyed or painted geometric symbols, or stylized depictions of humans or animals. Among tribal groups, bark cloth was used in rites of passage: birth, circumcision, tooth filing, tattooing, marriage and death. Tattooing was a symbolic complement to the coverage afforded by minimal and larger sizes of bark cloth. Since bark cloth had to be removed lest it disintegrate in the rain, tattooing was a continuous means of protection from misfortune and unwanted spiritual possession.

Both beaten and woven bark cloth, and early Southeast Asian cotton and silk textiles, were made exclusively by women, who hammered bark, cleaned and spun fibres, and wove patterns. These 'women's goods' were associated with fertility and life-giving properties—women alone could take their essence of being (i.e., bearing children) through the passage between this world and 'the other' (i.e., other realms of existence). Textiles, which were products of a woman's creative powers, provided protective passage. Cloth could also transform. In producing

cloth, women provided structure to previously raw and natural materials through the processing, weaving and dyeing process. Metaphorically, spinning thread was equivalent to bonding the parts of the soul and creating 'the thread of life'; weaving cloth, in turn, created life itself and protected and fertilized the wearer, as well as the broader community.[1]

Many other cultural dynamics guided Java's perceptions and consumption of cloth. There existed strong historic taboos against cutting fabrics. To cut it improperly or irreverently would not only diminish its protective powers, but could also unleash its malevolent potentials that could cause significant human harm. Cloth could only be cut by those endowed with sufficient powers to neutralize its potential danger:[2] women (who were perceived to be inherently more spiritually empowered than men) and local chiefs, clerics, monarchs, or others who had demonstrated their special spiritual possession. In Java, the female act of weaving cotton or silk cloth could be complemented in the process of dyeing, which was done in secret rituals from which outsiders were forbidden.[3] The earliest dyeing reproduced the symbolic colours of life itself: the brown of the earth and blue of the heaven were placed on the white of the air. These metaphysical principles were expanded by symbolic motifs such as plants, animals, pavilions and mountains.[4]

The local people perceived imported Indian and Chinese textiles to be powerful and magically endowed, the control of which reinforced

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[1] Mattiebelle Gittinger, *Splendid Symbols: Textiles and Traditions in Indonesia* (Washington, DC. Textile Museum, 1979), pp. 28–30; Simon Kooijman, *Ornamental Bark Cloth in Indonesia* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1963); Ruth Barnes and Mary Hunt Kahlenberg (eds), *Five Centuries of Indonesian Textiles* (Munich/New York: Demonico Books/Prestel Publishing, 2010); Fiona Kerlogue, *The Book of Batik* (Singapore: Editions Didier Millet, 2004).

[2] Ruth Barnes, *Ikat Textiles of Lamalera: A Study of an Eastern Indonesian Weaving Tradition* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1989), pp. 31–32.

[3] Gittinger, *Splendid Symbols*, p. 120. Here Gittinger cites two examples from Java, wherein men traditionally dyed the indigo blue colour. In contrast Barnes (*Ikat Textiles*, p. 16, pp. 31–32) relates that in response to her questioning she was assured that men or boys were not strictly prohibited from participating in dyeing, but that it was not "men's work" (p. 31).

[4] Gittinger, *Splendid Symbols*; Barnes, *Ikat Textiles*, and Barnes, "Early Indonesian Textiles: Scientific Dating in a Wider Context," in *Five Centuries of Indonesian Textiles*, Ruth Barnes and Mary Hunt Kahlenberg (eds) (Munich/New York: Demonico Books/Prestel Publishing, 2010), pp. 34–44.

the quest for status among early monarchs. Early temple architecture conspicuously incorporated iconographic carvings of draped Indic and Chinese textiles.[5] The point was that cloth was magical and empowered temples, as well as the icons that these temples contained. Stone, wood, or metal statues, as well as temples or shrines, were powerless until they were properly 'wrapped in cloth'—a practice still prevalent in Bali and much of the eastern Indonesian archipelago. Only when the icon or ritual site was draped in cloth did it 'come alive'. In Southeast Asian tradition, pre-existing prowess could be enhanced by the possession and wearing of powerful and symbolic foreign cloth, but native cloth alone had the independent capacity to bestow good or bad fortune on the holder, or an object; cloth, above all, distinguished social status. Figs. 8.1 and 8.2.

Resist-dyed batik was—and remains—one of several textile traditions of the Indonesian archipelago influenced by Indian textile imports. Particularly influential have been the double ikat silk *patola* cloth of Gujarat and the 'painted' cottons (also known as 'chintz') of Gujarat and the Coromandel coast, whose geometric and floral patterns were appropriated into local textile production. Javanese batik, or 'wax written' fabric, is created by covering part of the cloth with a coat of wax and then dipping it in a series of dye baths.[6] The waxed areas keep their original colour and when the wax is removed the contrast between the dyed and undyed area makes the pattern. Complex designs are achieved

[5] Rens Heringa, "Upland Tribe, Coastal Village, and Inland Court: Revised Parameters for Batik Research," in *Five Centuries of Indonesian Textiles*, ed. Ruth Barnes and Mary Hunt Kahlenberg (Munich/New York: Demonico Books/Prestel Publishing, 2010), p. 121; Kenneth R. Hall, "The Textile Trade in Southeast Asia, 1400–1900," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 39, no. 2 (1996): pp. 87–135. This publication paired my research in nineteenth-century Indonesian archipelago Dutch sources with revisionist in-depth art history and anthropology studies focused on Indonesian textiles during my post-doctoral fellowships at New York University and The Hague, and the periodic mentorship of Ruth Barnes. This present chapter updates this previous work, as it represents advances in our knowledge and understanding of the textile production and trade in a wider Indian Ocean context.

[6] Heringa, "Revised Parameters for Batik," p. 121, reports that surviving batik textiles that had been produced using a canting tool date from around 1700. See photographs of this textile hand canting process in Kenneth R. Hall, "The Textile Trade in Southeast Asia, 1400–1900," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 39, no. 2 (1996): pp. 111–112.

Fig. 8.1 Thirteenth-century stone carving from Candi Jago East Java. The textile held by a societal elite serves as the focal point (Photograph by the author)

by multiple layering and repeated dyeing. A final line painting in black or other dark colour may be made to emphasize the design elements of the pattern.

By the sixteenth century, Indian cloth was Southeast Asia's greatest import. Personal adornment and clothing were the principal items of non-essential expenditure for most Southeast Asians, so that any increase in income was likely to show first in purchases of textiles. There was a coincidental rapid expansion in Southeast Asia's pepper, spice and jungle products that paired with the rapid increase in cloth imports. Sultan Mahmud (r. 1488–1528), the last and wealthiest ruler of the Melaka emporium, is credited in the local *Sejarah Melayu* chronicle with sending a mission to south India to acquire forty varieties of cloth. The Portuguese scribe Tomé Pires, writing shortly after the Portuguese conquest of Melaka in 1511, estimated that cloth imports from Bengal, Coromandel (south India) and Gujarat (northwest coast India)

Fig. 8.2 *Kain pajang batik* (long cloth with batik embellishment), product of the Yogyakarta court of central Java, c. 2004, presented as a gift to the author. (Photograph by the author)

conservatively totalled 460,000 *cruzados* per year, equivalent to about nineteen tons of silver.[7]

India's high-quality silk *patola* and cotton chintz were the foundational textiles that became the multifunctional stimuli in Southeast Asia's transitional fifteenth-century world. Because of their high intrinsic cultural value in Southeast Asia, silk *patola* and cotton chintz became marketplace alternatives to other commodity or precious metal exchanges. Imported and locally produced cotton textiles were the vital commodities that, by the fifteenth century, reinforced expansive Southeast Asian

[7] Armando Cortesão, *The Suma Oriental of Tome Pires* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1944), pp. 269–272.

regional political, economic and cultural networking.[8] Demand was so high that, initially, cloth production in Java, and then in other regional textile traditions that were in any way engaged in the international maritime trade, began to create local reproductions of Indian textiles, or adapted standardized Indian patterns into their own textile production. Therein, Indian cotton cloth was the critical variable that induced locals to supply upstream commodities that were in high international demand and thus, directly or indirectly, sustained the variety of new upstream–downstream, coast–hinterland networks.[9]

Java Textile Culture c. 1800

Java's roughly 7.5 million population in the early nineteenth century was accustomed to wearing cotton clothing at the various levels of society.[10] Agricultural society at the highest and lowest levels had several clothing items: men owned a pair of coarse knee-level trousers (*panji-panji*), a sarong, or a long rectangular piece of cloth (*jarit*, which, like the sarong, was not sewn together at the ends), a jacket (*kalambi*), and a batik head cloth (*ikat*); women a sarong or *jarit*, a body cloth that was wrapped around their chest (*kemban*), a shirt-like covering for the upper body

[8] Prasannan Parthasarathi, "Cotton Textiles in the Indian Subcontinent, 1200–1800," in *The Spinning World, A Global History of Cotton Textiles, 1200–1850*, ed. Giorgio Riello and Prasannan Parthasarathi (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 17–41.

[9] Kenneth R. Hall, "The 15th-Century Cloth Trade with Southeast Asia's Indonesian Archipelago," in *Gujarat and the Sea*, ed. Lotika Varadarajan (Vadodara, Gujarat: Darshak Itahas Nidhi, 2011), pp. 439–466; Beverly Lemire, "Revisiting the Historical Narrative, India, Europe, and the Cotton Trade, c. 1300–1800," in *The Spinning World: A Global History of Cotton Textiles, 1200–1850*, ed. Giorgio Riello and Prasannan Parthasarathi (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 205–226; Pedro Machado, "Awash in a Sea of Cloth, Gujarat, Africa, and the Western Indian Ocean, 1300–1800," in *The Spinning World, A Global History of Cotton Textiles, 1200–1850*, ed. Giorgio Riello and Prasannan Parthasarathi (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 161–179.

[10] Peter Boomgard and A. J. Gooszen, *Changing Economy in Indonesia, II: Population Trends, 1795–1942* (Amsterdam: Royal Tropical Institute, 1991), pp. 7–82. As John Guy reports, in reference to early Gujarat block printed cloth traded to the East: "non-utilitarian uses of Indian textiles in Southeast Asia were important—as the volume of trade exceeded the consumptive needs of the region, as locally woven goods were available. Utility did not drive this commerce, but cultural values integral to the cotton textiles appealed to the wealthy and poor, and to male and female." See John Guy, *Woven Cargoes: Indian Textiles in the East* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1998), p. 10.

(also called a *kalambi*), and a shawl (*selendang*). Men and women also owned a waistband or girdle (*udat*) that fastened their sarong or *jarit*.[11]

Cotton textiles were fundamentally important throughout the Indonesian archipelago from early historical times, as vibrantly depicted on Java's sixth to sixteenth-century Hindu and Buddhist temples. Javanese clothing was vital as a status marker, as society elite wore the most elaborate and expensive brightly coloured textiles when the first Europeans arrived in the sixteenth century. The clothing design of the male elite included short trousers, sarongs or *jarit*s, jackets and head cloths that were distinct from those of commoners. Court women dressed similarly to non-elite women in sarong/*jarit*, *kemban* upper body coverings and *selendang*. Although similar in design, specific textile patterns (checks, stripes, and 'drawn' designs) and dyes distinguished the different levels of social hierarchy, age groups and regional variations.[12]

Most of Java's populations—notably rural labourers—historically satisfied their cotton cloth needs via longstanding domestic village cotton cultivation and household weaving, which depended on local cotton growing, spinning, weaving and dyeing. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, there was increased regional specialization in textile production in Java, with notable evolving differences between the textile traditions of the north coast ports and those of Java's central courts. Village cotton cultivation for local needs was, in both cases, completed

[11] Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles, *The History of Java*, vol. I (London: Black, Parbury, and Allen and John Murray, reprinted Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1978), pp. 87–88; John Crawford, *History of the Indian Archipelago*, vol. I (Edinburgh: A. Constable and Co., 1820, reprinted London: Frank Cass, 1967), pp. 209–12; J. B. van Doren, *De Javaan in het ware daglicht geschetsi, benevenens enige inlichtingen over het binnenlandsch bestuur op Java* (Den Haag: Langenhuysen, 1851), pp. 9–11, summarized in Alfons van der Kraan, "Anglo-Dutch Rivalry in the Java Cotton Trade," *Indonesia Circle* 68 (1996): p. 37.

[12] Raffles, *The History of Java* I, 88–89; Crawford, *History of the Indian Archipelago,* I, pp. 209–212. Heringa (see "Revised Parameters," pp. 127–128) differentiates between north coast (Tuban) and central Java court distinctions. Heringa asserts that Java textile hierarchy was based in landholding rights. In theory the central Java ruler was the owner of all the land, over 'small people' (*wang cilik*), while the eastern port states (*paisir*) recognized levels of family land ownership and its inheritance from father to son (p. 131, n. 31), as these familial land rights determined who could wear particular batik and other patterned cloth. See also Rens Heringa and Harman C. Veldhuisen, eds., *Fabric of Enchantment, Batik from the North Coast of Java* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art/Weatherhill, 1996).

in small plots of drained *sawah* (wet-rice fields) after a rice harvest or year-round in the dry uplands (*tegalan*). Cotton surpluses might be sold in the village or regional markets.[13] Men usually shared in cotton production by sowing seeds, tending shrubs and harvesting cotton, but the harvested cotton was relegated to women, who cleaned the seeds from the raw cotton; prepared cotton for spinning, carding and picking; and, ultimately, spun the cleaned cotton fibre into yarn.[14] One contemporary local innovation was the use of small paired revolving wooden rollers (*gelingan*) that reduced seed removal to roughly 1.5 days of labour, and another 1.5 days to prepare a pound of cotton by pounding the cotton fibres and finally cleaning off the remaining seeds prior to spinning.[15] Women might then use a small spindle and staff and/or a spinning wheel (*jantra*) for up to a month in preparation for weaving.

Besides batik, there existed several methods for patterning cloth, using plant sources to dye yarns red, blue and yellow. Weavers could arrange the colours of warp and weft threads to create stripes and checks. Through the technique known as *ikat*, they would bind off parts of the warp or weft before the dyeing process to obtain multicoloured yarns that were then woven together. Alternatively, weavers could dye the entire cloth after it came off the loom, imparting pattern through tie-resist.[16] In all cases, women wove cloth on narrow backstrap or pegged horizontal looms, which created narrow widths that varied between 50 cm (approximately 20 inches) and 65 cm (approximately 26 inches). Since a sarong or *jarit* required fabric 1–1.3 metres (39–51 inches) in width, women had to weave a cloth twice as long as required to allow side-by-side seaming of the two lengths of the cut woven cloth to achieve the required width.[17]

These domestic textiles were also woven as tribute for Java aristocrats or marketplace sales, but were often too coarse to meet court cultural needs. Some of this gap was filled by textile workshops within the

[13] Raffles, *The History of Java* I, pp. 133–134; Crawford, *History,* I, pp. 440–444.

[14] Raffles, *The History of Java* I, p. 86.

[15] Raffles, *The History of Java* I, p. 167.

[16] Raffles, *The History of Java* I, pp. 86–87.

[17] Gerrit Pieter Rouffaer, *De vaarnaamsie industrien der innlandsche bevolking van Java en Madoera* (Den Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1904), pp. 7–8; Heringa, "Upland Tribe," p. 123. *Dodot* was the adjoined highest quality hand woven ceremonial central Java batik. See the photograph of a traditional Java weaver and her loom in Hall, "Textile Trade," p. 110.

courts, where women of the court as well as full-time weavers filled the aristocrats' domestic and ceremonial needs. This elite demand was also sustained by imported textiles from India and China. In the fifteenth century, India's Gujarat, Coromandel and Bengal coastline trading ports supplied Java's textile demand which, by the seventeenth century, was dominated by the Dutch East India Company (VOC), whose ships made regular stops in India to purchase Indian textiles for resale in Java. When the VOC collapsed in 1796 after the Netherlands came under French rule during the Napoleonic Wars, the British East India Company, which was by then prominent, intervened to assume Dutch Company interests in India and Southeast Asia. Consequently, the British as well as private traders based in India began to export substantial numbers of textiles to Southeast Asia, especially high-quality Indian fabrics with brilliant colours and also fine white linen/cotton tightly woven cloth. The latter were readily received in Java, where they became the base fabric for enhanced Java and wider Indonesian archipelago batik production.

The highest-quality Java batik in around 1800 was the product of central Java and north coast Java court workshops largely populated by women of the royal households of sultans, regents (*bupatis*) and regional authorities. With time-consuming precision, these women drew the wax designs on the white or single-coloured cloth for subsequent dyeing in bright colour-fast hues to create intricate patterns. At the same time, batik craftsmanship improved substantially. This was made possible by the imports of higher-quality Indian cloth in wider widths, which obviated the need for sewing two pieces of cloth together. The quality of this fabric allowed the drawing and stamping of patterns that had been impossible on previous coarse loosely woven local textiles; lines drawn on this earlier cloth tended to be intermittent, or would bleed into the fabric. During the nineteenth century, consistent with prior regional pattern traditions, batik drawing was done with small, light copper or silver pens (*canting*) filled with hot liquid wax. After the drawing was done, the cloth was immersed in a dye, leaving undyed portions of the cloth that had been covered by the wax. Additional colours were added to the cloth by sequential waxing and dyeing.[18]

[18] Raffles, *The History of Java* I, p. 87, pp. 168–169; Heringa, "Revised Parameters," pp. 125–128, reports three distinct batik techniques of Tuban, an Islamic sultanate port on Java's northeast coast. One was a drop-by-drop application of wax on a horizontal base similar to the west Java *kain simbu*, which combined dots and short lines to portray

Thus, Java's batik production breakthrough at the beginning of the nineteenth century was initially achieved by maritime commodity flows exclusively within Asia. This exchange was based in the India–Java volume transit of luxury cotton threads and cloth that supplanted Java's productivity gap: limited and overly coarse indigenous woven cotton cloth output, and fragmented and a less cost-effective cotton cloth weaving 'industrial' structure. Early nineteenth-century imports of India's substantive quality white cambric cloth paired with Java's existing higher-quality dye technology as the foundation for Java's still time-consuming but profitable repeated waxing and dyeing of batik cloth, which produced marketable higher-quality and luxury cottons that were readily consumed by Southeast Asians and wider global consumers.

Textile Trade in Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century Banten: A Case Study

The port-polity of Banten, Java, is representative of other contemporary Indonesian archipelago political entities that came into existence consequent to the enhanced Indian Ocean trade from the fifteenth century. Banten, as with most of the other successful sixteenth-century Indonesian archipelago polities, fused its founding of a Muslim community in 1525 with its ruling elites' skilful organization of upstream–downstream and linked coastal trading port networks. Banten had a resulting profitable co-existence adjacent to the Dutch East India Company's Batavia home port until the late sixteenth century. In large part, the Banten leadership did this by servicing Dutch competitors: other Europeans, South Asians, Chinese and other Indonesian archipelago seafaring diaspora.[19]

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complicated geometric patterns, and batik *lurik,* referenced in Old Javanese inscriptions dating to the ninth to fourteenth centuries, consisting of dotted patterns within a grid of dotted check. The clusters are said to depict traditional affiliations of networked villages, centred on a core village surrounded by four to eight hamlets in the cardinal directions (p. 127). See also Fiona Kerlogue, *The Book of Batik* (Singapore: Editions Didier Millet/ Archipelago Press, 2004), pp. 19–21.

[19]Willem Lodewycksz, "D'eerste Boek: historie van Indien vaer inne verhaelt is de avontueren die Hollandtsche schepen bejeghent zijn," in *De eerste schipvaart der Nederlanders naar Oost-Indie onder Cornelis de Houtman, 1595–1597,* ed. Gerrit Pieter Rouffaer and J. W. Ijzerman, vol. I. (The Hague: Nijhoff for Linschoten-Vereeniging, 1915),

The trading port of Banten became a preferred intermediary marketplace, administered by Chinese and Indian merchant diaspora who were Banten residents. There, Turks, Arabs, Persians, Bengalis, Gujaratis and other South Asians picked up regional pepper and eastern Indonesian archipelago spices from the Moluccas. These were exchanged for a variety of imported products—most notably, Indian silks and cottons, and Chinese silks and porcelain. Inter-regional and international routes thus converged in sixteenth-century Banten. Keling (east coast Indian Muslim) traders served as Banten's late sixteenth-century port officers, the *syhbander* and *laksammana*. The ruler's Portuguese interpreter was also a Keling (Tamil) from Mylapore (southeastern India), who was the son of an Italian trader from San Thome (modern-day Chennai). At that time, the head of the combined seasonally resident Turkish and Arab merchant diaspora communities was from Constantinople, and had sailed the entire long-distance route from Venice to the East Indies.[20]

Banten did not face a serious threat from Portuguese or Dutch regional opponents throughout the sixteenth century. Chinese and Indian diasporas resident in the Banten urban centre controlled the port's wholesale trade. Hindu and Muslim traders from India's southern Coromandel Coast marketed undecorated or bleached cotton cloth which was, at that time, the import most in demand. A man named Chetty (a Tamil word for trader) Maluku, who owned several ships, provided outgoing cloth transport from Banten to the eastern archipelago's Spice Islands, returning with loads of spices that were subsequently re-exported to Melaka.

When the Dutch became a significant threat to Banten's pepper trade in the seventeenth century, these resident Chinese diaspora initially

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pp. 139–156; Edmund Scott, "An exact discourse of the Subtilties, Fashions, Pollicies, Religion, and Ceremonies of the East Indians, as well Chyneses as Javans, there abyding and dweling (1606)," in *The Voyage of Henry Middleton to the Moluccas*, ed. Sir William Foster (London: Hakluyt Society, 1943), pp. 81–176. In contrast to this case study of Banten, see Heringa and Veldhuisen, *Fabric of Enchantment,* on the textile histories of Banten's contemporary Java coast competitors.

[20] Jeyamalar Kathirithamby-Wells, "Banten: A West Indonesian Port and Polity During the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," in *The Southeast Asian Port and Polity, Rise and Demise,* ed. Jeyamalar Kathirithamby-Wells and John Villiers (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1990), p. 111; Rouffaer and Ijzerman, *De Eerste Schipvaart* I, p. 83.

responded by giving up pepper production and, instead, grew rice, sugar and ginger, as a statement of their loyalty to Banten, as well as for the profit potential. They also supported the renewal of local textile production, in order to replace purchases of decorated Indian cloth from the English by supplying inexpensive imported plain and bleached calico cloth, which locals transformed into striped, checked and batik textiles that the Chinese middlemen would market locally, or transport to Java's downstream regions for shipment to east Asian markets.

The Batavia-based Dutch East India Company's policy toward Banten changed in mid-century due to the anticipated threat of a Dutch war against defiant central Java-based Mataram's rulers. Banten responded to initial harassment by Dutch ships by sending Banten's traders to Seram, Ambon and Banda in the eastern archipelago, as this maintained a steady flow of commodities to and from the port.[21] But, over time, Banten chose to work with the Dutch, as British trade at that time was inconsistent and could not maintain its profits; this was due to the British Company traders at that time almost exclusively depending on their ability to market Indian textiles at Banten. By then, Banten's residents and visiting Southeast Asian traders preferred regional textiles rather than British imports from India, which made it possible for Banten to remain prosperous at British expense. It was the staging port for British and Danish voyages to Java, as well as the base for a lucrative smuggling trade with eastern Indonesian Makassar. Also, Bantenese and Chulia Tamil diaspora traders regularly sailed to Persian, Arabian and Indian (Coromandel, Gujarat, and Bengal) ports. Diplomatic contacts with the Muslim Golconda realm opened new trade opportunities at Porto Novo, Paleacat (Pulicat) and Nagapattinam on the southeast Indian coast, and tax-free concessions at the Golconda realm's principle trading port at Masulipatnam. Banten's Chinese diaspora transacted a very optimistic trade with Tonkin, Manila, Guangzhou, Taiwan and Japan.

Banten, in the early seventeenth century, was noted for its textile production. The British voyager Edmond Scott (c. 1604–1606) comments: 'Also there cometh from thence many sorts of white calicoes, which they themselves doe both die, paint, and guild, according to the fashions of

[21] Claude Guillot, "Libre entreprise contre économie dirigée: guerres civiles à Banten, 1580-1609," *Archipel* 43 (1992): pp. 57–72.

that country. Likewise they can weave a kind of striped stuffe.'[22] Here, the 'painted cloth' must have been batik, while the 'striped stuff' was likely *lurik* (a striped pattern obtained by weaving with white and blue yarns), or *poleng* (also made of white and coloured yarns, in either striped or checked patterns).

Javanese Cotton Trade Industry Renewal in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries

The fall in Java's demand for Indian decorated textiles was consequent to a return to domestic and regional production. This was, in part, due to the inflation of Indian textile imports, paired with local displeasure with the quality of Coromandel textiles.[23] Most notably, Coromandel printed and loom-patterned cloth had a narrow undecorated white edge, in contrast to local textiles that did not. In local cultural terms, the Coromandel textiles were thus 'incomplete'.[24] Coromandel decorated textiles also were not, at that time, colour-fast and tended to fade or bleed. Ultimately, decreased demand for Indian imported textiles forced the VOC to collaborate with existing local interest groups—notably, Chinese and other maritime diaspora based in Java's trading ports and upstream ruling elites in the manufacture and commerce of textiles that the Dutch could profitably market in the Indonesian archipelago in exchange for lucrative regional products.

There was not only increased demand in Java for renewed decorated Javanese textiles, but also in the wider Indonesian archipelago, where Javanese batik and other patterned cloth had always been held in special regard. Java's renewed textile production ran short of its ability to supply enough raw cotton and thus depended on imported cotton from Bali and Sumatra, where pepper growers in southeast Sumatra began shifting

[22] Edmund Scott, "The Description of Java Major, and the Manner and Fashions of the People, both Javans and Chineses, Which Doe There Inhabit," in *The Voyage of Henry Middleton to the Moluccas*, ed. Sir William Foster (London: Hakluyt Society, 1943), p. 172, p. 193.

[23] *Dagh-register Behouden Int Casteel Batavia Anno 1677*, 4.4, as discussed in M. A. P. Meilink-Roelofsz, *Asian Trade and European Influence in the Indonesian Archipelago between 1500 and about 1630* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1962), p. 244.

[24] Lucas Nagtegaal, "Rijden op een Hollandse Tijger: de noordkust van Java en de V.O.C., 1680-1743" (Ph.D. diss., University of Utrecht, 1988), p. 125.

to cotton cultivation as an alternative cash crop when pepper prices fell. They also purchased undecorated textiles from India which they, in turn, painted or dyed, and which were ultimately less expensive than the production cost to weave them locally.[25]

Thus, by the end of the seventeenth century, there was a significant decrease in Indian textile imports to Java. The British were especially hurt by this as, at that time, their Company trade depended almost exclusively on their marketing of Indian textiles. But, unlike the Dutch, the British at that time had neither a sufficient presence in Java, nor wider regional market exchange potential to compete against Java's textiles. The magnitude of this decline in Indian textile sales in Java is documented in Dutch East India Company records. In the 1670s, the Dutch East India Company regularly imported and sold Indian textiles worth roughly 40,000 *riksdollars* (*rds*), reaching a peak of 58,000 riksdollars in 1685 (as these were substantially marketed by allied north Java coast Chinese diaspora merchants). In 1690, they imported only 4000 *rds* worth of imported Indian textiles, a 90 per cent decrease.[26] By the 1690s, local Chinese merchants were marketing Javanese batik in Sumatra, Borneo, the Melaka Straits and China.[27] To counter this substantive decrease in regional demand for more expensive decorated Indian textile imports, in 1684 the VOC commissioned cloth painters and dyers from the Coromandel coast to produce designs in the Javanese style. These items failed to succeed as these marketplace substitutes sold for five times more than the price of locally produced and higher-quality Javanese batik or other patterned cotton textiles. These Indian imports were rightfully judged to be inferior to local textiles that had superior durability and were priced too high. Eight to ten per cent higher sales

[25] Batavia High Governance to Gentlemen XVII, 5, March 1750, General Mission 1971, 11: p. 849. On comparative contemporary Sumatra cloth production see Barbara Watson Andaya, "The Cloth Trade in Jambi and Palembang during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," *Indonesia* 48 (1989): pp. 27–46.

[26] Lucas Nagtegaal, *Riding the Dutch Tiger: The Dutch East India Company and the Northeast Coast of Java, 1680–1743* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 1996), pp. 147–148; Peter Boomgaard, "The Non-agricultural Side of an Agricultural Economy Java, 1500–1900," in *In the Shadow of Agriculture: Non-farm Activities in the Javanese Economy, Past and Present,* ed. Paul Alexander, Peter Boomgaard and Ben White (Amsterdam: Royal Tropical Institute, 1991), pp. 20–25.

[27] See Table 12, Nagtegaal, *Riding the Dutch Tiger*, p. 148.

prices in the wider Indian Ocean were consequent to a spike in European marketplace demand for south Indian calicoes.[28]

During the eighteenth century, it was ultimately more cost-effective for Java's Chinese diaspora traders to encourage local production of Javanese textiles. In 1719, Palembang, the major urban trading port on southeast Sumatra's coastline, imported sixty-four *corge* (twenty pieces) of Java striped, checked, or batik dyed textiles; in 1758, twenty-eight *corge*, and 2745 *corge* in 1793.[29] By then, Chinese diaspora merchants were competing against Javanese, Bugis and Malay traders who were regularly based in Java's Pasasir north coast ports, and sailed the Indonesian archipelago in ships that could transport between ten and one hundred *corges* of cloth.[30] Borneo was importing 16,360 *corges* of Javanese decorated cotton cloth in the 1720s, and 75,833 pieces of Javanese cloth in 1774–1775.[31] By that time, the VOC was also buying Javanese cotton yarn for export to the Netherlands, to supply a developing Dutch textile industry. In 1761, the VOC had 237 per cent profits from these shipments.[32]

From 1743, when the VOC had consolidated its hold over the north Java coastline, local Javanese regents were required to make annual payments of 300 *piculs* (roughly 60 kilograms) of cotton yarn, for which they were paid ten to fourty *rds* per *picul*—in contrast to the twelve to forty-five *rds* (according to cloth grade) that was the current marketplace standard.[33] The VOC administrators also imposed a twenty-five per cent export tax (as opposed to the previous eight per cent) on Java textile

[28] Gentlemen XVII, 31 December 1683; General Mission 4: p. 621; Andaya, "Cloth Trade," pp. 41–43. A similar point has been made recently by Kwee Hui Kian, "The End of the 'Age of Commerce'? Javanese Cotton Trade Industry from the 17th to the 18th Centuries," in *Chinese Circulations: Capital, Commodities and Networks in Southeast Asia*, ed. Eric Tagliocozzo and Wen-Chin Chang (Durham, Duke University Press, 2011), pp. 283–302.

[29] Andaya, "Cloth Trade", pp. 40–41.

[30] Kwee Hui Kian, *The Political Economy of Java's Northeast Coast c. 1740–1800: TANAP Monographs on the History of the Asian-European Interaction* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), pp. 63–64.

[31] Gerrit Knapp, *Shallow Waters, Rising Tide* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 1996), p. 132, Table 20.

[32] J.A. vander Chijs, ed., *Nederlandsch-Indisch Plakaatboek 1602–1811*, vol. 7 (Batavia, 1885–1900), p. 475.

[33] 15 August 1747, *Plakaatboek* V: pp. 471–472.

exports; this was done not only to make money, but also to force local producers to sell their cloth to the Dutch.[34] Consequently, local Java elites and Chinese diaspora partnered to find ways to make incomplete deliveries to sustain local products, which was possible since the Chinese diaspora controlled textile exports and were the major intermediaries in the regional marketing of local textile production.[35] Subsequently, the Dutch had to buy cotton yarn in the marketplace to supply the emerging demand of the Netherlands textile industry. Initially, the Dutch taxed undecorated and bleached cloth exports, but when the Chinese diaspora merchants avoided the export tax by dyeing the cloth with dyes that could be later washed out, the Dutch imposed a universal tax on cloth exports.[36]

There were continuing local initiatives in the early nineteenth century, but due to new circumstances. In 1823 collective British (1,356,728) and Dutch (79,344) imports of printed chintzes to Java totalled 1,436,072 guilders in market value; 298,999 of cloth 'sarongs'; 182,572 in a variety of 'cloth'; 1,390,314 in bleached cambrics; and 122,064 in cotton yarn; totalling 3,430,031 guilders in value.[37] By the 1830s, the Dutch were importing newly available Dutch factory-made cottons at the rate of roughly thirty to forty million guilders in value per year. Consequently, local handloom weaving could not initially compete with the imported textiles. Rather than enduring a consequent decrease in family income, households responded by shifting their labour commitments. The most notable change was a consequence of local access and consumption of inexpensive imported industrial yarn, and bleached and unbleached undecorated cotton cloth from Europe—this had occurred initially during the period of British sovereignty over Java (1811–1816), at the time of the Napoleonic Wars. When the Dutch returned to Java

[34] 25 November 1751, *Plakaatboek* VI: p. 97.

[35] Ruurdje Laarhoven, "The Power of Cloth: The Textile Trade of the Dutch East India Company [VOC] 1600-1780" (Ph.D. diss., Australian National University, 1994), pp. 258–261.

[36] December 1748, Gentlemen 11: p. 713.

[37] Alfons van der Kraan, "Anglo-Dutch Rivalry in the Java Cotton Trade, 1811–30", *Indonesia Circle* 68 (1996): Table 2, p. 45, based on N. W. Posthumus, *Dokumenten betreffende de buitenlandsche handelspolitiek van Nederland in de negentiende eeuw: II Onderhandelingen met Engeland over de koloniale handelspolitiek (1814–33)* (Den Hag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1921), pp. 90–94

in 1816, they were eventually able to market similar undecorated cloth of equal quality to that of British textile mills. New mills in the Belgian Netherlands used engraved roller print machines and dye-resistant resins to present a batik effect on cloth, but these had limited sales among consumers in Java, who preferred locally made quality batik.[38]

British and Dutch industrial mill textiles were more notable for their stimulation of local production. Former spinners and weavers (mostly women) in Java shifted their productivity to batik painting and dyeing of these imported industrial textiles, which as an end product could be sold at a lower cost to a wider public, and also made quality batik cloth available to the inclusive population, subject to social hierarchy distinctions.[39] By the 1820s, Javanese batik textile exports were substantially more than the previous value of Java's exported cloth.[40] Local consumption of quality batik grew due to its availability to a wider range of society. Increased regional textile consumption was also made possible by Java producers' new access to brass hand stamps (*caps*), which allowed a more efficient means of 'painting' cloth (Fig. 8.3). In a notable shift of labour commitment to Java's textile products, hand-stamping was usually done by males rather than females.[41] There was also a major shift in the scale and types of textile production in household cottage industry. Small-scale producers and household workshops were still active in their specialized decorating and finishing of marketable cotton cloth, although the prior time-consuming labour inputs spinning threads and weaving cloth were still required. Large-scale *bakul* ('tradesmen') workshops based in the coastal ports or adjacent to the Java elite's regional upstream court centres (managed by court elite and their intermediary merchant diaspora partners) prospered.[42]

As was the case in India, where substantial imports of British industrial calico textiles seriously challenged its cotton industry in the early

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[38] Alfons van der Kraan, *Contest for Java Cotton Trade, 1811–40: An Episode in Anglo-Dutch Rivalry* (Hull: Centre for South-East Asian Studies, 1998).

[39] van der Kraan, *Contest for Java Cotton Trade,* p. 7, p. 12, p. 41, pp. 57–58; Hall, "Textile Trade," pp. 120–122.

[40] Peter Boomgaard, *Children of the Colonial State: Population Growth and Economic Development in Java 1795–1880* (Amsterdam: Free Press, 1989), pp. 127–128.

[41] Gerrit Pieter Rouffaer and C.Th van Derventer, *De voornaamste industrieën der inlandsche bevolking van Java en Madoera* (Gravenhage: M. Nijhoff, 1904), p. 7, 22–23.

[42] Nagtegaal, *Riding the Dutch Tiger*, pp. 135, 149; Boomgaard, *Children*, pp. 220–228.

Fig. 8.3 *Cap*, or brass hand-stamps used for printing textile designs in contemporary Java and Bali (Photograph by the author)

nineteenth century,[43] Java's textile industry reoriented itself not only to survive, but to prosper. Java had certain advantages, in that Indian textile production was done on a larger scale by full-time specialists, including weavers and dyers. In Java, however, only some batik was the product of full-time professionals, while most of the production was performed by part-time spinners, weavers and dyers, who moved from textile production to agricultural work according to variations in the marketplace.[44] With the diminishment of Indian full-time textile production, Java's part-time textile artisans provided the alternative to imported European printed cloth—notably, Javanese batik, which was more expensive than

[43] Radhika Seshan, *Trade and Politics on the Coromandel Coast: Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries* (Delhi: Primus Press, 2012).

[44] Rouffaer and van Derventer, *loc. cit.*

the machine-made European textiles, but was of higher quality and was embedded with longstanding regional tradition.[45]

Consistent with earlier Javanese cultural practices, port towns were not only centres of textile manufacture, but also collection points for textiles from networked secondary port towns and their upstream.[46] The linked upstream consisted of networked individual household weavers and weaving villages, as well as courts where numbers of women did spinning, weaving, embroidery and other decorative work. While the highest quality textiles were manufactured in the courts, the greatest volume of textiles came from household 'cottage industry'. As in the past, locals did the dyeing and painting of textile piece goods in the off-peak seasons of the agricultural cycle and sold their surplus textiles to peddling traders, who renewed their supply of cloth and cloth decorating materials. By the mid-nineteenth century, the 'putting out system' to local households had unfinished cloth, thread and dyeing and other decorative materials supplied by a *bakul* intermediary, who dictated the size, patterns and quality of the product, paid the producer a wage and transitioned the finished decorated textiles to a market.[47] Port-based Chinese diaspora merchants were the ultimate distribution agents of cotton goods, and served as the critical links between Java's productivity and wider regional markets.

Local Agency in Java's Textile Production in the Seventeenth Through Nineteenth-Centuries

Consciously, this study has attempted to balance historical agency between local and transregional dynamics. In emphasizing local activities, events, beliefs, institutions, communities and individuals, this chapter joins other scholarship in further challenging notions of 'dependency' on Europeans (first, the British and, then, the Dutch) who purposely

[45] Gerrit Pieter Rouffaer and H. H. Juynboll, *De batik-kunst in Nederlandsch-Indië en haar geschiedenis: op grond van materiaal aanweizig in's Rijks Ethnographisch Museum en andere openbare en particuliere verzamelingen in Nederland* (Utrecht: A. Oosthoek, 1914), pp. 529–530.

[46] Knapp, *Shallow Waters*; Leonard Blusse, *Strange Company: Chinese Settlers, Mestizo Women and the Dutch in VOC Batavia* (Dordrecht: KITLV Press, 1986); Heringa, "Upland Tribe," and *Fabric of Enchantment*.

[47] Rouffer and van Derventer, *De voornaamste industrieën*, p. 11.

imposed industrial textiles on the early nineteenth-century Java marketplace, with the intent of negating the domestic need for local textile production. Instead, not only did aspects of local textile production survive, they were also substantially enhanced as newly available imported spools of industrial cotton threads and non-decorated and bleached industrial textiles were 'localized' with the Java batik tradition. In a significant local initiative, Javanese producers adapted metal stamp technology to apply traditional batik designs more inexpensively to imported cotton cloth and the remnants of locally produced cotton yardage—in so doing, revitalizing the Java textile tradition.

Giving agency to Southeast Asians in the meeting of the local and the exogenous—in this case, imported Indian and European factory-made textiles—is an example of what scholars of Southeast Asia know as *localization*,[48] which was never meant to imply that exogenous forces and factors were unimportant but, rather, that they were changed, adapted, mixed, reshaped, and refitted into indigenous states and societies so much that they were no longer separable (Fig. 8.4). Localization—known in other geographic fields as 'domestication' or 'cultural authentication'—was also a compromise between analytical extremes that may have framed the discussion as an inexorable indigenous–exogenous divide.[49] This study showcases the local adaptation of machine-woven and copper-plate and roller-printed European textiles, notably the superior industrially spun cotton threads and undecorated industrial textiles that were localized by Java weavers. These textiles were often paired with productive adaptations of new metal textile stamp technology as a less labour-intensive way to apply traditional designs to cotton cloth, to make Javanese cotton textiles highly marketable regionally. Thus, European

[48] O. W. Wolters, *History, Culture and Region in Southeast Asian Perspectives,* rev. edn. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Southeast Asia Program, 1999).

[49] One may compare this conceptualization of 'localization' to Sheldon Pollock's recent writings on the "Sanskrit cosmopolis," relative to regional adaptations of Indic culture. See Sheldon Pollock, "The Sanskrit Cosmopolis, 300–1300: Transculturation, Vernacularization, and the Question of Ideology," in *Ideology and Status of Sanskrit*, ed. Jan. E. M. Houben (Leiden: Brill, 1996); and "The Cosmopolitan Vernacular," *Journal of Asian Studies* 57, no. 1 (1998): pp. 6–37. As a corrective, see Kenneth R. Hall, "Knowledge Networks, Literary Adaptations, and the 'Sanskrit Cosmopolis' in Fifteenth-Century Java," forthcoming (Delhi: Primus Press, 2017).

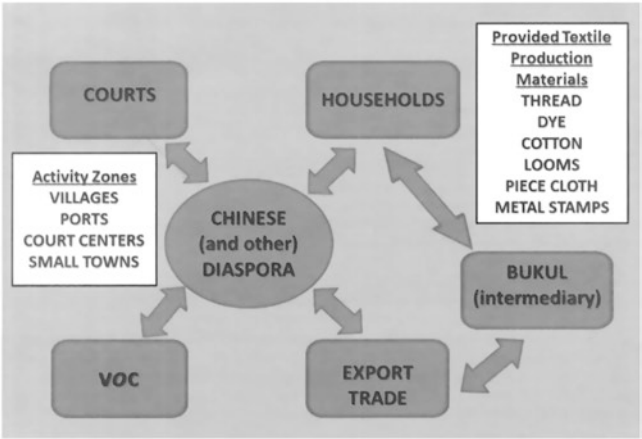

Fig. 8.4 Agencies and the flow of raw materials, tools, labour and finished products in seventeenth- to nineteenth-century Javanese textile production

textile imports ultimately stimulated—rather than destroyed—Java's nineteenth-century textile production.

This chapter negates prior depictions of the assumed 'underdevelopment' of Java that was argued to be demonstrated by a decline in Javanese demand for imported Indian textiles from the late seventeenth century. This was seen to be, initially, the result of purposeful Dutch and British marketing in Java of imported textiles from the workshops sponsored by the Dutch East India Company and British East India Company in southern and northeast India.[50] Then, in the early nineteenth century, industrial textiles—initially, from Britain and, later, from

[50]As initially asserted in Anthony Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce, 1450–1680*, *The Lands Below the Winds* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988); but challenged by Victor Lieberman, *Strange Parallels: Southeast Asia in Global Context, c. 800–1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). See also William Gervase Clarence-Smith, "The Introduction of Cotton Textiles in Early Modern South-East Asia," in *The Spinning World, A Global History of Cotton Textiles, 1200–1850*, ed. Giorgio Riello and Prasannan Parthasarathi (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 127–142, for his substantive 2009 critique. Reid's reconsideration is in Anthony Reid, "Southeast Asian Consumption of Indian and British Cotton Cloth, 1600–1850," in *How India Clothed the World: The World of South Asian Textiles, 1500–1850*, ed. Giorgio Riello and Tirthankar Roy (Leiden: Brill, 2009), pp. 31–51.

The Netherlands—again interrupted demand and negated further technological development of Java's previously vigorous cotton weaving industry. Publications in the early 1990s proposed that local consumption of less expensive and lower-quality Javanese batik was the alternative source for an impoverished society that could no longer afford to buy Indian or European textile imports. Against this, revisionists using British and Dutch colonial and East India Company records have more recently argued that the decline of Java's rural labour intensive yarn-spinning and textile weaving, reactive to inexpensive industrial cloth imports, released numbers of Java textile artisans to produce commercial crops for the increasingly profitable Indonesian marketplace.

This was paired with the rise of new hand-stamped batik and other cotton textiles that were widely consumed by Java and wider Indonesian archipelago consumers in preference over imported European imports; Indian textile imports were substantially curtailed by nineteenth-century British East India Company export restrictions to favour Indian Ocean marketing of British industrial textiles. Java's general public consumption of the less expensive stamped batik, the hand-painted versions of which had previously been too expensive for public purchase, coupled with the rebirth of upstream court-based and downstream port-based workshops and outsourced household production of labour-intensive batik hand-painting and dyeing on imported European cloth, or locally woven textiles using imported European industrial threads. Second, the revitalized Java textile industry began to export quantities of quality batik cotton cloth to satisfy Western consumer demand from the 1860s.

Conclusion

This study adds to the image of a consistently profitable post-1820s local economy in Java. It has been noted that Dutch or British imported textiles never produced a permanent decline in local textile productivity and profitability but, instead, created opportunities for local adaptations that, ultimately, sustained Java's unique batik and other decorated cotton cloth production. The enduring strength of Java's textile production and its flexibility (in taking advantage of the early nineteenth-century accessibility of imported machine spun thread, new metal hand-stamp technology and inexpensive undecorated quality industrial cotton sheeting) collectively encouraged renewal and enhancement of Java batik production. Imported European yarns were stronger and produced textiles that

were smoother in texture and more durable than previous Indian textile imports, increasing batik's marketability against imported European textiles. Nineteenth-century 'consumer' batik appealed to the longstanding cultural values of Indonesians, as many of the Indonesian archipelago consumers, for the first time, could afford to buy the new hand-stamped batik and other decorated cotton at a competitive price. Previously, the generalized societal consumption of batik had been denied due to its high cost and its restricted use in courts and temples.

Rather than the product of coastal 'industrial factories', Java's nineteenth-century batik production remained based in an assortment of downstream workshops run by Chinese diaspora entrepreneurs, and a mix of court-based workshops and 'putting out' and 'part-time' upstream networked households that dyed and patterned imported uncoloured and bleached European and Indian textiles during the non-peak periods in the local agricultural cycle. At the elite level, upstream Java court and court-connected workshops produced high-quality batik for elite and wider societal consumption, as the variety of Java batik and other decorated cloth were worn as differential marks of status among the traditional elite and the newly wealthy. The highest-quality court-produced cloth was sold by peddling traders along local and regional marketing networks. Multi-ethnic diaspora merchants based in Java's north coast trading ports shipped Javanese batik, for which there was a considerable demand, to the wider Indonesian archipelago and made it accessible to increasingly expansive global marketplaces. In sum, Java's mid-nineteenth century revitalized cotton textile industry was consequent to networked initiatives partnering Java's traditional upstream court elite and multi-ethnic downstream-based Asian entrepreneurs, rather than the product of invasive European agency. The nineteenth-century Java textile 'industry' clearly threaded its way through the constant shifts of marketplace demand and increased foreign competition, and was far more adaptive and successful than earlier thought.

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CHAPTER 9

'The Dearest Thing on the East African Coast': The Forgotten Nineteenth-Century Trade in 'Muscat Cloth'

Sarah Fee

In the late 1840s, Edouard Loarer, serving as the commercial representative on a two-year French exploration of coastal eastern Africa, observed that, '[o]wning one of these turbans, sashes and wrappers … is the ambition of every resident on the coast. Even the lowliest of slaves labours in

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order to dress in this coveted clothing. The cloth represents the dearest thing on the East African Coast'.[1] Contrary to our expectations, Loarer was not referencing textiles from India. Rather, he was writing about 'Muscat cloth' (*tissus de Mascate*), the striped cotton-and-silk wrappers woven in Oman, Southern Arabia.[2] By his estimates, coastal eastern Africa imported 100,000 pieces annually.

Numerous studies have examined the historic textile trades and dress traditions of the Indian Ocean world, with several specifically centred on eastern Africa. Curiously, they make little mention of this significant circulation of Omani-made cloth, which flourished throughout the nineteenth century and, ultimately, touched every corner of the western Indian Ocean world. This apparent oversight may be largely traced to scholars favouring the early modern period before 1800, and to a predetermined focus on cotton, on India, or on a single merchant or consuming group, such as the Swahili. The hybrid and commercial making of Muscat cloth, combined with its non-pictorial design, and the fact that very few historic pieces have survived, may have dampened the interest of art historians and anthropologists. Whatever the explanation may be, there exists overwhelming evidence for a widespread nineteenth-century fashion craze for 'Muscat cloth' that eventually swept the eastern half of sub-Saharan Africa, from Somalia down the Swahili coast to Mozambique, 350 kilometres inland to present-day Uganda and Zambia, and out to offshore islands of the Comoros and Madagascar.

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[1] 'Marchandises d'importation propres au commerce de la côte de Zanguébar' [ca. 1846–48] (Océan Indien 5/23 no. 7, Archives Nationales d'Outre Mer (ANOM), Aix-en-Provence). I thank Jeremy Prestholdt and Christopher Hayden for originally sharing the full document with me. Edouard Loarer accompanied Charles Guillain's 1846–1848 expedition along the coasts of eastern Africa. As the representative of the French Ministère du Commerce and the Chambre de Commerce de Nantes, his central task was studying and reporting on cloth consumption habits. See Sarah Fee and Samuel F. Sanchez "Édouard Loarer, 'Marchandises d'importation propres au commerce de la cote de Zanguébar', and the French explorations of the East Coast of Africa, 1846–48" (in press).

[2] Other terms to designate the cloth have included Maskat stuff, Muscat longee or lungy, Muscat apron, Arabian longee or lungee, kissua, Arab checks, Maskati, nankin de Mascate, étoffes de Mascate, soie de Mascate, Mascat zeug. The earliest use of the term I have found is 'Muscat lungy' included in a list of imports to southwest India. See Francis Buchanan, *A Journey from Madras through the Countries of Mysore, Canara and Malabar*, vol. 3 (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1807), p. 4.

This chapter aims to recover this far-reaching western Indian Ocean trade in Omani hand-woven textiles. It does so by examining production and consumption in the same analytic framework, as Jeremy Prestholdt and Pedro Machado have recently urged,[3] and by drawing on a wide range of sources—archival, linguistic, physical artefacts, images and interviews with contemporary Omani weavers—for it is only in combining these various approaches that the contours and importance of the trade become visible. The chapter further advances recent arguments that cloth was more than a simple by-product of the export trade out of eastern Africa; rather, local demand for specific textile types was a driving force in the region's phenomenal commercial boom of the nineteenth century, with global consequences.[4] Playing equivalent roles to the Indian double-ikat silk *patola* cloth crucial to commercial and diplomatic relations in Southeast Asia, Muscat cloth emerged in eastern Africa as the desired luxury fabric that moved local rulers—and ever-increasing swathes of the wider population—to (re)channel their energies into transregional trade, to produce, collect, transport and part with local goods, the ivory, slaves, copal, foodstuffs and so on coveted by foreign traders. In turn, Omani merchants and weavers—like their counterparts in India, the United Kingdom and the United States—laboured to innovate and accommodate eastern African tastes. Finally, this work brings to the fore

[3] Jeremy Prestholdt, *Domesticating the World. African Consumerism and the Genealogies of Globalization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012); Pedro Machado, *Ocean of Trade: South Asian Merchants, Africa and the Indian Ocean, c. 1750–1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

[4] William Gervase Clarence-Smith, "The textile industry of eastern Africa in the *longue durée*," in *Africa's Development in Historical Perspective*, ed. Emmanuel Akyeampong, Robert Bates, Nathan Nunn, and James A. Robinson (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 264–94; Pedro Machado, "Awash in a sea of cloth: Gujarat, Africa, and the Western Indian Ocean, 1300–1800," in *The Spinning World*, ed. Giorgio Riello and Prasannan Parthasarathi (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 161–179; Pedro Machado, "Cloths of a new fashion: Indian Ocean networks of exchange and cloth zones of contact in Africa and India in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries," in *How India Clothed the World*, ed. Giorgio Riello and Thirnakar Roy (London: Brill, 2009); Jeremy Prestholdt, "As Artistry Permits and Custom May Ordain; The social fabric of material consumption in the Swahili world, circa 1450 to 1600" (Evanston: Northwestern University, *PAS Working Paper,* no. 3, 1998); Machado, *Ocean of Trade*; Prestholdt, *Domesticating the World*.

men's dress—a topic that has perhaps received inadequate attention in studies of nineteenth-century western Indian Ocean textile trades.[5]

Oman as Historic Textile Producer

> Found our crew and passengers bargaining for turbans of blue silk with red stripes and borders, which, with a cheaper sort half silk, appear the principal manufactures of Muscat
>
> British captain, ca. 1837[6]

It is largely forgotten today that the southern Arabian nation of Oman was once a famed textile producer and exporter. Many of the same geo-political factors that conspired to give the nation a weighty commercial and political presence in the western Indian Ocean contributed to the emergence of its export textile trade. Lying at the mouth of the Gulf, Oman is strategically situated midway between Persia, India, China and Africa, at the narrow choke point where the Gulf meets the Indian Ocean. Monsoon winds favoured annual voyages between Oman and Africa and, by 700 CE, Omanis were settling along the eastern African coast, contributing to the flowering of urban port cultures from Mogadishu to Mozambique. From 1508, the Portuguese seized key port towns throughout the Indian Ocean, including Muscat, but, in 1650, Omani forces ejected them and, in turn, began a long ascendancy of rule in this vast region. During this so-called 'Silver Age' of Gulf trade, Oman controlled much of what moved through the Gulf, including the rich supplies of silk floss flowing from Persia.[7] Under the new Al-Busaid dynasty, from 1750 Omani ruler-merchants intensified their activities on the Swahili coast, creating garrisons and appointing governors in key port towns. From about 1832, when the Omani ruler Seyyid Said moved his court and capital from Muscat to the island of Zanzibar,

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[5] But see Zulfikar Hirji, "The *kofia* Tradition of Zanzibar: the Implicit and Explicit Discourses of Men's Head-dress in an Indian Ocean Society," in *Textiles in Indian Ocean Societies*, ed. Ruth Barnes (London: Routledge, 2005), pp. 68–84.

[6] Feringee Furaree, "Rough Notes on a Rough Ride from the East, Part III," in *The Dublin University Magazine*, vol. 16 (1840), pp. 243–247; p. 243.

[7] Robert Geran Landen, *Oman since 1856: Disruptive Modernization in a Traditional Arab Society* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1967); Ahmed Hamoud Maamiry, *Oman and East Africa*, 2nd rev. ed. (New Delhi: Lancers Publishers, 1980).

Oman became the dominant force in the region. By the time of his death in 1856, Seyyid had created an 'Omani commercial empire'—to use the term of Reda Bhacker—which stretched far into the African interior, to Kisangani in the present-day Democratic Republic of the Congo, and to the northeast corner of Zambia.[8]

Famous for this military, shipping and mercantile prowess and as a major emporium—a 'central depot to sort and distribute goods from India to the rest of the world'—Oman was also a nation of artisans.[9] They manufactured jewellery, pottery, passementerie, dyes and hand-woven cloth. Two distinct weaving traditions co-exist in Oman. The first is the Bedouin tradition of the vast interior, where women spin and weave wool on ground looms for domestic consumption, the form most studied by scholars.[10] The second tradition—and the type that concerns us here—is the 'urban' weaving of cotton and silk on pitlooms by men. A professional craft aimed at sale, carried out in port towns, their hinterlands and in inland oases, it has received little attention, apart from the recent study by Richardson and Dorr.[11]

The 'Muscat' in the term 'Muscat cloth' references Oman's major port and (from 1778) its capital but, in fact, men's commercial cotton weaving was widely spread beyond this one town (see Map 1.2); over the centuries, it was practised along the coasts and hinterlands of the Battinah and Sharquiyah districts.[12] Between 1821 and 1885, Europeans observed commercial cotton-weaving in Muscat proper and in the adjoining town of Muttrah, in the port towns of Sohar and al-Suwaiq, as well as the inland oasis towns of Nizwa, Beni Abu Hassan, Sarrya, Nakhl, Khaboora, Semail and Al'Aliyah.[13] In that last town in the 1880s, the

[8] M. Reda Bhacker, *Trade and Empire in Muscat and Zanzibar: Roots of British Domination* (London: Routledge, 1992).

[9] Landen, *Oman since 1856*, p. 82.

[10] Gigi Crocker Jones, *Traditional Spinning and Weaving in the Sultanate of Oman* (Muscat: Historical Association of Oman, 1987); Charlotte Heath, "Tradition and Innovation: Social Aspects of Learning Spinning and Weaving Skills in Oman," *Textile: The Journal of Cloth and Culture* 11, no. 2 (2013), pp. 176–187; Neil Richardson and Marcia Dorr, *The Craft Heritage of Oman*, 2 vols. (Dubai: Motivate Publishing, 2003).

[11] Richardson and Dorr, *The Craft Heritage of Oman*.

[12] Bhacker asserts that, by 1830, Muttrah had surpassed Muscat as the primary producer. See Bhacker, *Trade and Empire*, p. 133.

[13] James R. Wellsted, *Travels in Arabia*, vol. I (London: Murray, 1838), pp. 197, 320; James Buckingham, *Travels in Assyria*, 2nd ed. (London: Colburn, 1830), p. 412; S.B.

'creaking looms … [in the] … huts and sheds of the cloth-weavers … kept up an unmusical din well into the night'.[14] In the twentieth century, cotton-weaving was further documented in the port towns of Quryat and Sur and in the foothill villages of the Sharquiya.[15]

Men worked at pitlooms, a horizontal loom suspended over a deep hole, a type geared toward commercial weaving. The pit helps to keep fibres moist in arid climates, while the double heddle operated by foot pedals speeds production and frees the weavers' hands to make complex weaves, the use of a battant-reed further aiding these processes.[16] Omani men produced three basic types of cotton fabric: (1) dhow sails; (2) plain yardage (*khoudroung*) for tailored garments, made of locally grown and spun white and brown cotton; and (3) brightly dyed and striped rectangular wrappers, usually with silk accents. It was this third category—colourfully striped wrappers—that Europeans nicknamed 'Muscat cloth' and that formed the basis of Oman's textile export trade.

Muscat cloth has several distinct attributes (Fig. 9.1). A finished cloth is typically constructed of two narrow panels of identical fabric seamed together along the length, and further finished and joined by a narrow woven end band (transverse selvedge) running along each of the two ends, leaving a long fringe. Thus assembled, the cloth creates biaxial symmetry and measures about 3 by 1.5 metres, slightly narrower for turbans.[17] Historically, colourswere limited to shades of indigo-blue, white, red, black and yellow. The typical design presents wide, bold border stripes in red, yellow and black, a centrefield of blue checks and/or narrow stripes, and sets of colourful weft bands at the two ends. If visually

Miles, *The Countries and Tribes of the Persian Gulf*, 2 vols, (London: Harrison and Sons, 1919); Philip Ward, *Travels in Oman: On the Track of the Early Explorers* (Cambridge: Oleander Press Ltd, 1987), pp. 125, 148, 227; Miles, *The Countries and Tribes*, vol. 2, p. 457; Louis H. Maguire, "Oman: Its commerce, Industries, and Resources," *Cotton Goods Trade of the World, and the Share of the United States therein*, no. 12 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1881), pp. 459–474.

[14] S.B. Miles in Ward, *Travels in Oman*, p. 279.

[15] Richardson and Dorr, *The Craft Heritage of Oman*, vol. 2, p. 28.

[16] Unlike Ethiopia and India, where weavers sit on the edge of the pit, Omani weavers stand in a deep pit about shoulder level and lean against the back wall.

[17] Wellsted noted they were striped blue and red, measuring "about ten feet long and two feet six inches or three feet broad." See *Travels in Arabia*, vol. 1, p. 320.

Fig. 9.1 Man's hand-woven turban, collected in Muscat by Joest before 1899. Machine- and hand-spun cotton with silk yellow stripes, checked blue, white and black centre, with two colours of interlocking wefts, 120 × 308 cm. The piece is missing one of its red borders, which has been digitally reconstructed here to show how the full cloth would have appeared. Rautenstrauch-Joest Museum, Cologne 10732 (photograph © Rheinisches Bildarchiv)

simple to the untrained eye, the co-existence of checks at the centre and solidly coloured stripes at the borders requires time and skill: the effects were achieved through a tapestry join, the weaver interlocking two

separate weft threads, the first running across the centrefield, the other across the selvedge stripes. Most Muscat cloth was made of all cotton thread, but some had stripes or bands in silk or gold thread.[18]

In 1821, Fraser observed weavers in Muscat making '[t]urbans and waistbands, or girdles of cotton and silk, striped or checked with blue, and having the ends ornamented with red, green or yellow border'.[19] Typical of European observers then and now, he failed to note the precise disposition of the stripes and checks. Striping patterns, however, were never arbitrary, but fixed by convention and given formal names; it was these named patterns (e.g., *sahari*)—rather than colour or fibre—that distinguish Omani styles and are key for identifying them in trade reports and images.[20] Patterns might be regionally based, and there is evidence for fashion cycles. In 1895, the French vice-consul to Muscat named and described the pitloom products then current.[21] They included varieties of yardage; two kinds of turbans; and twenty named varieties of body wrappers, two of which, the *rehani* and *sederbaz*, are discussed later.

European authors tended to deride Omani pitloom weavings as coarse, but evidence indicates a range of qualities, including exquisitely fine work. A light airy fabric was made for turbans, and a heavier, tighter weave for body wrappers. Quality was tied to weave density, design complexity, brightness of dye, colour saturation of selvedge stripes, complexity of the tapestry join (which might be emphasized or hidden), and the addition of costly silk or gold thread. An important site of aesthetic embellishment was the transverse selvedge (*taraza*), a narrow woven band of one to two centimetres in width applied along each end of the cloth (see Fig. 9.1). The band served a functional role in preventing fraying, but was additionally multicoloured and patterned with floats, with

[18]The Prophet is said to have forbidden men to wear silk; consequently, Oman's rulers periodically forbade the fibre for dress. See Ward, *Travels in Oman*, p. 34.

[19]James B. Fraser, *Narrative of a Journey into Khorasan, in the Years 1821 and 1822* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, Brown and Green, 1825), p. 18.

[20]In the 1840s, Loarer noted there existed five types of Muscat cloth, but did not provide names or descriptions ('Marchandises', ANOM).

[21]The Vice-Consul sent samples of these cloths to the Lille Commercial Museum but only one has survived. I have been unable to locate Muscat cloth samples sent by Burton to the Royal Geographic Society, or by Loarer and other French agents to various French ministries.

the turban worn so as to display it conspicuously. Adding the band was typically the responsibility of the cloth owner, who purchased the raw panels from the pitloom weaver, and then took them to a specialized weaver whose main occupation was weaving bands on cloth ends using a very narrow, double-heddle loom.[22]

Fibres and dyes for making Muscat cloth came from a wide variety of sources that changed over time. Some were procured and/or processed locally. Cotton was grown at inland oases, with cotton spinning reported a major activity for women in Nizwa and Muttrah in the 1830s.[23] Dye plants, too, were widely cultivated locally, and included madder, turmeric and indigofera—which produce red, yellow and blue dyes respectively.[24] But, it appears that, port-based weavers in particular relied on imported raw materials, siphoned from the large re-export trade in which Muscat, and Omani shippers, were major players. Cotton fluff was variously drawn from Bandar-Abbas, Bushire and Kachchh, with the port of Mandvi providing the 'whitest, finest and softest'.[25] The better part of 400 balls from Persia were consumed in local weaving in the early 1840s.[26] From that same time, Omani weavers also adopted industrially-spun and dyed cotton thread (i.e., 'twist') from mills in Manchester.[27] Silk floss was always imported, as the delicate silkworms of 'Chinese' *Bombyx mori* could not survive Oman's high temperatures. The primary sources were the Persian ports of Bandar-Abbas and Bushire, with 400 to 500 maunds consumed locally in the early 1840s.[28] Gold thread likewise

[22] For a fascinating life history of one such weaver in the twentieth century, see Julia M. Stehlin-Alzadjali, *The Traditional Women's Dress of Oman* (Muscat Press & Publishing House, 2010).

[23] Wellsted, *Travels to Arabia*, vol. 1, p. 320; Miles 1876 in Ward, *Travels in Oman,* p. 371.

[24] Bhacker, *Trade and Empire*, p. 135. The many important crafts of Nizwa included dyeing imported cottons with indigo.

[25] Charles Guillain, "Côte de Zanguébar et Mascate. Extrait d'un rapport de M. le Lieutenant de vaisseau Guillain année 1841", *Revue Coloniale*, vol. 1, pp. 520–571 (1843), p. 553.

[26] 200 to 250 maunds in the year 1841 (Guillain, "Côte de Zanguébar", p. 553).

[27] "Rapport commercial sur l'Oman et Mascate en 1900", *Correspondance Commerciale Mascate*, Archives du Ministère des Affaires Etrangères (MAE), Paris.

[28] Guillain, "Côte de Zanguébar", p. 555. In 1910 Muscat imported ninety sacs of silk floss worth 40,000 Maria Theresa thalers (See "Rapport commercial sur l'Oman," MAE). Oman also exported, or re-exported, dyes and silk floss dyed locally (See Buchanan, *A Journey from Madras*, vol. 3, p. 60; Guillain, "Côte de Zanguébar," p. 555).

came first from Persia, then India, and, by 1900, Germany.[29] Raw materials for dyeing were drawn from various points of India, in particular turmeric from Kanara, indigo from Sind and Calcutta, with red dyes including cochineal coming out of Bombay, as well as eastern Africa itself (see below).[30]

A portion of 'Muscat cloth' was consumed locally, by Arab men in particular.[31] Into the nineteenth century, Bedouin men dressed solely in rectangular wrappers: a hip wrap (*wizar*) and a large cloth that served variously as turban (*mussar*), shoulder cloth (*ridah*), sleeping mat or blanket, and/or waist sash (*shal*).[32] Urban elites wore these same types of wrappers over their long tailored tunics and over-robes. Although the Ibahdi Islam practised by most Omanis 'enjoins every class to abstain from costly articles of dress',[33] men were on formal occasions observed to wear luxurious colourful wrappers, as sarongs, turbans and waist sashes. If in the twentieth century imported embroidered woolens from Kashmir filled this role, in the nineteenth century locally-made 'fancy coloured silk', more specifically 'blue checkered silks', were the wrappers of choice for 'distinguished persons', at least on the coasts.[34] This is widely evidenced in both first-hand observations and images, such as the portrait of Ahmad bin Na'aman (Fig. 9.2), the Muscati envoy sent to New York in 1840 by Sultan Seyyid Said. The common nineteenth-century style observed in Muscat was 'of small blue checked cotton,

[29] "Rapport commercial sur l'Oman", MAE; Guillain, 'Côte de Zanguébar', p. 558.

[30] Guillain, 'Côte de Zanguébar', p. 556; Maguire, 'Oman: Its Commerce, Industries, and Resources', p. 470; Buchanan, *A Journey from Madras*, vol. 3, p. 59. Into the year 2000, Omani dyers near Sur were dyeing magenta coloured silk (with chemical means) to achieve the desired hue (see Richardson and Dorr, *Craft Heritage*, vol. 2, p. 287).

[31] In the cosmopolitan port towns of Oman, each of the many large non-Arab communities—Baluchis, Indian merchants, Ethiopians, Somalis, etc. – had unique dress styles.

[32] Carsten Niebuhr, *Travels through Arabia and other Countries in the East*, 2 vols (London: R. Morison and Son, 1792), vol. 2, p. 233; Fraser, *Narrative of a Journey into Khorasan*, p. 26. Medieval sources, too, remarked on the use of wrappers by coastal Arabs. See Wendell Phillipps, *Oman: A History* (London: Longmans, 1967) pp. 16–17. To this day, wrapper dress is required of hajj pilgrims to Mecca.

[33] Wellsted, *Travels in Arabia*, p. 346.

[34] William Ruschenberger, *A voyage round the world: including an embassy to Muscat and Siam in 1835, 1836, and 1837* (London: Carey, Lea & Blanchard, 1838), p. 28; Buckingham, *Travels in Assyria*, p. 109. Buckingham implied this held true for Bedouin men as well, *Travels in Assyria*, p. 415.

Fig. 9.2 Portrait of Ahmad ibn Na'aman, 1840, by Edward Ludlow Mooney. Painted on the occasion of Na'aman's visit to New York aboard the *Sultanah*. Peabody Essex Museum M4473, gift of Mrs. William P. McMullan, 1918 (©Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, MA. Photography by Jeffrey D. Dykes)

with a silk and cotton border of red and yellow', 'universally worn by all who are born within the kingdom …whether the sultan or the subject'.[35] Samples reveal that the blue checks were tiny, visible only at close range. Each tribe reportedly had its own striping pattern, with the special

[35] Fraser, *Narrative of a Journey*, pp. 20, 26; Buckingham, *Travels in Assyria*, p. 412. See also Edmund Roberts, *Embassy to the Eastern Courts of Cochin-China, Siam, and Muscat in the US sloop of war Peacock during the years 1832–3–4* (New York: Harper Brothers, 1837), p. 354; C. de Gobineau, *Trois Ans en Asie de 1855 a 1858* (Paris: Hachette, 1859), p. 95.

design reserved for the ruler and 'all in the service of "His Highness"'[36] being characterized by five broad silk magenta bands at the two ends. The height and manner of folding the turban were further markers of status, with the Seyyid and select family members permitted the highest peaks. Another vehicle of masculine identity, the waist sash for holding the dagger, also received special attention, being often made of silver or gold threads. The few recorded early observations of Omani female dress indicate women wore garments tailored from imported fabrics; but, for moving in public, they covered their heads and person with a large rectangular cloth (*ridah, chador*). These, too, depending on time and place, were often colourful, locally woven striped and checked cloth.

As with sourcing raw materials, the organization of men's pitloom weaving was flexible and varied over time. Reports describe men both working individually in the home and in workshops of up to thirty looms.[37] The identity of weavers remains unclear, but it appears that as with Oman's artisans generally, they were associated with foreign or low status. Observers variously noted they were the descendants of earlier Persian settlers, worked in Baluchi sections of town, or in neighborhoods of barbers and jewelers.[38] Indeed, Reda Bhacker seems to suggest that, similar to clove production, enslaved labor was used in weaving from the 1830s following injections of Indian capital.[39]

Export figures for Muscat cloth are highly elusive—especially for the port town of Sur, whose traffic with eastern Africa likely eventually eclipsed that of Muscat—but indicators point to high volume, with cloth second only to palm dates. American and French consular offices respectively reported Muscat's cloth exports to be 300 boxes worth $150,000 in 1881, and 500,000 and 1,000,000 francs in 1895. With a cloth costing on average 1.5 francs this suggests that between 400,000

[36] Ruschenberger, *A voyage*, p. 137. According to oral traditions, Al Saidi rulers from the 1780 s patronized locally woven turbans, commissioning the distinctive pattern that is still reserved for the sole use of the royal family (see Richardson and Dorr, *Omani Craft Heritage*, vol. 2, p. 284).

[37] Wellsted, *Travels to Arabia*, vol. 1, p. 320.

[38] Ruschenberger, *A Voyage*, p. 77; Maguire, 'Oman: Its commerce', pp. 462, 466; Henshaw 1840 in Ward, *Travels in Oman*, p. 17.

[39] Bhacker, *Trade and Empire*, p. xxix.

and 800,000 pieces were yet exported in 1895.[40] Indirect evidence for the vast scale comes as well from the facts that in the 1840s, 'indigo, dyes, thread-makers, silk-spinners' were significant sources of taxes for the Omani state and as late as 1900 cotton thread formed the fourth largest category of Muscat's imports.[41]

Ultimately, the importance of Oman's historic export weaving emerges less from sources focused on Oman itself, and more from a study of the cloth's consumers, particularly in the eastern half of the African continent, where the cloth's wild success has left a wide trail of evidence.

Making 'Muscat Cloth' for Eastern Africa

Omani-made cotton-and-silk cloth was traded along the shores of the Gulf and Red Sea, as well as to Socotra and western India, but by the mid-nineteenth century, at least, exports appear to have been mainly channelled to eastern Africa.[42] Evidence indicates that the large-scale trade to Africa began from the late 1700s, tied to the rise of Omani political and commercial dominance in the region. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Portuguese sources mentioned only Indian textiles being imported into eastern Africa.[43] Indeed, Richardson and Dorr—based, it seems, on oral traditions—explicitly tie the flowering of Omani pitloom weaving to the rise of the merchant Al-Busaid Dynasty from 1741.[44] Written sources confirm that by 1776 Muscat was one of

[40] French Vice-Consul to Muscat, "Note explicative pour la collection d'échantillons envoyée au Musée Commercial de Lille", ca.1895, Registration Files, Musée d'Histoire Naturelle de Lille.

[41] 'Rapport commercial sur l'Oman', MAE; Guillain cited in Richard Burton, *Zanzibar: City, Island and Coast*, 2 vols (London: Tinsley Brothers, 1872), vol. 1, p. 273.

[42] Guillain, "Côte de Zanguébar", p. 558; Charles Guillain, *Documents sur l'Histoire, La Géographie et le Commerce de l'Afrique Orientale*, 3 vols (Paris: Bertrand, 1856), vol. 2, p. 359; 'Rapport commercial sur l'Oman', MAE; Buckingham, *Travels in Assyria*, p. 109; Loarer, 'Marchandises', ANOM; Maguire, 'Oman: Its Commerce, Industries, and Resources', p. 472; 'Commerce and Industries of Oman', *Commercial Relations of the U.S. with foreign countries during the year 1907* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1908), p. 618.

[43] Prestholdt, "As Artistry Permits".

[44] Richardson and Dorr, *Craft Heritage*, vol. 2, p. 284. Omanis were importing cloth to Kilwa in the early 1700 s, but the cloth type and origins are not indicated. See Edward Alpers, *Ivory and Slaves in East Central Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press,

the sites supplying the *quisange* (*kisanga*) cloth deemed 'absolutely necessary' for the slave trade in Kilwa, eastern Africa's wealthiest port of the time. The French trader Morice observed that the *quisange* was 'striped in blue and white with large red stripes at the two ends. The best come from Muscat, Daman and Diu. There are different qualities in fineness and prices. There are altogether four panels to a piece. In general the thickest are the best.'[45] At the end of the chapter I return to this entangled manufacture of cloth in Oman and western India.

Throughout the nineteenth century, as international trade in the western Indian Ocean intensified, Muscat cloth became even more 'necessary' in the economic life of the region. Recognizing this fact requires an appreciation of the cloths' physical attributes and formal names. In 1860 British explorer Richard Burton published a detailed list of trade fabrics imported through Zanzibar.[46] He divided them into two broad categories: 1) inexpensive monochrome cotton yardage, either solid white (*hamy* or *merikani*) or solid blue (*kaniki*), and 2) luxury cloths, what the Swahili termed 'cloths with names', most of which Burton observed were 'Arab and Indian checks, and coloured goods, of cotton or silk mixed with cotton'.[47] Europeans often referred to them as 'coloured cloths', more rarely as 'pretty', 'handsome', or 'gay' cloths. Burton noted that some of these 'checks'—such as the popular *barsati* and prestigious *deuli*—were hand-woven in western India, but a close study shows that increasingly the greatest variety and number came from Oman.[48]

1975), p. 73. Bhacker writes that Muscat cloth was a major import before the 1820s but does not indicate his source, *Trade and Empire*, p. 119.

[45] My translation of Morice, "Projet d'un établissement à la Côte Orientale d'Afrique", MSS. Afr. r. 6, Bodleian Library, Oxford. An unsigned letter from 23 février 1778 confirms that "Arabs furnish them [people of Swahili coast] with cottons (*toilles*) and fabrics (*etoffes*) particular to the dress of the Moors; and for the wrappers of the blacks; they go and fetch these products on the Malabar coast, in Muscat or Moka" (Ocean Indien Carton 15 Dossier 61, ANOM).

[46] Richard Burton (1860) *The Lake Regions of Central Africa*, 2 vols (London: Longman), vol. 1, p. 351.

[47] Ibid.

[48] For an analysis of all luxury textile imports in eastern Africa in the nineteenth century, see Sarah Fee "Cloth With Names: the luxury textile trade to eastern Africa, ca. 1800-1880," *Textile History* 48, 1 (2017): pp. 49–84.

Table 9.1 presents thirteen types of 'cloth with names' that can be confidently assigned stylistic origins or primary production in Oman, at least for the nineteenth century. Identifications are based on linguistic clues, contemporary writings, the study of artifacts, and interviews with Omani weavers.[49] The cloth names *sahari*, *kariati*, *siweki* make obvious reference to the Omani port towns of Sohar, Qaryat, and al-Suwaiq, the first renowned for its turban making, while the cloth name *burra* may refer to the port town of al Barka.[50] The *sahari*, together with the *debwani*, *rehani* and *subaya*, appear to have been most popular with consumers in eastern Africa and imported in greatest numbers. Figures 9.3 and 9.4 show examples of single panels of *sahari* and *debwani* (i.e., before assembly) collected by Henry Morton Stanley in the 1870s. The *sahari* features a uniform finely checked centrefield in blue and black, with a distinctive broad red stripe at each border flanked by narrow yellow and black stripes, and a series of six narrow bands of yellow alternating with red at the two ends. The *debwani* is characterized by a centrefield of tiny white and blue checks, and a series of wide tan weft bands at the two ends, likely made from Oman's distinctive natural brown cotton. The highest quality *debwani* reportedly came in both light and dark blue checks, the first of greater value.[51] The *subaya* (Fig. 9.5) presents a small centrefield of six stripes infilled with small blue and black checks alternating with narrow sets of stripes in red and yellow; covering much of the surface is a series of wide red weft bands at the two ends. Other Muscat cloth varieties include the *sabuni*, *sederbaz*, *ismaili*, and *barawaji,* the last unusual for its large black and white centrefield checks.[52] Omani pitloom weavers recognize and/or make to this

[49] Fee, 'Cloths with Names'. In 2011, I interviewed practising weavers in Sur, Quryat and Samand as Shan.

[50] On Sohar as the main producer of blue and white checked turbans, see Buckingham, *Travels in Assyria*, p. 412; James Buckingham, 'Voyage from Muscat to Bushire', *Oriental Herald and Journal of General Literature*, vol. 19: pp. 39–57 (1828), p. 40; Wellsted *Travels to Arabia*, vol. 1, p. 103; Ward, *Travels in Oman*, p. 148. Sacleux interprets *Burra* as an Omani topynym, perhaps al Barka (Charles Sacleux, *Dictionnaire Swahili-Français* (Paris: Institut d'Ethnologie, 1939)).

[51] Henry Morgan Stanley, *Through the Dark Continent*, 2 vols (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1878), vol. 2, p. 509.

[52] While not recognizing the name *sederbaz*, Omani weavers do make to this day a particular striping pattern called *chador* for the Sur market, characterized by large magenta and black checks. For an historical image of a Sakalava woman wearing the *barawaji*, see Sarah Fee, 'Anthropology and Materiality.' In Sandy Black et al. eds. *The Handbook of Fashion Studies,* London: Berg (2013), pp. 301–324.

Table 9.1 Cloths of probable Omani origin imported into eastern Africa in the nineteenth century (listed alphabetically)

Cloth name	*Description(s)*
barawaji alternative sp. *barouadji, barawadyi, mbarazady, barwani*	"Barwani [sic], Vêtement de femme très peu employé ici [Muscat] exporté principalement à Zanzibar. …Tout coton. Les raies de bordure sont quelquefois en soie." (French Vice-consul, Lille, ca. 1895) "barawadyi B. (ou kitambi b.) nom d'une variété de kitambi, dont le tissu comporte des fils d'or et de soie entremêlés. Syn *mbarazadyi*" (Sacleux *Dictionnaire*) Observed physical features: centrefield of large black and white checks; sets of bold colourful stripes on borders in red, yellow and black, more subdued weft banding in red and yellow
burra alternative sp. *bura, bhurra, burrah*	"Bura B. (ou kitambi b.), pagne de coton et soie avec quelques fils d'or, à fond bleu finement quadrillé de blanc, bordé en bas de bandes jaunes rouges et bleues, avec franges de couleur. – R. nom d'une localité près de Mascate, ou se confectionnait originairement ce pagne" (Sacleux, *Dictionnaire*)
debwani alternative sp. *Dabwani, debuani deboani,*	"debwani, small blue and white check made at Maskat; one fourth of its breadth is a red stripe, edged with white and yellow" (Burton, *Lakes*, p.1859). "debwani d. ou kitambi d., sorte de cotonnade tissé de diverses couleurs pour pagne ou turban : C'est une pièce de 6 à 8 coudées sur 1 yard, à petits carrés formés par des lignes rouges et blanches se croisant sur un fond bleu ; avec franges aux extrémités ; deux chaines en soie ; et une large bordure inférieure *upindo* jaune" (Sacleux, *Dictionnaire*) Observed physical features: centrefield of fine blue and white checks; six wide tan-coloured bands at the ends; sets of colourful stripes on borders in red, yellow and black

(continued)

Table 9.1 (continued)

Cloth name	*Description(s)*
ismaili alternative sp. *smaili, somaili*	"Smaili, Ismaili S. (ou kitambi s.) sorte de pagne tissé de diverses couleurs, à fond bleu foncé avec le bord inférieur rayé de rouge et de jaune – R. Ismaili n. pr. " (Sacleux, *Dictionnaire*) "ismaili Muscat, tissu bleu à bordure soie rayée, coupes de 21 inches sur 74 inches (Henri Mager (1897) *Rapport Adressé aux Chambres de Commerce de Rouen et des Vosges* (Rouen: Ancienne Imprimerie Lapierre, 2 vols), vol. 2 p. 42). Observed physical features: centrefield of very narrow stripes, approximately 3mm wide each, in two alternating colours; sets of colourful stripes on borders in red, yellow and black
jawi alternative sp. *javi, dyawa, dyawi*	"a kind of cloth of Arab manufacture (R.) perhaps rather of Kihindi" (Krapf); *Dyawa* (*Dyawi*, ou kitambe ca Dyawa); Dyawa. Java. *Dyawa* (*Dyawi*, ou kitambe ca Dyawa) (Sacleux); Djavi, tissu à rayures rouges fondues en écossais, coupes de 23 inches sur 85 inches (Mager, *Rapport Adressé* , vol. 2, p. 42)
kariati alternative sp. *kareati, kariadu*	"Kariati (ou kitambi ca k., ou debwani k.) variété de kitambi à fond rouge foncé, pour pagne ou turban – R. de Kariat en Oman" (Sacleux, *Dictionnaire*)
masnafu alternative sp. *masenefu, masnafi*	"Mixed silk and cotton cloth, of striped pattern, made at Maskat; larger kinds rise in price and the Arabs will pay from 20 to 25 dollars for those worked with gold thread" (Burton 1859) "MaSenefu, maSnefu (Am. Masinafu G. masanafu). Pièce de soie dont les femmes se ceignent à la façon du mahazamu ou qu'elles se jettent sur les épaules en guise d'écharpe; la mode semble en avoir passé…*sanef*, couverture dont on couvre les épaules d'une bête de somme' (Sacleux) Observed physical features: if similar to the Yemeni *masnafu*, primarily white with coloured stripes at the borders

(continued)

Table 9.1 (continued)

Cloth name	*Description(s)*
rehani	"Sert à la fois de pagne pour les hommes et de vêtement que les femmes mettent sur la tête et les épaules. Les raies vertes et rouges tout en soie. Deux morceaux" (French Consul, Lille, ca. 1895) Observed physical features: similar to subaya, but lacking the wide coloured weft bands at the two ends
sabuni alternative sp. *sabouni*	"Sabuni, a kind of cloth" (Krapf) Observed physical features: centrefield of six wide sets of narrow black and blue stripes, with checkered sections, alternated with narrow red stripes; sets of colourful stripes on both borders in red, yellow and black
sederbaz alternative sp. *strabazi, schaterbaz, stirbazi, sitirbazi, schaterbasi*	"Strabazi, sorte de pagne (kitambi) tissé de diverses couleurs, ***kitambi salihi*** des Arabes Cf. Ar. *Satara*, couvrir; *bazz*, vetement" (Sacleux *Dictionnaire*) Observed physical features: if similar to the "chador" pattern produced today in Oman, a black and maroon plaid
siweki	al-Suwaiq, a coastal town of Oman. Listed as a Muscat cloth style in "German East Africa"
sahari alternative sp. *sohari, sahare*	"sahari, 1) a country in Arabia; 2) a kind of cloth brought from that quarter, checked stuff for turbans" (Krapf) "Sohari, ridia, a blue and white check with a red border about 5 inches broad, with smaller stripes of red, blue and yellow: the ends of the piece are checks of a larger pattern, with red introduced. There are varieties of this cloth" (Burton, *Lakes*,) "Pièce d'étoffe (soie ou soie et coton), tissée de diverses couleurs (kitambi), à fond gris rayé de bleu, jaune et rouge. Est très employée pour le turban. R. Sohar, ville d'Oman, ou cette étoffe a été tout d'abord fabriquée" (Sacleux, *Dictionnaire*) Observed physical features: centrefield of uniform tiny black and blue checks; sets of colourful stripes on both lateral edges in red, yellow and black; sets of banding in red and blue at ends

(continued)

Table 9.1 (continued)

Cloth name	*Description(s)*
subaya alternative sp. *sabaya, sabaia, subaia, subaiya, soabahia*	"subai, a cotton and silk blend, striped stuff with small checks between the lines, and with a half-breadth of border, a complicated pattern of red, black and yellow. This cloth is used as a uzar or loin cloth, by the middle classes of Arabs…Some made of cotton only, and cheapest" (Burton, *Lakes*) Observed physical features: centrefield of 8 sets of checked stripes alternating with narrow solid stripes; sets of colourful stripes on borders in red, yellow and black, and very wide bands in red at the two ends

day all of the types listed in Table 9.1, with the exception of the *masnafu*, *debwani*, *burra*, and *barawaji*, which appear to have fallen from fashion, or were only ever made for the eastern African market, and thus dropped from weavers' repertories in the early twentieth century when their export trade to Africa's interior largely ended.

'Muscat cloth' made for eastern Africa was thus generally similar to that made for the domestic Omani market, consisting in two panels, with striped or checked centrefields, 10 cm of red and blue striping at the borders, banded ends and long fringes.[53] Prior to about 1830, the cloth was made of hand-spun cotton (whether local or imported) but, thereafter, much of it was observed to be made of British industrially spun and dyed cotton thread. This so-called 'twist', aggressively produced in Manchester mills with a view to export, notably to Bombay, cost half the price of Asia's hand-spun yarn.[54] The sharp drop in the price of raw materials reportedly led to a drop in the price of Muscat cloth in eastern Africa and thus, it seems, to a steep rise in demand from the

[53] "Principales industries Zanzibar en 1864," *Correspondance Commerciale Zanzibar,* vol. 2, 1852–1865, MAE. Loarer noted it measured from 285 to 305cm in length, and 122 to 130 in width.

[54] Prassanan Parthasarathi, "De-industrialization in nineteenth-century South India," in *How India Clothed the World: The World of South Asian Textiles, 1500–1850,* eds. Giorgio Riello and Tirthankar Roy, pp. 415–435 (London: Brill, 2009), p. 423.

Fig. 9.3 One panel of the *debwani* striping pattern, from the collections of Henry M. Stanley. Cotton, 525 × 66 cm. Object i.d. HO.1954.72.194, collection RMCA Tervuren (photograph J.-M.Vandyck. © RMCA Tervuren)

wider population.[55] It is in colouring and striping patterns that a few differences emerge between cloth made for the domestic market and the African export market. African consumers demanded particular shades

[55] Loarer, 'Marchandises', ANOM.

Fig. 9.4 One panel of the *sahari* striping pattern, from the collections of Henry M. Stanley. Cotton, 485 × 65 cm. Object i.d. HO.1954.72.196, collection RMCA Tervuren (photograph J.-M.Vandyck. © RMCA Tervuren)

Fig. 9.5 One panel of the *subaya* striping pattern, industrially woven in the Netherlands for the eastern African market, collected in Zanzibar before 1895. Note the small centre field and wide, multiple red bands at the two ends. Cotton, 456 × 74 cm. Object i.d. MAF8901, Courtesy of the Grassi Museum fur Volkerkunde zu Leipzig, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden (photograph: Christel Treumer)

of red prized for brightness and fastness.[56] One source was cochineal, a native of the Americas; another, which produced a favourite cerise shade, came from Africa itself: it was made from the bark of the *mkandaa* or 'yellow mangrove' (*Ceriops tagal*).[57] Some 600 tons of the bark were exported annually from the Swahili coast to Oman (as well as to India). Finally, as noted, unique striping patterns appear to have been made solely for eastern Africa; namely, the *debwani*, *burra* and *barawaji*, the last name likely referring to Brava, a port town of Somalia's Benadir coast.

Each striping pattern of Muscat cloth was made in several qualities: regular, medium, and superior, the last category also being denoted as 'first-rate' or 'fine'. Superior versions cost from three or four up to fifteen times the regular fare: MT $21 versus MT $7.50 for the highest- and lowest-quality *debwani* in 1870.[58] The variance lay in size, colour

[56] Loarer, 'Marchandises', ANOM; Lewis Pelly, 'Remarks on the Tribes and Resources around the Shoreline of the Persian Gulf', *Transactions of the Bombay Geographical Society*, 16 (1863–64) pp. 32–103.

[57] Loarer, 'Marchandises', ANOM. By 1895, anilines and synthetic dyes, notably a German-made green, were used for silk (see 'Note explicative', Musée d'Histoire Naturelle de Lille). But even before the invention of synthetic dyes, eastern Africans in some cases preferred European over Kachchhi dyes. See Burton, *Lakes*, vol. 2, p. 531.

[58] Stanley, *Through the Dark Continent*, vol. 2, p. 509.

and quality, and the inclusion of gold threads rendering a piece 'royal'.[59] These 'exceedingly expensive', top quality Muscat cloths were consumed in tiny quantities, representing just 2.5% in terms of value of the Muscat cloth carried by Burton's caravan into the interior in 1856, and 8% carried by Stanley in 1886 (148 yards).[60] Some flourishes were added in eastern Africa itself, estimated to add up to 40% of a cloth's value. The cloth was imported in the single panels (see Figs. 9.3, 9.4, 9.5 and 9.6) that came off the loom, and assembled into a wrapper on site: two panels stitched together, frequently with a large flamboyant seam in red silk, the fringe plied or braided, and a patterned, colourful transverse selvedge band (*taraza*) woven across the two ends. These bands, which could include gold or silver thread, were created by specialized weavers. Burton observed they were free Swahili or enslaved artisans based in Zanzibar, but photos reveal that a range of artisans—including resident Arabs (Figs. 9.7 and 9.8)—were active in other port towns and practised as far inland as Kisangani (Stanley Falls). Finishing the cloth locally may have been motivated by lower labour costs, but more likely allowed for more immediate responses to vagaries in local economies and changing fashions in end band colour and patterns.

Pathways of Muscat Cloth Distribution

> The import trade [to Zanzibar] is chiefly dates, and cloth from Muscat to make turbans
>
> English captain of the *Imogene*, 1834[61]

Over the nineteenth century, Muscat cloth became the primary luxury dress of eastern Africa, in high demand throughout the vast Omani commercial empire that came to reach from Mogadishu down the Swahili coast to Lourenço Marques, as far inland as present-day Uganda and Zambia, and to major offshore islands including the Comoros and

[59] Burton, *Lakes*, vol. 2, p. 532.

[60] Based on designations of 'fine' or 'ulyah'. See Burton, *Lakes*, p. 533; Stanley, *Through the Dark Continent*, vol. 2, p. 509.

[61] C. P. Rigby, 'Muscat-Zanzibar', *Commercial Reports received at the Foreign Office from her Majesty's Consuls between July 1 1862 and June 30 1863* (London: Harrison and Sons, 1863), p. 239.

Fig. 9.6 One panel of the *barawaji* striping pattern, hand-woven in Oman for the east African market, collected in Muscat in 1895. Cotton, silk (yellow and red stripes), tapestry joined weft. (12153 © Musée d'Histoire Naturelle de Lille)

Madagascar. Merchants of all origins were obliged to carry it, moving it along the same channels as other types of imported cloth. However, the roles it played in trade dynamics were singular and vital.

Arab merchants and shippers appear to have been the main transporters of Muscat cloth to the eastern African coast. In the 1840s, according to Loarer, their dhows carried it in small, irregularly sized bales of about 100 pieces, with two pieces wrapped together in brown paper to provide a matching set for turban and waist wrapper. They took it directly to the port towns of Brava, Mogadishu, Mombasa, Lamu, Tanga, Malindi, Kilwa Kiswani and Nosy Be.[62] Loarer identified Lamu

[62] Loarer, "Cahier A", Océan Indien Box 2 Folder 10, ANOM, Aix-en-Provence; Loarer, no. 2, "Lois et Coutumes de Douanes, Commerce sous les Divers Pavillons", ANOM; Guillain, *Documents sur l'Histoire, La Géographie et le Commerce*, pp. 172, 257, 535.

Fig. 9.7 An Arab weaver near Mombasa using the narrow loom to add an end band to a colourful Muscat cloth, c.1890 (photograph J. Sturtz, from *Land und Leute in Deutsch-Ost Afrika*, by J. Sturtz and J. Wangemann. Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, 1890. Courtesy of the Winteron Collection of East African Photographs, Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies, Northwestern University)

as the most enthusiastic coastal consumer of Muscat cloth; the island's high number of free residents supported a market for luxury textiles including '30 bails of fine and semi-fine fabrics from Muscat'.[63] But it was Zanzibar—that 'vast emporium furnishing all the needs of Africa's East coast'—through which the largest number increasingly transited.[64] 'Muscat cloth' likely formed a part of every dhow's cargo; Arab ships left Zanzibar for Muscat with the later summer monsoon winds, continued

[63] Loarer, 'Cahier A', ANOM.

[64] Guillain, *Documents*, Partie II, vol. 2: p. 344.

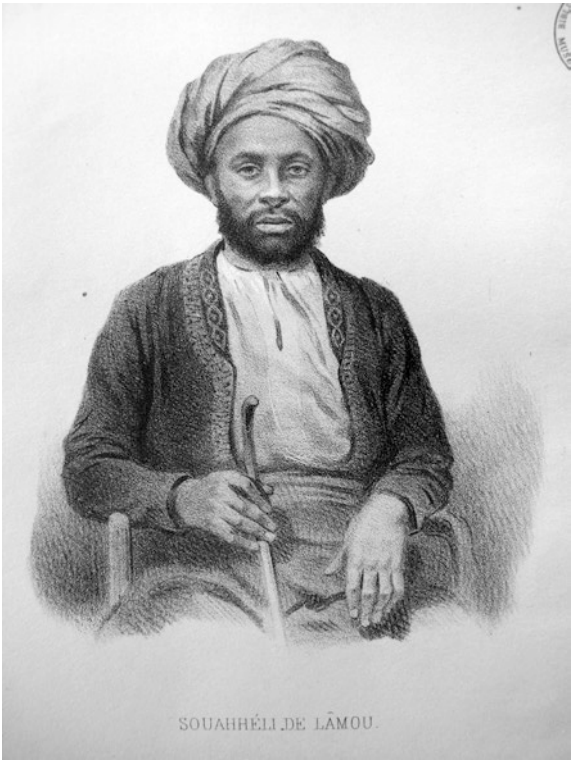

Fig. 9.8 Swahili man of Lamu wearing striped turban and waist sash, likely of Muscat cloth. Lithograph based on daguerreotype by Charles Guillain, c. 1847. From Charles Guillain, *Documents sur l'Histoire, La Géographie et le Commerce de l'Afrique Orientale*, Paris: Bertrand, 1856–57

up the Gulf to acquire additional goods, then stopped back at Muscat 'to take on merchants with their bales of cloth from that country' before setting sail again for eastern Africa.[65] Less commonly, ships under other flags carried the cloth. In 1841, for instance, American merchant Richard P. Waters partnered with Mohammed bin Abdel Cardree to ship 'Muscat

[65] Loarer, 'Marchandises'.

goods', including the full range of cloth types, from Zanzibar to Waters' agent in Majunga, Madagascar.[66]

Some types of Muscat cloth never left eastern Africa's ports. The finest and most costly pieces were generally consumed there by elites. Wealthy Arab men wore them as waist wrappers, voluminous turbans, shoulder cloth and waist sashes; the last article was especially tied to status, with a nobleman frequently changing 'them as a [European] man does his neckties'.[67] The costly *mansnafu* striping pattern with gold thread reportedly never left the coast, consumed only by wealthy Omanis (men and women), while the *subaya* was particularly popular with Zanzibar's 'middle class Arab' men.[68] The sultan and his officials, including governors posted in port towns, wore the distinctive Busaidi blue-and-white checked turban in the distinctive royal manner, with a high peak.[69] The formal wear of 'respectable' Swahili men likewise consisted in turbans and shoulder cloths of 'red, white and blue', with the distinctive 'favourite fringe' (Fig. 9.8).[70] Largely overlooked in studies on female dress, turbans and shoulder cloths were also essential accessories for elite women—both Arab and Swahili—as evidenced by extant objects and photographs (Fig. 9.9). Some were made of special satin-weave cotton-silk blends with narrow stripes (*mashru*) imported from India, others of velvet, but many appear to have been striped hand-woven Muscat cloth embellished with gold trim. In addition, the tunics and tassles worn by

[66] Perhaps intended as a trial run, Waters' shipment of over 100 cloths worth $280.19 included all the various qualities of the major striping patterns: *sarahas [sarasas?]*, *davanas* [*debwanis*], *sabony*, *sederabass*, *smaliheo* [*smaili*], *cocoie* [*kikoy*], *maradda*, *sabaeer* [*subaya*], *hodorang* [*koudrong*], *saahreah* [*sohary*]as well as the *trousere* [tausiri], a type associated with Kachchh. See Peabody Essex Museum Library, Richard P. Waters manuscripts, Box 1, folder 2, Zanzibar, February 15, 1841.

[67] Emily Reute, *Memoirs of an Arabian Princess from Zanzibar* (1907; repr. Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, 2009), p. 155. Elderly and poorer men wore black or white silk sashes.

[68] General Rigby, *Zanzibar and the Slave Trade* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1970), p. 335; Burton, *Zanzibar*, vol. 1; p. 382; Henry Morton Stanley, *How I Found Livingstone. Travels, Adventures and Discoveries in Central Africa* (London: Sampson, Low, Marston & Co., 1872), p. 36; Sacleux, *Dictionnaire*.

[69] Ruschenberger, *A Voyage*, p. 28.

[70] Burton, *Zanzibar*, vol. 1, p. 433. Oscar Baumann, *Usambara unde seine Nachbargebiete* (Berlin: Reimer, 1891). In Tanga at mid-century, commoners were forbidden from wearing turbans (Burton, *Zanzibar*, vol. 2, p. 124).

Fig. 9.9 Three young Swahili women wearing printed shoulder cloths, and striped cloth, probably hand-woven in Muscat, as turbans (photograph by Edouard Foa, ca. 1886–1897. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (93.R.114))

these women might be made of 'Oman silk or cotton … brought from Maskat, the Hejz and Bandar Abbas'.[71] A sign of urban belonging, Muscat cloth—albeit of lesser quality—was also donned as festive wear by freed men and women; indeed, some Omani striping styles became the preserve of freed and enslaved women.[72] Only Indian merchants seem to have generally eschewed Omani-made textiles in favour of their own religious or caste dress.[73]

[71] Burton, *Zanzibar*, vol. 1, p. 386.

[72] Rigby, *Zanzibar and the Slave Trade*, p. 335; 'Note explicative', Musée d'Histoire Naturelle de Lille.

[73] South Asians tended to dress in unique styles of tunics and turbans (Burton, *Zanzibar*, vol. 1, p. 108). See also Stanley, *How I Found Livingstone*, p. 3.

The demand for Muscat cloth increasingly spread beyond the coasts, far into the interior, moving along the same channels as other kinds of imported cloth. Indian wholesalers in Zanzibar—who supplied most cloth to caravans—stocked it, along with all other types of cloth, as did retail shops in key trading nodes such as Bagamoyo, Tabora and Ujiji, and small interior markets.[74] Some Arab and Swahili traders may have specialized in supplying these interior outlets, a potentially lucrative trade, as cloth prices were known to double in Unyamyembe, and multiply three to five times when they reached Ujiji.[75] But caravans in search of ivory were undoubtedly the major conveyor of Muscat cloth to the interior. After 1800, they tended to originate from the coasts, led by Swahili, Arab and European traders and explorers, comprising up to 2000 porters stretched over a mile long by the 1870s.[76] They carried vast quantities of coarse cotton sheeting to trade for local products and services, as well as luxury pieces to serve as diplomatic gifts, with Muscat cloth—as we shall see—largely playing the latter critical role.

Precolonial commercial reports for eastern Africa typically focus on industrial unbleached cotton yardage, do not always present the same cloth series across reports, and may vary widely in the numbers they provide, but several key reports and expedition records make clear that considerable quantities of Muscat cloth – variously labeled 'Muskat turbans' or 'Muscat silk loongees' – were imported. The British consul of Zanzibar, Colonel Rigby, in his well-known import statistics of 1859, noted that 200 bales arrived in Zanzibar alone, worth $50,000 representing 5% in value of total cloth imports, with three-quarters of the

[74] Burton, *Zanzibar*, vol. 1, p. 331; Jérôme Becker, *Troisième expédition Belge au Pays Noir* (Bruxelles: J. Lebègue & Cie, 1889), p. 16; Stanley bought cotton sheeting from the Indian wholesaler Tarya Topan, but had his Swahili guide Jetta chose his coloured cloths from unknown sources (Stanley, *Through the Dark Continent*, vol. 1, p. 63); Jérôme Becker, *La Vie en Afrique ou Trois Ans dans l'Afrique Centrale*, 2 vols. (Bruxelles: J. Lebègue & Cie, 1887), vol. 1, p. 45, vol. 2, pp. 438–439. Becker noted that people came from as far as Uganda, Karema and Ou-Rori on Lake Nyassa and Ujiji to buy such provisions in Tabora.

[75] James Augustus Grant, *A Walk Across Africa* (London: William Blackwood & Sons, 1864), p. 158; Stanley, *How I Found Livingstone*, pp. 14, 180; Burton, *Lakes*, p. 233. In Tabora, in the 1880 s, two of the biggest merchants were Zeid bin Djouma and Salim bin Raschid (Becker, *La Vie*, vol. 2, p. 21).

[76] Becker, *La Vie*, vol. 2, p. 448; Stephen Rockel, *Carriers of Culture: Labor on the Road in Nineteenth Century East Africa* (Portsmouth, CT: Heinemann, 2006).

goods being re-exported to the African mainland. French sources from a decade earlier suggest much higher numbers. In 1848, Loarer estimated that some 100,000 pieces worth $150,000 were brought annually to coastal eastern Africa, or thirty per cent in value of Zanzibar's total textile imports. Madagascar's island of Nosy Be, too, was observed to import substantial numbers in the 1840s.[77] British and French consular reports from 1859 to 1864, give smaller, yet significant, numbers: 200 bales—or 20,000 pieces—worth 10,000 GBP, representing nearly 6 per cent of total cloth imports.[78] The American Civil War, which disrupted the inflow of American-made coarse cotton yardage (see Chapter 10 by Ryan in this volume), caused surges in the demand for, and prices of, Muscat cloth.[79] Demand remained strong into the 1880s and beyond: Stanley's cloth supplies for the Pasha relief expedition seem to have consisted of 14 per cent Muscat cloth while, in 1881, Zanzibar reportedly yet imported 300 boxes of cloth worth MT $150,000.[80]

Burton considered Muscat cloth as a 'minor' trade item, and Charles Guillain dismissed it as insignificant, but numbers alone do not tell the full story.[81] Although low in total cloth import volume and value, as a prestige good the cloth was 'absolutely necessary' for doing business in eastern Africa throughout the nineteenth century. Stolid industrial cotton yardage served as common dress and, often, as a currency in the ivory trade—a medium of exchange for products, wages, and provisions—but it was not fit for a gift to a chief. Leaders in the interior, from village headmen to the ruler of Buganda, demanded costly textiles (with other items) in return for passage and trading rights in their lands, and as recognition of their authority. 'Very fastidious', they requested precise types of luxury textiles by name. As noted, some

[77] Charles Guillain, "Commerce de Nossi-bé et de la côte ouest de Madagascar: Extrait d'un rapport fait en février 1843", *Revue Coloniale*, vol. 1 (1843), pp. 245–279, p. 251.

[78] Rigby, 'Muscat Zanzibar', p. 244.

[79] Anonymous, *Correspondance Commerciale Zanzibar,* vol. 2, 1852–1865 (25 March 1865), MAE.

[80] E. C. Ross, 'Report on the Administration of the Persian Gulf Residency and Muscat Political Agency for the year 1880–1881' (Calcutta: Foreign Department Press, 1881), p. 139.

[81] Guillain, *Documents*, vol. 2, p. 343; Guillain elsewhere conceded that he had spent little time in Muscat and so underestimated the level of its commercial activity. See Guillain, 'Côte de Zanguébar et Mascate', p. 549.

were hand-woven cotton-and-silk striped goods made in western India. However, increasingly, Omani patterns were desired. Stanley observed that chiefs would not accept the 'flimsy coloured cloth of the *pagazi* [porter], but [demanded] a royal and exceedingly high-priced *debwani*, *Ismahili*, *Rehani*, or a *Sohari*, or *dotis* of crimson broad cloth'.[82] Apart from broadcloth, all were Omani in origin. A nineteenth-century Swahili author likewise recorded the cloths of the ivory trade as '*Kareati*, *buraa*, *rehani*, *sturbadi*, *barawaji*, *kikoi mzinga*, *pasua moyo*', which, again, were for the most part Omani patterns.[83] These patterns seem to have known periods of fashionability. From the 1850s through the 1880s, the *sahari*, *debwani*, and *subaya* were the highest ranking varieties, Burton describing the *debwani* as 'a showy article invariably demanded by the more powerful sultans [chiefs] for themselves and their wives'.[84] By the 1890s, the *sederbaz* had emerged as the top pattern.[85] Arab-style overcoats (*joho*) were also popular gifts.[86] So, too, over time, gifting underwent inflation. In the 1860s, English explorer John Hanning Speke generally distributed a single *debwani* or *sahari* as a chiefly gift, but was forced to give out many more in Ugogo territory where a multitude of leaders controlled small areas.[87] In the same area twenty years later, a Belgian explorer, having initially offered a ruler twelve yards of Muscat cloth,

[82] Stanley, *How I Found Livingstone*, p. 50.

[83] J. W. T. Allen (ed. and trans.), *The Customs of the Swahili People: The Desturi za Waswahili of Mtoro bin Mwinyi Bakari and other Swahili Persons* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981). The stores of luxury cloths held by the African Institute in Karema likewise contained 'rectangles of *rehani, sederbaz, soubaya, maharoma*, tasseled and embroidered [sic] with gold'. See Becker, *La Vie*, vol. 1, p. 277.

[84] Burton, *Lakes*, vol. 1, p. 114. Of the 3780 yards of Muscat cloth that Stanley carried on the Emin Pasha expedition, nearly 50 per cent was *debwani*, 25 per cent *sohari*, with the remainder consisting in *rehani, ismaili and subaya*. As examples of particular types of Muscat cloth gifted to or worn by rulers, see Becker, *La Vie*, vol. 1, p. 357, vol. 2, p. 260; Burton, *Lakes*, p. 188, 269; Stanley, *Through the Dark*, 1878, vol. 1, p. 105; John Hanning Speke, *Journal of the Discovery of the Nile* (New York: Harper, 1863), pp. 22, 171.

[85] Becker.

[86] Burton, *Zanzibar*, vol. 2, p. 144.

[87] Speke, *Journal*, pp. 62, 68–69.

after four days' protracted negotiation, ceded twenty-seven yards, plus a further thirty yards of industrial sheeting.[88]

Yet, in the interior and off-shore islands, as on the coasts, Omani-made cloth was consumed far beyond the political elite, with inferior versions of luxury patterns in high demand across a range of geographic and social spaces (Fig. 9.10). Rulers redistributed some luxury cloth to family and select subjects, while porters received it as part of their contractual wages. Visual and textual evidence corroborates Captain Loarer's observation that dressing in Muscat cloth was the ambition of almost every eastern African. Lesser quality *sahari* were popular in wide swathes of Ugogo territory, and also observed to be 'much used' by the Wanyamwezi, who also favoured inexpensive versions of the *masnafu*. Medium-quality *debwani*, made with European-dyed thread, meanwhile, were especially 'employed in the copal trade of the coast'.[89] As noted earlier, yet other striping patterns were popular amongst enslaved women, while young men might favour the cloth in general.

Testimony to its high social value, Muscat cloth—more than any other trade textile—was absorbed into oral literature and ritual, and appropriated for ceremonial gifting and dress. This was especially the case of the *subaya* striping pattern, which amongst other things was adopted as the elite burial cloth of Zanzibar and as the bridal wrap for the *grand mariage* of the Grand Comoros.[90]

'The Dearest Thing on the East African Coast'

Eastern African consumers had a wide variety of textiles to choose from, with merchants from Europe, South and West Asia, and North America continually proffering new types in the hopes of pleasing them. How and why did Muscat cloth become the 'dearest thing' coveted at all levels of society? Answers to these questions remain elusive, but I suggest a few possibilities.

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[88] Becker, *La Vie*, vol. 1, p. 138. The Arab trader Sayid bin Sayf from Kafurro reportedly paid $516 of cloth to three chiefs in the same area (Stanley, *Through the Dark*, vol. 1, p. 498).

[89] Burton, *Lakes*, vol. 1, p. 531.

[90] Sacleux, *Dictionnaire Swahili-Français*, Comoros.

Fig. 9.10 Sakalava woman of northwestern Madagascar wearing a wrapper of Omani pattern, probably the *debwani*, as a shoulder cloth, over her print dress (postcard, ca. 1910. Collection of the author)

There is some indication that Oman's export weaving to eastern Africa began as a form of re-export substitution, piggybacking on the earlier, centuries-long success of Gujarati textiles in the region. When Muscati merchants, having muscled out the Portuguese, sought to intensify activities in coastal eastern Africa in the early 1700s, they struggled at first for several reasons, including a lack of the requisite 'black' cloth formerly brought from India. This 'deceitful omission' was considered so grave by Swahili nobles as to incite them to write to Portuguese officials to request intervention.[91] By 1776, we find both Muscat and the Portuguese-Gujarati port towns of Diu and Daman supplying the same striped *kisanga* cloth for trade at Kilwa. Similarly, a cloth named *sabony* was exported from ports in India to the western Indian Ocean in the seventeenth century; in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the *sabuni* was being hand-woven in Oman and imported into eastern Africa.[92] The obvious inference is that Omani merchants sought to overcome dependency on Indian textiles by having local weavers imitate them. Yet, by the 1840 s at least, Omani-made cloth had clearly established itself as a distinct 'brand' and the tables had turned. Patterns of Muscat cloth were most desired, and Gujarati versions were considered in eastern Africa to be lesser 'imitations' of 'genuine Muscat products', and consequently sold for half the price.[93]

Key to the growing success of Muscat cloth was the socio-political dimension of fashion. Of the Swahili world, Prestholdt notes that dress 'was a major factor in the pursuit of respectability, power and prestige'.[94] In this 'prestige economy', claims for status 'hinged on the possession of cloth', and thus 'more than any other manufactured material, cloth

[91] Alpers, *Ivory and Slaves*, p. 73.

[92] The *sabony* cloth was made and/or shipped from Sind, the Coromandel Coast and Cambay. See Satya Prakash Sangar, *Indian Textiles in the Seventeenth Century* (New Delhi: Reliance Publishing House, 1998), pp. 30, 113, 172; Louis Krapf, *A Dictionary of the Suahili Language* (London: Trubner and Co., 1880); Interview with Rashid Siyabi, Qryat, Oman, November 17, 2011. See also the *sabouni* in the Waters shipping list of 'Arab goods' in note 63.

[93] 'German East Africa', *Commercial Relations of the United States with Foreign Countries* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1898), p. 308; Lieut. T. Postans, 'Some account of the present state of the trade, between the port of Mandavie in Cutch, and the eastern Coast of Africa', *Transactions of the Bombay Geographical Society*, vol. 3 (1839–40), p. 172.

[94] Prestholdt, "As Artistry Permits", pp. 23, 27, 31–32.

became an item of mass consumption in the Swahili world'.[95] Indian imports and locally woven cloth filled this role until the rise of Omani power from 1750. Thereafter, as Glassman and Fair have further noted, 'Arabization', including Arab dress, became the apex of cultured elegance.[96] By the 1870s, at least, the Omani ruler of Zanzibar granted African political favourites the right to wear the distinctive Busaidi turban.[97] I suggest that the overriding ambition at all levels of society—the enslaved included, and particularly men—to wear hand-woven Muscat cloth formed an important part of this wider struggle to claim 'culturedness' and participate in the institutions of coastal urban society.[98] By extension, far beyond the Swahili coast, hundreds of kilometres into the interior, amongst dozens of ethnic and language groups, the cloth also became a primary marker of status and international connections (Fig. 9.11). Some, such as King Mtesa of Uganda, adopted Omani-style robes and had his attendants dress in *sahari* wrappers, following conversion to Islam.[99] To this day in Islamic Northwest Madagascar, the qualifier of 'Arab' (*arabo*) adds to the value and desirability of certain Omani cloth patterns.[100] Yet, for the many 'upcountry pagans' who dressed in ostensible 'Arab style' white robes and turbans, or wrappers of 'Arab checks', associations with Islam or Arabness were tenuous at best, the dress being instead general 'sources of power and prestige'.[101]

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[95] Ibid., pp. 34–39.

[96] Laura Fair, *Pastimes and Politics: Culture, Community, and Identity in Post Abolition Urban Zanzibar, 1890–1945* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2001); Jonathon Glassman, *Feasts and Riot: Revelry, Rebellion, & Popular Consciousness on the Swahili Coast, 1856–1888* (London: Heinemann, 1995).

[97] Glassman, *Feasts and Riot*, p. 97.

[98] Prestholdt, "As Artistry Permits", p. 20; Glassman, *Feasts and Riot*, pp. 107, 119. W. F. W. Owen, *Narrative of Voyages to Explore the Shores of Africa, Arabia and Madagascar*, 2 vols (London: R. Bentley, 1833), vol. 2, p. 155.

[99] Stanley, *Through the Dark Continent*, vol. 1, p. 192.

[100] Gillian Feeley-Harnik, 'Number One—Nambawani—Lambaoany: Clothing as an Historical Medium of Exchange in Northwestern Madagascar', *Michigan Discussions in Anthropology*, 14, Ann Arbor (2003) pp. 63–102.

[101] Grant, *A Walk,* pp. 128, 146; Speke, *Journal*, pp. 184, 203; Burton, *Lakes*, vol. 1, pp. 194, 523, 531; Becker, *La Vie*, vol. 1, 152, vol. 2, p. 158; Ludwig von Hohnel, *Discovery of Lakes Rudolf and Stefanie*, 2 vols., trans. Nancy Bell (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1894), pp. 64, 72; Stanley, *How I Found Livingstone*, p. 243; Burton, *Lakes*, pp. 90, 172, 194; J. Frederic Elton, *Travels and Researches among the Lakes and Mountains of eastern and central Africa* (London: John Murray, 1879), pp. 288, 327, 383; Glassman, pp. 25, 42, 134.

Fig. 9.11 Group of Unyamwezi men gathered around a smith, c. 1900. The seated man with crossed arms and the man holding a vessel wear *sahari* as wrappers, the two men on the right wear *kikoy under their white tunics (kanju)* (courtesy of the Moravian Archives, Herrnhut)

Trading practices of Arab merchants likely helped to imbue Muscat cloth with notions of splendour, luxury and foreign cachet. Although they dealt as well in European and Indian textiles, Arab traders appear to have privileged Omani-made cloth. Unlike Indian merchants, they led caravans and settled by the thousands far inland, dressing in finery and

paving their way using gifts, especially cloth.[102] Already by the 1820s, the Omani governor of Zanzibar was sending personal caravans bearing gifts to important chiefs, a practice continued by Seyyid Said, gifts that undoubtedly included cloth, as distributing 'robes of honour' was a time-honoured tradition in Oman, as throughout West Asia.[103] 'Trading chiefs' of the interior, in turn, offered 'dark blue turbans' to activate exchange relations with their own ivory suppliers.[104] A sixteenth-century marketing technique of Arab traders was parading women dressed in fine cloths before local communities to stoke desire, and then offering the cloth on credit.[105] Three hundred years later, when Livingstone queried of Africans why they participated in the slave trade, they responded that Arabs 'come and tempt them with fine clothes'.[106] Muscat cloth's dominance was so firmly rooted by the 1840s that the French rightly despaired that no European textile could ever displace it.[107] Like the double-ikat silk *patola* cloth made in India for the Southeast Asian trade, high-quality Muscat cloth became enshrined in eastern Africa as the luxury cloth par excellence.[108] As we shall see, the Nyamwezi trading 'diaspora' was also an important conduit for the cloth.

The symbiotic relation between Omani merchants, shippers and weavers further contributed to Muscat cloth's sustained popularity in eastern Africa, perhaps to a degree even greater than that described for Gujarat by Prestholdt, Goswami and Machado.[109] Diasporic Arab networks along the nodes of production, distribution and consumption

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[102] Burton, *Lakes,* p. 397; Joseph Thomson, *To the Central African Lakes and Back, 1878–1880*, 2 vols (London: Sampson, Low, Marston, Searley & Rivington, 1881); Franz Stuhlman, *Mit Emin Pascha ins Herz von Afrika* (Berlin: Dr. Reimer, 1894), pp. 216, 717; Stanley, *How I Found Livingstone*, p. 174.

[103] Stanley, *How I Found Livingstone*, p. 14; Alpers, *Ivory and Slaves*, p. 159; Abdul Sheriff, *Slaves, Spices and Ivory in Zanzibar* (London: James Curry, 1987), p. 44; *London Evening Post*; Rockel, *Carriers*, p. 49.

[104] Alpers, *Ivory and Slaves*, p. 161.

[105] Guillain, *Documents*, part I, p. 339.

[106] David Livingstone, *The Last Journals of David Livingstone in Central Africa, From eighteen hundred and sixty-five to his death* (London: Harpers and Brothers, 1875), pp. 64, 94.

[107] Guillain, *Documents*, part II, vol. 2, p. 182.

[108] In fact, Muscat cloth seems to have carved out markets in Southeast Asia, as indicated by the cloth pattern name *javi* ('Java') (see Table 9.1) and surviving samples that appear in areas such as Sulawesi and Myanmar.

[109] Machado, *Ocean of Trade*; Prestholdt, *Global Repurcussions*, Goswami, *Globalization*.

deep into the interior ensured a steady flow of information on changing consumer preferences for colour, size, decoration and texture. It is clear that, like their Indian counterparts, they were thus able successfully to cater to both the high-end and low-end markets. The oversized checks of the *barawaji*, for instance, helped make that style affordable to enslaved women. As noted, the price of Muscat cloth plummeted, like other imported cloth, over the nineteenth century, a major variable being weavers' adoption of vastly cheaper factory-made British thread. However, in addition, they likely devised more efficient means to imitate complex finishings, while merchants absorbed cuts to their original forty per cent profits.[110]

Material properties likewise seem to have enhanced Muscat cloth's appeal. Versions made of Omani hand-spun cotton thread were reportedly superior in quality and durability to those made from Indian cotton. Gums were used to add sheen and perhaps, in the case of the *debwani*, to imitate the look and feel of locally woven raffia textiles.[111] The inclusion of at least a few stripes in silk greatly increased the cloth's appeal, and Oman's control of the silk flowing from Persia through the Gulf during this period surely gave it a decisive competitive edge. Adding small areas of silk simultaneously elevated a cloth's prestige, accommodated Muslim strictures against men's wearing of silk and kept the cloth affordable.[112] The cloth's renown was also based on the quality of its dyes, particularly certain colour-fast shades of red. Finally, came the cloth's woven end bands, the 'gaudy silk fringe of red and yellow'—made by a specialist using a separate narrow loom—which, Loarer reported, adorned most Muscat cloth and was 'the major reason for the high costs of better qualities'.[113] Any type of cloth, even industrial cotton sheeting,

[110] Bhacker, *Trade and Empire*, p. 146.

[111] Industrial cotton cloth had a difficult time competing with locally woven raffia cloth, even in Zanzibar, where freemen "struck with the beauty of the fabric [handwoven grass cloth], eagerly exchange their cotton cloths for fine grass cloth" (Stanley, *How I Found Livingstone*, p. 380; Livingtone, *The Last Journals*, p. 172).

[112] Permitted to men in times of war, silk was believed to offer "physical resistance to the edge of the sword." See Yusuf Ali, *A Monograph on Silk Fabrics Produced in the North-Western Provinces and Oudh* (Allahabad: N.W. Provinces and Oudh Government Press, 1900), p. 121.

[113] Richard Burton, *First Footsteps in East Africa, or An Exploration of Harar* (London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1856), p. 29; Loarer, 'Marchandises'.

could be (and was) embellished with this end band, the work itself being mostly carried out in Africa.[114] Nevertheless, this bit of extra weaving seems to have been most associated with Muscat cloth—the Swahili adopting the Omani Arabic term *taraza* to denote it—helping to create a 'Muscat brand'. These same fancy structures proved very difficult for European industry to imitate using power looms; Hanseatic firms, in particular, commissioned imitations in Britain, Switzerland and Holland, meeting some success in producing low-quality versions for the masses, with Japanese industry entering the imitation game from the turn of the century (see Fig. 9.5). However, discerning connoisseurs were not fooled—the British agent Lewis Pelly famously noting that, in Zanzibar, imitations were like 'gossamer to a beaver'—and, as late as 1898, hand-woven 'genuine Muscat products' sold in Zanzibar for up to double the price of factory-made 'European and Hindoo imitations'.[115]

What is more, as Rockel argues, sartorial influences did not travel in a 'unidirectional diffusion' flowing from coast to interior.[116] Rather, as suggested throughout this chapter, cultural authentication (i.e., domestication) and appropriation guided the consumption of Muscat cloth. In the interior, people mostly rejected the tailored clothing of the Arabs and Swahili, seeking instead Muscat cloth for use as body wrappers, tying it around shoulders, waists or chests according to local fashions.[117] In doing so, women might adopt as waist wraps striping patterns that, in Oman, served as male turbans or shoulder cloths. Africans generally ignored the *masnafu*, the striping pattern most popular with coastal Arab notables; indeed, local tastes drove Omani merchants and weavers to develop new patterns. In addition to trickle-down emulation, there is evidence for 'street fashion'—better termed here 'trail fashion'; that is, influences moving sideways and upwards. Nyamwezi caravan porters, in

[114] Guillain, *Documents*, part II, vol. 1, p. 84. Caravaners deployed huge resources to add woven end bands to industrial sheeting to please the many African consumers who refused the cloth otherwise (Hohnel, *Discovery*, pp. 14, 103; Guillain, "Commerce de Nossi-bé, » p. 248). The creation of these end bands appears to have been Zanzibar's only loom weaving in the nineteenth century.

[115] "German East Africa," p. 308. Pelly, "Remarks on the Tribes", p. 98.

[116] Rockel, *Carriers*, pp. 55–56.

[117] Where adopted, tailored clothing, too, might be adjusted to local tastes; for instance, being made out of raffia yardage instead of cotton (Stanley, *How I Found Livingstone*, p. 380).

particular, were a source of fashion inspiration. Before entering important villages or towns, the entire caravan—of several hundred or thousand men—would dress in finery to impress local residents, a parade of 'dazzling colours and imposing turbans'.[118] Partially paid in 'coloured cloths', porters were observed to 'walk half or wholly naked, to save their cloth for displays at home', where some held celebratory feasts which involved dancing dressed in the various costumes they had seen on their journeys.[119] They might carry additional beads and cloth to sell along the way or at home.[120] In so doing, porters helped to filter and spread new styles of fashionable dress.

Conclusion

According to Reda Bhacker, the success of Oman's commercial empire in eastern Africa was due not only to external demand for cloves and ivory, but also to local demand for Omani-produced commodities. Together, they led to 'the multiplication of the existing trade routes and the introduction of new ones … as far apart as present-day Somalia to the north, Zaire [sic] to the west and Cape Delgado to the south'.[121] This chapter has teased out the critical roles played by hand-loomed Muscat cloth in this process. The cloth's popularity endured throughout the nineteenth century and only significantly diminished with the dismemberment of the Omani African commercial empire, as competing European colonial powers—Germany, Belgium, Italy, France—carved up the area as the century drew to a close.[122] Even then, demand for the cloth continued. Testament to the trade's earlier importance, Muscat cloth had become so

[118] Thomson, *To the Central African Lakes*, vol. 2, pp. 12, 246, 248.

[119] Burton, I. *Lake Regions*, p. 237.

[120] Selemani bin Mwenye Chande, "My Journey Up-country in Africa", in *Swahil Prose Texts*, ed. B Lyndon Harries (Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 234. Grant, *A Walk,* p. 359; Burton, *Lakes*, vol. 2, p. 238; David Livingstone, *Missionary Travels & Researches in South Africa* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1858), p. 426; Stanley, *How I Found Livingstone*, p. 243.

[121] Bhacker, *Trade and Empire,* p. xxix.

[122] 'Report for the year 1902 on the trade and commerce of Zanzibar', *Diplomatic and Consular Reports: Africa, No. 3063* (London: Harrison and Sons, 1903); H.W. Maclean, *Report on the conditions and prospects of British trade in Oman, Bahrein, and Arab Ports in the Persian Gulf, by H.W. Maclean, special commissioner of the Board of Trade-Commercial Intelligence Committee* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1904).

thoroughly implanted in the dress and ritual practices of eastern Africa that several styles continued to be imported in modest numbers throughout the twentieth century, as they continue to be to the present day. A small but steady demand for the *sahari* and *subaya* striping patterns continues in pockets of the Comoros Islands, Madagascar, Tanzania, Somalia, coastal Kenya and Djibouti, with the national Olympic team of Djibouti wearing it for their entry to the opening festivities in Rio de Janeiro in 2016. For the moment, at least, South Asia has (re)captured the producing lead: today, the cloth is no longer made by hand-weavers in Oman but, rather, by enormous mills in Bombay and Pakistan, global industry ever bending to the consumer tastes of eastern Africa.

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CHAPTER 10

Converging Trades and New Technologies: The Emergence of *Kanga* Textiles on the Swahili Coast in the Late Nineteenth Century

MacKenzie Moon Ryan

The fashionable printed textile known today as *kanga* emerged from a complex history of global trade networks responding to local east African consumer demands.[1] Initially imported to Africa from Europe, this factory-woven cloth printed with colourful designs developed out of converging western Indian Ocean trades in industrially manufactured textiles, as well as late nineteenth-century technological advances in synthetic dyes and printing techniques. Before 1886, east African women dressed in a variety of imported printed cotton fabrics—known by a number of names—which they wrapped about their hips, chests

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and heads. By the mid-1880s, however, the *kanga* had emerged as the dominant printed wrapper type, displacing most of its predecessors, with women on the Swahili Coast demanding a steady stream of new colours and designs enabled by technological advances. This essay employs nineteenth-century European travelogues and archives, business documents, technological treatises, trade reports, local accounts, contemporaneous photographs and surviving pieces of cloth manufactured for sale to east Africa to provide the first art historical analysis of production. The focus on production offers a new interpretation on the history of the textile genre, whose emergence can be traced to African tastes, savvy resident Indian cloth merchants, changing technologies and shifting geo-politics. I demonstrate how the cloth type grew out of previous demands for indigo-dyed cotton cloth from India and unbleached plain-weave cotton cloth from the USA; the widespread adoption of newly invented synthetic dyes to create brightly coloured cloths; advances in printing technologies to create highly defined, repeating patterns cheaply; and the design influence of square printed handkerchiefs, a *kanga* predecessor which provided striking motifs and bordered compositions. From the 1860s, east African women used these square handkerchiefs to create an innovative rectangular wrapper that appealed to their fashionable sensibilities. The *kanga* as we know it today (as well as the term itself) emerged by 1886, drawing on both global textile production revolutions and enduring east African aesthetic preferences for printed cloths with crisp, bold and symmetrical designs within a bordered composition.[2]

[2] This article builds on the work of Laura Fair but, instead of chronicling clothing trends as linked to the social identities of consumers, I focus on networks of trade and supply, and innovations in technologies of production that made new types of cloth available for sale in Zanzibar during the second half of the nineteenth century. See Laura Fair, "Dressing Up: Clothing, Class and Gender in Post-Abolition Zanzibar," *The Journal of African History* 39, no. 1 (1998): pp. 63–94, and Laura Fair, *Pastimes and Politics: Culture, Community, and Identity in Post-Abolition Zanzibar, 1890-1945* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2001), pp. 64–109. Much of this article centres in Zanzibar, as the late nineteenth-century entrepôt for imported goods, but scholars such as Sheryl McCurdy have worked to nuance understandings of how consumer goods functioned along trade routes into the interior of east Africa. See Sheryl McCurdy, "Fashioning Sexuality: Desire, Manyema Ethnicity, and the Creation of the 'Kanga,' ca. 1880-1900," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 39, no. 3 (2006): pp. 441–69.

Imported Cotton Fashions Before 1860

East Africa's participation in Indian Ocean exchange networks dates back at least two millennia, with cotton cloth long a part of it. The famous *Periplus*, a first century CE mariner's guide, specifically mentions a trade in cotton cloth woven in Gujarat in present-day India to the Horn of Africa.[3] Trade in cloth from Gujarat to the east African coast likely increased between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries with the rise of Islamic trading networks and flourished until the early nineteenth century, when competition from new South Asian trading networks, the rise of the Omani Empire, as well as British and American imports challenged Gujarati dominance in imported cloth.[4] By the early nineteenth century, Gujarat had centuries of experience of exporting large amounts and a wide variety of hand-woven cloth to this market, varieties which included plain white, indigo-dyed, spotted, striped and checked.[5] East Africans acquired cloth for clothing, usually wearing it as rectangular wrappers, to function as currency and as status symbols. As noted by Prestholdt and Machado, east African demand shaped Gujarati cloth production; changeable fashions dictated which cloths were purchased at any given time, and astute Gujarati merchants and cloth-makers strived to keep abreast of changing demands in cotton cloth.[6]

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[3] Anonymous, *The Periplus Maris Erythraei*, trans. Lionel Casson (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), pp. 7–8, 11, 17. *Periplus Maris Erythraei* was written by an Egyptian Greek merchant between 40 CE and 70 CE. This handbook for merchants outlined the trade between Roman Egypt and the Indian Ocean world, from the coast of east Africa through southern Arabia to the coasts of the subcontinent of India. Amongst other trade goods, the writer mentions textiles woven in Gujarat that were traded to the Horn of Africa in the first century CE.

[4] Pedro Machado, "Awash in a Sea of Cloth: Gujarat, Africa, and the Western Indian Ocean, 1300-1800," in *The Spinning World: A Global History of Cotton Textiles, 1200-1850*, ed. Giorgio Riello and Prasannan Parthasarathi (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 178.

[5] Machado, "Awash in a Sea of Cloth," p. 172; Thomas Smee, "Observations during a Voyage of Research on the East Coast of Africa, from Cape Guardafui to the Island of Zanzibar, in the H. C.'s cruiser *Ternate*, (Captain T. Smee,) and *Sylph* schooner (Lieutenant Hardy), 1811," in *Zanzibar: City, Island, and Coast*, by Richard F. Burton, vol. 2 (London: Tinsley Brothers, 1872), pp. 493, 512–13.

[6] Jeremy Prestholdt, "As Artistry Permits and Custom May Ordain: The Social Fabric of Material Consumption in the Swahili World, 1450-1600," Program in African Studies Working Papers 3 (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University, 1998), p. 17; Machado, "Awash in a Sea of Cloth," pp. 170–4.

The development of *kanga* textiles in the late nineteenth century grew out of this centuries-old practice of east Africans demanding imported cloth according to changing fashions. In the early nineteenth century, consumers there continued to demand plain white, indigo-dyed and patterned cloth, which merchants and others involved in the textile trade in east Africa continued to supply. Unpatterned, monochrome, plain-weave cotton cloth—either indigo blue or white—dominated imports. From the 1780s to the turn of the century, the majority of lower-class African consumers preferred indigo blue cloths but, by the early years of the nineteenth century, consumers preferred white cloth (Fig. 10.1).[7] The indigo-dyed cotton cloth was hand-woven in India and came to be known as *kaniki* (see Fig. 10.2).

Originally also hand-woven in India, the naturally white, unbleached cotton cloth imported to east Africa was, after 1840, called *merikani* ('American'), named for the United States of America which, in the middle decades of the nineteenth century, became the largest producer and importer of white cloth. By the mid-1830s, merchants based in Salem, Massachusetts, were challenging Gujarat's trade in hand-woven cotton cloth to east Africa, having found in Zanzibar a ready market for the factory-made white, plain-weave cotton cloth produced in the nearby factories of Lowell, Massachusetts.[8] As numerous sources indicate, consumers on the Swahili Coast and in the hinterland preferred this American-made white *merikani* cloth to *kaniki* after its introduction.[9] American-

[7] Preference for blue cloth (called *zuartes*) from the 1780s is noted by Machado, "Awash in a Sea of Cloth," pp. 172–3, and preference for white cloth is confirmed in 1811 by British Captain Smee and again in 1859 (called *merkani*) by British explorer Richard F. Burton; See Smee,"Observations during a Voyage of Research," p. 513 and Richard Francis Burton, "The Lake Regions of Central Equatorial Africa," *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society* XXIX (1859): pp. 422–3.

[8] Jeremy Prestholdt, "On the Global Repercussions of East African Consumerism," *The American Historical Review* 109, no. 3 (2004): p. 769.

[9] Trade reports, travelogues, and business documents all emphasize the dominance of *merikani* over *kaniki* and even the lengths which competitors went to imitate American manufacture. For example, William Samuel W. Ruschenberger, *Narrative of a Voyage round the World, during the years 1835, 36, and 37*, vol. 1 (London: Richard Bentley, 1838), pp. 65–6; Burton, "The Lake Regions of Central Equatorial Africa," pp. 421–3; Richard F. Burton, *Zanzibar: City, Island, and Coast*, vol. 2 (London: Tinsley Brothers, 1872), pp. 412–4.

Fig. 10.1 Young woman on *left* wears indigo piece-dyed cloth (*kaniki*), young woman in *centre* wears 'handkerchief-print' yardage (*leso ya kushona*), and young man on *right* wears garments tailored from unbleached cloth (*merikani*). The Humphrey Winterton Collection of East African Photographs, Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies, Northwestern University. (Photographer unknown, late nineteenth century, Zanzibar)

made white *merikani* cloth enjoyed dominance for a quarter of a century, but fashions changed in the early 1860s when a crisis in supply of *merikani* due to the American Civil War left east Africans without their

Fig. 10.2 Swatch of indigo piece-dyed cloth (*kaniki*). Located in *LKM 274 Stalen voor Afrika Slendangs* Etc. *1884–1900* sample book, *Leidsche Katoenmaatschappij* or Leiden Cotton Company. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. (Photograph by MacKenzie Moon Ryan)

staple imported cloth.[10] East African consumers therefore turned again to indigo-dyed cloth, *kaniki*, or acquired lesser-quality British and Indian imitations of *merikani* imported via India (see Figs. 10.1 and 10.2).[11]

[10] Prestholdt, "On the Global Repercussions," p. 769.

[11] American merchants could only lament this change in fortune: 'Before the war, nearly two thirds of the Cotton goods (which form one of the principal articles of import) were imported from the U.S., but for the past four years the market has been supplied chiefly with goods of English manufacture from Bombay & England. In ordinary times, however,

Dissatisfied with these cloths, east African women in particular looked increasingly to patterned cotton cloth (see Fig. 10.4).

Certainly, monochrome indigo-dyed *kaniki* and unbleached *merikani* accounted for the greatest volume of cotton cloth imports to east Africa, but patterned cloth also formed part of the historic Gujarati trade to the area. The Portuguese, in the late sixteenth century and throughout the seventeenth century, referred to striped and spotted cloths from India, the latter likely referencing patterns made through resist-dyes and/or mordant printing.[12] Archaeological specimens confirm that Gujarat was an early and prolific exporter of such textiles—block printed for a clientele of modest means—trading them from at least the tenth century to Red Sea ports, and from the fourteenth century to Indonesia.[13] A great variety of printed cotton cloth was available in the mid-nineteenth century, though it made up only a small fraction of east Africa's textile imports.[14] The crisis in American-made unbleached *merikani* from the 1860s, combined with Europe's industrial advances in printing technologies and the advent of synthetic dyes, set the stage for increasing consumer demand for cotton prints that utilized lesser-quality unbleached cotton cloth, leading to the creation of numerous printed cloth varieties including, ultimately, the *kanga*.

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these can hardly be brought to compete with American Cottons." See Edward D. Ropes, "Letters Concerning Eastern Africa: 61. Edward D. Ropes to William H. Seward, October 5, 1865, Zanzibar," in *New England Merchants in Africa: A History through Documents, 1802-1865*, ed. Norman R. Bennett and George E. Brookes, Jr. (Boston: Boston University Press, 1965), p. 538.

[12] Machado, "Awash in a Sea of Cloth," p. 172; Prestholdt, "As Artistry Permits," pp. 27, 29.

[13] Ruth Barnes, "Indian Trade Textiles: Sources and Transmission of Designs," in *Cultures of the Indian Ocean*, ed. Abdul Sheriff and Jessica Hallett, pp. 230–42 (Lisbon: Comissão Nacional para as Comemorações dos Descobrimentos Portugueses, 1998).

[14] Many of these patterned cloths were helpfully itemized by Burton in 1859, but these comprised only "minor [import] items" rather than the "principal imports" of *merikani* and *kaniki*. See Burton, "The Lake Regions," pp. 421–3. For detailed descriptions of patterned cloths, relative price and demand, see Burton, "The Lake Regions," pp. 428–32.

Revolution in Production: Advances in Roller-Printing and the Advent of Synthetic Dyes

Technological advances in Europe in the nineteenth century radically transformed the production of printed surface design on textiles. Advances in roller-printing substantially dropped production time and labour requirements in the application of patterned surface design to cloth which, in general, lowered the price of factory-printed textiles. Discovery of synthetic alizarin and aniline dyes, both coal tar products, provided a new range of bright and colour-fast dyes. Both revolutionized the production of printed textiles, directly affecting manufacture, appearance and cost. These advances are closely tied to the development of *kanga* textiles.

Around the world, including in Europe, in the late nineteenth century when *kanga* textiles emerged, numerous age-old methods of printing designs on cloth were still in use. Some workshops continued to print cotton cloth by hand, a technique known as block printing in reference to the method in which a printer applies designs to cloth. Engraved woodblocks were created by a specialized wood carver, who cut, chiselled, or in other ways removed the background of each woodblock, leaving the design in relief. Woodblock designs were carefully planned to interlock and thus repeat seamlessly when numerous impressions were laid side by side—although, if inexpertly aligned, breaks in design or overlap became visible. The mordant is stamped on the cloth in the designs imparted by the woodblocks, following which the cloth is dipped in the desired natural dye. The woodblock could also be dipped in wax or paste so that the desired design resisted the natural dye when run through a dye bath. Different colours were applied with successive dye baths. After the shift to synthetic dyes, colour could be directly applied to the surface of the cloth, using the woodblock to imprint one small portion of design to the cloth by hand. The action was repeated across the cloth until the desired pattern was realized, and successive blocks were used to impart different colours.[15]

[15] Edmund Knecht and James Best Fothergill, *The Principles and Practice of Textile Printing* (London: Charles Griffin & Co., Ltd., 1912), pp. 18–22.

Designs imprinted by woodblocks often appear flat, as the method of manufacture does not allow for subtle tonal shifts. Alternatively, block printing is especially effective for small, repeating designs, for creating well-defined outlines and consistent expanses of colour that do not rely upon the illusion of spatial depth. In the case of *kanga* cloths, which as we shall see were sometimes block printed, designs were mostly printed in one to two colours upon a white or coloured ground. For this reason, woodblock printing is often considered a slow and somewhat expensive process primarily of use in limited runs.[16]

Technological advances in the late eighteenth century transformed cotton printing in Europe. Scotsman Thomas Bell invented a cylinder or roller-printing machine in 1783, which printed engraved designs directly onto cloth via mechanical means.[17] Whereas woodblocks print designs in relief, copper cylinders are engraved with intaglio designs, and the design is printed when colour fills in the impressions and is pressed onto cloth via a rotating machine roller. Lines engraved in copper rollers can be of any thickness, while lines created from woodblocks must be substantial enough to avoid splitting the wood and robust enough to sustain many impressions.[18] Furthermore, several colours may be imparted simultaneously in a single mechanical printing with the addition of a separately engraved roller for each colour. The nature of the cylinder copper roller means that designs up to the width of the roller repeat seamlessly. Compared to woodblock printing by hand, mechanical roller-printing sped up the process enormously, though the high cost of acquiring such machines and engraving separate copper rollers for each colour of each design meant that some textile printing firms continued to use woodblock printing by hand even into the early twentieth century.[19]

In contrast to the piecemeal adoption of mechanical printing, the discovery of the first artificial dye derived from coal tar in 1856 set in motion rapid advances in chemical research and brought about an almost complete abandonment of natural dyes in industrial production in just a

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[16] Knecht and Fothergill, *The Principles and Practice of Textile Printing*, pp. 17–8, 24.

[17] John Gardner, *Bleaching, Dyeing, and Calico-Printing* (Philadelphia: P. Blakiston, Son & Co., 1884), p. 62; Knecht and Fothergill, *The Principles and Practice of Textile Printing*, p. 49.

[18] Knecht and Fothergill, *The Principles and Practice of Textile Printing*, p. 18.

[19] Gardner, *Bleaching, Dyeing, and Calico-Printing*, p. 63; Knecht and Fothergill, *The Principles and Practice of Textile Printing*, p. 49.

few short decades. Prior to the mid-nineteenth century, two natural dyes were widely used in cotton textile printing: indigo for blues and black, and the root of various madder plants (*Rubia*) for red shades. Indigo, from the leaves of various indigofera bush species, while possessing an enviable fastness, was labour-intensive to manufacture: insoluble, it requires fermentation and the preparation of a complex alkaline bath so the dye will adhere to cloth fibres. The dye cannot be directly applied to the surface of the cloth, requiring resists and repeated soakings to create pattern and achieve a deep colour.[20] In addition to a range of reds, madder could be made to produce pinks, lavenders, browns, and tans by manipulating the type and amount of alum mordants.[21] Iron mordants combined with a tannic source were also used extensively for creating black.

The replacement of these natural dyes with synthetics began with British chemistry student William Henry Perkin who, while attempting to synthesize quinine, accidentally discovered a bright purple dye from aniline, which came to be called aniline mauve.[22] Magenta followed in 1860 and aniline black in the 1860s, the second provoking textile chemist Charles O'Neill to proclaim it 'one of the most permanent colours which it is possible to conceive'.[23] Aniline blue, violet and green followed in later years, while chemists discovered the diazo-compounds in 1864.[24] Synthetic alizarin, derived from coal tar, was introduced in 1868 and made commercially available the next year.[25] According to O'Neill,

[20] Susan W. Greene, *Wearable Prints, 1760-1860* (Kent, OH: The Kent State University Press, 2014), pp. 177–8.

[21] Greene, *Wearable Prints*, p. 156.

[22] Charles O'Neill, *The Practice and Principles of Calico Printing, Bleaching, Dyeing, Etc.* 2 vols. (Manchester: Palmer and Howe, 1878), p. 285. O'Neill also lists over one hundred patents related to the making and application of aniline coloured dyes (excluding black), pp. 286–98.

[23] Date of magenta from Knecht and Fothergill, *The Principles and Practice of Textile Printing*, p. 9; John Lightfoot discovered aniline black in 1860 and he patented it some three years later, O'Neill, *The Practice and Principles*, p. 304; quote from O'Neill, *The Practice and Principles,* p. 301. O'Neill separately lists patents related to the making and application of black aniline, pp. 301–3.

[24] Knecht and Fothergill, *The Principles and Practice of Textile Printing*, p. 9.

[25] O'Neill, *The Practice and Principles,* p. 90; Knecht and Fothergill, *The Principles and Practice of Textile Printing*, p. 9.

'artificial alizarine' displaced natural madder as a red dyestuff in the course of just a few years:[26]

> So successful has been the artificial manufacture of the proper and real colouring matter of this dyestuff, that the natural product has suffered a depression in value, and a supplanting which has probably no parallel in the history of colouring matters. … In the eight years, from 1868 to 1876, the value of the imports of this dyestuff and its derivatives fell from £1,000,000 to about £140,000. One important calico printing house that formerly consumed 500 to 600 tons of madder per annum has not for some years past used an ounce of it, without for a moment changing the quality or the styles of their work.[27]

O'Neill continues:

> [T]he price was reduced step by step until it became cheaper than extract of madder and madder itself; the price of the latter was reduced by 50, 60, and 70 per cent., and in less than five years from the date of its introduction, artificial alizarine was produced in such quantity and of such quality that madder could be safely put aside as a cumbrous superfluity in the list of dyeing materials.[28]

Another textile dye expert, William Crookes, confirmed that in 1874 'Manuals of Dyeing and Printing composed before the discovery of coal-tar colours are now little more than literary curiosities'.[29] And while other artificial and synthetic blues provided new opportunities in blue dyes, synthetic indigo (pure indigotin) was the last to be replicated, widely used for commercial printing from 1892.[30]

Just how quickly synthetic dyes were discovered, patented and widely adopted by textile manufacturers can be demonstrated by a manual on bleaching, dyeing and calico-printing from 1884, which details no

[26] O'Neill, *The Practice and Principles,* p. 67.

[27] O'Neill, *The Practice and Principles*, pp. 67–8.

[28] O'Neill, *The Practice and Principles*, pp. 91–2.

[29] William Crookes, *A Practical Handbook of Dyeing and Calico-Printing* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co.: 1874), p. v.

[30] Greene, *Wearable Prints*, p. 191.

fewer than twenty-four different aniline dyes.[31] By 1912, Knecht and Fothergill's textile printing manual exclaimed:

> The resources of the calico printer and dyer are constantly added to by the unceasing production of new and improved artificial dyestuffs, and the number at his disposal is now so enormous and their properties so diverse that he is enabled to introduce almost any shade demanded into styles of work that were formerly restricted to one or two colours only.[32]

The discovery and adoption of artificial and synthetic dyes in the second half of the nineteenth century revolutionized the textile world. The shift was so swift and all-encompassing that the market for natural dyestuffs dried up in as little as a decade, or, at most, a generation. Artificial and synthetic dyes produced more regular, consistent, and colour-fast textiles. The dyestuffs were considerably cheaper once manufactured for industrial use. These advances also increased the possible number and varieties of colour and hue. All of these qualities are evident in the simultaneous development of *kanga* textiles and their immediate predecessor: factory-woven, printed and imported square cotton handkerchiefs.

Design Demands: Handkerchiefs with Printed Borders and the Transformation to *Kanga* Cloth

Printed handkerchiefs, square in shape with bold designs, contributed pattern and design to women's wrappers in east Africa in the mid-nineteenth century. As Prestholdt has noted, 'Although we tend to think of cloth, beads, and brass wire as finished manufactured goods distinct from the "raw" materials Africans exported, it is more appropriate to think of them as only partially manufactured, since they often had to be radically redesigned in India, East African centres of trade, or on caravan trails before they could be sold in local markets.'[33] This was the case with imported square handkerchiefs. Around 1860, women in Mombasa or Zanzibar sewed together six square cloths to form a rectangular wrapper. Resident Indian cloth merchants shortly thereafter took this innovation

[31] Gardner, *Bleaching, Dyeing, and Calico-Printing*, pp. 160–81.

[32] Knecht and Fothergill, *The Principles and Practice of Textile Printing*, p. 9.

[33] Prestholdt, "On the Global Repercussions," p. 766.

one step further: working with European merchant-converter firms[34] and European manufacturers, they began supplying east African consumers with large widths of cloth industrially printed with multiple handkerchief designs. The fashion-driven demands of east African women united with advances in textile technologies to pave the way for the creation of *kanga* textiles. Let us trace these transformations in detail.

The symmetrical and bordered design composition and penchant for crisp motifs common to *kanga* textiles developed from an innovative use of a common import item: printed square handkerchiefs. Pocket-handkerchiefs were more or less square and measured around 30 cm × 30 cm, or 26 cm × 23 cm,[35] and large coloured cotton handkerchiefs—the sort used to create a woman's wrapper—were likely around 60 cm square.[36] The Portuguese first witnessed trade in dyed and patterned handkerchiefs, called *lenço,* from India to east Africa in the early sixteenth century.[37] By the latter half of the nineteenth century, factories in the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Switzerland were imitating and innovating on these handkerchiefs, embellishing machine-woven cotton cloth with printed designs, which came to be known as *leso* in Swahili (see Fig. 10.3).[38]

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[34] European merchant-converter firms were essentially distributors or middlemen in the sourcing, shipping and supplying of manufactured goods from industrialized metropoles to consumer colonies. Headquartered in European cities, these firms often held branch offices throughout the world's growing urban centres.

[35] Measurements quoted in Karl Wilhelm Schmidt, *Sansibar: Ein ostafrikanisches Culturbild* (Leipzig: F.A. Brockhaus, 1888), p. 144; Charles New, *Life, Wanderings, and Labours in Eastern Africa*, 2nd ed. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1874), p. 29.

[36] Though Schmidt provides the measurements for the smaller pocket-handkerchiefs, he provides the definition of 'Lezos' as 'six in a row compose a piece, a *doti* in the native measure, find their use as hip and breastcloths'. See Schmidt, *Sansibar*, p. 144. A *doti* is the equivalent of four yards, which makes each large handkerchief approximately 24" square, or around 60 cm.

[37] Edward A. Alpers, "Gujarat and the Trade of East Africa, c. 1500-1800," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 9, no. 1 (1976): pp. 1, 24, 35, 39. Alpers suggests that trade in cotton cloth from Gujarat to the Swahili Coast may have commenced in the fifteenth century, following the rise to prominence of the Islamic sultanate of Gujarat in 1392. The Portuguese controlled trade in coastal east Africa in the sixteenth century, which continued to be dominated by Gujarati cloths. By the early seventeenth century, cloths from Gujarat still dominated the east African market and were dyed blue or dark purple, also blue, black and red.

[38] Schmidt, *Sansibar*, pp. 144–5.

Fig. 10.3 Printed handkerchief (*leso*), sold to east Africa. Note Arabic-script Swahili text. Located in *Vlisco Slendangs 1886* sample book. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. (Photograph by MacKenzie Moon Ryan)

Oral traditions assert that Swahili coastal women from Mombasa or Zanzibar first sewed together six square handkerchiefs in an arrangement of three-by-two to create a large rectangular woman's wrapper with printed designs, measuring about 180 cm × 120 cm and called *leso ya kushona* (Swahili for 'sewn of handkerchiefs').[39] We can pinpoint

[39] Farouque Abdillah and Gill Shepherd, "I am like a kanga-cloth. I die in all my beauty," *Africa Now*, February (1984): p. 48; Janette Hanby and David Bygott, *Kangas: 101 Uses* (Nairobi: Ines May, 1984), p. 2; Anthony John, "The Kanga Struts in Style," *Weekend Standard* (Kenya), July 2 (1982): p. 11; Tony Troughear, "Khangas, Bangles and Baskets," *Kenya Past and Present* 16 (1984): p. 13. The nineteenth-century measurement (72" × 50") comes from "Zanzibar: Report for the Year 1896 on the Trade of Zanzibar," by A.H. Hardinge, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports on Trade and Finance*, Foreign Office No. 1961 (London: Harrison and Sons, 1897), pp. 9–10. Today, *kanga* in my collection measure closer to 167 cm × 111 cm or 66" × 44".

Fig. 10.4 Flanking women wear stitched 'handkerchief-print' yardage (*leso ya kushona*). The Humphrey Winterton Collection of East African Photographs, Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies, Northwestern University. (Photographer unknown, late nineteenth century, Zanzibar)

this transformation from printed handkerchiefs to a fashionable woman's wrapper to sometime in the 1860s[40] thanks to the writings of British missionary Charles New. Between 1863 and 1872, New visited Mombasa and subsequently Zanzibar, where the new *leso ya kushona* or 'stitched handkerchief' wrapper was considered highly fashionable among the majority of Swahili coastal women.[41] He writes:

> Six [lesu, large coloured cotton handkerchiefs], cut into two parts of three each, are sewn together so as to make one square cloth and the dress is complete. This is drawn round the body under the arms, and is secured by gathering the ends together and rolling them into a ball at the chest. A similar article is worn over the shoulders, or is hung from the head like a veil. … Dressed in this style, particularly when the material is new and the colours are bright, the Msuahili woman is in her glory, and appears to admire herself prodigiously.[42]

Based on New's observations and late nineteenth-century photographs taken in Swahili coastal urban centres, these 'large coloured cotton handkerchiefs' were printed continuously on one textile width, which enabled merchants to sell six *leso* in a row (the equivalent of one *doti* of 4 yards). Buyers then cut the six *leso* in half to create two groups of three handkerchiefs, which were then sewn together along the selvedge to create a rectangular, grid-like wrapper. Studio photographers practising from the 1870s onwards such as A.C. Gomes, A.R. Pereira de Lord, and J.B. Coutinho recorded the changing fashions in their photographs, which they reproduced on widely disseminated postcards.[43] In some photographs, a keen eye can discern the stitched seam that unites the two groups of square handkerchiefs (Fig. 10.4).

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[40] Fair, by contrast, cites Hanby and Bygott's and Linnebuhr's date of the late 1870s for the creation of *leso ya kushona*. See Fair, *Pastimes and Politics*, pp. 79–80; Hanby and Bygott, *Kangas*, pp. 2–3; Elisabeth Linnebuhr, "*Kanga*: Popular Cloths with Messages," in *Readings in African Popular Culture*, ed. Karen Barber (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1997), p. 140.

[41] New arrived in east Africa in January 1863 and departed in May 1872. See Charles New, *Life, Wanderings, and Labours in Eastern Africa*, 3rd edn (Oxon: Frank Cass, 1971), p. 8.

[42] New, *Life, Wanderings, and Labours in Eastern Africa*, 2nd edn, p. 60.

[43] John Hannavy, *Encyclopedia of Nineteenth-Century Photography*, Vol. 1 (London: Routledge, 2007), pp. 342–3.

New's final line may speak to the pride and fashionable sensibilities conveyed by women of modest means who wore this new stitched-handkerchief wrapper. They had two choices for making this wrapper: (1) purchasing six individuals square handkerchiefs, or (2) purchasing two widths of cloth, each of which was printed with three continuous handkerchief designs. Indeed, van Vlissingen & Co., the Dutch textile printer, has records for producing the large square printed handkerchiefs (measuring 72 cm × 72 cm) and full-size 137 cm × 200 cm wrappers[44] created for the Zanzibari market by 1876.[45]

Beyond colour and pattern, size mattered greatly for both consumers and producers. Historically, looms in India and Europe produced widths of 50–65 cm. Creating a wrapper to cover the body effectively thus required stitching together two widths of cloth, which created a seam down the centre. Printing the large-scale centrefield *kanga* designs preferred by Swahili women necessitated a single width of 100 cm. European producers at first resisted this shift as it required costly reconfigurations of machinery made for the European yardage market. The Hamburg-based merchant converter, Wm. O'Swald & Co., for instance, in 1877 tried to commission from Manchester a print run of six handkerchief designs on a single width of one metre.[46] The Dewhurst firm in Manchester politely refused the order, requesting either a 'normal size' cloth or a higher production run.[47] Ultimately, however, European producers had to adapt and bend, too, to this aesthetic preference, or lose the market altogether, providing another vivid example of the global repercussions of east African women's distinctive textile demands.[48]

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[44] P.F. van Vlissingen & Co. records use the term *slendang* to refer to cloth wrappers and recorded measurements in the imperial system: handkerchief as 30" × 30" and full-size wrapper 54" × 79"

[45] *Blauw & wit slendangs Zanzibar* and *Zanzibar handkerchiefs*, records salvaged from 1876 textile pattern book, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photographs in the collection of the author.

[46] Linnebuhr, "*Kanga*," p. 140.

[47] Manuscript from Anonymous, *Manuscript from Firmenarchiv O'Swald 1878, 621-1/3-21*; as quoted in Lutz J. Schwidder, "Das Hamburger Kolonialhandelshaus Wm. O'Swald & Co. und die Einführung von 'Techniken' in die Kolonien 1890-1914" (PhD diss., Universität Hamburg, 2004), and cited in Linnebuhr, "*Kanga*," p. 140.

[48] Prestholdt, "On the Global Repercussions"; Jeremy Prestholdt, *Domesticating the World: African Consumerism and the Genealogies of Globalization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008); Machado, "Awash in a Sea of Cloth."

Further confirmation of the popularity of the new handkerchief wrapper and the collaborative efforts of European manufacturers and resident Indian cloth merchants to please east African consumers is provided by Dr. Karl Wilhelm Schmidt. This German explorer and doctor arrived in Zanzibar in late 1885 and wrote thus about 'Lezo' handkerchiefs in his 1888 publication:

> These cloths are generally real, cotton handkerchiefs, which six or twelve pieces make up one contiguous piece; they are produced in Europe for the Zanzibar market. The colours, patterns and sayings printed on have to be carefully considered by the manufacturers or the customers…[49]
> We come now to the colourful cloths, printed handkerchiefs, the Lezos or Kitambis. They are already signs of a greater luxury and therefore are mainly sold in Zanzibar and the coastal ports. The Lezos, six in a row comprise a piece, a doti in the native measure, find their use as hip and breastcloths. The allowable sizes of the individual cloths vary between 30 by 30 and 26 by 23 cm. As mentioned elsewhere, this is the actual fashion article in Zanzibar. Every four weeks, new patterns come to the market, and depending on whether customers like them or not, the handkerchiefs achieve higher or lower prices. The European houses present the Indian wholesalers with newly designed patterns, and after they examined them and agreed on colour, size and price, the design is sent to the factories in Manchester, or even to Holland or Switzerland.[50]

Schmidt documents the transformation of printed handkerchiefs from individual square cloths to fashionable rectangular wrappers snapped up every month by stylish east African women. He also comments upon the textile's colourful and printed appearance, the variance in price depending on customer preference, and the trade networks that functioned to meet the demands of east African women consumers. Crucially, these consumers determined whether or not new designs arriving in monthly shipments succeeded. By 1885, European production of manufactured and printed cloth for the east African market was in full swing, setting the stage for a new genre of printed cloth, *kanga*.[51]

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[49] Schmidt, *Sansibar,* p. 83.

[50] Schmidt, *Sansibar,* pp. 144–5.

[51] Numerous examples of printed cloth intended for the east African market are held in the archives of the Vlisco Museum. Vlisco, a Dutch textile printer formerly called P.F. van Vlissingen & Co., not only retained their own late nineteenth-century textile pattern

Schmidt makes another important observation regarding 'the sayings printed on [these cloths]', a hallmark of *kanga* textiles today.[52] Scholars have tended to date the appearance of textual inscriptions on cloths printed for the Swahili market to a later time, to around 1920.[53] However, Schmidt's 1885 observations are confirmed by a study of objects: several van Vlissingen & Co. handkerchiefs printed for the Zanzibari market, likely dating from 1886, and *kanga*, dating between 1886 and 1889, have printed Arabic-script Swahili text (see Fig. 10.3).[54] Text likely originated on handkerchiefs, which directly contributed to the use of Swahili text on *kanga*. While most of extant late nineteenth-century printed cloths for the east African market do not possess inscriptions, certainly it was an optional feature on both handkerchiefs and *kanga* from a very early date. In other words, the inclusion of text on cloth printed for the Swahili market is not a later addition but original to the earliest form.

Beyond printed sayings, the handkerchief wrapper *leso ya kushona* and *kanga* also share overall design conventions relating to borders and the central motif. *Leso* handkerchiefs were square in shape, and their printed designs often emphasized this shape through wide borders that contrasted sharply in colour and pattern with the centrefield (Fig. 10.5). These borders created a grid-like pattern when Swahili coastal women assembled six identical handkerchiefs to form a rectangular wrapper.

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books, but also acquired those of their vanquished competitors, *Haarlemsche Katoen Maatschappij* (HKM or Haarlem Cotton Company) and *Leidsche Katoenmaatschappij* (LKM or Leiden Cotton Company). All three Dutch textile printing firms produced printed designs on cloth, commissioned by European merchant converters, designed by resident Indian cloth merchants in the trading centres of east Africa, intended for east African consumers.

[52] Schmidt, *Sansibar*, p. 83.

[53] For a more in-depth discussion on the inclusion of text on early *kanga* textiles, see MacKenzie Moon Ryan, "A Decade of Design: The Global Invention of the *Kanga*, 1876-86," *Textile History* 48, no. 1 (2017): pp. 101–32.

[54] The earliest extant examples date from 1886, but the vast majority of Vlisco's early records were destroyed in a devastating fire in 1883, making it difficult to ascertain whether production started prior to 1886. Swatches of both *leso* and *kanga* are contained in the volume, *Vlisco Slendangs 1886*, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. The date of Vlisco's fire from H.W. Lintsen, "Part III: Textiles," in *History of Technology in the Netherlands: The Genesis of Modern Society 1800-1890* (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 1993), p. 71.

Fig. 10.5 Woman wearing 'handkerchief-print' yardage (*leso ya kushona*) with budding paisley corners and striped borders around her torso. Captioned '*Geputzte Negerin*', the photograph is reproduced in Karl Wilhelm Schmidt, *Sansibar: Ein ostafrikanisches Culturbild* (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1888), p. 83. (Image courtesy of the University of Minnesota Libraries)

Kanga textiles borrowed, extended and simplified handkerchief borders to frame the entire rectangular shape of the large wrapper. The exterior borders of the rectangular *kanga*, in turn, created an unbroken central expanse, where a contrasting though complimentary motif could feature. The design and scale of the square handkerchief were thus enlarged and adjusted to fit the large rectangular shape of *kanga*, maintaining east African women's preferences for highly defined and symmetrical designs.

The distinctive border and centrefield conventions of *kanga* textiles allow them to be immediately recognized in late nineteenth-century photographs of east African women (Fig. 10.6). Period photographs confirm a consistent demand for strongly defined shapes that do not

Fig. 10.6 Three women seated wearing wrapped *kanga*; central woman wears *kanga* with the budding paisley and striped border design. The Humphrey Winterton Collection of East African Photographs, Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies, Northwestern University. (Photographer unknown, likely taken in about 1890, Zanzibar)

rely upon subtle tonal shifts or the illusion of spatial depth. Indeed, the qualities best suited to block printing came to define the types of designs that contribute to rectangular borders, interior motifs and symmetrical compositions. The contributions of newly invented, brilliant synthetic dyes to this design development can be ascertained through a study of textile pattern books (Fig. 10.7). They reveal that *leso* handkerchiefs and early *kanga* textiles often display consistent expanses of these new colours, with designs primarily printed in one to two colours, including fuchsia, rose, burgundy, black and red, with the majority printed

Fig. 10.7 *Kanga* swatch with budding paisley and striped border design, in pink-white-and-rose colourway, hand-dated 1 October 1887. Located in *Vlisco Slendangs 1886* sample book. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. (Photograph by James Ryan)

on bleached white grounds to create affordable yet brilliantly coloured printed textiles.[55]

The stitched handkerchief cloth (*leso ya kushona*) and *kanga* co-existed for a short time, and photographic evidence indicates that women even wore these two fashionable cloths simultaneously (Fig. 10.8). From 1886, *kanga* textiles overtook the *leso ya kushona* to become the most popular and widespread printed wrapper for women in east Africa.[56] But

[55] In rare instances, grounds of yellow and inks of blue and orange appear on late nineteenth-century *kanga*. Colours noted on swatches from late nineteenth-century pattern books from the companies P.F. van Vlissingen & Co. (Vlisco), *Haarlemsche Katoen Maatschappij* or Haarlem Cotton Company (HKM), and *Leidsche Katoenmaatschappij* or Leiden Cotton Company (LKM), all accessed in the archive of Vlisco Museum, Helmond, the Netherlands.

[56] Printed cloth with contiguous square handkerchief designs continue to be worn by women in the Comoros Islands today, though the fashion has fallen out of favour throughout the rest of east Africa. Personal communication with Isabelle Denis on 3 November 2012, and Chris Spring, 'Not Really African? *Kanga* and Swahili Culture', in *East African*

Fig. 10.8 Woman wearing 'handkerchief-print' yardage (*leso ya kushona*) around torso and *kanga* draped across her shoulders. (A. C. Gomes photograph, ca. 1890, Zanzibar. Courtesy of The Humphrey Winterton Collection of East African Photographs, Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies, Northwestern University)

Contours: Reviewing Creativity and Visual Culture, ed. Hassan Arero and Zachary Kingdon (London: Horniman Museum, 2005), p. 75.

European-printed handkerchiefs must be credited for paving the way for the success of *kanga* textiles: they established the networks of production which included European manufacturers, European-based merchant-converter firms, and resident Indian cloth merchants who worked together to meet the demands for quickly changing fashions among lower-class east African women in the late nineteenth century.

The Rise of *Kanga* as the Dominant Fashionable Print

As we have seen, *kanga* textiles shared many features with other imported industrially printed cloths. This final section examines the technological, social, aesthetic and commercial factors that contributed to the cloth genre's rise in the 1880s to become the reigning print fashion in east Africa, a position it continues to hold today.

The earliest published use of the term *kanga* to refer to a printed cloth appears in the writings of British explorer Henry Morton Stanley, who lists *kanga* cloth by name in his 1878 publication *Through the Dark Continent*. Also called guinea fowl cloth (as the word *kanga* in Swahili translates to guinea fowl), Stanley includes *kanga* with African cloths and beads in an appendix on African currencies, complete with Zanzibar prices. Compiled in preparation for his expedition from September 1874 to August 1877, Stanley's use of the term *kanga* is the earliest in print.[57] A subsequent mention in print dates to 31 December 1886, in which Stanley requests the cloth by name from Edmund Mackenzie of the British merchant-converter firm, Smith, Mackenzie & Co.[58] The term *kanga* is reputed to have been adopted from one of the first popular styles of this printed cloth, called *kanga za mera*, meaning 'the first of *kanga*' in archaic Swahili.[59] Oral tradition credits an early design that

[57] Henry Morton Stanley, *Through the Dark Continent, or The Source of the Nile around the Great Lakes of Equatorial Africa and Down the Livingstone River to the Atlantic Ocean*, vol. 2 (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1878), p. 509.

[58] Henry Morton Stanley, *In Darkest Africa, Or, the Quest, Rescue and Retreat of Emin, Governor of Equatoria*, vol. 1 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, Toronto Presbyterian New Company, 1890), p. 37.

Stanley specifically requested four pieces of 24 yards each of *kanga*, equalling 96 yards.

[59] Abdillah and Shepherd, "I am like a kanga-cloth," p. 48; Fatma Shaaban Abdullah, "Reflections on a Symbol," *Africa Now*, February 1984, p. 49; Anonymous, "*Kanga* Textiles from Tanzania," *African Textiles: The Magazine for the African and Arab Markets*, August/September 1984, p. 24; Troughear, "Khangas, Bangles and Baskets," p. 13.

resembled the guinea fowl, a common bird in east Africa that has white spots on black feathers. Swahili men and women explain the pattern as a comparison between guinea fowl and women: they both have a tendency to strut—women, in particular, whilst wearing this cloth—and to travel in groups, constantly chattering.[60] The term *kanga* came to apply to this new type of cloth, transcending a particular design.

By 1889, competition between European suppliers of *kanga* was already rife, and east African consumers' preferences were both particular and subject to changeable fashions, as observed by British administrator Frederick Jackson:

> While on the question of changing fashions, it may be of interest to record that nowhere did fashion change so quickly as in Zanzibar and the larger coast towns; but it was confined to women only. It is a fact that if importers of coloured shawls (*kanga* or *leso*) had not sold out one consignment before another one of different design arrived, sometimes only a month later, they had difficulty in disposing of them, and had either to reduce the price or dispose of them to up-country traders. It is also a fact that at the time when the Germans cut out Manchester in the matter of these coloured shawls, and in other commodities too, they sent out special agents to study the question of native requirements on the spot. Consular reports, however strongly worded and inviting, were not enough for them. One of those agents conceived the brilliant idea of obtaining from a Swahili priest short and suitable texts from the Koran, which were stamped in black Arabic characters, and formed a very attractive border; they were not merely snapped up at once, but women actually fought for them.[61]

In addition to noting the fierce competition between European merchant converters by 1889–1890, this passage records the first contemporaneous observation of Swahili text printed in Arabic characters on garments clearly referred to as *kanga* (or *leso*). The passage, together

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[60] Hanby and Bygott, *Kangas,* p. 3; Julia Hilger, "The *Kanga*: An Example of East African Textile Design," in *The Art of African Textiles: Technology, Tradition and Lurex*, ed. John Picton (London: Barbican Art Gallery, 1995), p. 44; John, "The Kanga Struts," p. 11; Robert Ndwiga, "Be it Love or Sorrow, Say it with Khangas," *East African* (Nairobi), June 5–11, 2000, p. viii.

[61] Frederick Jackson, *Early Days in East Africa* (1930; repr., London: Dawsons of Pall Mall, 1969), p. 177. This passage is drawn from his 1889–90 expedition with the Imperial British East Africa Company.

with cloth swatches of a similar date, again confirms the inclusion of Arabic-script Swahili as an original feature of *kanga* textiles.[62] During the last decades of the nineteenth century, Swahili was most often written in Arabic script, following the centuries-old prevailing tradition for writing the various dialects of the Bantu language.[63] European missionaries introduced Swahili written in Roman script from the 1840s, but it was not officially adopted until the late 1920s.[64] Roman-script Swahili text first appeared on *kanga* textiles in 1910, and text in both scripts became a standard inclusion from that point until the late 1950s, when Roman-script Swahili text displaced Arabic-script Swahili text.[65]

British trade reports reveal the growing and sustained popularity of *kanga* cloth. From 1891, *kanga* textiles were listed as a separate commodity in British trade reports on Zanzibar.[66] By 1895, they warrant a more detailed description. Below, I quote at length a particularly insightful account that indicates both the fierce European competition for the *kanga* trade and their extreme adaptations to meet east African demand:

> Another important branch of this trade is in connection with what are known in the local market as '*Kanga*s' … which form the principal garments of native women. At one time a large business was done in these with both Manchester and Glasgow … but of recent years a demand has set in for a cheaper article, and it has been met by the import by German

[62] Printed Swahili text, in both Arabic and Roman scripts, became a more standard inclusion in the 1910s just before World War I, though the innovation of including Swahili text, initially printed in Arabic script, is original to the emergence of the cloth genre itself ca. 1886.

[63] Andrey Zhukov, "Old Swahili-Arabic Script and the Development of Swahili Literary Language," *Sudanic Africa* 15 (2004): p. 13.

[64] Zhukov, "Old Swahili-Arabic Script," p. 14.

[65] The earliest *kanga* textiles in Vlisco's archive that possess Roman-script Swahili text date to 31 March 1910. Judging from Vlisco's holdings of other Dutch textile printers' sample books, a variety of lettering styles—including cursive, sentence case, and block capitals—were all used to print Roman-script Swahili text on *kanga* in the first decades of the twentieth century. Based on thousands of *kanga* textiles and dozens of textile pattern books bearing hundreds of *kanga* swatches consulted at the Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photographs in collection of the author.

[66] "Inclosure 3: Extracts from a Report on the Trade of the Benadir Ports," in "Zanzibar: Report for the Year 1891 on the Trade of Zanzibar," by G.H. Portal, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports of Trade and Finance*, Foreign Office No. 981 (London: Harrison and Sons, 1892), p. 31.

> firms of a common block-printed '*Kanga*,' made in Holland, which has almost entirely superseded the superior and more expensive English variety, although the cloth itself is still supplied from Manchester. The printing of these handkerchiefs is in Holland performed by hand by a very cheap class of labour, consisting chiefly of old women and children, and Dutch manufacturers are willing to supply different patterns in comparatively small quantities, whereas the only business house in Great Britain that has … been approached with a view to taking up this particular line, has only been willing to do so on the understanding that merchants here would order such large quantities of each variety that the latter were afraid that they would be unable to dispose of them, and therefore declined the offer.[67]

Kanga cloth styles changed so rapidly at the end of the nineteenth century that Dutch manufacturers, commissioned by German merchant-converter firms, found greater success and more assured profits by continuing to print *kanga* by hand, using woodblocks. Although this technology was older and more laborious, it was paradoxically a cheaper means by which to produce *kanga*, which required agile shifts in designs to please the ever-changing demands of east African women. Small batches of designs or colourways could be dispatched relatively quickly, adjustments being made quickly and cheaply as needed. By employing lower-paid workers—namely, women and children—Dutch textile printers remained deft, avoiding the British tendency to overproduce one design. British manufacturers used a more advanced technology of machine-printing, utilizing cylindrical copper rollers that required intaglio engraving. The cost of a copper-roller engraving and manufacturing set-up was only cost-effective for large runs of the same pattern—something unprofitable in the *kanga* trade, which prized the novelty of new designs and colourways over quality of print. The Dutch succeeded with old-fashioned production techniques and underpaid labour to print *kanga* textiles. Not all technological advances made sense in the case of *kanga* in the late nineteenth century—a further example of

[67] "Zanzibar: Report for the Year 1895 on the Trade of Zanzibar," by A.H. Hardinge, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports on Trade and Finance*, Foreign Office No. 1765 (London: Harrison and Sons, 1896), pp. 9–10.

how European technologies had to bend to accommodate east African demands if production was to remain profitable.[68]

The trade report's definition of '*kanga*s' as 'printed handkerchiefs' points to their close association with their direct predecessor, the *leso ya kushona*, and, from 1895, British trade reports on Zanzibar mention *kanga* cloth in greater or less detail every year until 1912, when the reports become much more streamlined.[69] The trade report from 1896 confirms the continued strong showing of *kanga* imports in Zanzibar and significantly refers to what would become a common practice: commissioning designs to capitalize on the events of the day:

> With this report is sent a sample* of the above [an English machine-printed *kanga*], with a device printed upon it representing the firing of one of Her Majesty's ships upon the Sultan's palace, advantage having been taken of this incident to enhance the value of the article.[70]

The incident referred to in this passage was the Anglo-Zanzibar War, which has the dubious honour of holding the record for the shortest war in history (40 min). The conflict took place on 27 August 1896 over a succession dispute. The British-sanctioned candidate for the sultanate who shared anti-slavery sentiments was passed over for a man unfavourable to British interests. British forces subsequently opened fire on the palace in Zanzibar, where the new sultan had barricaded himself. An important local event, it is quite fitting that a savvy cloth merchant designed a *kanga* make the most of this succession dispute. Such designs commemorating contemporary happenings were another early feature of *kanga* which, like inscriptions, continued throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

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[68] Only after World War I did Dutch textile printer P. F. van Vlissingen & Co. shift production from woodblock to roller-printing for *kanga* textiles.

[69] See Appendix A: "Discussion of *Kanga* Textiles in Early Twentieth-Century British Colonial Trade Reports" in MacKenzie Moon Ryan, "The Global Reach of a Fashionable Commodity: A Manufacturing and Design History of *Kanga* Textiles" (PhD diss., University of Florida, 2013), pp. 518–48.

[70] "Zanzibar: Report for the Year 1896 on the Trade of Zanzibar," by A.H. Hardinge, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports on Trade and Finance*, Foreign Office No. 1961 (London: Harrison and Sons, 1897), pp. 8–9. The asterisk denotes the sample was forwarded to the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, though its present whereabouts are unknown.

By the turn of the twentieth century, competition among women in Zanzibar to wear the latest *kanga* designs was firmly entrenched, as indicated in this colonial report from the neighbouring island of Pemba:

> There is much rivalry amongst the women as to who shall soonest appear arrayed in the latest thing in kangas, which sell at a high premium during the early days of their novelty. Thus newly-arrived kangas will fetch as much as 4*s.* for the set of two, during, say, the first week, after which time the price declines, as the articles goes out of fashion, until a pair of the same cloths can be had eventually for 1*s.* 4*d.*, which is the lowest figure at which the Indians sell them. Zanzibar is the Paris of East Africa, and the Zanzibar belles are admittedly the glass of fashion. To keep up their reputation for smart dressing involves the frequent purchase of new kangas, of which, I understand, a Zanzibar girl will possess as many as two to three dozen sets at one time.[71]

Colourful and affordable *kanga* textiles with striking printed designs allowed the majority of women on the Swahili coast to participate in a consumer culture by acquiring imported commodities that were tailor-made to their demands. Some early *kanga* included Arabic-script Swahili text and subjects informed by current events, which were designed and sold by resident Indian cloth merchants, who placed orders with European-based merchant converters, who commissioned the printing of new *kanga* designs from European manufacturers. Manufacturers printed *kanga* as inexpensively as possible to undercut rival producers and to secure larger swathes of the market in east African women's clothing. In sum, competition for *kanga* was rife: European manufacturers attempted to produce a cost-effective and attractive consumer commodity and east African women desired to obtain the latest styles of the fashionable garment.

Conclusion

Kanga cloth emerged as the dominant printed textile in east Africa as a result of competing textile trades, new technologies, and particular local demands in the late nineteenth century. For centuries, consumers

[71] "Report on the Island of Pemba for the Year 1900," by O'Sullivan-Beare, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports: Africa*, No. 2653 (London: Harrison and Sons, 1901), pp. 15–6.

on the east African coast sought various types of imported cloth. From around the 1780s, they preferred hand-woven indigo-dyed cloth (*kaniki*) from India before turning to white cloth in the early nineteenth century, which became factory-made and imported from the United States (*merikani*) from around 1830. The American Civil War stymied production and exportation of this white cloth in the early 1860s, which forced consumers to return to indigo-dyed *kaniki*, now industrially woven in Europe. Dissatisfied with the underwhelming alternative, Swahili coastal women turned increasingly to printed square handkerchiefs known as *leso*, which they sewed together to create a stitched wrapper. Resident Indian cloth merchants took this innovation one step further by working in concert with European merchant-converter firms and European textile manufacturers to produce full-sized large rectangular printed wrappers.

Simultaneously, technological advances in Europe contributed to the desirability and affordability of industrially printed textiles in the mid-nineteenth century. The development of artificial and synthetic dyes from 1856 greatly increased the fastness, saturation and consistency of colour in printed textiles. European manufacturers used engraved copper rollers alongside woodblock printing to create sharp impressions. Both the revolution in chemical dyes and the options to adapt printing technologies to market demands contributed new possibilities in textile production, as well as lowering costs.

The emergence of *kanga* textiles as we know them today occurred by the 1880s while the use of the term dates to the 1870s, when Stanley first included the new printed cloth type by name in print. Greatly indebted to the handkerchief wrapper, *kanga* cloths pioneered a simplified composition of symmetrical, striking borders surrounding a large centrefield bearing a central motif. From six identical square handkerchiefs to one large rectangular composition, *kanga* cloths adhered to east African women's demands for boldly patterned and brightly coloured printed textiles. The new cloth genre took advantage of new aniline dyes to create its central motifs and contrasting bordered designs in bright colours. And yet, quality of print was less crucial than an endless succession of new designs. Their affordable price helped pave the way for unceasing demands for new patterns and colourways. East African women quickly adopted the new genre as everyday fashionable clothing, incessantly demanding new *kanga* with every arriving ship.

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PART III

Cultures of Consumption

CHAPTER 11

Warp and Weft: Producing, Trading and Consuming Indian Textiles Across the Seas (First–Thirteenth Centuries CE)

Himanshu Prabha Ray

The commodities involved in the Indian Ocean trade may be divided into various broad categories such as aromatics, medicines, dyes and spices; foodstuffs, wood and textiles; gems and ornaments; metals; and plant and animal products. These categories find mention in a range of textual sources from the first century CE *Periplus Maris Erythraei*[1] to the India letters of the Cairo Geniza dated to the eleventh and twelfth centuries, as well as Chinese and Arab accounts.[2] In his initial survey of 311 documents relevant to trade with India, Goitein found that Indian silk and other textiles such as cotton formed an important component of the list of seventy-seven items transferred from Arabia, East Africa and India

[1] Lionel Casson, *The Periplus Maris Erythraei* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), pp. 39–44.

[2] Moira Tampoe, *Maritime Trade between China and the West* (Oxford: BAR International Series 555, 1989), pp. 131–153.

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to Cairo.[3] An analysis of these trade commodities indicates that, though there were variations over time, the staples included textiles, beads, ivory and metal-ware.

In this chapter, I focus on textiles from the Indian subcontinent traded across the Indian Ocean. India has historically been one of the major producers of cotton fabrics in the Indian Ocean region. The evolution of a cultivated version of cotton (both Gossypium arborem or tree cotton and G. herbaceum or short staple cotton) in South Asia is dated to the fifth millennium BCE levels at Mehrgarh in Baluchistan, while finds dated to the Harappan period occur in a variety of contexts. At Mohenjo-daro, for example, Marshall found two silver vases wrapped in red-dyed cotton cloth in the lower town.[4] Dorian Fuller has reviewed the evidence for the presence of cotton and flax at Harappan sites, as well as in other parts of the Indian subcontinent. He suggests an increase in spinning activity in peninsular India from the second half of the second millennium BCE as a result of increasing social complexity.[5] More recently, jute cloth has been identified from the site of Harappa and dated to 2200–1900 (cal) BCE.[6]

Three aspects of this long history of textiles that travelled across the Indian Ocean will be highlighted in the pages that follow: the first relates to the diverse varieties of textiles attested to in the sources and the fact that it was only some of these that travelled across the seas; the second includes organization of trade networks and changes from the beginning of the Common Era to the fourteenth century CE; while

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[3] Shelomo Dov Goitein, "Letters and Documents on the India Trade," *Islamic Culture* 37, vol. 3 (1966): p. 196.

[4] Jonathan M. Kenoyer, "Ancient Textiles of the Indus Valley Region," in *Tana Bana: The Woven Soul of Pakistan*, ed. Noorjehan Bilgrami (Karachi: Koel Publications, 2004); John Marshall, *Mohenjo-daro and the Indus Civilisation* (London: A. Probsthain, 1931), pp. 33, 194–5, 585–6.

[5] Dorian Q. Fuller, "The spread of textile production and textile crops in India beyond the Harappan zone: An aspect of the emergence of craft specialization and systematic trade," in *Linguistics, Archaeology and the Human Past*, Occasional Paper 3, ed. Toshiki Osada, and Akinori Uesugi (Kyoto: Indus Project, Research Institute for Humanity and Nature, 2008), pp. 1–26.

[6] Rita P. Wright, David L. Lentz, Harriet F. Beaubien, and Christine K. Kimbrough, "New evidence for jute (Corchorus capsularis L.) in the Indus civilization," *Archaeological and Anthropological Sciences*, 3 February (2012) (online). https://www.harappa.com/sites/default/files/pdf/Jute.pdf accessed on 22nd November 2016.

the final aspect will highlight multiple uses of cloth within the subcontinent. The broader issue that this chapter addresses relates to the role of textiles as a means of communication across the shared cultural ethos of the Indian Ocean during the period from the first to thirteenth centuries CE. Textiles were significant markers of cultural identity in Asia and were often utilized to create social relationships. Their ritual significance is evident from ninth- and tenth-century inscriptions from Java. New archaeological investigations in the past decade are providing material evidence, which corroborates the central role of textiles in exchange across the Indian Ocean. For instance, there have been notable finds in central Thailand and Sulawesi. Based on an important group of ninety fragmentary spindle whorls dated from the third century BCE to the third century CE, found at Tha Kae, one of the several moated sites, ten kilometres from Lopburi in Thailand, Judith Cameron has suggested a probable link with India in the early first millennium CE.[7] Twenty-four textile fragments from a burial site of Pontanoa, Bangka, were radiocarbon dated to around 500 CE. Dye analysis showed that they were block-printed and resist dyed—a unique process associated with India.[8]

I start by tracing patterns of consumption of textiles in the Indian subcontinent based on early textual sources and archaeological data in order to expand upon the cultural significance of textiles.

Consumption Patterns

Later Vedic texts of the first millennium BCE reveal a pattern of dress whereby cotton cloth was used for daily wear, large woollen shawls (*kambala*) for the cold season, and fine linen (*kśauma*) made from fibres of flax or the linseed plant for the elite. The *Arthaśāstra* composed between 50 and 125 CE[9] lists valuable goods considered important for inclusion in the king's treasury and this involved a range of textiles such as woollens (dyed and undyed); those from Nepal; those made

[7] Judith Cameron, "Iron and cloth across the Bay of Bengal: New data from Tha Kae, central Thailand," *Antiquity* 85, no. 328 (2011), pp. 559–567.

[8] Judith Cameron, "Indian Textile Fragments from the site of Pontanoa Bangka, Sulawesi, Indonesia," *Journal of Indian Ocean Archaeology* 7/8 (2013), pp. 1–8.

[9] Patrick Olivelle, *King, Governance and Law in Ancient India: Kautilya's Arthaśāstra* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 29.

from animal hair; *dukūla*, which probably meant some kind of yarn; linen; cotton cloth and various varieties of silk, where a distinction is made between *patrorṇa*, *kauśeya* and *cīna* cloth from the land of Cīna (or China) (II.11.107–114). The last denotes the domesticated Bombyx silk of China while the first two—*patrorṇa* and *kauśeya*—have been identified as uncultivated or 'wild' silk produced by the larvae of moths which spin their cocoons on the leaves of various trees.[10] *Kauśeya* is already mentioned in the fifth–fourth centuries BCE grammar of Panini (IV.3.42) and occurs in the Epics as well.

Early Indian Buddhist literature provides insights into a diverse range of textiles used; cloth appears on the earliest list of gifts permissible to Buddhist monks and nuns, which included only four items: robes, food, place for rest and medicine. Early textual references indicate that several varieties of clothing were involved, though only cotton cloth was allowed, as physical distinctiveness became important so that Buddhist monks could be differentiated from ascetics of other affiliations. For example, King Pasenadi is said to have gifted a thin soft shawl of fine linen to a nun, thereby stirring a controversy over the issue.[11]

Gradually, additions were made to the list of permissible gifts and silk came to be included, signifying acceptance of wider contemporary practices. Rules for monastic clothing thus exemplify the Buddhist doctrine of the 'middle way', by negotiating between rigid rules and acceptable reality.[12] For example, a piece of silk was found in a Buddhist relic casket dated to the early centuries CE at Devnimori in Gujarat.[13] The practice of gifting clothes to monks continued in the later period, as evident from a six-line inscription in cave 11 at Kanheri on the west coast of India dated to 12 September 854 CE. This records the visit of a devout worshipper of the Buddha from Gauda (or Bengal) and a permanent endowment made by him of one hundred drammas or silver coins for the

[10] Hartmut Scharfe, *Investigations in Kautalya's Manual of Political Science* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1993), p. 290; Samuel Beal, *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, vol. II (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co, 1906/1958), p. 133.

[11] Gouri P. Lad, "Textiles in the Vinaya Pitaka," *Bulletin of the Deccan College Postgraduate and Research Institute* 49 (1990): pp. 227–235.

[12] Paul Nietupski, "Clothing: Buddhist Perspectives," *Encyclopaedia of Monasticism* A – L, ed. William M. Johnston (Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, 2000), pp. 307–9.

[13] Ramanlal Nagarji Mehta, and S.N. Chowdhary, *Excavations at Devnimori* (Baroda: Maharaja Sayajirao University, 1966), p. 186.

construction of a meditation room and clothing for monks residing at the mahāvihāra at Krishnagiri identified with Kanheri.[14]

A total of 2381 poems by 473 poets are identified as the earliest surviving literature in Tamil dating from the first century BCE to the third century CE.[15] These are broadly divided into two categories called *akam* (or interior) and *puram* (or exterior), the former dealing with love and life inside the family, while the latter relates to men's interactions outside, such as war and politics. The *Purananuru*, an anthology of 400 poems sung in honour of the king and written between the first and third centuries CE contains fascinating insights into the varied uses of clothing, such as white cloth being used to cover a dead hero,[16] or the exquisitely embroidered silken garments sewn with ornaments bestowed by the king on the bard.[17] One of the poems speaks of a woman spinning cotton by the light of a small fire in the town.[18]

Clearly, the domain of textiles was complex and intricately linked to the creation of social identity. Was this limited to internal consumption, or did the complexity transcend national borders and into trans-oceanic networks? As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, textiles were an important component of trade across the western Indian Ocean. There are references in the *Periplus Maris Erythraei* to 'cloth of all kinds', garments and silks being exported from the west coast of India[19] for centres at the mouth of the Red Sea, such as the island of Socotra, as well as along the south Arabian coast. The details in the *Periplus* have found some corroboration through archaeological excavations conducted at the site of Berenike in Egypt, as will be discussed in the next section.

A somewhat different picture emerges from the Judeo-Arabic texts recovered from the Geniza chamber of the Ben Ezra synagogue in Fustat (Old Cairo), which provide fascinating insights into the maritime world of the Indian Ocean. The recently translated 459 documents (comprising

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[14] Shobhana Gokhale, *Kanheri Inscriptions* (Pune: Deccan College Post-graduate & Research Institute, 1991), pp. 70–71.

[15] George L. Hart, and Hank Heifetz, *The Purananuru: The Four Hundred Songs of War and Wisdom* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), p. xvi.

[16] Hart and Heifetz, *The Purananuru*, p. 169.

[17] Hart and Heifetz, *The Purananuru*, p. 224.

[18] Hart and Heifetz, *The Purananuru*, p. 186.

[19] Casson, *The Periplus Maris Erythraei*, pp. 194–5, sections 6, 14, 31, 32, 36, 39, 48, 49, 51, 56, 59, 63.

523 shelf marks of the India Letters from the Cairo Geniza dated from CE 1080 to 1160) are crucial to this discussion:

> As for textiles, Indian muslin (Indian red silk) [sic], called *lānis* (*lānas*) in some letters and *lālis* (*lālas*) in others, as well as muslin clothing are frequently mentioned, but mostly as presents sent by the India traders to their wives, to business friends or to religious dignitaries. On the other hand, Indian cotton fabrics were traded in considerable quantities, but still were only of secondary importance. Since textiles took up much cargo space, only precious textiles were, as a rule, considered worthwhile to ship; but the Jewish traders represented in the Geniza catered mostly to middle class customers.[20]

Another category of textiles were meant for distinct markets. For example, the *futa*, better described as a sarong or untailored long piece of cloth worn around the waist or sometimes shoulders, is frequently mentioned in the Geniza documents as being sent from Egypt to Aden and from there to India. It is suggested that these were meant for foreigners resident in India and were usually either of linen or silk, while the local garment worn by the Indian population was invariably of cotton.[21] The most popular were indigo-dyed textiles that found markets across the Indian Ocean, as discussed in the next section.

Textiles Dyed Blue in Indian Ocean Trade

Indigo is perhaps the oldest organic dye used in the Indian Ocean region. The Greek sources refer to its origin in India and the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* catalogues it as an item of export from Barbarikon (Sect. 39). The Greek term used is *indikon melan*, literally 'Indian black'. The term used for it in South Asia is *nīla*, a term that spread eastwards into Southeast Asia with the adoption of Indian textiles, especially for ceremonial purposes, while the Arabs conveyed their version of *nīla* with the definite article *an- nīla*.[22] In recent years, this information from

[20] Shelomo Dov Goitein, and Mordechai Akiva Friedman, *India Traders of the Middle Ages* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), p. 17.

[21] Goitein and Friedman, *India Traders of the Middle Ages*, pp. 175–6.

[22] Jenny Balfour-Paul, *Indigo* (London: British Museum Press, 1998).

written accounts has been substantiated by finds of textile specimens dyed in blue.

The *Dharmasūtras* (or Law Books) composed in Sanskrit around the third to second centuries BCE reject the use of dyes or dyed cloth and categorically decree that the *snātaka* (or student) should avoid all clothes that are dyed, as well as those that are naturally black (*Sarvān rāgānvāsasi varjayet – kṛṣṇam ca svābhāvikam,* Ā*pastamba Dharmasūtra*, I.30.10–11). The same is repeated in other Dharma texts, which often associate colour with a particular *varna*. According to the *Vasiṣṭha Dharmasūtra* (II.65–7) a *brahman*'s garment should be white and unblemished, a *ksatriya*'s dyed madder red and a *vaisya*'s yellow silk. Or else, people of all classes may wear un-dyed cotton garments. In addition to wearing un-dyed clothes, *brahmans* are also restrained from trading in indigo. Thus, the *Manusmṛti* (X.89) states that, when a *brahman* is unable to earn a living, he may sell goods traded by a *vaisya*, but should avoid every type of dyed cloth … indigo (*nīlī*), lac, and so on.

Most of the cloth used by Buddhist monks was reddish brown and vegetable dyes were used for the purpose. Patterned and brightly coloured garments were prohibited to the monks, as also were garments dyed with indigo or turmeric, or in the colours yellow, crimson, magenta, or black. The use of cloth with cut ends, long borders, embroidered borders and borders in the shape of serpents' hoods, appropriate for the layman, were also not allowed.[23] These restrictions on the colour and nature of textiles allowed to Buddhist clergy are to be seen as attempts to create a distinctive identity for monks and nuns, which would differentiate them both from the laity and from other ascetic groups. The appearance of Buddhist monastics is a central concern in the *Vinaya* texts, which contain detailed rules on the materials of robes, dyeing and storing them, as well as how the robes are to be worn.[24]

The fruit of the indigofera plant mixed with ghee or clarified butter appears in a list of antidotes to poison in Susruta's compendium, which dates from a few centuries BCE to 500 CE, while the process of dyeing is described in the *Pañcatantra*. Once, a jackal named Candarava lived in

[23] Moti Chandra, *Costumes, Textiles, Cosmetics and Coiffure in Ancient and Medieval India* (New Delhi: Oriental Publishers, 1973), p. 12.

[24] Torkel Brekke, "The Early Samgha and the Laity," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 20, no. 2 (1997): p. 27.

a cave in the outskirts of a city. One day as he was hunting for food, his throat pricked with hunger, and he entered the city. At once, the street dogs fell upon him snapping at his limbs and jabbing with their sharp pointed teeth. Terrified out of his wits by the savage barking, Candarava ran here and there, reeling and stumbling in his desperate attempts to escape. Finally, he rushed into the house of an artisan, where he tumbled into a huge vat of indigo dye that had been left unattended. The dogs ran away in the direction they had come from. Seeing all the animals flee from him, Candarava understood that they were scared of his altered appearance.[25]

Thus, it is evident that the Epic, the *Dharmasūtras*, *Ayurveda* and narrative literature provide very different perspectives on the use of dyes, especially indigo, from a complete negation of the use of dyed cloth to associating the colour with deities. Another genre of Sanskrit literature that provides insights into the attitude to clothing is *kāvya*. An especially noteworthy characteristic that distinguished it from contemporary medieval European literature is the almost total absence of descriptions of clothing of the principal characters. For example, the eleventh-century poet Sri Harsa in his *Naiṣadhīyacarita* describes in great detail the jewels that the heroine donned as she entered the *svayamvara* hall or her tremendous physical beauty, but almost totally ignores the garments she was wearing. The same poetic conventions are evident in medieval Jaina and Buddhist writings as well.

This emphasis on the use of a restricted range of colours and the dominant position of un-dyed cloth in textual accounts needs to be contrasted with data from inscriptions, sculptures and paintings. Mathura, for example, was famous for a special kind of cloth known as *śāṭaka* (*Mahābhāṣya*, I. 1.2) in the early centuries CE and one of the inscriptions refers to the donor as the wife of a dyer.[26] It is significant that a variety of garments, including those with ornamental cloth ends, are represented in the second- to first-century BCE sculptures of Bharhut and Sanchi in central India. Similarly, the fifth-century paintings at Ajanta provide details of patterned textiles and especially noteworthy

[25] Arthur W. Ryder translated *Pañcatantra*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1925) Book I: The Blue Jackal, pp. 122–129.

[26] G. Buehler, "New Jaina Inscriptions from Mathura", *Epigraphia Indica* I (1892): no. 5, p. 384.

are the costumes worn by women. For example, a *cauri*-bearer or an attendant walking in front of a raja's horse in a procession wears a full-sleeved tunic with the figures of *hamsa* or geese (cave I). In a representation of the Campeya jataka in cave II, a lady is dressed in a long tunic decorated with an assortment of small flowers. Patterned textiles also appear in the representations of pillows, curtains and cushions.[27] Royal attendants (cave I) are often shown wearing tunics on which complex patterns are worked out. An attendant depicted in cave I wears a tunic with a pattern in bands consisting of rosettes, circles within compartments and chevrons, while another seated on the ground wears a tunic of silver brocade with floral designs in dark brown.[28] How was this patterned cloth produced and what role did dyes play in its production? Most likely the intricately patterned cloth seen in paintings was produced through mordant-painting and resist dyeing. There is evidence for the use of this technique in the early centuries of the Common Era, as will be discussed later.

Patterned cloth was produced either by mordant-dyeing alone or, more commonly, when several colours were involved, with mordant dyeing in combination with resist-dyeing. Since cotton cloth does not respond readily to dyes, a fixative agent or mordant had to be used to ensure that the dye adhered to the fabric. Mordants and dyes were applied either by painting with *qalams* (or pens), or by stamping onto the fabric with wooden blocks. While the use of mordants is considered as a 'positive' process, both painting and block-printing were also employed in the 'negative' process of resist-dyeing. This involved the use of either molten wax or moist mud on those areas of the fabric that were not intended to take up the dye.

All types of patterned textiles evoked admiration and awe in the writings of Sanskrit philosophers who were intrigued by cloth that had been dyed, patterned or woven in more than one colour.[29] Passages in *Nyāya-Vaiśesika* writings—especially in their debates with the Buddhists—indicate that, by the tenth century CE, philosophers were trying to understand two types of multicoloured cloth: cloth that was woven with

[27] Moti Chandra, *Costumes, Textiles, Cosmetics and Coiffure*, p. 93.

[28] Moti Chandra, *Costumes, Textiles, Cosmetics and Coiffure*, p. 86.

[29] Phyllis Granoff, "Luxury Goods and Intellectual History," *Ars Orientalis* 34, (2007): pp. 151–7.

threads of different colours and single-coloured cloth to which a pattern had been applied after weaving. The basic issue that preoccupied them was the final colour of the richly patterned and multicoloured cloth and the implications of this for their philosophy. In most cases, the philosophers agreed that the final product had a separate colour, best termed '*citra*' or variegated.[30]

The *Divyāvadāna* refers to shops at Sopara on the west coast, which exclusively dealt in cloth imported from Kasi or Varanasi (*kasika-vastravari*) and also shops that stocked *phuttaka* cloth that has been described as printed muslin.[31] *Puṣpapaṭṭa* or 'flowered cloth', either printed or embroidered, was also known. The tenth-century Siyadoni inscription from Gujarat records donations made between 903 and 968 by merchants and artisans, and the endowment of shops in the textile market, main market and so on.[32] Another example from South India is the Piranmalai inscription of the thirteenth century from the Sokkanatha temple. The importance of the temple lay in its strategic location astride routes crossing the southern part of the peninsula from the Malabar coast to the east. The record lists a range of commodities on which cess was levied for the benefit of the temple. These included cotton, yarn, thick cloth, thin cloth, thread, and so on.[33]

The fifth-century CE Mandasor inscription provides an instance of how a guild of silk weavers endeavoured to retain their identity in spite of their displacement from their place of residence. The inscription describes the designs they wove on silks as *varnantara-vibhaga-cittena*, translated as 'with varied stripes of different colours'.[34] Clearly then, patterned cloth was an important commodity that needed to be comprehended not only by the weaver who produced it, but also by the philosopher who sought to explain the colour of the final product. The discussion so far has been based on texts and paintings. Is there evidence for the survival of ancient specimens of textiles from India? It is here that

[30] Granoff, "Luxury Goods and Intellectual History," pp. 158–9.

[31] Moti Chandra, *Costumes, Textiles, Cosmetics and Coiffure*, p. 33.

[32] V.K. Jain, *Trade and Traders in Western India* (New Delhi: MunshiramManoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd. 1990, p. 139).

[33] Meera Abraham, *Two Medieval Merchant Guilds of South India* (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers, 1988), p. 105.

[34] A.L. Basham, "The Mandasor Inscription of the Silk Weavers," *Essays on Gupta Culture*, ed. Bardwell L. Smith (New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1983).

archaeological excavations conducted at the Red Sea site of Berenike provide insights into the world of Indian Ocean networks, as the arid climate of the Red Sea region has preserved a rich hoard of textiles from the subcontinent.

The town of Berenike was founded in the first half of the third century BCE and was abandoned before about 550 CE—thus enjoying an extraordinary life-span of eight hundred years. Berenike is located at the boundary of the Red Sea and the Eastern Desert on an extinct coral reef, covering an area of about 300–350 metres north–south and 670 metres east–west. The site is unique in other ways as well, as the arid climate has enabled the preservation of organic remains, including textiles; to date, approximately 800 textile pieces have been recovered. Of these, 360 were found in 1995 and 450 in the 1996 season of archaeological excavations. A majority of the fabrics were of cotton (48 per cent in 1995), while fancy fabrics tended to be of wool and most of these probably came from the fourth- to fifth-century CE deposits. The standard direction of spin in Roman Egypt and the Eastern Desert was the S-spin, whereas half of the pieces of cotton from Berenike were Z-spun.[35] This is the usual twist for Indian cotton thread and scholars analyzing textiles are generally agreed that the spin direction of fibres was culturally specific.[36] One of the surprises of the 1994 season was the discovery of a blue-resist dyed cotton fragment with a floral motif.[37] The only complete object found was a small bag made from irregularly Z-spun cotton tabby.[38]

In spite of this relative profusion of textile pieces, evidence for local textile production is restricted to one spindle whorl, one flax-seed and a small quantity of cotton wool. It would seem that Berenike was a consumer city and its wealth allowed its residents to tap the textile resources

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[35] John Peter Wild, and Felicity C. Wild, "The Textiles," in *Berenike 1995: Preliminary Report of the 1995 Excavations at Berenike (Egyptian Red Sea Coast) and the Survey of the Eastern Desert*, ed. S.E. Sidebotham, and W. Z. Wendrich (Leiden: Centre of Non-Western Societies, 1996), p. 246.

[36] Ruth Barnes, *Indian Block-Printed Textiles in Egypt*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 49.

[37] Wild and Wild, "The Textiles," p. 251.

[38] John Peter Wild, and Felicity C. Wild, "The Textiles," in *Berenike 1996: Report of the Excavations at Berenike (Egyptian Red Sea Coast) and the Survey of the Eastern Desert*, ed. S.E. Sidebotham, and W. Z. Wendrich (Leiden: Centre of Non-Western Societies, 1998), p. 230.

of a wide hinterland. Nevertheless, there is evidence for the purchase and importation at the site of raw wool and the utilization of the available fleece of sheep and goats, as well as for the presence of indigo plants—indigo being one of the dyes used for the textiles.[39]

Berenike was a multi-cultural site and the inhabitants came from throughout the ancient world, including Egypt, the Mediterranean, Axum, sub-Saharan Africa, south Arabia, Nabataea, Palmyra and, perhaps, India. Greek was the lingua franca in early Roman times and most texts are in that language, though ostraka (or writing on pottery) found in the city indicate a substantial Roman military presence. The Nikanor Archive belonging to a family of camel owners involved in the transport of goods between the Nile valley and the Red Sea coast indicates the participation of elite families resident in Egypt in trading activity, but similar data is not available to ascertain direct Roman official involvement in maritime trade. Overall, this Red Sea–Indian Ocean commerce seems to have been free-wheeling and a business that included barter.[40] Berenike, though, is not the only site to have provided evidence for the presence of textiles.

Nearly three thousand textile fragments were recovered from the archaeological excavations at Fustat, the capital of Abbasid Egypt (750–969), and dated from 750 CE to 1100 CE. A resist-dyed blue and white panel with alternating elephant and tree design is matched by other fragments from Quseir al-Qadim and the Newberry collection discussed later. Astounding evidence of a corpus of well-preserved textiles comes from the 1982 excavations at Quseir al-Qadim on the Egyptian coast of the Red Sea. What increases the value of these finds is the presence of hundreds of fragments of letters written in Arabic on paper dating from 1200 CE to 1240 CE that provided a rare glimpse into the use of textiles and of the trading community. Prized possessions in the house were Indian blue-patterned textiles with a 'tree of life' design alternating with the elephant motif or the stylized rosette pattern.[41]

The collection of more than two thousand textile fragments in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, gathered from the 1920s by Percy E.

[39] Wild and Wild, "The Textiles," (1998), pp. 235–6.

[40] Steven E. Sidebotham, *Berenike and the Ancient Maritime Spice Route* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), p. 249.

[41] Kathleen Strange Burke, and Donald Whitcomb, "Quseir al-Qadim in the thirteenth century," *Ars Orientalis* 34 (2007): pp. 82–98.

Newberry, provides an invaluable record not only of how collections were made in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but more significantly as a vital resource for studying the movement and use of indigo-dyed textiles. The bulk of this now famous collection was made between 1920 and 1932 during Newberry's stay in Cairo and seems to have come from the vicinity of the city, though the precise provenance of the finds remains unrecorded.

Two types of textiles interested Newberry: embroideries and printed fabrics. There are 1226 textile pieces that fall into the second category and it is this second category that is relevant for this chapter for two reasons. First, visually, the textiles can be divided into three groups: textiles dyed blue or black, those dyed red, and those that included both red and blue.[42] Second, the textile fragments were radiocarbon dated and gave dates ranging from the tenth to sixteenth centuries CE.

In the blue-dyed textiles, of which there are 267 fragments in the collection, resist was applied to cover parts of the fabric and the original colour of the fabric then formed a part of the pattern. The pattern thus appeared white against a blue background and the blocks used in the process would have had the pattern raised, rather than retracted into the surface.[43] A total of 253 fragments forming the third group in the Newberry collection show evidence of both blue and red dye. A majority of the designs were based on floral representations, though there are a few specimens showing animals, such as the elephant and birds such as the peacock and the goose. An analysis of the designs indicates similarities with architectural ornaments and Jain manuscript covers, leading to the conclusion that the block-printed textiles in the Newberry collection originated in north-western India, especially Gujarat. A final aspect of these textiles that needs discussion is their use. The presence of seams on some of the pieces indicates that they were stitched and worn as garments, while others were used as part of domestic furnishings, as room-dividers or door hangings and, perhaps, as large canopies for ceremonial occasions.[44] No doubt patterned textiles dyed blue had a wide circulation in Indian Ocean trade, both across the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal. This leads us to the issue of the organization of trade.

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[42] Barnes, *Indian Block-Printed Textiles in Egypt*, pp. 52–4.

[43] Barnes, *Indian Block-Printed Textiles in Egypt*, p. 55.

[44] Barnes, *Indian Block-Printed Textiles in Egypt*, p. 86.

Organization of Inland Trade

It is often suggested that kinship ties and family linkages formed the basis of trading networks in antiquity and it was only in the post-thirteenth-century CE period that there was a change in the relations between financiers, traders and shippers. Credit for this change is attributed to the growth of large states, developed tax structures, expanding markets and growing populations. How valid are these assumptions? In earlier studies, we have discussed the data for the organization of trade, as evident from inscriptions and Buddhist texts, such as the *Jātakas*.[45] A reading of the *Periplus Maris Erythraei* establishes the absence of state control over maritime trade either in the region of the Red Sea or further afield.

Chapter II. 23 of the *Arthaśāstra* refers to the Superintendent of Yarns, who is urged to employ women to spin yarn from wool, bark fibre, cotton, silk, hemp and flax, and to set their wages accordingly. In contrast, the Nasik inscription of the year 42, reads as follows and is worth quoting extensively:

> In the year 42, in the month of Vesakha, Usavadata, son of Dinika, son-in-law of king Nahapana, the Ksaharata Ksatrapa has bestowed this cave on the Sangha generally; he has also given a perpetual endowment, three thousand – 3000 kahapanas, which for the members of the Sangha of any sect and any origin, dwelling in this cave, will serve as cloth money and money for outside life (kuśaṇa) and those kahapanas have been invested in guilds dwelling at Govardhana, – 2000 in a weavers' guild, interest one pratika (monthly) for the hundred; and those kahapanas are not to be repaid, their interest only to be enjoyed. Out of them, the two thousand – 2000 at one pratika per cent are the cloth money; out of twelve (kahapanas). As to the thousand which has been invested at an interest of three quarters of a pratika per cent, out of them the money for kuśaṇa. And at the village of Chikhalapadra in the Kapura district has been given eight thousand 8000 stems of coconut trees; and all this has been proclaimed

[45] Himanshu Prabha Ray, *Monastery and Guild: Commerce under the Satavahanas* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1986); Himanshu Prabha Ray, "The Western Indian Ocean and the Early Maritime Links of the Indian Subcontinent," *Indian Economic and Social History Review* XXXI, no 1 (1994): pp. 65–88; Himanshu Prabha Ray, *The Archaeology of Seafaring in Ancient South Asia* (Cambdrige: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

> and registered at the town's hall, at the record office, according to custom.[46]

The Nasik inscription of the early centuries of the Common Era thus records the practice of investing money with guilds of weavers. It also continues the practice mentioned earlier, that of donating money for cloth to Buddhist monks.

An important source of state revenue was *śulka* or tolls and the person in-charge of collection is referred to as *śulkika*. It would seem that *śulka* was a tax collected for use of roads, ferry-crossings and harbour facilities, and differed from tax charged on the sale and purchase of commodities in the marketplace. Of interest to this discussion is the charter of Visnusena dated to 592 CE, issued from Lohata in the Kathiawar region of Gujarat. This charter is addressed to a list of officials, as is usual in records of the Maitraka dynasty (493–776 CE). The charter assures protection to the community of merchants (*vaniggrāma*) established in the region and endorses their continued functioning.[47] It provides a detailed list of seventy-two trade regulations or customary laws to be followed. Some of the regulations are of great interest to this discussion, as they indicate not only an active coastal trade, but also a lower rate of tax for commodities for religious purposes. Indigo or *nīla* is mentioned as one of the items exported from areas such as Gujarat and the charter of Visnusena mentions a tax on the pressing of the indigo dye. Indigo also figures as one of the items of trade from India westward to Egypt handled by the business house of Ibn'Awkal between 980 and 1030.[48]

From the ninth to the mid-fourteenth centuries, several merchant associations dominated economic transactions in peninsular India, such as the Ainurruvar, Manigramam, Nanadesi and the Anjuvannam. Associated with these merchant associations were communities of craftsmen such as weavers, basket-makers, potters, leather-workers and so on. The topographical distribution of the inscriptions is significant and they are clustered in the Dharwad–Bijapur and Mysore localities of Karnataka,

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[46] E. Senart, "The Inscriptions in the Caves at Nasik", *Epigraphia Indica*, VIII, no. 8 (1905–6): pp. 82–85, no. 12.

[47] D.C Sircar, "Charter of Visnusena samvat 649," *Epigraphia Indica* XXX, no. 30 (1953–4): pp. 163–181.

[48] Norman A. Stillman, "The eleventh-century merchant house of Ibn 'Awkal (A Geniza study)," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 16 (1973): pp. 15–88.

while in Tamilnadu larger numbers are found in the Thanjavur, Tiruchirapalli and Madurai districts. Not only did these merchant associations develop powerful economic networks, they also employed private armies. They donated regularly to temples, which were at times named after them, and also contributed to the construction of tanks.

The early eleventh-century Kochi plates of Bhaskara Ravivarman record the grant of the title *Anjuvannam* and privileges in trade to Joseph Rabban, a Jew in Muyirikkodu (or Mujiri), now identified with Pattanam. The third set of inscriptions, the thirteenth-century Kottayam plates of Vira-Raghava, records the grant of the title *Manigrammam* and privileges to Ravikkoran, a merchant in Kodangalur.[49]

Different views have been expressed about the identity of Anjuvannam, an association of merchants found only in coastal towns on the Malabar and Tamil coasts. After a careful analysis of the inscriptions, Subbarayalu equates them with the Hanjamana found on the Konkan coast in Marathi-Sanskrit and Kannada inscriptions. It denoted a trading body composed of West Asian sea-going merchants traversing the Ocean as far east as Java and occurs in inscriptions from the ninth century onwards. By the eleventh century, it was largely comprised of Muslim traders and became a permanent part of the local community in coastal villages. Its presence as a trade guild continued until the thirteenth century, after which there exist no further references to it.[50]

Information about the organization and functioning of the merchant guilds comes from inscriptions recording donations to temples that refer to two types of assembly meetings.[51] One type—*pattana-dharmayam* (Kannada) or *pagudi* (Tamil), meaning shared contribution—comprises those that record decisions linked to contributions made to the temple; the second refers to the founding of towns where merchants as well as soldiers lived (*erivira-pattinam*). The *pattana-dharmayam* inscriptions

[49] Noboru Karashima, "South Indian Merchant Guilds in the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asia," in *Nagapattinam to Suvarnadwipa: Reflections on the Chola Naval Expeditions to Southeast Asia*, ed. Hermann Kulke, K. Kesavapany and Vijay Sakhuja (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2009), p. 54.

[50] Y. Subbarayalu, "Anjuvannam: A Maritime Trade Guild of Medieval Times," in *Nagapattinam to Suwarnadwipa: Reflections on Chola Naval Expeditions*, ed. H. Kulke, K. Kesavapany and V. Sakhuja (Singapore: Institute for Southeast Asian Studies, 2009), pp. 163–166.

[51] Karashima, "South Indian Merchant Guilds," pp. 135–57.

appear in Maharashtra and Karnataka in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, while they are clustered in Tamilnadu in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Most of the *erivira-pattinam* inscriptions in Tamilnadu come from the eleventh and twelfth centuries, suggesting that, at this time, the importance of soldiers who guarded the merchants increased greatly. The range of their operations extended well beyond the boundaries of the Indian subcontinent into Southeast Asia.

Several clusters of Tamil inscriptions have been found on the eastern sides of the Indian Ocean from Burma (Myanmar) to Sumatra. Of the eight mid-ninth- to late-thirteenth-century Tamil or part-Tamil language inscriptions so far found in Southeast Asia, one has been found near Pagan in Burma, two just south of the Isthmus of Kra in the Malay peninsula, four in north and west Sumatra, and one on the central coast of China.[52] The earliest Tamil inscription was found on a hill, about fifteen kilometres upstream on the Takua Pa River, on the west coast of peninsular Thailand. It was associated with the remains of a small structure and three large stone figures of Shaiva affiliation. The inscription refers to the digging of a tank and a military camp set up for its protection.

There is a temporal gap of almost two centuries between the ninth-century peninsular inscription of Takua Pa and the earliest Tamil-language inscription found in Sumatra. This latter inscription, dated 1088 CE, was found at the early port site or *pattinam* (as mentioned in the inscription) of Lobo Tuwa, just to the north of Barus on the west coast of the island. This record refers to a tax levied on the captains and crew of incoming ships to the settlement on the island. An inscription from the north coast of Sumatra dated to twelfth-century records trading regulations covering losses of goods, the waiving of collection of interest, and perhaps of royal fees. The last five of the known Tamil-language inscriptions of Southeast and East Asia appear to date to the second half of the thirteenth century CE. Perhaps the easternmost record is the bilingual Tamil and Chinese language inscription found associated with remains of one of the two Siva temples at Quanzhou in south China. These inscriptions connect merchants associations operating out of south India with the founding or the endowing of temples or other structures for the use of the resident Indian merchant community.

[52] Jan Wisseman Christie, "The medieval Tamil-language inscriptions in Southeast Asia and China," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 29, no. 2 (1998): pp. 239–268.

In the tenth century, local versions of these merchant guilds, termed the *banigrama*, appeared in the north coast ports of both Java and Bali, especially at Julah on the Balinese coast. There are seven Javanese inscriptions dating from 902 CE to 1053 CE that refer to merchant associations called *banigrama* and to the various tax concessions granted to them. While some foreign merchants may have been included in these groups, these appear largely as indigenous organizations associated with the local economic networks as tax-farmers.[53]

Changes in the textile patterns illustrated on Javanese statuary of the later tenth and eleventh centuries reflect the rapid rise in popularity of Indian export cloths at this time. Interesting information regarding textiles is found in inscriptions from central Java, which record changes in the status of land donated to religious establishments. Festivities accompanied this change in status and there are references to gifts given to officials and witnesses on the occasion of the establishment of the *sima*. Gifts of cloth are recorded and several ninth-century inscriptions mention 200 pieces of cloth gifted to residents and guests. Inscriptions refer to nearly seventy varieties of cloth and, while most of these would have been of moderate value, others certainly indicated valuable varieties meant for royalty. Gifts of textiles also took into account the role and status of the recipient, as well as the sex. The most common type of cloth listed is described on account of its colour as red or blue. Special cloths for persons of high status were in a range of colours and patterns and, often, the place of origin of the textiles is also mentioned in the inscriptions. Most of the cloth presented seems to have been of cotton, though there are references to fine textiles, possibly silk.[54]

Multiple Meanings

Cotton cloth (called *karpasika-pata* or simply *pata* in Sanskrit) was also used as writing material in ancient India. Nearchos (c. 326 BCE), an admiral of Alexander's fleet, has mentioned that the Indians wrote letters

[53] Jan Wisseman Christie, "Asian Sea Trade between the Tenth and Thirteenth Centuries and its Impact on the States of Java and Bali," in *Archaeology of Seafaring: The Indian Ocean in the Ancient Period*, ed. Himanshu Prabha Ray (New Delhi: Pragati Publications, 1999), pp. 221–270.

[54] Jan Wisseman Christie, "Texts and 'Textiles' in Medieval Java," *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient* 80 (1993): pp. 181–211.

on well-beaten cotton cloth. Cloth was prepared for writing by putting on it a thin layer of wheat or rice pulp and polishing with a conch-shell or a smooth stone after the same was dried. Writing on the pata was done with black ink. In Rajasthan, almanacs and horoscopes were prepared on scrolls of cloth. In Kerala, till recently, cloth was used by traders for the maintenance of accounts of a permanent nature. In Karnataka, until the last century, processed cloth known as *kaditam* was in use. It was covered with a paste of tamarind-seed and subsequently blackened with charcoal powder. Chalk or steatite pencils were used for writing on this black cloth. At times, silk cloth was also used for writing.

Written documents gradually replaced traditional oral statements and gained legal status in the early centuries CE, as evident from the *Arthaśāstra*.[55] Keeping records was also described as a necessary procedure in accounting and legal practices.[56] In later Dharma texts, such as Narada and Yajnavalkya, documents (*lekhyam*) were required for transactions of property and wealth, and their format was explained in full. Inscriptions refer to a tax on written documents referred to as *kovera*.[57] This is a practice that continued throughout the historical period, as evident from the Geniza papers. When Ben Yijū found no paper, he wrote on cloth. Among the documents preserved in the Geniza, Goitein found two pieces of cloth inscribed in Ben Yijū's hand. The fact that cloth was used rather than paper indicates that they were written in India, not in Yemen or Egypt.[58]

Conclusion

In the final analysis, it is evident that Indian textiles should not be regarded as a mere luxury item which was bought by traders (Romans, Arabs or Europeans) to pay for the spices from Southeast Asia or 'as commercial commodities produced to the requirements of a foreign

[55] Patrick Olivelle, *King, Governance and Law in Ancient India – Kautilya's Arthaśāstra* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2013), 2.10.1–63, pp. 119–122.

[56] Olivelle, *King, Governance and Law in Ancient India* 2.7.2–3; 3.1.7, pp. 111–112; p. 179.

[57] Vasudev Vishnu Mirashi, *Inscriptions of the Kalachuri-Chedi Era*, vol. IV of Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum (Ootacamund: Government Epigraphist for India, 1955), p. cxlii.

[58] Goitein and Friedman, *India Traders of the Middle Ages*, p. 61.

consumer'.[59] Instead, textiles have been an integral part of the maritime network of the region at least from the beginning of the Common Era onwards, if not earlier. This network involved a range of fabrics from coarse cotton to fine silks and from dyed cloth to embroidered material. The value attributed to these varied not only temporally, but also spatially in the different regions of the Indian Ocean littoral. This, then, has to be studied within the context of the nature of the society and there can be no generalizations across the Indian Ocean. For example, an argument is often made that textiles in Southeast Asia were recognized as a means of storing wealth, whereas in India domestic surplus income was traditionally stored in the form of gold and silver jewellery. As has been pointed out in this essay, the association of fine and expensive textiles with elite status is evident from references in Sanskrit and Pali literature, and finds representations in sculpture and painting. It is no doubt correct that textiles do not find mention in the inscriptions of South Asia as is the case with those from tenth-century Java, but this variation is a result of differences in the nature of rituals associated with donations of land between the two regions. Thus, the study of textiles needs to be located both within the micro-context of local and regional systems, as well as within broader Indian Ocean commercial and maritime networks.

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[59] John Guy, *Woven Cargoes: Indian Textiles in the East* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1998), p. 8.

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CHAPTER 12

The Decline of the Malagasy Textile Industry, c. 1800–1895

Gwyn Campbell

Introduction

It is conventionally thought that cheap mass-produced cloth emanating from European and North American factories, assisted by falling transport costs, undermined indigenous textile production in the non-western world.[1] Several writings on pre-colonial Malagasy textiles broach these issues.[2] For some, the export of predominantly adult male slaves

[1] See e.g. Charles Issawi, "De-industrialization and Re-industrialization in the Middle East since 1800," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 12, no. 4 (1980): pp. 469–79; Amiya Kumar Bagchi, "De-industrialization in India in the nineteenth century: Some theoretical implications," *Journal of Development Studies* 12, no. 2 (1976): pp. 135–64; Stephen Broadberry and Bishnupriya Gupta, "Lancashire and Shifting Competitive Advantage in Cotton Textiles, 1700-1850: The Neglected Role of Factor Prices," *Economic History Review* 62, no. 2 (2009): pp. 279–305.

[2] John Mack, *Malagasy Textiles* (Princes Risborough: Shire, 1989); Rebecca L. Green, *Once Is Never Enough: Textiles, Ancestors, and Reburials in Highland Madagascar* (Bloomington: Indian Art Museum, 1998); Christine Mullen Kreamer and Sarah Fee, eds., *Objects as Envoys: Cloth, Imagery, and Diplomacy in Madagascar* (Washington

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had, by about 1820, critically undermined cloth manufacture in highland Madagascar by obliging women, the core textile workers, to replace men in the agricultural sector.[3] Others have argued, though, that in the late 1800s French cloth imports undermined local production, helping to lay the basis for colonial takeover in 1895/1896.[4] Coming from an art historical perspective, still others have suggested that artisanal textile production remained vigorous through the period of isolation under Ranavalona I (r. 1828–1861). For instance, there is the assertion that the production of coloured brocaded silks at least 'reached their peak popularity' in the 1860s.[5] All consider that, thereafter, the influx of foreign cloth and dyes undercut local 'bast and plain cotton weaving, certain decorative techniques and eventually natural dyes'.[6] Sarah Fee contends, however, that indigenous textile production generally remained vibrant

DC: Smithsonian Institution, 2002); Sarah Fee, "The Shape of Fashion: The Historic Silk Brocades (akotifahana) of Highland Madagascar," *African Arts* 46, no. 3 (2013): pp. 26–39; Idem, "Chasing Silk: A search for meaning and memory in Madagascar's illustrious textiles," *ROM Magazine* (Fall 2013): 2733; Idem, "*Ze mañeva aze*: Looking for patterns in Malagasy cloth," in *Textiles in Indian Ocean Societies*, ed. Ruth Barnes (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005), pp. 85–109; William Gervase Clarence-Smith, "Locally produced textiles on the Indian Ocean periphery 1500–1850: East Africa, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia," paper presented at the 8th Global Economic History Network Conference, Pune (Dec, 2005); Chapurukha M. Kusimba, J. Claire Odland, and Bennet Bronson, eds., *Unwrapping the Textile Traditions of Madagascar* (Los Angeles: UCLA Fowler Museum Publications, 2004); Henri Mager, *La Vie à Madagascar* (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1898); Idem, *Rapport adressé aux chambres de commerce de Rouen et des Vosges*, 2 vols. (Rouen: Ancienne Imprimerie Lapierre, 1897); W.J. Edmonds, "Bygone Ornamentation and Dress among the Hova Malagasy," *Antananarivo Annual and Madagascar Magazine* (hereafter *AAMM*) 22 (1896): pp. 469–78.

[3] Pier M. Larson, *History and Memory in the Age of Enslavement: Becoming Merina in Highland Madagascar, 1770–1822* (Portsmouth, New Hampshire: Heinemann, 2000).

[4] Guy Jacob, "Influences occidentales en Imerina et déséquilbres économiques avant la conquête française," *Omaly sy Anio* pp. 5–6 (1977); Bernard Schlemmer, *Le Menabe, histoire d'une colonisation* (Paris: ORSTOM, 1983).

[5] Fee, "Shape of Fashion", p. 34; Sarah Fee, "Historic Handweaving in Highland Madagascar: New Insights from a Vernacular Text Attributed to a Royal Diviner Healer, c. 1870", *Textile History* 43, no. 1 (2012): pp. 61–82; see also Simon Peers, 'History and Change in the Weaving of Highland Madagascar', in *Unwrapping the Textile Traditions of Madagascar*, ed. Chapurukha M. Kusimba, J. Claire Odland, and Bennet Bronson (Los Angeles: UCLA Fowler Museum Publications, 2004), pp. 143–153.

[6] Fee, "Historic Handweaving", p. 153.

until at least circa 1950.[7] This chapter proposes an alternative view by examining the history of textile production within the Merina Empire between, approximately, 1800 and 1895 in the context of the threat posed both by the products of western factories and by local dynamics, notably the policies of the Merina court.

Background

In stark contrast to their African neighbours, the Malagasy eschewed the use of animal hides for clothing, employing an Austronesian preference for textiles of plant and insect origin, including reeds, bast (tree bark, hemp), and leaves (raffia, banana—*Musa textilis*), cotton and silk. The east coast was the centre of bark and leaf cloth production, hemp flourished in the volcanic soil near Betafo in southern Vakinankaratra and fertile terrain around Fort Dauphin and, while cotton and silk were cultivated in many regions, cotton and silk cloth production was concentrated in the central highlands and southwest—although William Ellis (1838) claimed that the finest Malagasy cotton cloth was produced in the southeast (Anosy).[8]

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[7] Sarah Fee, "Cloth in Motion: Madagascar's Textiles through History," in *Objects as Envoys: Cloth, Imagery, and Diplomacy in Madagascar,* ed. Christine Mullen Kreamer and Sarah Fee (Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution, 2002), pp. 33–94; Fee, "Historic Handweaving"; Fee, "Shape of Fashion"; Mary Jo Arnoldi, "Gifts from the Queen: Two Malagasy *Lamba Akotofahana* at the Smithsonian Institution," in *Objects as Envoys: Cloth, Imagery, and Diplomacy in Madagascar,* ed. Christine Mullen Kreamer and Sarah Fee (Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution, 2002), pp. 95–119.

[8] William Ellis, *History of Madagascar, vol. 1* (London: Fisher, 1838), pp. 79, 277; Mayeur, "Voyage au pays d'ancove, autrement dit des hovas ou Amboilamba dans l'intérieur des terres, Isle de Madagascar" (1777), pp. 161, 165–166, 173 and William Ellis, "Voyage au pays d'ancove, par le pays d'ancaye autrement dit des Baizangouzangoux" (1785), pp. 220–1, 226– British Library Add.18128; George S. Chapus et André Dandouau, "Les anciennes industries malgaches," *Bulletin de l'Académie Malgache* 30 (1951–1952): pp. 49–50; Samuel Pasfield Oliver, *Madagascar; an Historical and Descriptive Account of the Island and its Former Dependencies,* vol. 2 (London; New York, Macmillan, 1886), pp. 11, 79, 82–83; Guillaume Grandidier, *Histoire Physique, Naturelle et Politique de Madagascar,* vol. 4 tome 4 (Paris: Hachette et Société d'Éditions Géographiques, Maritimes et Coloniales, 1928), pp. 5, 84–86, 168; Charles Pridham, *An Historical, Political and Statistical Account of Mauritius and its Dependencies* (London: T. and W. Boone, 1849), p. 252; Gwyn Campbell, *An Economic History of Imperial Madagascar, 1750-1895: The Rise and Fall of an Island Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 31–32.

In terms of the debate over the decline of traditional textiles in Merina-dominated regions of Madagascar, the most significant fibres were cotton, silk and raffia. Cotton (*Gossypium arboreum* race indicum (known as *landihazo* in Imerina and *hasina* in Betsileo) was possibly introduced by traders from Western India,[9] passing via eastern (Mananjary) and southern (Ibara) Madagascar to Betsileo.[10] Alexander Bortolot, however, implies that the Sakalava and Mahafaly of the west and southwest first cultivated cotton from the sixteenth century—although William Clarence-Smith, following John Mack, indicates that it was by then a major industry throughout the island.[11] There is one indigenous Malagasy silkworm, the *landibe* (*Borocera madagascariensis*), although several types of moth produce silkworm (notably, *B. madagascariensis* and *B. cajani*) that are particularly common in the centre and the west. *Landibe* were raised on the leaves of two main shrub species, the *tapia* (*Chrysopia* sp.) and *ambatry* (*Cajanus indicus*). *Tapia* was grown by the Ankandrarezina Bara and in Imerina, particularly in western Imamo, and by the Antehiroka of Marovatana.[12] The

[9] J.B. Hutchinson, "New Evidence on the Origin of the Old World Cottons," *Heredity* 8 (1954): pp. 225–241; Christophe Moulherat, Margareta Tengberg, Jérôme-F. Haquet, and Benoît Mille, "First Evidence of Cotton at Neolithic Mehrgarh, Pakistan: Analysis of Mineralized Fibres from a Copper Bead," *Journal of Archaeological Science* 29, no. 12 (2002): pp. 1393–1401.

[10] H.-M. Dubois, *Monographie des Betsileo (Madagascar)* (Paris: Institut d'Ethnologie, 1938), p. 280; Chapurukha M. Kusimba, "Introduction to Madagascar and its Textile Traditions," in *Unwrapping the Textile Traditions of Madagascar*, ed. Chapurukha M. Kusimba, J. Claire Odland, and Bennet Bronson (Los Angeles: UCLA Fowler Museum Publications, 2004), p. 24.

[11] Alexander Ives Bortolot, "Kingdoms of Madagascar: Malagasy Textile Arts," in *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000)—http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/madg_3/hd_madg_3.htm (24/07/10); Kusimba, "Introduction to Madagascar," p. 24; Hutchinson, "New Evidence on the Origin of the Old World Cottons," p. 232; William Gervase Clarence-Smith, "The cotton textile industry of sub-Saharan Eastern Africa in the *longue durée*'," 2—International Conference on "Understanding African Poverty over the Longue Durée," Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, Harvard University, 15–17 July 2010.

[12] James Hastie, "Diary" (1817), pp. 168–170, CO 167/34, British National Archives, Kew (hereafter *NAK*); Chapelier, "lettres adressées au citoyen préfet de l'ile de France, de décembre 1803 en mai 1805," *Bulletin de l'Académie Malgache* 4 (1905–1906), pp. 38–39; Chardenoux, "Journal du voyage fait dans l'intérieure" (1816), p. 175—British Library Add.18129; Raombana, "texts" in Simon Ayache (ed.), *Raombana (1809–1855) l'Historien* II (Fianarantsoa, 1976), p. 13; Oliver, *Madagascar*, vol. 1, pp. 343, 387 and vol. 2, p. 13; Chapus et Dandouau, "anciennes industries malgaches," pp. 49–50. See also Fanny Barsics, Tsiresy M.

ambatry/amberivatry was found in some central Imerina locations and, more commonly, in Betsileo, the Andrantsay valley, on the Tsienimparihy plain and in Ibara. *Ambatry* silk was finer, less fatty and more valued than *tapia*.[13] Rich orange-golden silk from the *mampitahady* or golden orb-web spider (*Nephila inaurata madagascariensis*), which is stronger than that of silkworm, was regularly used to join silk *lamba*.[14]

The raffia tree grew in humid climates, up to an altitude of 800 metres. It was harvested along the north-eastern littoral from Antalaha to Vatomandry, and was also common in the Ankay and Antsihanaka, and along the west coast.[15] In 1889, Georges Foucart noted of the Betsimisaraka that, 'The men wear vests of *rabanna*, a material woven out of fibres of the raphia palm, which are generally yellowish with stripes of blue, and descend to the knees. The women's dress consists of a skirt of *rabanna* and a jacket of cotton, buttoned closely over the chest.'[16] The blue came from locally grown indigo, which Charles Pridham, in 1849, considered of 'fine quality',[17] although Jean Laborde

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Razafimanantsoa, Joël Minet, Éric Haubruge, and François J. Verheggen, "Nocturnal moth inventory in Malagasy *tapia* woods, with focus on silk-producing species," in *Les vers à soie malgaches. Enjeux écologiques et socio-économiques*, ed. François J. Verheggen, J. Bogaert, and Éric Haubruge (Gembloux: Presses agronomiques de Gembloux, 2013), pp. 77–89.

[13]Anonymous, "Mémoire historique et politique sur l'Isle de Madagascar," [1790], pp. 87–89, British Library Add.18126; Mayeur, "Voyage au pays d'ancove" (1777), pp. 165, 172–173 and (1785), p. 224; Chapelier, "lettres adressées," pp. 38–39; Locke Lewis, "An Account of the Ovahs, a race of people residing in the Interior of Madagascar: with a Sketch of their Country, Appearance, Dress, Language, &c.," *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society* 5 (1835): p. 234; Oliver, *Madagascar,* vol. 2, pp. 13, 191; Grandidier, *Histoire* (1928) p. 91; Anonymous, "Natural history notes," *AAMM* 22 (1898), pp. 251–252; Chapus et Dandouau, "anciennes industries malgaches," p. 50.

[14]Hans Sloane, *A Voyage to the Islands Madera, Barbados, Nieves, St Christophers and Jamaica*, vol. 2 (London: For the author, 1725), p. 196; P.L. Simmonds, "Spider Silk," *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts* 35 (1886–1887): pp. 957–958.

[15]Chapelier, "Manuscrits," in Académie Malgache, *Collection de documents concernant Madagascar et les pays voisins,* vol. II (Tananarive: Académie Malgache, 1940), pp. 82–83; Oliver, *Madagascar,* vol. 2, p. 82; Grandidier, *Histoire* (1928), p. 169; Mager, *La Vie à Madagascar*, p. 26; Henri Joret, "Le Raphia Ruffia Mart" *Le Naturaliste* 13, vol. 2 (1891): p. 222.

[16]Anonymous, "The Valley of the Mangoro, Madagascar," *Scottish Geographical Magazine* 6 (1890): p. 427.

[17]Pridham, *Historical, Political and Statistical Account*, 252; see also Anonymous, "Raphia Comm.," *Bulletin de la Société Nationale d'Acclimatation de France* 4, no. 3 (1886): p. 762.

(1805–1878) introduced an allegedly superior Indian indigo.[18] Other local vegetable dyes were used to produce green, red and brown stripes. The majority wore coarse *rabanna* (raffia cloth),[19] also used to make canoe sails.[20] However, some raffia cloth was of 'exquisite fineness'—one foreign observer in 1790 compared it favourably to French Lyonnais cloth—with up to fifty-three threads to the inch (as opposed to five to seven threads per inch for raffia bagging).[21] There was also a 'silk rabanna' of raffia weft and silk warp described as 'very supple and fine, of silky glint, and a pale yellow colour'.[22] In all, textile production was an exclusively female activity, except for the highly valuable red silk shrouds used to wrap the dead of noble castes, which was practised by males of the Zanadoria and Zanadralambo clans of northern Imerina.[23]

Raw materials for textile production and cloth formed staples of intra-island trade. By 1800, the highlands, notably Imerina, formed the centre of cloth production, importing raw silk and raffia from the Sakalava, zozoro reed from the Sihanaka and raffia from the Betsimisaraka, in exchange for cotton cloth. From the south, raw hemp, cotton and silk flowed to Betsileo, which produced a similar but more restricted range of textiles and through Betsileo to Imerina—with a return flow of cloth.[24] Textiles were also significant in foreign trade. By at least the early 1500s, Indian and Swahili traders imported Surat raw silk and cotton and Surat cloths, and Mascarene traders imported cotton cloth, and printed and plain handkerchiefs.[25] By the late 1700s, Indian and Swahili traders were

[18] Désiré Laverdant, *Colonisation de Madagascar* (Paris: La Société Maritime, 1844), p. 129.

[19] W.W. Robinson, "Cotton Manufactures in Madagascar" (Tamatave, 7 Aug 1880) in *Cotton Goods Trade of the World* 12 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1881), p. 142; see also ibid, p. 148; Anon, " Valley of the Mangoro," p. 427; Mager, *Rapport* vol.1, p. 29.

[20] Jehenne, "Renseignements nautiques sur Nossi-bé, Nossi-Mitsiou, Bavatoubé etc. etc. (côte N.O. de Madagascar)" *Annales Maritimes et Coloniales* 3, vol. 1 (1843): p. 392.

[21] *Notes on the Madagascar Collection* (Philadephia: Philadelphia Museums, 1906), pp. 1–4; *Annual Report of the Philadelphia Museum* (Philadelphia 1905), p. 14; Ibid (Philadelphia, 1906), pp. 14–16; Anon, "Mémoire historique," [1790], p. 63; Mager, *La Vie à Madagascar*, p. 27.

[22] Joret, "Raphia Ruffia Mart," p. 221.

[23] Mayeur, "Voyage au pays d'ancove" (1777), 183 and (1785), p. 208; Anon, "Mémoire historique," [1790], p. 62; Grandidier, *Histoire* (1908), pp. 243–246, 250 and (1928), p. 167.

[24] Campbell, *Economic History*, pp. 40–41.

[25] Campbell, *Economic History*, p. 55; Jeffrey A. Hess, "An Indian Ocean Odyssey: Malagasy Raffia Ikat Textiles in Gujarat" in *Textiles from India: The Global Trade*, ed. Rosemary Crill (Calcutta: Seagull Books, 2006), p. 204.

also importing Surat *Bombyx mori* silk floss and cotton yarn into northwest Madagascar.[26] There is speculation that Malagasy cloth formed an early export to Mutapa (modern-day Zimbabwe). Certainly by 1800, Malagasy exports to passing ships and Mascarene traders included loincloths (*salaka*—presumably for slaves), matting and *rabanna* (raffia cloth) for bags. *Rabanna* exports, declared a court monopoly by the 1830s,[27] rose considerably in value; those to Mauritius rose from $1,287 to $7,675 between 1864 and 1876.[28] From the mid-1880s, fine raffia cloth decorated with brightly coloured stripes, much from Vonizongo, was also exported to Europe in 2 metre × 1.4 metre pieces, predominantly for use as wall covering and furniture covers, as was raffia thread as garden string.[29] In addition, orchil, used in the production of dye, was exported from Nosy Ve in the southwest and, by the late 1880s, from Tamatave.[30]

The Debate

The Slave Trade, 1770–1822

Pier Larson contends that, from 1770 to 1822, 70,000 mostly male Merina slaves were exported, forcing women, en masse, to abandon cloth production and enter agricultural work for the first time.[31] In

[26] Campbell, *Economic History*, pp. 42, 55.

[27] Raombana, *Histoires* (1853), p. 3—Archives de l'Académie Malgache; André Coppalle, "Voyage dans l'intérieur de Madagascar et à la capitale du roi Radame pendant les années 1825 et 1826," p. 8—http://www.bextes.org/coppalle.pdf (15/10/07); Jean-Louis Joseph Carayon, *Histoire de l'établissement français de Madagascar pendant la Restauration* (Paris: Gide, 1845), xxxiii, fn.1; Ellis, *History of Madagascar*, vol. 2, p. 331

[28] British Parliamentary papers; see also Lyons McLeod, *Madagascar and Its People* (London: Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts & Green, 1865), p. 210; Mager, *Rapport* vol. 1, pp. 33–34.

[29] Oliver, *Madagascar* vol. 2, pp. 82–3, 178; James Wills, "Native products used in Malagasy industries," *AAMM* 9 (1885), pp. 126–127; James Sibree, *Things Seen in Madagascar* (London: Livingstone Press, 1921), pp. 30–1; Idem, "The Arts and Commerce of Madagascar, its recent progress, and its future prospects," *Journal of the Society of Arts* (June 1880): p. 623; Campbell, *Economic History*, pp. 40, 42, 44, 66, 189; James Richardson, *A New Malagasy-English Dictionary* (Antananarivo, Madagascar, 1885), pp. 296, 301, 524, 534; Émile Monod, *L'Exposition universelle de 1889*, vol. 2 (Paris: E. Dentu, 1890), pp. 266, 270.

[30] Monod, *L'Exposition universelle*, vol. 2, 266; Campbell, *Economic History*, p. 57.

[31] Larson, *History and Memory*.

my view, though, most slaves exported from the mid-1790s were non-Merina.[32] Larson's evidence for a major gender imbalance derives from William Ellis who specifies Betsileo and Sakalava-land, heavily exploited by Merina slave raiders from the 1790s, as the most demographically ravaged regions of Madagascar.[33] He assumes that females traditionally worked exclusively in weaving and domestic craftwork, but Merina oral histories reveal that, during the main agricultural season, they had always worked in the fields, engaging in textile and pottery production in the off-peak agricultural dry season.[34] Moreover, Larson's evidence for a collapse in textile manufacture devolves on one source, Leguéval de Lacombe, whose observations about Imerina were exposed as largely fictitious.[35] The argument for mass impoverishment of Merina households from the 1790s to 1820s is further undermined by evidence that slave ownership became so widespread in that era that, by 1817, free adult male Merina rarely worked in the fields—although Merina females continued to do so.[36]

Indeed, as a proportionally greater number of female slaves were retained in Imerina, rather than being exported, it is probable that they, like their free Merina counterparts, engaged in textile manufacture in the off-peak agricultural season, thus boosting and—because they brought novel techniques and varieties from their home regions—diversifying local cloth production. The artisanal textile industry was further promoted by serious obstacles to the Merina foreign trade, and hence imported cloth. These obstacles were occasioned, first, by Franco-British conflict in the region, notably the 1809-1811 British blockade and occupation of the Mascarene Islands (Réunion and Mauritius); continued control by the Sakalava of trade routes to Majunga, the chief

[32] Georges Sully Chapus and E. Ratsimba, trans., *Histoire des Rois: Tantaran' ny Andriana*, vol. 5 (Antananarivo: Académie Malgache et Université de Nice, 1978), pp. 321–322, 633.

[33] Ellis, *History of Madagascar*, vol. 1, pp. 114, 152.

[34] *Histoire des Rois*, vol. 5, pp. 276–277; see also Chardenoux, "Journal du voyage fait dans l'intérieure," p. 174.

[35] Legueval de Lacombe, *Voyage à Madagascar et aux iles Comores (1823 a 1830)* 2 vols. (Paris, L. Desessart, 1840); see also James Sibree, "Maps of Madagascar,"' AAMM 3: pp. 11–15 (1877), p. 12; L. Dahle, "Geographical Fictions with Regard to Madagascar," *AAMM* 8 (1884), p. 107.

[36] James Hastie, "Journal" (1817) in *Bulletin de l'Académie Malgache* 2 (1902): pp. 184, 250–251.

west coast port; and uprisings against the Merina that followed the death of Andrianampoinimerina in 1810, notably by Bezanozano and Betsimisaraka groups to the east who disrupted Merina trade outlets to east coast ports.[37]

From Free Trade to Protectionism, 1820–62

This period was characterized by limited foreign textile imports due to a failure to attract foreign traders to Merina-controlled ports and the adoption of autarky.

The Failure of the British Alliance

By the 1820 Britanno-Merina treaty, Radama I (r. 1810-1828) banned slave exports and accepted free trade, and a British resident agent; these acceptances were in return for the British recognizing him as king, not just of Imerina, but of all Madagascar, and pledging the military and technical assistance necessary to effect the conquest of the island and to promote the manufacture and export of cotton and silk cloth.

However, the alliance failed to bring the promised rewards. By 1825, Merina garrisons were installed in all major east coast ports and at the west coast port of Majunga, but two thirds of the island remained unconquered. Moreover, non-British foreign traders, required to pay 10 per cent customs duties, transferred to the independent west coast where duties were cheaper, slaves available and exchange largely transacted through barter. They were followed by Mauritian merchants ('British' from 1810) incapable of meeting Merina demands for export duty payments in cash because of a severe currency crisis on Mauritius.[38]

Second, following the slave export ban, Merina royal revenue slumped dramatically, from $32,927 in 1821 to $22,360 in 1822. By 1824, it had increased to $50,000, but still fell far short of Crown requirements.[39] The British had promised an annual compensation of $20,000 for

[37] Campbell, *Economic History*, pp. 63–67.

[38] Despite assertions—based on Réunionnais' records—to the contrary, Claude Wanquet, *Fragments pour une histoire des économies et sociétés de plantation à la Réunion* (Université de la Réunion, 1989), 205; see Gwyn Campbell, 'Madagascar and the Slave Trade, 1810–1895', *Journal of African History* 22, no. 2 (1981): pp. 206, 208.

[39] Campbell, *Economic History*, pp. 70–71.

the slave trade ban but, up to 1826, total compensation amounted to $35,147 short of that promised.[40] Furthermore, no private slave dealer received compensation for loss of slave export earnings—which, over the period 1820-1826, would probably have totalled about $2.5 million. The ban reduced incomes, the money supply, foreign trade and, thus, the demand for imported cloth.[41] Moreover, because of the ban on slave exports, the slave population of Imerina increased to constitute 33% of the total population by 1830, sometimes reaching 66% (around 30,000) in the Merina capital, Antananarivo. These slaves had little purchasing power. The majority of Merina were little better off for, as artisan missionary John Canham (1798–1881) stated in 1824, 'The fact is there is no money in the country, nor any channel to bring it. I am often told by the people that when they sold slaves they had plenty of money, but since the slave trade ceased they are become impoverished.'[42]

Another potentially beneficial outcome of the failure of the British alliance was the attempt to develop export-orientated cotton and silk industries. In 1815, Robert Farquhar (1776–1830), Governor of Mauritius, obtained 835 Indian convicts, some of whom he granted to Toussaint de Chazal (1770–1822) to cultivate silk from 500 mulberry worms—*Bombyx mori* or *Sericaria mori lin*, newly introduced from Bengal—at his Mondrain plantation in the Plaines Wilhems.[43] An

[40] Hastie, "Diary" (1817), p. 188; *idem*, "Diary" (1820), p. 472, CO.167/50; Farquhar, 'Minute' on Madagascar (Port Louis, August 1822) and Farquhar to Earl Bathurst, Port Louis, 29 July 1822, CO 167/63, *NAK*; Campbell, "Madagascar and the Slave Trade, 1810-1895," pp. 206, 208.

[41] This probably underpins the 1822 'female' protest against the pro-British policies of the Merina Crown—see Gwyn Campbell, 'Larceny in the Highlands of Madagascar', *Slavery and Abolition* 23, no. 1 (2002): pp. 137–146.

[42] Canham to Burder, Ifenoarivo, 5 Nov 1824, SOAS/LMS Archives, Madagascar: Incoming Letters (hereafter SOAS/LMS-MIL), B2.F1.JD; see also Jones and Griffiths to LMS, Antananarivo, 2 June 1824, SOAS/LMS-MIL, B2.F1.JA.

[43] R. T. Farquhar, Simmons, Pallister, Wilkinson and Thomas Winkworth, "Silk from the Isle of France," Transactions of the Society, Instituted at London, for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce 42 (1823): pp. 168–175; George Richardson Porter, A Treatise on the Origin, Progressive Improvement, and Present State of the Silk Manufacture (London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown and Green and John Taylor, 1831), p. 39; '"Extracts" of letters from Chazal to Farquhar, 19 and 26 December 1815' in The Literary Panorama and National Register 5 (1817), p. 447. W. Draper Bolton, Bolton's Mauritius Almanac, and Official Directory for 1852 (Mauritius: Mauritian Printing Establishment, 1852), p. 26; Report of the

attempt was made in 1815/1816 in the Tamatave region by Malagasy chiefs and créole settlers to cultivate what was possibly the same silkworm and to grow cotton. This effort had been supervised by a British army captain (Le Sage) but failed due to the ravages of Betsimisaraka war bands, the humid climate and what Le Sage termed a lack of native husbandry.[44] Similarly, a cotton plantation established near Tamatave in 1818 by army officer John Brady (c. 1795–1835), using Indian penal labour granted by Farquhar, failed because many of the Indians died (presumably of malaria) and the sandy soil proved unsuitable.[45] However, some Merina officers created small cotton plantations in the vicinity of military garrisons founded in conquered coastal regions[46] and, by the 1840s, Laborde had also started cotton plantations on the east coast.[47] The first commercial shipment of cotton to Britain in 1836 was described as 'quite equal to the qualities of Bowed [i.e., Georgia upland or short staple] cottons'.[48]

In 1816, Farquhar sent two Bengali convicts from Mondrain to Imerina to introduce the new Indian breeds of mulberry silkworm. The Indians discouraged the indigenous practice of eating pupae and, from 1820, Radama I distributed mulberry bush cuttings to community leaders (*ambonizato*), urging them to follow the example of the Bengalis whose endeavours were, by 1823, described as highly successful.[49] They

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Royal Commissioners Appointed to Enquire into the Treatment of Immigrants in Mauritius (London: William Clowes and Sons, 1875) vol. 1, p. 26 and vol. 34, p. 26.

[44] Gwyn Campbell, "Imperial Rivalry in the Western Indian Ocean and Schemes to Colonise Madagascar (1769–1826)," in *African Networks, Exchange and Spatial Dynamics*, Laurence Marfaing and Brigitte Reinwald (eds) (Münster: LIT, 2001), p. 120.

[45] Alfred et Guillaume Grandidier, Histoire *Physique, Naturelle et Politique de Madagascar*. vol. 4, Tome 1 (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1908), 604; see also Gwyn Campbell, *David Griffiths and the Missionary 'History of Madagascar'* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), pp. 623–626.

[46] Campbell, *Economic History*, pp. 31, 101.

[47] Laverdant, *Colonisation de Madagascar*, p. 129.

[48] *Caledonian Mercury* (22 Oct 1836).

[49] Le Sage, "Mission to Madagascar" (1816), CO. 167/34; Farquhar to Wilmott, Madagascar, 6 June 1823, CO.167/66, NAK; and Hastie, 'Diary' (1817), pp. 159, 173; James Hastie, "Diary" in Daniel Tyerman and George Bennett, *Journal of Voyages and Travels, 1821-1829* ed.James Montgomery, vol. 2 (London: Westley & Davis, 1831), pp. 189–190; Bojer, "Journal" in Jean Valette ed., "L'Imerina en 1822–1825 d'après les journaux de Bojer et d'Hilsenburg, extrait du *Bulletin de Madagascar* (avril–mai 1963), p. 24; Leminier, 'Notes sur une excursion faites dans l'intérieur de l'ile de Madagascar',

almost certainly introduced the same Indian techniques as on Mauritius where:

> The houses or shed in which the silk-worms are kept are composed of lattice-work, covered over with a mixture of clay and cow-dung, and covered with a thatched roof. Their breadth is about fifteen feet, their height eight feet, and their length is regulated by the number of worms to be accommodated … In the middle is a path of convenient width, and on each hand are tiers or stages of open frames or shallow boxers made of bamboo, in which the worms are placed: eight inches in height are sufficient for each frame, including the space between that and the next, so that the house contains twelve stages. Each worm when ready to spin is transferred to a small cell made of platted bamboo, as practised in Bengal.[50]

It was later claimed that British missionaries introduced the Chinese silkworm and mulberry tree.[51] Certainly, in 1825, Hastie created mulberry bush plantations for the Merina Crown at Mahela and Andevoranto, on the northeast coast,[52] and, in the 1830s, white mulberries were cultivated by Breton trader Adolphe Delastelle (1802–1856) at Mananjary and red mulberries by Laborde at Mantasoa—where a rearing house for silkworm produced annually 200 kilograms of raw silk.[53]

Thomas Rowlands (c. 1804–1828), an LMS weaver, arrived in mid-1822 to establish a factory to produce calico and other cloth in Antananarivo. He located plentiful supplies of locally spun cotton, and hired a French carpenter [Le Gros?] to make two looms. However, Keturah Jeffreys (1791–1855), wife of missionary John Jeffreys (1792–1825), rejected the role of spinner assigned to her by the LMS, and Malagasy spinners working on a seasonal basis could not provide a sufficiently regular supply of yarn. Radama 'lent' Rowlands spinners but, probably because he did not pay them, they deserted. Subsequently,

(1825). in *Bulletin de Madagascar* 292 (1970), p. 778; W. F. W. Owen, *Narrative of Voyages to… Africa*, Arabia, and Madagascar II (London: Bentley, 1833), p. 171; James Cameron, *Recollections of Mission Life in Madagascar during the early days of the LMS Mission* (Antananarivo: Abraham Kingdon, 1874), p. 28; Raombana, "texts," pp. 1–3.

[50] Farquhar et al., "Silk from the Isle of France," p. 170.

[51] Wills, "Native products," p. 224.

[52] Hastie, "Diary" (2 April 1825), CO.167/78 pt.II, NAK.

[53] Grandidier, *Histoire* (1928), p. 171.

Rowlands bought six female slave spinners, purchasing additional yarn from local 'free' spinners. However, his spinning machine possessed only thirty-six spindles' instead of the hundreds required, and he faced strong local competition. As cotton and silk weaving were ubiquitous female activities, practised from June to August in the off-peak agricultural (dry) season when most festivals were held and demand for new clothes peaked, Rowlands simply could not compete with indigenous weavers who had significantly lower overheads. As Hastie commented, 'the demand for native growth and manufactures, which is sold at a price materially lower than the purchaser of the raw article can afford, does not admit of his attempting a competition in weaving'.[54] By early 1824, Rowland's two looms were running at only 25% of capacity, and the project collapsed.[55] Similar problems plagued Savigny (Savinery), a Mauritian weaver in Imerina from 1821 to 1823, and Raolombelona, a Malagasy youth trained in England from 1820 to 1826 who, on his return, failed profitably to adapt Manchester weaving and dyeing techniques to Malagasy conditions.[56] Moreover, most Malagasy found Rowland's limited output too expensive, while elite demand was met by imported Indian, British and American fine velvets, silks, and printed and plain cottons that proved cheaper despite transport costs. Thus, Manchester cottons fetched from $3.5 to $4 a piece in Antananarivo, compared to $6 a piece, which was the cheapest of Rowland's range.[57]

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[54] James Hastie, "Report on Missionary Instruction in Ovah" (17 March 1824), and James Hastie, "Report on the Schools superintended by the Missionaries at Tananarive" (19 April 1824), CO.167/78, pt. II, NAK.

[55] Jones and Griffiths to LMS (n.d.), SOAS/LMS-MIL, B2.F1.JB; William Ellis, *Three Visits to Madagascar during the years 1853-1854-1856* (London: Murray, 1859), pp. 341–342; Keturah Jeffreys, *The Widowed Missionary's Journal* (Southampton: Westley and Davis, 1827), pp. 173–176.

[56] Raombana, "Histoires," pp. 96-7; idem, "Annales" (1853), pp. 297, 300 - Archives de l'Académie Malgache; Barry to Hastie, Port Louis, 12 May 1823, CO.167/77, *NAK*; Freeman to Burder, Antananarivo, 23 Oct.1827, SOAS/LMS-MIL, B2.F5.

[57] Raombana, "Histoires," pp. 6–7; Jones and Griffiths to LMS, Antananarivo, 2 June 1824, SOAS/LMS-MIL, B2.F1.JA; Rowlands to Burder, Antananarivo, 17 June 1824, SOAS/LMS-MIL, B2.F1.JB; Rowlands to LMS, Antsahadinta, 13 June 1826, SOAS/LMS-MIL, B2.F3.JA; Jones and Griffiths to Burder, Antananarivo, 30 May 1827, SOAS/LMS-MIL, B2.F3.JA.

In 1824, Rowlands started working part-time; chiefly, to train the Malagasy 'apprentices' Radama had assigned him.[58] In 1826, Radama rejected the British treaty and adopted autarkic policies and, in May 1827, agreed on a seven-year contract with Rowlands and John Cummins (1805–1872), a missionary spinner, to run a water-powered factory equipped with British machines to produce annually 5,000 plain cotton pieces each measuring 1 yard 2 inches x 21 yards (0.97 metres x 19.20 metres) at 36 threads to the inch (2.54 centimetres). Missionary artisan James Cameron (1800–1875) contracted to build the water mill, and the LMS offered half of the required investment in return for 50% of profits—until repaid by the Crown. The Crown allocated Raolombelona to the project, and promised the necessary site, building material, raw materials and labour, as well as protective barriers against cloth imports (by altering payment for cattle exports, traditionally made in cloth, to cash).[59] Rowlands immediately set out to create large-scale plantations of cotton, raffia and hemp (to produce sail cloth) at Ifody in the eastern forest, some 100 kilometres from Antananarivo, but, in April 1828, died of malaria. Following Radama's death in August 1828 and the 1829 French invasion of the northeast coast, Ranavalona substituted for textiles the idea of an armaments factory.[60]

The Merina regime maintained some domestic cloth production. The army generated an enormous demand for uniforms and the Crown annually received, in part compensation for the slave export ban, 400 soldier caps, red jackets, shirts, pairs of trousers and pairs of shoes.[61] These had

[58] Canham to Burder, Antananarivo, 30 June 1822, SOAS/LMS-MIL, B1.F4.JA; Ellis, *History of Madagascar*, vol. 2, p. 275.

[59] Robin to missionaries, 24 Jan and 14 Feb 1827, SOAS/LMS-MIL, Bx.2 F.4 J.A; Rowlands to Jones and Griffiths, Amparibe, 15 May 1827; Cummins to Jones and Griffiths, Amparibe, 17 May 1827; Jones and Griffiths to Burder, Tananarive, 30 May 1827—SOAS/LMS-MIL Bx.2 F.4 J.A; Griffiths to LMS, Tananarivou, 10 Jun 1827; Jones to Hankey, Tananarivou, 15 June 1827—SOAS/LMS-MIL Bx.2 F.4 J.B.

[60] Jones and Griffiths to [LMs] nd [1823?], SOAS/LMS-MIL, Bx.1 F.5 J.A; Rowlands to Burder, Antananarivo, 17 June 1824, SOAS/LMS-MIL, Bx.2 F.1 J.B; Rowlands to Burder, Antananarivo, 26 Dec 1825, SOAS/LMS-MIL, Bx.2 F.2 J.C; Jones and Griffiths to Burder, Tananarive, 30 May 1827, SOAS/LMS-MIL, Bx.2 F.4 J.A. Freeman to [LMS], Tananarivou 23 Oct 1827; Cameron, *Recollections of Mission Life*, p. 7; Wills, "Native products," pp. 126–128; Campbell, *Economic History*, pp. 73–75, 92–93.

[61] As well as twelve sergeants' regulation belts, 400 pieces of white cloth, 500 pieces of Indian blue cloth and, for the king, a dress coat (with two epaulets), boots, and cocked

an almost immediate impact, it being commented that the 1823 Merina expedition to Sakalava land comprised '10,000 men under arms, 4,000 of whom are clothed'.[62] Repudiation of the British alliance from 1826 entailed rejection of the compensation. Thus' to produce textile supplies and clothing' the government formed *fanompoana* (forced unremunerated labour for the state) groups comprising 106 hemp cultivators, 30 silkworm breeders, 21 makers of blue dye, 57 cotton spinners and weavers, 207 tanners (makers of leather goods) and 165 manufacturers of military clothes and flags.[63]

In terms of output for the civilian market, the greatest success was an import-substitution enterprise established by missionary wives in 1824, where forty to fifty female pupils produced European-style small overcoats of twilled calico and bordered woollen cloth, gowns, trousers, shirts and kerchiefs that a mission shop, operating from 1825 to 1829 in Antananarivo, sold to the Merina elite, competing with Mary Hastie, the British Agent's wife, who imported velvets, silk, calico and linen clothes for elite females.[64] Again, from 1837 until his expulsion from the island in 1857 for political intrigue, Laborde produced silk, and a variety of cloths and dyes, at Mantasoa, an industrial complex he created forty kilometres from Antananarivo.[65]

Insufficient domestic production ensured elite Merina demand for foreign cloth. Thus, Muslim (probably Swahili) traders travelled to Antananarivo with beads, white and silk cloth, and raw silk—of Indian and Omani origin—the latter possibly used to make the prestigious

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hat—*Papers relating to the Abolition of the Slave Trade in the Mauritius: 1817–1820*, vol. 18 (House of Commons, 1821), p. 360.

[62] Anon, letter, Mauritius, 10 Oct 1824, in *Caledonian Mercury* (8 January 1825).

[63] Campbell, *Economic History*, pp. 124–125.

[64] Jones to Farquhar, Antananarivo, 25 March 1822, CO.167/63, *NAK*; David Griffiths, *Hanes Madagascar* (Machynlleth: Richard Jones, 1843), p. 29; Ellis, *History of Madagascar* vol.1, pp. 277–278; Jean Valette, *Études sur le règne de Radama I* (Tananarive: Imprimerie Nationale, 1962), p. 321; Raombana, *Histoires*, pp. 6–7.

[65] Raombana B2 Livre 13, 18, Archives de l'Académie Malgache; A.M. Hewlett, "Mantasoa and its Workshops; a page in the History of Industrial Progress in Madagascar" *AAMM* 11 (1887), pp. 378, 381; Oliver, *Madagascar*, vol. 2, 107; G.S. Chapus, *Quatre-vingts années d'influences européennes en Imerina (1815–1895)* (Tananarive: Académie Malgache, 1925), pp. 204–5.

akotifahana silk shawls.[66] 'British' products shipped via Mauritius dominated cloth imports into Tamatave. In the 1820s, most 'British' cottons originated from Bengal and the Coromandel coast, and silk from China, but, by 1835, cottons of Indian and British origin shared the Malagasy market; by mid-century, most textiles (cottons, linens and silks) were imported from Europe, cottons chiefly from Britain.[67] Tamatave was merely the point of entry, imported cloth being overwhelmingly destined for Antananarivo. This market was, however, restrained to the elite. Although the population of the capital rose between 1820 and 1860 from about 17,000 to 50,000, it fluctuated sharply depending largely on the presence or absence of *fanompoana* soldiers and porters, neither of whom were wealthy enough to afford imported cloth.[68] While 'British' cotton imports into Tamatave increased in the early years of Ranavalona I's reign, in the period 1836–1862, they surpassed $60,000 in value for only ten years (1836–1840, 1854–1858, 1860–1862), and fell below $20,000 from 1845 to 1853.[69]

End of Autarky and Dominance of Foreign Cotton Textiles, 1862–1895

The resumption of foreign trade in 1862 led to an increase in the import of foreign textiles. However, as foreign trade and prosperity generally increased, and as military expansionism ended in 1853 and *fanompoana* in 1862, a resurgence in domestic textile production—notably, of silk and niche cotton products, unchallenged by cheap foreign cottons—might also have been expected.

The years 1861–1874 did mark a period of relative prosperity for the Merina economy. There was an initial sharp spike in cloth imports, almost certainly associated with elite demand for European clothing in 1862 at the time of Radama II's coronation (it appears that the King's

[66] Ellis, *History of Madagascar*, vol. 1, p. 338; James Holman, *A Voyage Round the World, including Travels in Africa, Asia*, Australasia, *America* etc. etc., vol. 2 (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1834), p. 473; McLeod, *Madagascar and Its People*, p. 266. For the *akotifahana*, see Fee, "Cloth in Motion," pp. 55–56; Fee, "Shape of Fashion"; Idem, "Chasing Silk".

[67] House of Commons, *Foreign Trade – Mauritius* (1835), p. 567; Pridham, *Historical, Political and Statistical Account*, p. 251.

[68] See Gwyn Campbell, *Economic History*, pp. 344–346.

[69] See Fig. 12.1.

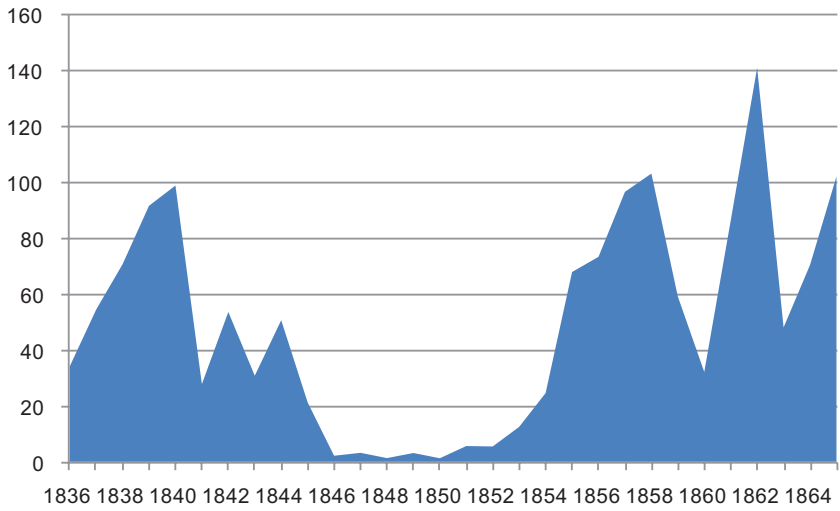

Fig. 12.1 Tamatave: estimated value of British cotton piece imports, 1836–1864 ($000s). *Source* House of Commons papers

lamba, reserved for 'sacred festivals and other state occasions' was made of 'fine scarlet English broadcloth, bordered and richly ornamented with gold lace'),[70] the visits of western embassies, and the inflow of European traders and missionaries. Imports then decreased, before showing a slow unsteady growth to 1870, followed by a sharp increase up until 1874.

Until 1865, British (Manchester and Indian) and French cottons 'consisting of brown and white shirting and sheeting, printed cotton goods, also cotton handkerchiefs',[71] imported by Mascarene traders, dominated the Merina market.[72] At the same time, in response to

[70] *The New American Cyclo.dia: A Popular Dictionary of General Knowledge* 11 (New York: D. Appleton, 1863), 26; see also Lieut. Charles Brand, "A Visit to the Island of Madagascar," *The United Service Journal and Naval and Military Magazine* 11 (Nov, 1829): p. 536.

[71] J. P. Finkelmeier, Tamatave, 1 Oct 1866 in *Report upon the Commercial Relations of the United States with Foreign Countries for the Year ending September 30, 1866* (Washington,Government Printing Office, 1867), p. 549.

[72] "Report by Mr. Consul Pakenham of the Trade of Madagascar for the Year 1863," in *Commercial Reports received at the Foreign Office from Her Majesty's Consuls between July 1st 1863 and June 30th 1864* (London: Harrison and Sons, 1864), p. 113.

the dearth of cotton supplies from the American South during the Civil War, there was a surge of interest in establishing cotton plantations on the eastern lowlands of Madagascar. James Morris, representing Mauritian commercial interests, urged the Cotton Supply Association of Manchester to invest in cotton production in Madagascar where the climate and soil were appropriate, labour 'abundant and cheap', and transit to Europe via the Cape easy.[73] Manchester remained unimpressed, but there was some Mascarene investment until the postwar resumption of American cotton supplies.[74]

Moreover, from 1865, American cotton imports quickly established dominance, Finkelmeier, US consul at Tamatave, writing by 1871 that 'American cotton rules this market, and commands fair prices; consumption unusually large, and prices ranging from 8½ to 12½ to 13 cents per yard'.[75] American cottons were preferred because it was 'produced in their own country and not injured from pressing' and 'is said to wear and wash well'.[76] The overwhelming bulk of cotton imports comprised American grey cotton sheeting and British imitations thereof, and' secondarily' American cotton shirting and European prints.[77] The major American importers were John Bertram (Salem), which merged into

[73] *Cotton Supply Association, Cotton Culture in New or Partially Developed Sources of Supply* (Manchester: John J. Sale, 1862), pp. 31–32.

[74] Alexander Andrews, "Cotton Possibilities" *The New Monthly Magazine* 133 (1865): p. 444; Thomas Conolly Pakenham, "Madagascar" in Foreign Office, *Commercial Reports received at the Foreign Office from Her Majesty's Consuls*, vol. 26 (London: Harrison and Sons, 1880), p. 239.

[75] J. P. Finkelmeier, 'Madagascar', Tamatave, 30 Sep 1872 in Department of State, *Annual Report on Commercial Relations between the United States and Foreign Nations… for the Year ending September 30 1871* (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1872), p. 880.

[76] Lieut. Burnes, quoted in William Samuel Waithman Ruschenberger, *A Voyage Round the World: Including an Embassy to Muscat and Siam in 1835, 1836, and 1837* (Philadelphia: Carey, Lea and Blanchard, 1838), p. 47.

[77] Secretary of State, *Commercial Relations of the United States with Foreign Countries during the Years 1882 and 1883*, vol. 2 (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1884), p. 119; Pakenham, "Madagascar," Tamatave, 31 Dec 1873, in *Reports from Her Majesty's Consuls on the Manufactures, Commerce, &c. of their Consular Districts* pt. 3 (cont'd) (London: Harrison, 1874), p. 1396; Pakenham, "Madagascar," in *Reports from Her Majesty's Consuls on the Manufactures, Commerce, &c. of their Consular Districts*, pt. 1 (London: Harrison, 1880), p. 238.

Ropes, Emmerton & Co. from 1865, and George Ropes (Boston).[78] The main European importers were Procter Brothers (London); William O'Swald (Hamburg) and, until bankruptcy in 1883, Roux de Fraissinet (Marseille).[79] Domestic textile production also experienced an initial resurgence. However, both foreign imports and domestic cotton textile production declined in the mid-1870s due, chiefly, to the economic crises of 1876/1877, French hostilities and renewed *fanompoana* (Fig. 12.2).

Economic Crisis and French Hostilities

From the end of 1876, the Merina economy slid into a prolonged economic crisis from which it failed to recover. The immediate cause was a smallpox epidemic from late 1876 to early 1877, which severely disrupted foreign trade and killed an estimated 40% of people in rural Imerina. From April 1878, a fall in primary product prices on world markets accentuated the slump in foreign trade and contraction in the

[78] Milhet-Fontarabie, "relation" (1860) in Francis Riaux, "Notice Historique sur Madagascar" in Ida Pfieffer, *Voyage à Madagascar* [1857] (Paris: Librarie Hachette, 1881), p. 21; Norman R. Bennett, *Studies in East African History* (Boston: Boston University Press, 1963), pp. 36–37; Kessler Vrocker to John Bertram, Tamatave, 11 July 1867, John Bertram Papers B2.F5, Agency Records - Tamatave. Correspondence and Accounts, 1867-1870, Peabody Essex Museum (hereafter, *PEM*); Finkelmeier to Seward, 1 Oct 1866 and 11 Apr 1867; "8th Annual Commercial Report" (24 Oct 1873); Robinson to Hunter, 1 Oct.1877; Robinson to Payson, 7 Aug 1880—United States National Archives, Washington, DC (hereafter *US*); Louis Catat, *Voyage à Madagascar (1889–1890)* (Paris, Hachette, 1895), p. 62; Robinson, "Cotton Manufactures," pp. 147–8.

[79] Gwyn Campbell, '"Toamasina (Tamatave) and the Growth of Foreign Trade in Imperial Madagascar, 1862-1895," in *Figuring African Trade*, ed. Gerhard Liesegang *et al.* (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 1986), pp. 528–9; Finkelmeier to Seward, 12 Dec. 1865 and 11 April 1867; Robinson to Hankey, 29 Oct.1877; *idem* to Payson, 7 Aug.1880; Wetter to Uhl, 26 Sep.1894 –*US*; Pakenham to Granville, Tamatave, 3 Jan 1883, in House of Commons, "Correspondence Respecting Madagascar Relating to the Mission of Hova Envoys to Europe in 1882-1883," no. 67, *Africa* 1 (1883); Hermann Kellenbenz, "Zanzibar et Madagascar dans le commerce allemand, 1840–1880," *Colloque d'histoire de Madagascar* (Université de Madagascar, Mahajanga, 1981); William Fairburn, *Merchant Sail*, vol. 5 (Lovell: Fairburn Marine Educational Foundation, 1945–55), p. 3014; Ropes, Emmerton & Co. to J. Orme Ryder, Salem, 30 April 1883 and 7 May 1883; Ropes, Emmerton & Co.to Whitney, Salem, 21 December 1883—Emmerton & Co. and Arnold Hines & Co, Partner and Agency Records, PEM.

money supply.[80] Thereafter, cotton imports quickly recovered, assisted by a decline in prices, and a sharp increase in demand for cotton prints from Betsimisaraka women and in Imerina, where they became fashionable for the first time amongst men, as well as among women, as a cheap way of lining the inside of *lamba* made of American unbleached cotton.[81] Hitherto, European prints called *patnas*, sold in 6-yard lengths, had dominated the market but, from the late 1870s, longer pieces were in demand and American prints soon gained the ascendancy because the dyes used were 'fast'.[82]

Cotton imports again experienced a sharp decline during the Franco-Merina War of 1883–1885, during which trade was disrupted due to the flight of French traders from Merina-controlled regions (as again, from 1894, when the French government once more pressed its claims to Madagascar),[83] the French naval blockade of Tamatave and Majunga, and the failure of the Oriental Bank on Mauritius in May 1884.[84] The French blockade of Tamatave in June 1883 caused an initial shortage of American cottons, the price of which rose by as much as 75% by July 1884 (Fig. 12.3).[85]

Thereafter, prices declined as traders switched to unblockaded ports such as Mananjary and, notably, Vatomandry from where cotton goods travelled inland to join the main Tamatave–Antananarivo route at

[80] Pakenham, "Madagascar," p. 238.

[81] Finkelmeier to Hunter, 1 October 1877, US2; Gwyn Campbell, "Currency Crisis, Missionaries, and the French Takeover in Madagascar, 1861-1895," *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 21, no. 2 (1988): pp. 278–9.

[82] Secretary of State, *Report upon the Commercial Relations of the United States with Foreign Countries for the Year ending September 30, 1879*, vol. 1 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1880), pp. 231–2; Robinson, "Cotton Manufactures," p. 145.

[83] Robinson, "Cotton Manufactures," p. 146; Belle McPherson Campbell, *Madagascar* (Chicago: Woman's Prebyterian Board of Missions of the Northwest, 1889), p. 17.

Robinson, Tamatave, 30 Jun 1884, in *Reports from the Consuls of the United States on the Commerce, Manufactures, etc. of their Consular Districts* 42 (Jun 1884) (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1884), p. 757; Mager, *Rapport*, vol. 1, 8, pp. 11–12.

[84] Blyth Bros. to Ropes, Emmerson & Co. Mauritius, 9 Jun 1884, Partner and Agency Records. Madagascar Agencies. Correspondence Sent. Letterbook 1884–87 (May–Oct 1884), Bx.44 F.5, *PEM*.

[85] Robinson, Tamatave, 20 July 1884, in *Reports from the Consuls of the United States on the Commerce, Manufactures,* etc. *of their Consular Districts* 43 (Sep 1884) (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1884), p. 14.

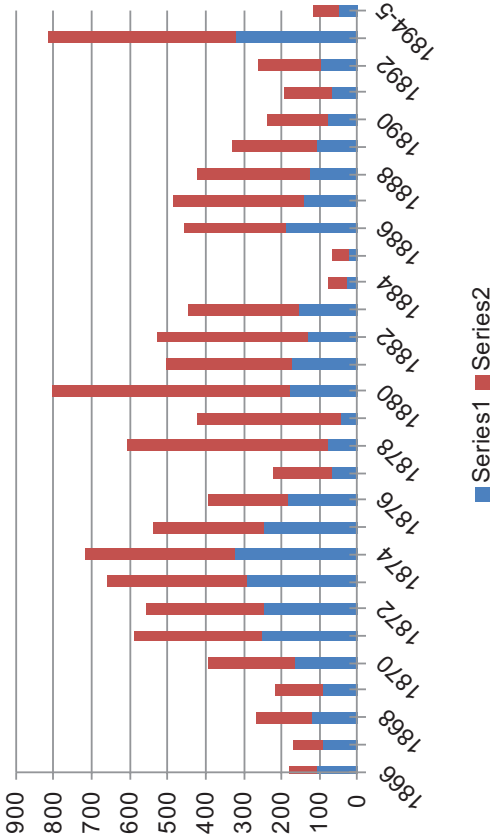

Fig. 12.2 Tamatave: estimated value of British and American cotton piece imports, 1866–1895 ($000s). *Source* US Consular Archives, Washington; House of Commons papers

Trintra, just above Beforona,[86] and from Mananjary to Fianarantsoa, the main Merina garrison in Betsileo. American traders proved adverse to the risk such routes entailed, which gave 'Imerina', an excellent new variety of brown 'British' cotton sheeting made in Bombay, and four new marks of 'British' shirting, a temporary hold of the Antananarivo market.[87]

The war accentuated the economic crisis. Government reserves were largely exhausted in purchasing armaments and paying indemnities to foreign powers: $2 million to the French, and $3,000 to the United States for a Sakalava attack in 1885 on the American ship *The Surprise*.[88] Cloth imports rose following the end of hostilities, before declining steadily into the 1890s—with the exception of 1893/1894 when cloth imports witnessed a brief resurgence.[89]

From the late 1870s, contrary to treaty agreements, the Merina regime started to levy duties on imported cloth in kind, subsequently releasing it onto the domestic market when it felt the moment opportune. Foreign merchants railed against the practice, accusing the Merina government of being 'a competitor able to control the market'.[90] Moreover, the state used *fanompoana* labour to transport cloth to the interior, unlike foreign traders who had to pay slave porters owned by the court elite who also occasionally instructed such porters to steal their freight.[91] Additionally,

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[86] Robinson, Tamatave, 3 Jul 1885, in Secretary of State, *Report upon the Commercial Relations of the United States with Foreign Countries during the Years 1884 and 1885* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1886), 518; Bachelder to Dawson, Antananarivo, 4 Aug 1884, Partner and Agency Records. Madagascar Agencies. Correspondence Sent. Letterbook 1884-87 (May-Oct 1884), Bx.44 F.5, *PEM*; Mager, *Rapport*, vol. 1, p. 26.

[87] "Memoranda relating to Samples sent the undersigned by J.E. Dawson Esq., Tamatave," in N.E. Bachelder to Ropes, Emmerton & Co., Antananarivo, 18 Jul 1885, and N.E. Bachelder to Dawson, Antananarivo, 9 May 1885, Bx.44 F.3, *PEM*.

[88] Campbell, "Currency Crisis," p. 283.

[89] See Table 2.

[90] W.W. Robinson to Victor F.W. Stanwood, US Consulate, Tamatave, 27 Oct 1880, Andakabe Agency (1880-83), *US*.

[91] Bachelder to Dawson, Antananarivo, 20 Jun and 10 Jul 1885, and Laborde to Dawson, Vatomandry, 22 Jul 1885—Bx.44 F.3, *PEM*; Campbell, "Currency Crisis," pp. 284–5; Idem, "Labour and the Transport Problem in Imperial Madagascar, 1810-1895," *Journal of African History* 21, no. 3 (1980): pp. 341–56; Whitney to Ropes, Emmerton & Co, and Arnold, Hines & Co, Tamatave, 17 Dec.1886; Whitney to Ropes, Emmerton & Co, Tamatave, 26 July 1887, *PEM; Reports from the Consuls of the United States on the Commerce, Manufactures, etc. of their Consular Districts* 19 (May 1882) (Washington:

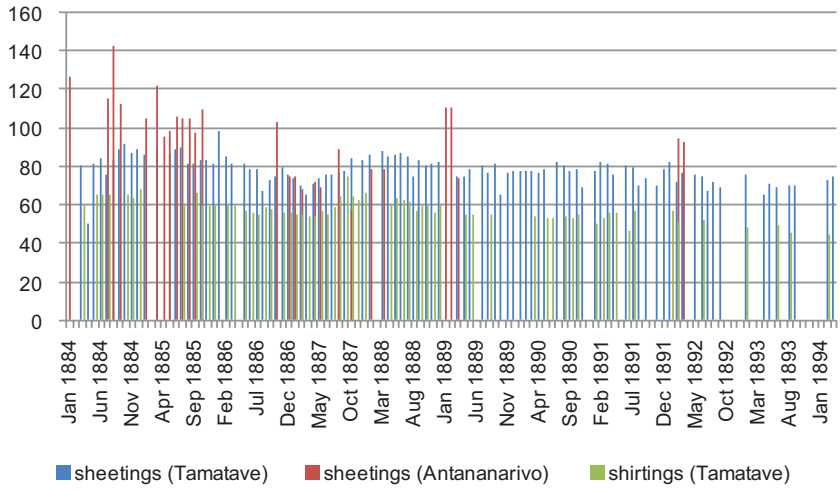

Fig. 12.3 Madagascar: price of cotton sheetings and shirtings for available years, 1884–1894 ($ per 1000 yards). *Source* US Consular records

in the 1880s, the court established the 'Ambohimalaza' cartel, comprising five Antananarivo-based 'houses'.[92] In 1888, the cartel's two leading dealers, Raoelina and Andriampatra/Andriampatsa, were described as 'very solid men… certainly the largest buyers of American cottons'.[93] To the chagrin of foreign dealers, the Ambohimalaza cartel, one of the few buyers who purchased for money and had privileged access to porters, largely established control over the price and distribution of cotton imports.[94] The 1883–1885 conflict strengthened their position due

Government Printing Office, 1882), 48; Campbell to Rainilaiarivony, Tamatave, 3 Jan 1890, Enclosure 10 in Campbell to Wharton, Tamatave, 26 Apr 1890, *US*.

[92] Laborde to Dawson, Vatomandry, 20 June 1885; Duder to Dawson, Antananarivo, 21 & 27 December 1889, PEM.

[93] Whitney to Ropes, Emmerton & Co, Tamatave, 1 May 1888; Dawson to Ropes, Emmerton & Co, Tamatave, 27 April 1890, *PEM*.

[94] Laborde to Whitney, Vatomandry, 28 June 1886 and Vatomandry, 1 Nov.1886; Whitney to Ropes Emmerton & Co, Tamatave, 2 April 1888; Edward P. Duder to Whitney, Antananarivo, 10 Aug 1889; Bachelder to Dawson, Antananarivo, 20 June, 10 and 17 July 1885, *PEM*.

to the elimination of French competitors, and the decision by the risk-averse Americans to sell directly to the syndicate at lower prices rather than ship consignments directly to the interior (Table 12.1).[95].

The Ambohimalaza cartel used their quasi monopoly to effect: In April 1888, in the midst of a cottons glut, they stockpiled imported cloth in Tamatave in order to maintain prices in Antananarivo. They were so indispensable that, by late 1889, R.W. Geldart, Tamatave representative for *George Ropes*, employed cartel member Joseph Andrianisa as his Antananarivo agent.[96]

However, by April 1890, Andrianisa had gone into bankruptcy and had been imprisoned by Rainilaiarivony, his major creditor.[97] This reflected a collapse in exports of hides—the major earner of the foreign currency required to pay for textile imports.[98] The crisis deepened in 1891 when global overproduction of hides caused prices to plummet. Initially, foreign traders competed to extend credit to Malagasy merchants in order to stimulate cloth purchases—the major import. Merina traders on the east coast obtained credit at ninety days for amounts of up to $200 from O'Swald and $100 from French firms—80% of O'Swald's loans there were repayable in dollars and 20% in kind.[99] American firms were more cautious; from February 1891, Ropes, Emmerton restricted credit to between fifteen and twenty-eight days, and charged 10% per annum on all overdue bills.[100] This was, nevertheless, much more generous than the officially established maximum interest rate of $0.0208 in the dollar, or $0.50 per month.[101] However, relatively easy commercial credit led local dealers to over-extend; in 1892, the market for imported cottons contracted sharply due to over-supply, the credit structure collapsed and many Merina traders went bankrupt.[102]

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[95] J. E. Dawson to Arnold, Hines & Co., and Ropes, Emmerton & Co.,Tamatave, 18 Jul, and 14 and 29 Aug 1884, Bx.44 F.5; Laborde to Dawson, Vatomandry, 20 Jun 1885, Bx.44 F.3, PEM.

[96] Whitney to Ropes, Emmerton & Co, Tamatave, 1 May 1888, *PEM*.

[97] Campbell to Wharton, Tamatave, 23 Dec 1889, *US*.

[98] Campbell to Wharton, Tamatave, 26 Apr 1890, *US*.

[99] Ropes, Emmerton & Co, to Cheney, Salem, 22 Sep and 21 Oct 1885; Dawson to Ropes, Emmerton & Co, Tamatave, 6 Nov 1890, *PEM*.

[100] Campbell, *Economic History*, pp. 300–302.

[101] Whitney to Ropes, Emmerton & Co, Tamatave, 27 Feb, 19 and 27 March 1891, *PEM*.

[102] Dawson to Ropes, Emmerton & Co, Tamatave, 27 April 1890; Ryder to Ropes, Emmerton & Co, Tamatave, 27 Dec 1892, *PEM*; *Madagascar Times* (30 Jul 1884), p. 276.

Table 12.1 The Ambohimalaza cotton goods syndicate, 1885–1890

Rasaheno	Rainizanaka	Rainimanana '&c of Zoma'
Rajoely	Ramanangodra	Rainialidera (brother of Razafimbelo)
Ramanana	Ramananjohn	Andriampatra/Andriampatsa
Raoelina	Razafimbelo	Andri[an]vonzato
F.H.Rama	Ratofarilana	Razafindrintsoa
Joseph Andrianisa	Randriamihary	Randriantsolo/a
Ravoavahy	Randriantaola	Ramanajoharo
Andriansolo	Ratsimanohatra	

Campbell, Economic History, p. 168

Domestic Textile Industry

The long period of isolation under Ranavalona, and the difficulties faced by foreign importers of cloth, might have been expected to stimulate the domestic textile industry. Even as late as the mid-1880s, foreigners noted the possibility of Imerina becoming self-sufficient in cloth—US Consul William Robinson commenting, in 1884, that due to the French blockade on imports 'the people were preparing to return to the use of home-made cloths'.[103] However, Robinson was badly informed; from 1826, following the rejection of the British treaty, Merina government policies, notably *fanompoana*, progressively undermined indigenous textile production, especially in Merina-controlled territory.

Fanompoana

From 1826, dwindling monetary stocks and an adversity to overseas borrowing obliged the Merina Crown to apply *fanompoana*—hitherto restricted to ritual services for the Crown or essential public works—to all aspects of government and the economy. First, thousands of Merina males were conscripted into the military as the Crown created a standing army and launched military expeditions against other provinces of Madagascar. Up to half perished annually, mainly through malaria and starvation. Such was Radama's determination to create an island empire that he not only replaced the men who died with new draftees, but, between 1822 and 1824, increased army numbers

[103] Campbell, *Economic History*, pp. 301–3; Duder to Ropes, Emmerton & Co, Antananarivo, 20 March 1893, *PEM*.

from 12,000 to 17,500. It was a vicious circle in which soldiers were drawn from the small farmer class, who also paid a special tax to support the army, yet remained unsalaried.[104] *Fanompoana* was also imposed on 7,000 artisans to work full-time in various aspects of production of military goods,[105] on the 20,000 workers (about 5% of the Merina population registered for *fanompoana*) to build the Mantasoa industrial complex that specialized in the production of armaments, and on the 5,000 permanent workers who maintained the site (Table 12.2.).[106]

While the conquered Sihanaka, Bezanozano, Betsimisaraka and Betsileo initially escaped military service, they were forced into other types of *fanompoana*. The Sihanaka collected and transported firewood from the eastern forest for the court, state factory boilers and forges, and *boribory*, wood from which potash was extracted, for gunpowder and soap factories. A Bezanozano unit of 3,060 also carried fuel to Antananarivo, and both groups transported construction wood (average of 75 men per trunk), and *hafotra* (small trees and shrubs) for rope-making. In 1830, a Betsileo unit was formed, 21,000-strong, in part to transport Sirabe lime and sulphur to Antananarivo.[107] Considerable *fanompoana* were also employed in east coast plantations and factories. For example, in April 1825, 2000 Betsimisaraka under Hastie created a ten-acre mulberry bush plantation near 'Vonitzar[y]', on the Antananarivo–Andevoranto route. Also, in the 1830s, 6,000 men took four months to convey imported sugar-crushing machinery to Laborde's Lohasoa distillery. Betsimisaraka *fanompoana* similarly constructed the Toamasina (Tamatave) and Mahavelona (Foulepointe) forts, and collected and transported forest products for export.

The cost of military expansionism within Madagascar proved so onerous that it largely ceased in 1853. There followed two decades of relative peace but, in 1878, conflict with the French appeared possible and, from the close of 1879, inevitable. Subsequently, as in the 1820s, the court used mission schools as the main institutions for military recruitment. In response to government pressure, the LMS in Imerina alone

[104] Robinson, Tamatave, 20 July 1884, in *Reports from the Consuls* (Sep 1884), p. 14.

[105] Campbell, *Economic History*, p. 76.

[106] See table; Campbell, *Economic History*, p. 148, pp. 162–164.

[107] Raombana B2 Livre, pp. 13, 18.

Table 12.2 Estimated growth of imperial Merina Army, 1820–1852

Year	*Soldiers*	*Recruits*	*Year*	*Soldiers*	*Recruits*
1820	1,000	n.a.	1831	30,000	n.a.
1821	12,000	n.a.	1832	25,000	n.a.
1822	13,000	6,000	1833	30,000	n.a.
1823	14,000	6,000	1834	30,000	n.a.
1824	14,250	n.a.	1835	45,000	n.a.
1826	n.a.	8,750	1837	n.a.	2,228
1827	n.a.	8,750	1838	n.a.	45,000
1828	12,000	15,000	1840	20,000	40,000
1829	13,800	15,790	1845	n.a.	11,750
1830	30,000	n.a.	1852	100,000	n.a.

Campbell, 'Slavery and Fanompoana', p. 470

registered 70,000 pupils in 1881/2, and, for the first time, recruitment was extended en masse to subject peoples. In 1882, for instance, 6,000 Betsileo males were conscripted through enforced registration in schools and churches. In 1884, scholars numbered 73,324 on LMS registers in Imerina, and a further 20,683 in Betsileo, the number remaining at about 100,000 until 1887. In January 1888, the court warned indigenous pastors to maintain school numbers or risk being themselves drafted. That year, all boys aged sixteen or over were conscripted. In Betsileo, such numbers fled to avoid the draft so that, in order to maintain quotas, Protestant and Catholic teachers regularly 'kidnapped' each other's pupils. In the early 1890s, Mascarene pressure for a French takeover mounted and, by mid-1893, a French invasion was imminent. Consequently, domestic military recruitment intensified; by June 1893, all males registered in Jesuit schools and churches in Vonizongo had been drafted and, by early 1894, recruitment from schools had become general.[108]

Fanompoana in support of the war effort also intensified, to mine lead and, especially, to search for gold to pay for mounting military costs and the $2 million French indemnity.[109] Missionaries organized 'voluntary' school and church gold corvées. From 1885, the Merina government organised massive gold *fanompoana* parties on its own account; in

[108] Campbell, *Economic History*, pp. 246–7.

[109] Campbell, *Economic History*, pp. 248–9.

Betsileo such levies comprised 'all the scholars, except the very smallest' irrespective of gender.[110]

It is in this light that the establishment of a state-church in 1869 must be viewed. Its chief function was to recreate the institution for the recruitment of *fanompoana* labour that had existed in the early nineteenth century. The missions, notably the LMS, became absorbed into a state-church over which the court maintained absolute control; it established the pace and direction of 'evangelization', appointed state-church personnel, enforced chapel and school attendance, and determined the location and closely supervised the activity of missionaries. A few missionaries objected but the majority succumbed and, effectively, became agents of the state.[111]

Peoples subject to the Merina Crown not only suffered state *fanompoana*, much of it organized through schools and churches, they also suffered state-church *fanompoana*, the major components of which were the donation of time, labour, material goods and money to the erection of churches and schools, and the maintenance of permanent state-church personnel.[112] The state-church also had a significant commercial impact in the field of clothes and cleanliness for, whereas in the 1860s most indigenous Christians still dressed in the traditional Merina fashion, the adoption of European dress in church became virtually compulsory for the Merina elite following the 1869 court conversion to Christianity, while foreign missionaries and indigenous pastors applied increasing pressure on ordinary peasants to dress well on Sundays: "when one becomes a Christian, one must also accept some of the associated civilization—the purity, cleanliness and dress to make one worthy of being a Christian; for the sake of mind and spirit, one must also cleanse the body".[113]

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[110] Gwyn Campbell, "Missionaries, Fanompoana and the Menalamba Revolt in late nineteenth century Madagascar," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 15, no. 1 (1988): pp. 58–61.

[111] Karl Jakobsen, "Ny Tantaranny Stasiona Fihasinana, taona 1875-1943" (Fihasinana, 1944), pp. 9–10, Boks 57, NMS/FLM Archives, Isoraka, Antananarivo; Gwyn Campbell, "Gold Mining and the French Takeover of Madagascar, 1883-1914" *African Economic History* 17 (1988), pp. 1–28.

[112] LMS, *Ten Years' Review of Mission Work in Madascar 1880–1890* (Antananarivo: LMS, 1890), pp. 33, 93; The Madagascar Times, 8 Dec 1888; Haile to PM, Ambohibeloma, 28 Aug 1889, HHI, pp. 529–3. Archives Nationales, Antananarivo.Campbell, 'Missionaries'.

[113] Campbell, "Missionaries", pp. 56–57.

The state-church therefore contributed to demand for soap, and foreign cotton pieces and expensive paraphernalia of chapel-going such as hats, collars and shoes. Particular emphasis was placed on white Sunday wear—hence, for those who could afford it, a special *lamba*.[114]

Impact on the Domestic Textile Industry

The direct and indirect impact of military expansion and *fanompoana* was to erode the domestic textile industry.

Military and other *fanompoana* drew thousands of, initially, mainly young males out of peasant agriculture and into state-directed works and the army. For the period 1826–1853, if one includes the 30,000 Merina drafted into the army and the slaves involved in the porterage syndicate, this would indicate a minimum of 50,000 men, mostly young and able-bodied, in permanent and virtually unremunerated forced labour from Imerina alone. This represented, possibly, 12.5% of the total and as much as 25% of the working population that was removed permanently from agricultural production.[115] It is probable that about the same percentage applied from the late 1870s, certainly from the start of the French conflict in 1883 when the figure was probably higher for gold-mining districts, notably in Betsileo, where women also were drafted into gold *fanompoana*.

Further, high soldier mortality meant that by mid-century women outnumbered men by possibly three to one in Imerina.[116] *Fanompoana* also resulted in flight. Military service became so onerous by the late 1830s that civilian *fanompoana* units nominally 100 strong had been reduced through flight and evasion to ten to fifteen men. Marovatanana, one of the most populous Merina provinces in 1800 was largely deserted by 1845, whilst from Vonizongo and Valalafotsy provinces by the early 1850s one

[114] Campbell, "Missionaries."

[115] K. Fagereng, "Ny fandrosoan 'ny vehivavv sy ny fikambananay tao anatin 'ny 50 taona" (1924), in

Dahle (ed), *Atopazy ny Masonao* (Tananarive: NMS, 1974), pp. 76–78; see also Ellis, *History of Madagascar* vol. 1, p. 288.

[116] Joseph Pearse, "LMS Churches and Congregations and Christian Life" *AAMM* 19 (1895), p. 319; C.F.A. Moss, *A Pioneer in Madagascar. Joseph Pearse of the LMS* (London: Headley Brothers, 1913), pp. 43–4; Mager, *Rapport*, vol. 1, p. 43.

estimates the number of slaves and free men who have fled to Sakalava land to escape the obligations imposed by her majesty to be 24,000.[117]

By the late 1850s, it was noted: 'There are almost no men in the villages of Imerina, apart from slaves. The different types of fanompona (services or corvées) are so harsh that many slaves refuse liberty when it is offered or which they can obtain through self-redemption.'[118]

There was a similar reaction to increased *fanompoana* from the 1870s. Thus, by 1889, in order to escape forced labour, many people in Vonizongo, the Vakinankaratra and Northern Betsileo—the areas hardest hit—had fled their homes, many to become brigands.[119] This had a deleterious demographic impact. The indications are that the population of nineteenth-century Madagascar remaining stagnant at between two and three million. That of Imerina, and the Merina capital of Antananarivo, grew; the population of Imerina from approximately 100,000 to 500,000 in the 1820s, at which level it remained, albeit with sharp fluctuations in the 1830s, depending largely on the presence or absence of soldiers, until the late 1870s, when it again increased to about 800,000. The population of Antananarivo rose between 1820 and 1860 from about 17,000 to 50,000, in the subsequent decade reaching 100,000 at which level it remained despite sharp fluctuations.[120]

In 1896, many foreign merchants claimed that the population of Madagascar was eight million and, as the poorest Malagasy spent $0.8 each year on imported cotton cloth, the market for imported cottons was $6.4 million.[121] In reality, the population was closer to two million and, as they were increasingly impoverished, their ability to purchase foreign cloth decreased sharply.

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[117] Gwyn Campbell, 'An Industrial Experiment in Pre-Colonial Africa; The Case of Imperial Madagascar, 1825–1861', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 17, no. 3 (1991): p. 557.

[118] William Ellis, *The Martyr Church* (London: John Murray, 1867), p. 28.

[119] Raombana Bk.13 B.2, 25; see also Campbell, "Industrial Experiment," p. 557.

[120] Finaz, "Journal" (1855–7), p. 113 - Diaires 11.20, Archives de la Vice-Province Société de Jésus de Madagascar, Antananarivo; see also idem, 31: Raombana Bk.12 C.1, p. 489; Raombana, "Annales," p. 247.

Campbell, "Missionaries," p. 63.

[121] See Campbell, *Economic History*, pp. 344–346.

This might be seen to buttress an argument for vigorous domestic production of cloth. However, Merina policies dictated that this was not the case. First, while a significant part of the increase in the population in and around Antananarivo was a result of the influx of females captured in military expeditions launched each dry season from 1820–1853 against non-Merina peoples of the island, this did not lead to enhanced textile production. Fearing the possibility of revolt, Merina soldiers killed all captive males, and brought captive women and children back to Antananarivo as slaves. After taking its share, the Crown distributed them to leading officers—all members of the Merina elite who, given their existing stock of slaves, absorbed many as household servants whom they put to work in traditional female occupations such as textile and pottery production.[122] However, the impetus this gave to cloth production was diminished by the fact that such slaves were also the major victims of the *tangena* poison ordeal. Should any misfortune befall a slave owner, suspicion would first fall upon slaves. The *tangena* killed an estimated 1,000 people per annum in the early 1820s, rising to 3,000 from 1828–1861. If three-quarters of *tangena* victims were slaves, the ordeal would have killed between 1 and 4.5% of Imerina's slave population annually.[123]

Second, *fanompoana* had a negative impact on female demography and textile production. Refugees from *fanompoana* fled both to independent reaches of the island and to brigand bands in the *efitra*—a largely depopulated no-man's land between independent reaches and areas under firm Merina control. Brigands lived by raiding villagers within the empire while, from the Franco-Merina War of 1883–1885, hostile bands of Sakalava and Bara increasingly raided the plateau heartland of Betsileo and Imerina. The target of both brigands and pastoral war bands was cattle, and also women and children whom they seized as slaves, either to serve them in independent reaches of Madagascar, or to be sold to foreign slavers.[124] In consequence, the number of cultivators dwindled, and those who remained were increasingly the older and less able-bodied. This was accentuated by a series of deadly epidemics. Smallpox epidemics afflicting the central highlands in 1875–1881 and

[122] Mager, *Rapport*, vol. 1, p. 7.

[123] Campbell, *Economic History*, pp. 155–156.

[124] Campbell, *Economic History*, pp. 155–156.

1885–1889, there also being frequent outbreaks of malaria from 1878 and typhoid from 1882, and an influenza epidemic in 1893.[125] Mortality rates were high. In 1878, an estimated 10,000 people died during epidemics in south Betsileo alone and, in the 1893 flu outbreak, a similar number died in Imerina. The period 1882–1893 was also one of highly erratic rainfall. Too little precipitation at the commencement of the rice-growing season, followed by torrential rainfall and floods in the later stages—a feature of this era—resulted in many ruined harvests of rice, the staple food.[126] Inevitably, the price of food rose from the late 1870s, as the second period of intense *fanompoana* started, and the price of basic provisions in Imerina more than doubled[127] This trend continued as increased *fanompoana* coincided with a period of drought to cause high incidences of famine in 1879 and from 1880 until after the French takeover in 1895.[128] Thus, from the late 1870s, a plateau environment conventionally considered as healthy was transformed into one afflicted by unrelenting impoverishment, imperial exploitation, drought, famine and disease. In such circumstances, women could ill afford to devote time to textile production.

Women and girls were increasingly obliged to fulfil agricultural tasks normally executed by males. At the same time, they were the chief targets of brigands and Sakalava and Bara bands, whose raids intensified from the mid-1880s. This, in turn, had an increasingly detrimental impact upon traditional female occupations, including textile production.

Conclusion

Until the mid-1820s, most Malagasy wore home-produced clothes. Rowlands had noted in 1826:

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[125] Campbell, "Missionaries."

[126] Gwyn Campbell, "Crisis of Faith and Colonial Conquest: The Impact of Famine and Disease in Late Nineteenth-Century Madagascar," *Cahiers d'Études africaines* 32, no. 127 (1992): pp. 423, 426–427.

[127] Campbell, "Crisis of Faith," pp. 421–428.

[128] Robinson, Tamatave, 1 Oct 1876 in Secretary of State, *Report upon the Commercial Relations of the United States with Foreign Countries for the Year ending September 30, 1876* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1877), p. 739; Robertson, Tamatave, 1 Oct 1878 in Secretary of State, *Report upon the Commercial Relations of the United States with Foreign Countries for the Year ending September 30, 1878* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1879), p. 936.

> Every woman in the country from the King's wives to the Slaves are weavers. They will sit upon their heels weaving from morning'til night a month together for 1/8 of a Spanish dollar. Most families spin and weave the whole of their own clothing. The markets are stocked with home made clothes. No cloth meets with a rapid sale … if it is not superior to their own in whiteness, fineness, brilliance of colours etc.[129]

Traditionally, while ordinary peasant women may have produced a variety of cloth, they sold cotton and silk to the elite. Fine silks and cottons were sufficiently esteemed to be referred to as gods—reflecting their great symbolic meaning and ritual use. Indeed, cloth consumption was possibly as high for the dead as for the living. *Lambamena*, a silk cloth dyed dark red, was used to wrap corpses for internment in ancestral tombs—twenty to thirty *lambamena* were often used for those of high rank; and up to one hundred for dead kings.[130]

However, from the 1820 British treaty, the Merina elite increasingly adopted European dress,[131] over which they often flung a *lamba*, using a wider array of cloth and silk fabrics for ceremonial occasions, such as the *Fandroana*, or Merina New Year, and to wrap corpses.[132] Even at the low point in foreign trading relations under Ranavalona I, the court elite hired Delastelle to ship luxury Parisian cloth from France: the items purchased by prime minister Rainiharo (d. 1852), court favourite Rainijohary, and three princes alone cost some $30,000.[133] Of Ranavalona's purchases it was commented:

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[129] Campbell, "Crisis of Faith."

[130] Rowlands to LMS, Antsahadinta, 13 Jun 1826, SOAS-LMS MIL B.2 F.3 J.A.

[131] Wills, "Native Products," pp. 124–5; Sibree, "Arts and Commerce," p. 625; Arthur Leib, "The Mystical Significance of Colours in the Life of the Natives of Madagascar" *Folklore* 57. 3 (1946), pp. 130–1.

[132] Jones and Griffiths to Burder, Tananarivo, 30 May 1827, Bx.2 F.4 J.A, SOAS/LMS MIL; David Jones to Miss Jane Darby, Gosport, Tananarivoo 14 March 1822, 'David Jones. Copies of Letters 1818–39' Madagascar Odds Bx.4 – SOAS/LMS; Griffiths, *Hanes*, pp. 29, 35; Ellis, *History of Madagascar*, vol. 1, pp. 277–278, 282, 339–340, 349 and vol. 2, p. 269; Jones to Farquhar, Antananarivo, 25 March 1822, CO.167/63, NAK; Rabary, *Ny Daty Malaza* vol. I (Tananarive: LMS, 1930), pp. 24, 41; Raombana, *Histoires*, pp. 6–7; David Jones in *The Manchester Times and Gazette* (2 June 1832).

[133] Ellis, *History of Madagascar*, vol. 1, p. 283; Wills, "Native Products," pp. 124–5; Moss, *Pioneer*, pp. 16–17; Sibree, "Arts and Commerce," p. 625; W.E. Cousins, *Madagascar of To-Day* (London: Religious Tract Society, 1895), pp. 42–3.
Grandidier, *Histoire* (1908), p. 659.

> The Queen's dresses are made of the finest velvet or scarlet woolen, lined with silk of the same colour; her scarfs of red Cashmere, or velvet, also lined with silk. Those garments are covered with embroidery of the finest gold, the designs of which have been drawn at Tananarivo. One of the designs has required above 200 *l.* [$1000] worth of gold. The shoes are red and embroidered with gold. The stockings, of the most beautiful silk, have their sides embroidered with gold of considerable thickness. All the gloves have likewise gold embroidery … The parasol executed to procure her shade when she reviews her troops on horseback is likewise a pattern of both elegance and solidity. It is red, and ornamented with a quantity of gold embroidery ….[134]

Thus, whereas in the 1820s some of the Merina elite wore traditional dress on ceremonial occasions, by the 1860s most elite men and women wore European dress (Figs. 12.4 and 12.5).[135]

Moreover, from the mid-1820s, domestic textile production was progressively undermined. This was not primarily due to an influx of cheap Western textiles, as foreign commentators claimed.[136] Protectionist measures limited such imports until 1862. Even then, local weavers generally unravelled imported cottons that they mixed with local yarns to produce cloth the style and texture of which they controlled.[137] Rather, the decline of cotton textile traditions in Merina-controlled areas was chiefly due to *fanompoana*, unremunerated forced labour for the state, which both impoverished the peasant masses and forced women, the backbone of the textile labour force, into other activities. Hence, from the mid-1820s, the time and resources women within the Merina Empire could devote to cloth production, and the ability of peasants to purchase cloth, was increasingly restricted.

This was reflected in their clothing. Traditionally, only the rich owned cotton and silk clothes—the poor wore cloth woven from bast

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[134] Quoted in 'Magnificence of the Court of Tananarivo', *Morning Post* (14 April 1843).

[135] See illustration.

[136] d'Anthouard, in "The Agricultural Products of Madagascar," *Journal of the Society of Arts* 39 (31 Jul 1891): p. 750; Steven Conn, *Museums and American Intellectual Life, 1876–1926* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), p. 126.

[137] James Sibree, *Madagascar and its People* (London: Religious Tract Society, 1870), p. 220; Robinson, "Cotton Manufactures," p. 142; Auguste Vinson, *Voyage à Madagascar au couronnement de Radama II* (Paris, Roret, 1865), p. 318; Jacob, "Influences occidentales"; Schlemmer, *Le Menabe*.

Fig. 12.4 Rafaralahy, Merina governor of Foulepointe, c.1820. Frontispiece in William Ellis, *History of Madagascar* (Fisher, Sons & Co., 1838), vol. 1

and leaves. From the 1820s, impoverishment and increased *fanompoana* ensured that this continued to be largely the case.[138] Reflecting missionary views for the period 1820–1836, Ellis (1838) commented that, in some parts of Imerina, 'the only clothing of the slaves and poorer classes is a loose piece of cloth, from twelve to eighteen inches wide, of a dark-brown colour, and made of the bark of the hibiscus', although the *jabo lamba* 'a coarse native cloth or matting manufactured from the

[138] Lewis, "Account of the Ovahs," p. 234.

Fig. 12.5 "*Rainitompomerasy and Raizananana Christian officer and his wife*", c. 1860. Photograph by William Ellis. Courtesy of the Royal Ontario Museum

dyed bark of the useful rofia [i.e. raffia], which supplies a large portion of the poorer classes in the country with their ordinary and almost only clothing … multitudes in Madagascar possess, from the cradle to the grave, no superior attire'.[139] In the early 1840s, Welsh missionary David

[139] Ellis, *History of Madagascar*, vol. 1, pp. 279–80; see also Lewis, "Account of the Ovahs," p. 234.

Griffiths noted that even prosperous Merina commonly wore a *jabo* made of raffia warp and cotton weft.[140]

In the 1860s, spurred by economic revival and cotton shortages caused by the American Civil War, there was a brief resurgence of both indigenous cotton production and traditional cloth production. However, from 1875, increased *fanompoana* and economic crisis again impoverished the peasantry and severely disrupted traditional textile production. Indigenous production of luxury cotton and silk textiles continued to be restricted to the elite, for whom ordinary *lamba* were manufactured chiefly of imported cotton goods, mostly of American origin:

> The principal materials of which they are now made are the American unbleached cotton sheetings and shirtings for men's wear, and frequently for women's wear; also, cotton printed goods of all varieties are extensively used. But the native women (principally the Hova women of the capital district, Imerina) weave a fancy lamba, with a very primitive loom, which is worn by both sexes on state occasions only. They are also sold in limited numbers to foreigners, who send them as curiosities to their friends at home. Much of the largest number of them are wholly made of cotton. Some are made wholly of native silk, and some of silk and cotton mixed.[141]

Moreover, growing impoverishment was reflected in the fact that, by 1896, women's *lamba* were generally made not of unbleached cotton, but of imported white shirting.[142]

By contrast, the mass of the population were sparsely clothed in inferior cloth. LMS missionary James Sibree commented in 1870 that, 'The ordinary dress of the men of the poorer class consists of a long piece of cloth round the loins called the *salàka*, sometimes a coarse jacket of hemp or *ròfia* cloth, and always a lamba of these or some other cheap material',[143] while, in 1874, an LMS Deputation stated: 'the people in country places, not distant from the capital, wear little clothing; while

[140] Griffiths, *Hanes*, p. 20.

[141] Robinson, "Cotton Manufactures," p. 142.

[142] Mager, *Rapport*, vol. 1, p. 43.

[143] Sibree, *Madagascar and its People*, p. 216.

children of nine or ten years of age wear none at all'.[144] *Fanompoana* was largely to blame, but so were other exactions visited upon the masses by the elite. Thus, in the early 1880s Catholic missionaries reported that peasants had largely abandoned cotton cultivation because, as soon as the cotton blossomed, the elite sent their slaves to harvest it, without recompense.[145] The indications are that the limited time the mass of peasant women could devote to textile production was increasingly channelled into the production of cheaper types of cloth, made of imported Pondicherry cloth, a durable blue cloth from India or a Manchester imitation thereof,[146] and especially raffia cloth. Indeed, should imported cotton piece prices exceed those of indigenous raffia cloth, the dealer tended to switch to raffia.[147] Ironically, the only non-elite group to wear cotton *lamba* proudly (when not working) was slave porters—who comprised the only regular wage-earning class.[148]

In Betsileo, impoverished peasants increasingly wore traditional reed clothing, in contrast to the families of the Merina officers who governed them. Thus, speaking of the opening ceremony of a new church in Fanjakana, Betsileo, in August 1891, LMS missionary Joseph Pearse stated that the missionary-educated Merina males present 'have a great liking for boots and fancy stockings and other articles of European attire' while the Merina women 'dressed in their best—some in light blue and bright yellow and pink silk "lambas," while one wore a skirt said to be of "grass green silk, trimmed with satin frills of crimson, orange and grey, at the side was a purple rosette with a big button in the middle"'. By contrast, the 'poor Betsileo' possessed 'only a small rush mat for clothing'.[149]

In sum, this chapter suggests that, with the rise of a Merina Empire from the end of the eighteenth century, two economic zones formed in Madagascar, one comprising the central highlands and eastern littoral

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[144] From From "The Mission in Madagascar" in *Fruits of Toil in the London Missionary Society* (London: LMS, 1877), p. 26.

[145] Camille de La Vaissière, *Vingt ans à Madagascar* (Paris, Victor Lecoffre, 1885), p. 14.

[146] Robinson, "Cotton Manufactures," p. 147.

[147] *The Madagascar Times* (8 Dec 1888); Campbell, "Labour and the Transport," pp. 341–56; Mager, *La Vie à Madagascar*, p. 13.

[148] *The Madagascar Times* (8 December 1888); Campbell, 'Labour and the Transport', pp. 341–356; Mager, *La Vie à Madagascar*, p. 13.

[149] Moss, *Pioneer*, p. 146.

dominated by the Merina regime in Antananarivo, and the other comprising most of western and southern Madagascar that was effectively independent. Textile production in all areas remained vibrant until the time of the Britanno-Merina Treaty of 1820. Subsequently, cotton textile production was steadily undermined in areas subjected to Merina rule primarily due to the Merina regime's generalized imposition of *fanompoana*, or unremunerated forced labour for the state, which impoverished the masses and forced women, the backbone of traditional textile production, into other activities.

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CHAPTER 13

Contemporary Geographies of Zanzibari Fashion: Indian Ocean Trade Journeys in the Run-Up to Ramadhan Festivities

Julia Verne

Introduction: Textiles, Taste and Translocal Trade in Contemporary Zanzibar

Walking from the area of Michenzani through Mchangani into the old city centre of Zanzibar, known as Stone Town, one passes by hundreds of small shops, one next to the other, with most of them selling goods which have been bought either in Southeast Asia (mainly Bangkok), China, India, or Dubai. These shops are the result of various translocal connections clearly indicating the remaining relevance of trading connections across the Indian Ocean. Already in 1988, Constantin and Le Guennec-Coppens pointed to the enormous role of family connections to Arabia for the constitution of Darajani and

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Creek Road, the main shopping road in Zanzibar, formerly therefore also called Dubai Street.[1] And, looking around the same shopping streets today, not much seems to have changed. Spending time in the shops and talking to their owners, Dubai is still the place most often referred to when talking about their business trips, either as the place where to do their shopping or as the place to pass through and visit family and friends.

In this chapter, I will thus start by examining contemporary trading practices between Zanzibar and Dubai. With Dubai usually being the first international destination of Zanzibari traders, it serves as an ideal background to introduce typical features of today's trading endeavours, indicating the way in which social, historical and economic relations are still closely intertwined in the revival of this particular trade route. Furthermore, Dubai plays a decisive role in a certain ideology of translocal connectedness that still characterizes Zanzibar. Therefore, by (re)connecting the East African coast to the Arabian Peninsula, traders are able to provide their consumers with highly demanded textiles, the symbolic meaning of which allows them to express their translocal belonging even without having to be mobile themselves. Against this background, I will then turn to more recent extensions of Zanzibari trading connections across the Indian Ocean by presenting ethnographic material from a trade journey to Jakarta. Pursuing the question of how Zanzibari traders manage to meet the specific demand of Zanzibari consumers when embarking to a new place, I will sketch out the characteristics of such a business trip to Southeast Asia, pointing out, in particular, how it allows for a certain newness while, at the same time, following historical patterns. Textiles have been traded across the Indian Ocean to Zanzibar for a very long time, and, as this journey shows, though certain things have changed considerably, even the most recent versions of this trade still evoke historical imaginations that play a crucial role in negotiations of fashion and taste that inform Zanzibari consumption practices today.

[1] Françoise Constantin and Françoise Le Guennec-Coppens, "Dubaï Street, Zanzibar…" *Politique Africaine* 30 (1988), pp. 7–21.

Dubai: Fashion Hub or Stepping Stone?[2]

Traders in Zanzibar are heterogeneous, as everywhere in the world, varying in age, income and specialization. Nevertheless, since the late 1990s, a group of traders has established itself, the members of which all started their businesses in the 1990s, soon after president Ali Hassan Mwinyi, encouraged by the strong calls of the World Bank and the IMF for structural adjustment programmes, had made efforts to restore Zanzibar's international relations and trade became more liberalized again.[3] Most of them started with trips to Dubai—'the world's re-exportation platform' of the time[4]—combining their business interests with visits of relatives who had fled from Zanzibar in the context of the so-called Zanzibar Revolution[5] and were now living in the Arabian Peninsula. Meanwhile, they own one or two shops in Zanzibar in which they mainly sell textiles and ready-made garments, and regularly travel to Dubai and further east to buy their goods. Sometimes alone, but usually in small groups, they visit the same wholesalers and share the containers for shipment to Zanzibar.

The amount of capital involved in their businesses varies but usually remains relatively small and often includes formal as well as informal transactions—two main characteristics of what Mathews, according

[2] Parts of this chapter have been published in the *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography:* Julia Verne, 'Re-enlivening the Indian Ocean through contemporary trade: East African traders searching for new markets in Jakarta', *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 38, no. 1 (2017), pp. 123–138.

[3] Mohammed Ali Bakari, *The Democratisation Process in Zanzibar: A retarded transition*, (Hamburg: GIGA Hamburg, 2001), p. 133.

[4] Sylvie Bredeloup "African Trading Post in Guangzhou: Emergent or Recurrent Commercial Form?," *African Diaspora* 5 (2012), p. 30.

[5] On 12 January 1964, only thirty-three days after Zanzibar was given full independence from the British, the new government was overthrown by a troop of mercenaries and followers of the opposition party, a political upheaval towards a socialist pro-African regime in which approximately 6000–10,000 residents were killed, and about 30,000 out of approximately 50,000 people of Arab origin were forcibly expelled or fled at their own initiative, many of them heading towards Arabia. For more on this, see Jonathan Glassman, *War of Words, War of Stones* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011); and Erik Gilbert, "Oman and Zanzibar: The historical roots of a global community," in *Cross Currents and Community Networks: The history of the Indian Ocean world*, ed. Himanshu Prabha Ray and Edward Alpers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 163–178.

Fig. 13.1 Advertising new flights to Dubai, evoking historical imaginaries (Photograph by author, 2008)

to his observations of African traders in China, calls 'low-end globalisation'.[6] Stoller, in his work on West African traders in New York, finds a more positive term by describing them as 'pragmatic master[s] of transnational side roads'.[7] In the context of Zanzibar, it is important to note that this 'side road'—compared to globalization through big, multinational corporations—is the main way of importing textiles and clothing to the island, with the effect that it is these traders that actually decide and determine the selection of dress and fashion available to Zanzibari consumers.

[6] Gordon Mathews, "Chungking Mansions: A Center of "Low-End Globalization," *Ethnology* 46, no. 2 (2007), p. 170.

[7] Paul Stoller, *Money Has No Smell: The Africanization of New York City* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), p. 178.

Yunus is one of them.[8] He is a so-called *mshihiri*, a Zanzibari with ancestors from the Hadhramaut in Yemen. It was his great-grandfather who, in the nineteenth century, was the first of his family to move south along the East African coast. He started to engage in the dhow trade and soon managed to establish himself as one of the most successful and well-known traders in Zanzibar in his time. Yunus likewise started his own trading business at an early age. He first travelled to Dubai at the age of nineteen to visit some of his relatives and, three years later, in 2000, returned in order to buy textiles for trade in Zanzibar and opened his own shop in Kiponda. It has become one of the most successful shops for men's and boy's clothes in Zanzibar, with most of its clientele coming from the middle and upper-middle classes (Fig. 13.1).

Initially, he flew to Dubai twice a year to select the textiles. One of his uncles works in the import-export sector, and used his knowledge and connections to help friends and relatives such as Yunus with their trading businesses. While Yunus was still in Zanzibar, his uncle would keep him informed about the schedule of the container shipment to Dar es Salaam and Zanzibar, so that he could plan his trip at the right time, trying to keep the time frame between buying and selling as short as possible. While in Dubai, his uncle would guide Yunus through the large wholesale areas where cheap imports from Asia can be obtained. Since even in these places goods of different qualities and prices can be bought, it was important for Yunus to get good offers for products of middling or even relatively high quality, as this would also represent his status as a trader. In this respect, the experience and knowledge of his uncle about where to get a bargain had been very helpful. However, staying with his relatives also meant spending considerable time with the family, becoming involved in family festivities and, as a result, being less independent in

[8]The empirical material presented in this chapter is based on extensive ethnographic research in Zanzibar between 2003 and 2014, several field trips to the Arabian Peninsula in 2008, 2011 and 2013, and mobile ethnographic research that involved accompanying traders on their journeys through the Tanzanian hinterland, Arabia and South East Asia. While close relations were developed and maintained over this period with a number of Zanzibari families engaging in trade, through spending a considerable amount of time with traders in their shops, at customs, and on business trips, it was possible to gain a wider understanding of the main characteristics of this trade in Zanzibar, its major actors as well as its everyday and more mundane features. Yunus, and the other traders presented here, serve as exemplary characters by whom to illustrate the development and recent dynamics in Zanzibari trading practices.

his endeavours as a trader. Moreover, from an economic perspective, it soon appeared more profitable to travel directly to Asia to buy the textiles he wanted for an even cheaper price where they were produced. Once Yunus' business grew, instead of simply travelling to Dubai more frequently, he therefore decided to join some of his friends who were travelling to Bangkok and Guangzhou,[9] and reduce his stays in Dubai to an extended stopover on his way back, which he could then entirely dedicate to his family. Thus, while Dubai retains its relevance in a social and cultural sense, economically, Asian trade hubs have clearly superseded in importance.

While most Zanzibari who trade in male clothing have followed similar paths, traders concentrating in textiles for women cannot bypass Dubai as a main trading centre that easily. With respect to some female garments, frankincense and perfumes, Arab origin is still crucial, as it increases the products' appeal, as well as the price. This is experienced, for example, by Shemsa, a female trader who also owns a shop in Kiponda, not far away from Yunus, in which she sells women's and children's clothes; long, wide women's dresses (*madira*), *abaya* (the long black overcoats worn by Arab women, called *buibui* in Zanzibar); fashion jewellery; perfume; and headscarves (*mitandio*), as well as materials for evening and wedding dresses. Some of these goods, particularly the *abaya* with matching headscarves and the perfume made of frankincense, simply have to come from Dubai (or Muscat) and represent the latest Arab fashion if she wants to satisfy her customers. While I will discuss the particular notion of Arab fashion among Zanzibari consumers in the next section, this customer preference is responsible for the fact that traders dealing with these goods still have to travel to Dubai at least three or four times a year. And so does Shemsa. Since her relatives live outside the city centre, she usually prefers to stay at the Gold Plaza, a hotel right next to the Gold Souk of Dubai in the middle of numerous wholesalers, making it unnecessary to take a taxi.[10] The Gold Plaza Hotel is owned

[9] For about a decade, African traders have systematically started to expand their trading networks into Asia, with Bangkok and Guanghzou being two of the major posts. With regard to West African traders, it has to be noted, however, that already in the mid-1980s more discreet dynamics had emerged linking Asian export goods with African markets. See Bredeloup, 'African trading post'.

[10] On the role of family relations for Zanzibari trading business in Dubai, see Julia Verne, *Living Translocality. Space, Culture and Economy in Contemporary Swahili Trade* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2012), p. 106.

by an Indian family, and it has become famous for its Tanzanian and mainly Zanzibari guests. Often, together with fellow Zanzibari traders, she visits her favourite shops to acquire a selection of *abaya* in the latest shapes and designs. Every year the major Arab fashion designers introduce several new styles, and her task is to find *abaya* of these designs for an acceptable price so that she will be able to sell them in Zanzibar and still make a profit. Like Yunus, for all the other textiles she offers in her shop, she usually flies to Bangkok and Guangzhou, accepting the long journey in order to pay less than she would have to pay for the same goods in Dubai.[11]

The month of Ramadhan is an exception. When shopping activities in Zanzibar reach their peak, with everyone wanting to have several sets of new clothes for the festivities of Eid-al-Fitr, it can happen that traders such as Yunus and Shemsa spontaneously fly to Dubai in order to buy goods to fill the empty shelves in their shops. Depending on how well the business develops during this holy month, the goods they have bought on their last trip to Asia might not be sufficient for the high demand. And, since no trader wants to miss out on the biggest shopping moment of the year, travelling to Dubai for a day or two and buying as many textiles as they can fit in their suitcases has become a common practice. In this case, Shemsa usually takes specific orders from her customers, so that she can buy textiles she will definitely sell upon her return.

It might seem, thus far, as if the trade journeys form the most important part of a trader's life in Zanzibar. And, certainly, as I will show later, the traders' mobility is crucial not only in regard to the acquisition of goods, but also with respect to the traders' identity. However, the majority of their time is spent in their shops, waiting for and dealing with customers. And, as the fact that Shemsa actually takes specific orders from her customers indicates, it is the concerns and expectations of consumers

[11] As Bredeloup, in her work on African trading posts in Asia, notes, a 'feminization of the profession' can be observed with 'African business women—single, married, divorced, or retired from civil service—… forsaking in ever greater numbers the trading post of Dubai to come and find their supplies on the Asian markets'. See Bredeloup, 'African trading post in Guangzhou', p. 38. Usually, they start to travel within a group together with relatives, friends or neighbours 'who are an authority in the profession and who represent, thanks to their high morals, protection against rumours'. See Bredeloup, 'African trading post', p. 177.

that, indeed, have a very high impact on the selection of textiles available in Zanzibar today.

Real and Imagined Origins: The "Arabness" of Zanzibari Fashion

When engaging with their customers, Zanzibari traders have to deal particularly with their wish to be fashionable, often going hand-in-hand with the desire to look 'Arab', or, rather, to represent their (real or imagined) 'Arabness', as well as their aim to use dress as a way to confirm, or at least suggest, a particular social status.

Against the background of historical studies of dress and fashion along the Swahili coast, it becomes clear that these aspects are not new but, instead, have characterized large parts of the history of clothing in this particular East African context. As Prestholdt has pointed out for the fifteenth century, 'material items—cloth in particular—both reflected social attitudes and stratification and served as culturally relative instruments for maintaining or challenging status in city-states and towns along the East African littoral'.[12] At that time, it was mainly cottons from Gujarat that were broadly recognized as prestigious and, thus, allowed for the accumulation of social and political influence.[13]

While dress, in general, clearly remained an important terrain for contesting social relations and articulating social identities,[14] it was only in the nineteenth century, with the increasing presence and political power of Omani Arabs and the growth of Islam, that textiles and other material

[12] Jeremy Prestholdt, *As Artistry Permits and Custom May Ordain: The social fabric of material consumption in the Swahili world, circa 1450 to 1600*, PAS Working Papers 3 (Evanston: Northwestern University, 1998), p. 8.

[13] Pedro Machado, "Awash in a Sea of Cloth: Gujarat, Africa, and the Western Indian Ocean, 1300-1850," in *The Spinning World: A global history of cotton textiles 1200-1850*, ed. Giorgio Riello, and Prasannan Parthasarathi (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Pedro Machado, "Cloths of a New Fashion: Indian Ocean Networks of exchange and cloth zones of contact in Africa and Indian in the eighteenth and nineteemth centuries," in *How India Clothed the World*, ed. Giorgio Riello, and Tirthankar Roy (Leiden: Brill, 2009); Prestholdt, *As Artistry Permits and Custom May Ordain*, p. 9; Jeremy Prestholdt, *Domesticating the World: African Consumerism and the Genealogies of Globalization* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2008).

[14] Laura Fair, "Dressing Up: Clothing, Class and Gender in Post-Abolition Zanzibar," *The Journal of African History* 39, no. 1 (1998), pp. 63–94.

objects from Arabia came to be considered extremely valuable and fashionable. As Ranger observed in the context of his work on the Beni Ngoma dance in Eastern Africa, 'fashion often, though not invariably, followed power'.[15] Accordingly, it was in the nineteenth century that the Swahili concept of *ustaarabu* widely replaced *uungwana*[16] as the civilized ideal,[17] leading to the widespread celebration of 'Arab' fashion.[18] Glassman, for example, emphasized that 'many Shirazi sought to affect an "Arab" identity in the latter nineteenth century in order to not only equate themselves with Omanis from overseas but also distinguish themselves from newcomers'.[19] As Fair has shown in respect of women, the *buibui* began to appear in Zanzibar at the end of the nineteenth century, when it was 'first worn exclusively by the urban elite—wealthy Omani, Comorian and Arab women of "mixed blood"'—but was later adopted by women of all ethnic and class backgrounds in the islands.[20] Explaining the rapid spread of the—possibly Hadhrami influenced—*buibui* in the years immediately following World War I, several of her informants

[15] Terence Ranger, *Dance and Society in Eastern Africa, 1890-1970: The Beni Ngoma* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), p. 31.

[16] While *uungwana,* generally translated as 'civilization', was used as a description of Swahili patricians while emphasizing their status as free men (as opposed to the slaves, *watumwa*), the term *ustaarabu*, also best understood as fine manners and respectable behaviour, contains a direct reference to Arab ways, meaning 'being like an Arab'. For more on this, see Randall Pouwels, *Horn and Crescent: Cultural Change and Traditional Islam on the East African Coast, 800-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Katrin Bromber, "Ustaarabu: A conceptual change in Tanganyikan newspaper discourse in the 1920s," in *The Global Worlds of the Swahili*, ed. Roman Loimeier and Rüdiger Seesemann (Münster: LIT, 2006), pp. 67–82; Kai Kresse, *Philosophising in Mombasa: Knowledge, Islam and Intellecual Practice on the Swahili Coast* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007); John Middleton, *African Merchants in the Indian Ocean; Swahili of the East African Coast* (Long Grove: Waveland Press, 2004).

[17] Pouwels, *Horn and Crescent*; Randall Pouwels, "Eastern Africa and the Indian Ocean to 1800: Reviewing Relations in Historical Perspective," in *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 35, no. 2/3 (2002): pp. 385–425; James de Vere Allen, "Swahili Culture Reconsidered: Some Historical Implications of the Material Culture of the Northern Kenyan Coast in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries," in *Azania* 9 (1974): pp. 105-138; Bromber, "Ustaarabu: A conceptual change;" Glassman, *War of Words.*

[18] Pouwels, *Horn and Crescent*; Ranger, *Dance and Society in Eastern Africa.*

[19] Jonathan Glassman *Feasts and Riot: Revelry, Rebellion, and Popular Consicousness on the Swahili Coast 1856-1888* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1995), p. 63.

[20] Fair, 'Dressing up'.

suggested that the *buibui* was 'the latest thing to hit the town', or that it became the fashion that '"everyone who was anyone" was wearing'.[21]

This fashioning of Arab styles and materials was accompanied by the development of highly differentiated tastes and sophisticated ways of assessing quality. From the perspective of traders, this was expressed in the very delicate and picky attitude of customers, famously described by Lewis Pelly, the British vice consul at Zanzibar; 'When a Hamburg firm tried to copy a popular, blue-checked turban cloth made in Muscat and began to import a knockoff that they imagined to be equally attractive and even sold it at a price lower than the Muscati-made variety, Zanzibari consumers found the colours overly bright, so that it was valueless.'[22] In a similar manner, he could tell of the plight of various textiles that arrived with a stripe too narrow or too broad—aspects that, as I will soon try to show, still drive the selection process today.

Although Arab styles were sanctioned—and thus less visible in the years following the 'Revolution'[23]—they did not lose their ideological value. On the contrary, apart from the religious relevance of the Arabian Peninsula as the core of Islam, it was flows of migration to Oman and the United Arab Emirates in the aftermath of the 'Revolution' that even strengthened the orientation towards Arabia. And fashion has clearly remained a very important and popular way of emphasizing one's 'Arab' connections, leading, in particular, to a strong desire for the latest designs of *buibui* from Dubai, the place usually perceived as the Arab fashion hotspot.

In his work on dance and society in Eastern Africa, Ranger has also emphasized the complex meaning of fashion as a cultural technology that has long served as an important mechanism of integration along the Swahili coast.[24] As Braudel put it: 'Fashion … is the way in which each civilization is oriented. It governs ideas as much as costume'.[25]

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[21] Fair, 'Dressing up', p. 82; Allen, 'Swahili Culture Reconsidered'.

[22] Jeremy Prestholdt, "On the global Repercussions of East African Consumerism," *The American Historical Review* 109, no. 3 (2004), p. 763.

[23] Thomas Burgess, "Cinema, Bell Bottoms, and Miniskirts: Struggles over Youth and Citizenship in Revolutionary Zanzibar," *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 35, no. 2/3 (2002), p. 308; Fair, "Dressing Up," p. 83.

[24] Ranger, *Dance and Society in Eastern Africa*.

[25] Fernand Braudel, *Civilization and Capitalism, 15th-18th Century: The structure of everyday life* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992), p. 328.

Moreover, fashion not only faces outward towards others, it also touches the body and, in doing so, fashion not only serves as a way to create or sustain a particular outward experience but also to support an inner feeling.[26] As Fuglesang has shown for young women in the Swahili town of Lamu, to dress up is important to the public presentation of self, and an important means to gain prestige, respectability and self-esteem.[27] As she emphasizes, qualities of personhood are judged by how the body is presented and displayed. Beauty, in this respect, is 'a state which has to be achieved, but also an art to be cultivated'.[28] As a result, local fashions are creative and skilfully created versions of elements of other fashions—with, in the case of Zanzibar, at least in respect to certain kinds of dresses such as the *buibui* and *dishdasha*, Arab women in the Gulf States being perceived as fashion leaders.

Bypassing Arabia: Finding Alternatives at Home

On the one hand, fashion in Zanzibar, as elsewhere, can be an enormous source of pleasure and fascination, providing those partaking in it with a sense of power to change, perform and be part of the latest developments in the Gulf; on the other hand, the wish to be fashionable and trendy also creates pressure. Not many can afford the latest imports from Dubai, or order new designs from relatives abroad. Therefore, especially during the month of Ramadhan, when everyone is busy shopping and redecorating their home for the Ramadhan festivities, some women make an effort to master the fashion world by creating 'Arab' elements locally. This can be best illustrated with regard to a new *buibui* that is usually considered to be a necessary item on the shopping list.

This long, black coat can be made of different materials, adorned with different designs in different colours, and cut and sewn in various styles: wide or fitted, with wide, slim sleeves or with trumpet sleeves, like a butterfly, 'Islamic' style or with a v-neck. Every year at least—usually around the time of Ramadhan—several new styles are introduced to Zanzibar,

[26] Terence Turner, "The social skin," in *Not Work Alone: A cross-cultural view of activities superfluous to survival*, ed. Jeremy Cherfas and Roger Lewin (London: Temple Smith, 1980), pp. 112–140.

[27] Minou Fuglesang, *Veils and Videos: Female Youth Culture on the Kenyan Coast* (Stockholm: Stockholm University Press, 1994), p. 115.

[28] Fuglesang, *Veils and Videos*, p. 126.

generally created by designers in Dubai and Muscat.[29] In Dubai and Muscat, it does not take long until these new designs become more widely accessible, since the numerous tailors in the markets of Dubai and Muscat are quick to copy them. Then, these new styles are most often brought to Zanzibar through individual women, who either received them from their relatives in the Gulf, or had them tailored to measure while being there on a visit. For traders, it is difficult to acquire the latest trends, since buying them ready-made is too costly and would not allow for a considerable profit, if they would be able to sell them at all.[30] Thus, those women who manage to get a *buibui* of a new style soon become trendsetters in Zanzibar.[31] They are the models for all those in Zanzibar looking for a new *buibui* during the month of Ramadhan, whose aim it is not simply to buy one of the old designs, but actively to follow the latest Arab fashion and participate in setting the new trend in Zanzibar.

Becoming more and more nervous and hectic with each progressing day, most women usually start by browsing the market in Vikokotoni, where a few shops have specialized in *buibui* materials as well as accessories for the embroidery, most of them imported from India or China. As Fair has described for the early twentieth century, the range of fabrics which are meant for *buibui* is extensive, allowing women to display both their wealth as well as their knowledge of the market in Dubai and Muscat.[32] Many women still either save or try to borrow money from friends and relatives in order to be able to buy a higher-grade fabric and more exquisite stones for the ornaments.[33] But, even when the fabric and material for the ornamentation have been purchased, the difficult task that remains is to find a tailor who knows the desired style

[29] In Dubai and Muscat, new designs and styles of *abaya* (*buibui*) are introduced more or less monthly by designers from brands such as Hanayen, Mauzan or Al Ameerat, which all have shops in the big malls.

[30] The price for a ready-made *buibui* of the latest style in Dubai and Muscat ranges from more or less a hundred to several hundred US dollars.

[31] Since opportunities to acquire such new styles depend on personal travel or the mobility of relatives, it is not always the same women setting the trend. More generally, however, as also observed by Fuglesang in the case of Lamu, 'trendsetters' usually have a certain social status and prestige, often closely connected to 'Arab' affiliation.

[32] Fuglesang, *Veils and Videos*, p. 85.

[33] For example, the popular luxury brand Hanayen is famous for using original Swarovski crystals for the ornamentation of *buibui*. In the Gulf States as well as in Zanzibar, cheap imitations of such stones are used to imitate the designs.

and is able to produce a *buibui* exactly how it has been imagined. When a woman wants to be among the first to wear a new style, she is often forced to find a pattern she can borrow and show to the tailor, which the tailor can then try to copy—not an easy task in a context where women want to distinguish themselves from others by wearing a particular new trend first. If she is successful, the tailor will then be asked to create a *buibui* in the same cut, but with changes to the ornamentation. If the tailor succeeds in producing the *buibui* as imagined, the result will be considered as a fashionable *buibui* from Dubai even though neither the fabric nor the stones for the ornaments have ever been there.

Against the background of this empirical information, it becomes clear that there certainly is some space for traders to buy their goods elsewhere than the Arabian Peninsula; the difficulty for them remains to meet the specific taste that allows customers to relate the textiles to the latest Arab styles and designs. It is not the actual origin of the cloths and garments that is crucial to the customer, as long as it matches the (imagined) fashion in the United Arab Emirates and Oman. Hence, for traders such as Yunus[34] and Shemsa it is vital to be familiar with this (imagined) fashion through conversations with their customers and a thorough knowledge of the market. Only then can they comfortably bypass Dubai and embark to new shores confident that they will be able to import cloth that corresponds to sophisticated Zanzibari aesthetic sensibilities.

Embarking to New Shores: Buying Textiles in Jakarta

Towards the end of 2009, Yunus asked me whether I wanted to accompany him and several other traders on their main shopping trip of the year scheduled for early March 2010. Our party consisted of Yunus,

[34] In respect to men's and boys' clothing, the link to the Arabian Peninsula is less complicated. The long white robe (*dishdasha*) men in Dubai and Muscat wear in official settings, called *kanzu* in Swahili, is usually directly imported from the Arabian Peninsula and therefore matches those worn over there. However, since most shops in Zanzibar usually only sell ready-made *kanzu* within the lower price range, all those wishing to follow the latest fashion details of the more expensive variants either have to order one through a friend of relative in Oman or the United Arab Emirates, or find a Zanzibari tailor who is able to produce a garment accordingly. In respect of everyday male clothing, a link to 'Arab' style is less relevant. But even without any clear geographical or cultural reference, discourses about the most fashionable styles remain vital in informing the selection and work similarly to those of women.

Shemsa, Bi Hidaya and Thabit. Bi Hidaya is an older woman who works for the Ministry of Finance but also owns a shop in *Macontainer*—a famous shopping area in Zanzibar, especially among women; Thabit owns a shop in Shanghani, near the post office. They not only planned to travel to Guanghzou[35] and Bangkok, as in previous years, but also wanted to try a new destination: Jakarta. As they said, it was becoming a little bit boring to travel to Guanghzou and Bangkok, as this was what everyone else in Zanzibar was doing as well. With everyone frequenting the same wholesalers in those cities, the garments available in Zanzibar were all more or less the same. Even those only travelling to Dubai mainly bought imports from Thailand and China, so that there was simply not much variety offered in the shops in Zanzibar. Despite the available clothes and textiles generally fitting the taste of their consumers, Yunus had the impression that some customers were growing dissatisfied with the limited choice, so it was timely to introduce some new styles. They themselves also found that it was about time to experience something different and explore a new place.

However, Yunus and his companions were very aware of the difficulty of bringing in new clothes and textiles while, at the same time, responding to the clear expectations of their consumers. For their endeavour to be successful, they would have to negotiate familiar tastes and preferences with predicting trends. And, as I will show, it was this dialectic relation between novelty and familiarity that strongly characterized this trip to Jakarta. The new setting certainly brought with it new challenges and uncertainties, but established practices rendered the strange environment more familiar. At the same time, the whole idea of embarking to new shores appeared to be embedded in the long (real or imagined) history of Indian Ocean commerce.

[35] For a detailed impression of African traders operating in Guangzhou, see Angelo Müller, and Rainer Wehrhahn, "Transnational Business Networks of African Intermediaries in China: Practices of networking and the role of experietial knowledge," in *Die Erde* 144 (2013): pp. 82–97; Brigitte Bertoncello and Sylvie Bredeloup, "The emergence of new African trading posts in Hong Kong and Ghuangzhou," in *China Perspective* 218 (2007): pp. 94–105; Adams Bodomo and Enyu Ma, "We are what we eat: Food in the process of community formation and identity shaping among African traders in Guangzhou and Yiwu," *African Diaspora* 5 (2012): pp. 3–26; Lyons et al., "In the Dragon's Den: African Traders in Guangzhou," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 38, no. 5 (2012): pp. 869–888.

Creating Familiarity Through Shopping Routines

Whereas all four members of our trading party had detailed knowledge of where to find goods in Bangkok and Guangzhou—the trading hubs in Asia where they had been many times—they only had a very vague idea of what to expect in Jakarta.[36] Their initial guidance was from a couple of West African traders they had met in Guangzhou the year before, who had indicated that Jakarta was a good place to buy clothes, often providing better deals than Bangkok and—at least as important—offering different styles. This information was supported by two fellow Zanzibari traders who had been to Jakarta to buy electronics and construction material. These same two traders had also given Yunus the details of a cargo agent in Jakarta who would assist them not only with the shipment of their cargo, but who had also helped them to get business visas. They had further recommended a rather inexpensive hotel in Petamburan—Hotel Alma—situated in close proximity to the agent's office. As we soon found out, Hotel Alma was known for accommodating African traders, the majority, however, from West Africa.

The hotel receptionist was obviously accustomed to clientele like us. He welcomed us in basic English, and, as soon as he found out what kind of goods we were interested in, he immediately recommended the two major shopping centres famous for wholesale trade, as well as how to get there. He later also helped us to write down some basic Indonesian terms useful for communicating with wholesale traders and shop assistants. And, even though our vocabulary remained very limited throughout our stay and we often were not able to make sense of the reactions to our questions, this list of words somehow proved to be sufficient to arrange the business deals. Every now and then, misunderstandings and misdirections caused us some delays—and once even required a return to the hotel for clarification—but they did not have any sustained impact on the success of our journey.

[36] From a more general African perspective, Jakarta had already been a relevant trading post before the xenophobic acts against Chinese merchants and other foreigners in 1988 and the financial crisis that heavily affected Indonesia, and was then replaced by new trading posts in China. For the political reasons already mentioned, this was not the case for Zanzibari traders, who—when going beyond Dubai—started to travel to Bangkok and Guangzhou in the 2000s and only for a few years explore new destinations such as Indonesia and Singapore.

In a recent paper on African traders in China, Müller and Wehrhahn characterized such business trips as follows:

> As petty commercial travellers they frequent the wholesale markets every day. They trade with [local] salespeople face-to-face, using gestures and calculators to overcome language barriers, pay upfront in cash and organise shipment arrangements, either directly with the salespeople or with trade agents who specialise in shipments to and within Africa.[37]

Generally, the same can be said about our group of Zanzibari traders in Jakarta. However, whereas this might be the general organizational framework of their trips, what matters much more to the traders is the actual process of selecting the goods. First, while browsing through thousands of shops in Tanah Abang and Mangga Dua, two of the world's largest textile and clothing wholesale and retail markets, the crucial task is to master the indefinite amount of garments for sale. For every available cloth, the complex interplay of price, aesthetics and ideas about customer preferences has to be negotiated and results in elaborate shopping strategies.

Tanah Abang and Mangga Dua are huge complexes, both consisting of about twelve floors, each filled with a few hundred small shops and stalls built closely side by side, leaving only narrow paths for consumers. Each floor concentrates on a particular product: it starts with textiles on the bottom, continues with underwear, bed sheets, and so on, a floor for Indonesian batik, a couple of floors for women's tailored fashion, then men's fashion. Boys' clothing is to be found on the eighth floor, girls' dresses on the ninth and shoes on the tenth. With at least 5000 shops—Simone estimates 10,000 wholesale and retail units in total—and around 300,000 people using the complex each day, browsing through the shops requires stamina and patience.[38]

Bi Hidaya and Shemsa, the two women, decided to first look for girls' dresses and to shop for textiles, women's underwear and bedsheets later. Yunus, on the other hand, started by focusing on boys' shirts before looking for boys' jeans, underwear and socks. Thabit was especially interested in batik dresses to sell to tourists in Zanzibar. However, none of

[37] Müller and Wehrhahn, "Transnational Business Networks," p. 87.

[38] AbdouMaliq Simone, "The Surfacing of Urban Life," *City 15* (2011): p. 361.

the traders immediately started to buy anything. Rather, they were trying to pool their knowledge.

On the first day, they would simply look, ask for prices and calculate how much this would be in Tanzanian Shillings. Then, they discussed if the dress would sell in Zanzibar when demanding three, or at least two-and-a-half, times this price. If this seemed possible, they asked for the shop's business card, wrote all this information on the card and added some hints on where to find the shop the next day. On the second day, they continued to inquire into prices and look for a cheaper, wholesale price. Uncertain of the local shopkeepers' term for 'wholesale', we asked for the price of a dozen and that generally worked. When having figured out the bulk price, they then asked for different colours and sizes. If the shops did not seem to have much stock, they would purchase a dozen off the bat. Only on the third day did they return to specific shops to order larger quantities and make decisive purchases. This general pattern remained in place for the purchasing of all the goods, except that it eventually became condensed, and finally fitted into a single day.

Selecting the Goods: Finding Novelty in Similarity

So, what were the criteria for choosing garments and fabrics? As I observed from my companions' browsing behaviour, their comments and discussions, as well as their actual acquisitions, cut, fibre, cloth pattern and notions of fashion all counted. First, the textiles should not look like last year's model. Regularly, one of the women said '*hii nzuri lakini itaonekana kama ya mwaka jana*', meaning '*this is beautiful but people will think it's from last year*'. In a way, this relational character of fashion has been captured well by Adorno when talking about popular music, where 'any rhythmical formula which is outdated, no matter how "hot" it is in itself, is regarded as ridiculous and therefore either flatly rejected or enjoyed with the smug feeling that the fashions now familiar to the listener are superior'.[39] Thus, even if it suited their taste, knowing that it would be hard to sell, they would put it aside and not consider buying it.

As we all knew from our experiences in Zanzibar, each year certain colours become more desirable than others. A crucial aspect that

[39]Theodor Adorno, "On popular music," *Studies in Philosophy and Social Science* IX (1941): p. 43.

featured prominently in their discussions about colour was the skin tone of their potential customers. Whereas some colours are seen to suit women of lighter complexion particularly well, other colours are associated with darker-skinned women. At the time of our journey, especially among women with lighter skin, cream and different shades of brown—maroon, in particular—were very much appreciated, as well as purple. While dark red had been very popular the year before, it had now lost its charm.

Moreover, while previously everything had been about large flower prints, this year something new had to be found. Thus, within the vast quantities of cloths available in these wholesale complexes, the challenge consisted of finding materials that add novelty in a way that is considered to be particularly beautiful, something that would make their customers 'shine'.[40] It was clear, that not everything that is considered new would catch on and become fashion. Instead, the selected material had simultaneously to be different from and yet similar to previous preferences, since this would allow their customers to express their particular skills in successfully portraying their distinguished sense of fashion through subtle differences and distinctions.[41]

These considerations were especially relevant in respect to women's dresses, but they also featured in discussions about men's shirts and clothes for children. Concerning children's dresses, according to Bi Hidaya, Shemsa, Yunus and Thabit, they should preferably be made of cotton, even those worn on festive occasions, as this was now regarded as better quality. Only the very cheap girl's dresses imported from China were still made of 'plastic'. Moreover, except for very small children, the dresses should have sleeves to fit a Muslim ideal. Concerning the cloth pattern, a clear distinction was made between infant and adult designs—the latter at this time often consisting of larger prints and glittering adornments—and, in general, the clothes should be of a somewhat simple design. Boys' shirts and trousers offered in Bangkok would usually be full of prints—popular figures such as Spiderman or wrestling stars were popular at the time; the clothes offered in Jakarta seemed to be plainer in

[40] The Swahili verb 'kung'ara' (to shine) is commonly used to describe a person wearing new commodities and the 'trendy'.

[41] Paola Ivanov, *Translokalität, Konsum und Ästhetik im islamischen Zanzibar – eine praxistheoretische Untersuchung* (Unpublished Habilitation, submitted at the University of Bayreuth, 2013).

style—something that Yunus in particular was very happy about. Another very important factor was that ready-made dresses should not give the impression of being hand-made in Zanzibar. And finally, colour mattered here, as well. Dresses for girls should not be too dark and, again, it was important to vary the colour from the previous year. In this respect, yellow and green became two of the traders' favourite choices; although, generally, it was very much desirable to get the same dress in a variety of colours, so as to offer different options for siblings, and also prevent everyone from looking the same.

Overall, these different variables informing the selection process illustrate the high degree to which traders take into consideration the tastes of their customers. Thus, even though these traders travelled to Jakarta in search of novelty, this novelty is clearly limited by the very powerful ideas about aesthetics and fashion in Zanzibar sketched out earlier. Thus, their hope is to find the approval of their customers by offering them something different that is also somehow the same.

Continuing Historical Patterns Through (Re)Connecting Indonesia

The same holds true in respect to the traders' journeys. Despite embarking to unfamiliar shores, the exploration and mastering of new places is clearly embedded in routinized and very familiar practices. Moreover, especially when travelling to Jakarta, the historical dimension of such trading endeavours comes to the fore. Whereas in most narratives the history of trade across the Indian Ocean has been closely connected to both the dhow and the monsoon,[42] thus emphasizing the maritime links between Arabia, Africa and South Asia, links between the East African coast and Southeast Asia are less well-known. Nevertheless, at least 'from the beginning of the Common Era we have good evidence of the spread to southeast Asia of Indian cultural and religious influences', as well as of economic contacts linking the Malay world to the wider Indian Ocean.[43]

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[42] Kenneth McPherson, *The Indian Ocean: A History of People and the Sea* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1993): Adriaan Hendrik Johan Prins, *Sailing from Lamu: A study of maritime culture in Islamic East-Africa* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1965); Abdul Sheriff, "The dhow culture of the Western Indian Ocean," in *Journeys and Dwellings*, ed. Helene Basu (London: Orient Longman, 2008), pp. 61–89; and Alan Villiers, *Sons of Sindbad* (New York: Charles Scribner's, 1940).

[43] Michael Pearson *The Indian Ocean* (London: Routledge 2003), p. 58.

Moreover, recent archaeological and genetic studies in East Africa give evidence of a deeply networked trade and contact in the early Indian Ocean world involving Southeast Asia.[44]

In his book *The Graves of Tarim*, Engseng Ho vividly narrates the movements and genealogies of the Hadrami society across the sea during the last five hundred years.[45] Leaving the Hadhramaut in Yemen, some—such as Yunus' ancestors—moved along the East African Coast and settled in places such as Lamu, Mombasa, Zanzibar, or Kilwa. Others, however, crossed the ocean reaching India, Aceh, Singapore, or Java. Apart from their crucial role in religious networks across the Indian Ocean, these Hadrami also connected its shores through trade. And, while this mobility of scholars and business men had been disrupted or, at least, made less visible during the colonial and early-postcolonial period, it is now through traders such as Yunus and his companions that places across the Indian Ocean have reconnected and the long historical trajectory of such endeavours can be experienced. This sense of historicity,[46] frequently expressed by the traders on this trip to Jakarta, becomes particularly evident when visiting 'Sindbad', a Yemeni restaurant situated not far from our hotel.

Like Yunus, the owner of the restaurant forms part of the Hadrami diaspora; when Yunus told him that he has relatives in Java, the restaurant owner spoke of his relatives in Lamu and the Comoros. Both indulged in a lively conversation about the adventures and achievements of their forefathers, seeing themselves as those now able to tie in with a great past. But even though the rest of our group did not have personal ties to the place, we were incorporated in this imagination of an enlivened Indian Ocean. Despite not everyone in Zanzibar actually having ancestors who travelled the Indian Ocean, this image still forms an important part of their lives—as, for example, expressed in the strong

[44] Nicole Boivin et al., "East Africa and Madagascar in the Indian Ocean World," *Journal of World Prehistory* 26, no. 3 (2013): pp. 213–281.

[45] Enseng Ho, *The Graves of Tarim: Genealogy and Mobility across the Indian Ocean* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2006).

[46] These observations deeply resonate with Prestholdt's idea of a 'basin consciousness' and an increasing notion of regional coherence in the Indian Ocean—see Jeremy Prestholdt "Locating the Indian Ocean: notes on the postcolonial reconstitution of space", *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 9, no. 5 (2015): pp. 440–467.

demand for 'Arab' fashion. In a way, as they said, it still felt like following in the footsteps of their ancestors.

This was facilitated by the familiar atmosphere of the restaurant. The foods were similar to the *pilau* and *biriyani* as it is cooked in Zanzibar, and the restaurant even offered the popular 'chicken and chips'. Here, the availability of these particular dishes, cooked in a familiar way, were not seen as symbols of recent globalization but, rather, as a hint at the long historical trajectory of mobility in the Indian Ocean. In this way, for them, being able to sit in this restaurant was what distinguished them from the larger numbers of West African traders coming to Jakarta who had just opened their own barbecue place in a courtyard nearby. While traders from West Africa were assumed simply to follow an economic rationale, being mobile and flexible so as always to account for changes in business opportunities and legislation,[47] for them, it was important to emphasize that there was more to it. By travelling to Jakarta, they were not only able to mobilize a familiar image of Indian Ocean travellers, they also extended Zanzibar's economic connections beyond Arabia by reconnecting with the long faded links to Indonesia.

This sense of following a long tradition of travel and trade also helped in respect of incorporating textiles from Jakarta into Zanzibari ideas of fashion. In a context where 'Arabic' styles were in high demand, emphasizing Arab connections to Indonesia lead to an increased appreciation of the styles and designs offered in the shopping centres. Back in Zanzibar, when talking about the journey with their customers, it helped them to convey the popular sense of 'Arabness' in different textiles from a new place.[48]

Conclusion: Dialectics of Novelty and Familiarity Within Contemporary Zanzibari Geographies of Fashion

Contemporary trading activities in Zanzibar not only revive old routes, they also establish new ones across the Indian Ocean. Thus, today, not all Zanzibari traders travel to the same places as their forefathers. They

[47] See also Bredeloup, 'African trading post in Guangzhou'; Bodomo and Ma, 'We are what we eat'.

[48] For a theoretical engagement with collective, cultural and translocal memory' see Brigittine French, "The semiotics of collective memories," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 41 (2012): pp. 337–353; Astrid Erll, "Travelling Memory," *Parallax* 17, no. 4 (2011): pp. 4–18; Chiara de Cesari and Ann Rigney, *Transnational Memory* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2014).

travel to new shores and, in many ways, their mobility has become very different. Nevertheless, in certain respects, they still follow in their forefathers' footsteps. As the ethnographic account of this trade journey to Jakarta has shown, even if the setting is new, they still pursue familiar practices, and they generally have confidence in their ability to find their way in this new locale. To this day, Zanzibari trading in clothing is closely entangled with ideas of fashion and the tastes of Zanzibari consumers, who, from the perspectives of traders, remain very picky. In their efforts to meet and predict demands, they seek out new textiles from new places, notably for the celebrations of Eid-il-fitr, by increasing the spectrum of textiles offered while still being mindful of the desired styles and designs. Based on their experiences of trade in Zanzibar, traders such as Yunus and Shemsa are driven to leave the beaten track. They go beyond established connections in search of novelty. And, indeed, they find themselves confronted with new goods, a different culture of trade, different opportunities, and different challenges and risks. This not only makes the trip more adventurous and exciting than travelling repeatedly to Bangkok, it also successfully evokes an image of the—real or imagined—past, when Zanzibari traders were more famous for making their way in the Indian Ocean world. Thus, even though these traders travel to a new destination, the journey still serves to strengthen old bonds, actual and imagined. And it is the same dialectic relationship between old and new that characterizes the Zanzibari sense of fashion that fuels trade journeys such as this: the imported materials have to look the same and different at the same time in order to correspond successfully to the (imagined) geographies of fashion dominating consumption practices in Zanzibar today.

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CHAPTER 14

The Fabric of the Indian Ocean World: Reflections on the Life Cycle of Cloth

Jeremy Prestholdt

Cloth is remarkably dynamic. It is woven, exchanged and creatively adapted in myriad ways. It also affects relationships intimate and distant by translating aesthetics, desires and social ideals into the language of exchange. As a result, textiles are key to understanding the history of global exchange and social relation. The essays in this volume suggest that we cannot fully understand the socio-economic fabric of the Indian Ocean without reflecting on textiles, and we cannot write the global history of fashion and textile production without concerted reflection on the Indian Ocean region. More precisely, the production, exchange and consumption of textiles offer unique windows on Indian Ocean connectivity and the region's articulation with the wider world. The research presented in this important collection elaborates these points by tracing the long life cycles of cloth destined for Indian Ocean markets. Indeed, the essays address several questions critical to understanding Indian Ocean linkages and patterns of global interface: What are the social meanings of cloth in Indian Ocean contexts? How is cloth transformed

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in its circulation? How have textiles articulated Indian Ocean economies with the global economy?

Interdisciplinary research on the Indian Ocean has greatly enhanced our understanding of its matrix of linked socio-economic systems, a space of "related but different social worlds", in Kai Kresse and Edward Simpson's words.[1] These social worlds were constituted by centripetal forces, including the monsoon pattern, exchange, migration, religion and empires. Those forces, in turn, fostered notions of affinity and equivalence. Many objects of material culture evidence Indian Ocean socio-economic linkages. The dhow, for example, has for centuries been a primary symbol of transoceanic connectivity.[2] Yet, few objects of Indian Ocean material culture are as transcendent as cloth. Many of the sartorial choices of people along the Indian Ocean rim, past and present, reflect regional aesthetic communities. From the latest Dubai *abaya* to variations on the Indonesian men's tubular *sarong*—alternatively known as *lungi* (Bangladesh and India), *izaar* (Oman), *macawis* (Somalia) and *shuka* (Kenya and Tanzania)—fashion has long evidenced mutual influences along the Indian Ocean rim. At the same time, the history of cloth in the region suggests that niche markets and local variations on wider sartorial concepts have likewise defined fashion and the textile trade, specifically.

Cotton and silk textiles have acted as a 'means of communication' in the Indian Ocean region, as H.P. Ray suggests in Chap. 11. Building on Ray's insight, we might think of cloth as a means of communication in multiple senses: it conveys ideals, personal desires and cultural norms, and it is a vessel for social and economic exchanges. Moreover, cloth is easily altered and re-fashioned. The diverse biographies of cloth outlined in this volume demonstrate this remarkable malleability. They also recount the ways in which cloth has gained new value in its circulation. Like other objects, textiles have social lives. As Arjun Appadurai has shown, considering an object's life cycle can reveal transitions between social forms including the commodity, gift, ritual object and so

[1] Kai Kresse and Edward Simpson, "Between Africa and India: thinking comparatively across the western Indian Ocean," Zentrum Moderner Orient Working Paper no. 5, (2011): p. 1.

[2] Abdul Sheriff, *Dhow Cultures of the Indian Ocean: cosmopolitanism, commerce, and Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010).

on.[3] In this chapter, I would like to narrow the analytical aperture to focus on one social form: the commodity, or the economic object evident throughout this volume. By taking this tack, I wish to emphasize the importance of cloth as a medium of transregional economic and social engagement. Additionally, I wish to highlight the ways in which complementary processes of alteration in multiple locales have augmented cloth's socio-economic value.[4] A holistic view of cloth as economic object—from thread to garment—recognizes the intertwined processes not only of weaving, circulation, exchange and adornment, but also alteration, unravelling, reweaving and other forms of reassembly. By recognizing cloth as a highly dynamic socioeconomic object, we can gain insight into the creation and augmentation of value as well as how the process of adding value connects producers and consumers, often through circuitous transregional routes.

This collection evidences the dividends of studying the modification of textiles over their long life cycles. Specifically, the essays offer valuable insight into patterns of trans-oceanic integration over the past two millennia and they encourage us to consider economic relationships and modifications of value as intertwined phenomena. To elaborate these points I will begin with a reflection on the importance of cloth in the Indian Ocean region as a vehicle of both emic and etic relation. Then, in the second section, I will turn my attention to the extended life cycles of cloth and transregional processes of value creation.

Cloth and Global Integration

Cloth has long been an integrative element within the Indian Ocean world. It has also linked Indian Ocean societies with other spheres of exchange, from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic and Pacific basins. Derek Heng and H.P. Ray's chapters demonstrate that such extra-Indian Ocean links extend back to the beginning of the Common Era. However, in the early modern era, new multidirectional routes of

[3] Arjun Appadurai, "Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value," in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed., Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1986), pp. 3–63.

[4] Igor Kopytoff, "The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as a Process," in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed., Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 64–94.

linkage emerged with the establishment of Portuguese and Dutch colonial empires in the region. As Giorgio Riello and others have shown, the emergent Atlantic economy became linked to Indian Ocean textile production in important ways, and consumers around the world began to wear Indian cloth.[5] Likewise, Indian textile designs influenced aesthetics in many world regions. As a result, consumer demands elsewhere were, as Prasannan Parthasarathi argues in Chap. 2, 'remade in the image of those of the Indian Ocean'.

This demand beyond the region had myriad repercussions. For instance, the transatlantic slave trade depended to a great degree on European and African merchants' access to cloth from South Asia.[6] As a result, American plantations, European trading firms, Indian weavers, African commercial agents and African textile consumers integrated American, European and Atlantic African economies with that of the Indian Ocean. This global interdependence shaped Indian production as well. As Lakshmi Subramanian shows in Chap. 3, Surat merchants and brokers negotiated layered relationships across oceanic space, which affected the moral economy of the late eighteenth-century handloom industry. In the nineteenth century, the colonization of much of the Indian Ocean region by European states closed many historic routes of connection and channelled alternative transoceanic currents.

Cloth offers important evidence of the integration of the Indian Ocean with the Atlantic – and the Pacific – not just within but also beyond imperial commercial circles.[7] For example, among the most popular cotton goods in 1850s East Africa was American cloth, known locally as *merekani*. The close relationship between US manufacturers and East African consumers was perhaps most clearly evident in the

[5] Giorgio Riello, *Cotton: The Fabric that Made the Modern World*; *The Spinning World: A Global History of Cotton Textiles, 1200-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

[6] Kazuo Kobayashi, "Indian Cotton Textile and the Senegal River Valley in a Globalising World: Production, Trade and Consumption, 1750-1850" (PhD diss., London School of Economics, 2016).

[7] These connections were being deepened with the Atlantic in the eighteenth century around slave trading from Brazil and the Rio de la Plata region to the southeast African coast, for which see Pedro Machado, *Ocean of Trade: South Asian Merchants, Africa and the Indian Ocean, c. 1750-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), especially chapter 3.

fashionability of the stamps printed on the American textiles. In southern Unyamwezi (Tanzania), for instance, consumers sought lengths of *merekani* bearing the blue "Massachusetts Sheeting" stamp, which wearers wrapped around their body in such a way as to ensure that the words appeared across their chests.[8] By the early twentieth century, as Hideaki Suzuki shows in Chap. 5, the demand for Japanese textiles in the Indian Ocean region forged new linkages with the Pacific as well.

Japanese production for niche markets in the European colonies of the Indian Ocean region fed Japan's rapid industrialization, integrating East Asia and major Indian Ocean markets in new ways. In the inter-war period, Japanese manufacturers appealed to colonial consumers in the Dutch East Indies, South Asia and Eastern Africa by producing low-cost cotton textiles that catered to niche market demands.[9] As we see in Suzuki's chapter, Japanese officials sent representatives to East Africa and published analyses of regional consumer trends. These assisted Japanese firms to produce cloth appropriate for local markets. The Japanese government's willingness to research the changing tastes of diverse consumers, and manufacturers' responses to these research findings, allowed Japanese cotton goods to supersede most European and Indian competitors in East Africa in the 1930s.

The examples of British, American and Japanese textiles in the Indian Ocean region also evidence the diversification of regional markets in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In the postwar era, Japanese manufacuters once again appealed to regional consumers. From the 1960s, Japanese manufacturers gained significant market share in the region, notably in East Africa and South Asia. As Seiko Sugimoto outlines in Chap. 4, Japanese manufacturers again focused on niche markets, producing goods such as *kanga* for East Africa and a variety of high-end synthetics for Indian consumers. Distinct from the inter-war trade in cotton goods, Japanese production of synthetic *sarees* appealed to post-war consumers' desires for signifiers of distant societies. More precisely, Sugimoto demonstrates how the transposition of Japanese motifs from *yuzen kimonos* to Japanese synthetic *sarees* captured a particular consumer

[8] Jeremy Prestholdt, "On the Global Repercussions of East African Consumerism," *American Historical Review* 109, no. 3 (2004): pp. 755–81.

[9] Katsuhiko Kitagawa, "Japanese Competition in the Congo Basin in the 1930s," in A.J.H. Lantham and Heita Kawakatsu, eds., *Intra-Asian Trade and the World Market* (New York: Routledge, 2006), Ch. 10.

interest in foreign novelty among Indian and Indian diasporic audiences. Just as important, the popularity of Japanese *sarees* among these elite consumers evidenced a desire to signify the 'modern'.

The creation of independent nations, the diversification of global trade and emergent Cold War geo-political frictions redefined Indian Ocean rim societies in the postcolonial era. The Indian Ocean's matrix of socio-economic relations to a degree diminished as the political gaze of postcolonial states turned inward. However, new means and nodes of interface would result in alternative trans-Indian Ocean links. For instance, the global petroleum economy in many ways reoriented regional economic activity towards Persian Gulf states. Aviation and telecommunication linkages also encouraged mobility and exchanges that affected perceptions of regional affinity. In the post-Cold War era, numerous centripetal forces, from trade agreements to labour migration and tourism, fostered a renewed sense of equivalence that affected both individual and interstate relationships. In recent decades, people along the Indian Ocean rim have even imagined coastal identity as an alternative social and political lever.[10]

Consumer culture represents one dimension of regional reorientation and reinvention. Perhaps no place evidences this better than Dubai. The Persian Gulf metropolis has become the financial nucleus of the Indian Ocean region and a magnet for business, economic migration and consumerism. Much like nineteenth-century Bombay and Zanzibar, Dubai's position as both commercial emporium and transit point has bolstered its cultural influence.[11] For example, Dubai women's fashions have gained surprisingly uniform popularity from Kuala Lumpur to Cape Town. In only a matter of weeks, Dubai women's fashions now reach the ends of the Muslim Indian Ocean world. In Chap. 13, Julia Verne relates how Zanzibari small business owners import *abaya* fabrics from Dubai from which local clothiers create Dubai-influenced *buibui*. As this example suggests, fabric expresses the larger cultural currents of the

[10] Jeremy Prestholdt, "Locating the Indian Ocean: Notes on the Postcolonial Reconstitution of Space," *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 9, no. 3 (2015): pp. 440–467.

[11] Nile Green, *Bombay Islam: the religious economy of the west Indian Ocean, 1840-1915* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Jeremy Prestholdt, *Domesticating the World: East African Consumerism and the Genealogies of Globalization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008).

Indian Ocean. Sartorial choices radiate across the region from particular sources, while diverse consumers domesticate them in variegated ways.

In some Indian Ocean societies, sartorial influences from Dubai are predicated on a social interest in 'Arab' aesthetics. Verne notes that, in Zanzibar, Arabness operates as both fashion ideal and social identity. Wearing current Arab styles is an expression of subjectivity, a way of emphasizing affinity with Dubai and the wider Arab world. Moreover, the popularity of Arab fashions has structured relationships with other Indian Ocean locales such as Jakarta. More precisely, Zanzibari merchants' emphasis on Arab links with Indonesia has shaped their interest in the clothing designs on offer in Jakarta. Verne suggests that a 'popular sense of "Arabness"' allows Zanzibari merchants to seek out materials from across the Indian Ocean region that seem to reflect a shared Indian Ocean cultural aesthetic—indeed, a shared history. Fashion, then, operates in a dialectical relationship between the present and past. Imported fabric must, Verne argues, appear 'the same and different' in order to appeal to Zanzibari '(imagined) geographies of fashion'. Indian Ocean currents are thus relevant to the geographical and historical imaginations of Zanzibari consumers, and these are incessantly revised.

Actors along the Indian Ocean rim have reimagined the region, but they have done so for new demands and in response to changing global circumstances. Like international trade agreements, labour migration and the demand for Persian Gulf oil, textiles and the aesthetics of adornment are elements of regional reintegration. Simultaneously, as Prasannan Parthasarathi notes in Chap. 2, Asia has once again become the centre of global textile and clothing production. This structural shift signals a return to a pre-eighteenth-century global orientation, albeit, as Parthasarathi writes, on 'radically different foundations'. The emergent global textile economy thus overlaps and intersects with the revivification of the Indian Ocean as an idea.

Cloth and Value

It is important to note that the long production chains that typify garment manufacturing in the current age of globalization are not entirely novel. The fact that the global trade in garments only surpassed that in textiles (Parthasarathi, Chap. 2) in 1987 suggests that multi-site value adding has been an historically important dimension of clothing production. One reason for this is that until relatively recently fashion was

defined not by common transnational aesthetics or multinational retailers but rather by myriad niche markets. Across the Indian Ocean's history, brokers, merchants and tailors far removed from textile-weavers re-conceptualized cloth and added significant value in response to the demands of particular markets. Cloth manufacturers and consumers were thus linked by complex production chains that evidenced changing forms of manufacturing and imaginative labours within and beyond the Indian Ocean region.

The biographies of cloth presented in this volume evidence the modes of translation and flexibility necessary to cater to niche markets. In Chap. 10, MacKenzie Moon Ryan provides fascinating detail of the mechanisms of translating consumer interests in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In the case of the production of the colourful women's wrappers known as *kanga* in East Africa, mechanisms of translation were complicated. Indian merchants in East Africa developed designs and then ordered these textiles from European 'merchant converters'. They, in turn, commissioned European manufacturers to produce the *kanga*.

The life cycles of Indian Ocean cloth also evidence creative adaptation by a range of actors to suit capricious niche markets. In Ryan's chapter, we see how imported men's handkerchiefs inspired the popular *leso* women's wrapper in East Africa, which was made by sewing together several imported handkerchiefs. Additionally, Sarah Fee shows in Chap. 9 how women in East Africa adopted Muscat cloth to wear around the waist, in contrast to its conventional use for Omani men's turbans and shoulder cloths. The aesthetics of Muscat cloth even experienced brief fame in the West, where it was once again adapted to local tastes. After the Sultan of Zanzibar's visit to Paris in 1875, fashionable women in Paris, London and New York favoured bonnets wrapped in a brocaded scarf that approximated the design of Sultan Barghash's Muscat cloth turban.[12]

Historically, the manufacture of cloth was often a cumulative, layered process in which agents added value at multiple junctures in a textile's life cycle. This processual value adding is too often neglected in reflections on global economic relationships. The essays in this collection

[12] Messrs. Ballard and Halley, "New York Fashions," *Harper's Bazaar* September 11, 1875.

and other recent work demonstrate its centrality to textile trades in the Indian Ocean region. For instance, in nineteenth-century Zanzibar much of the popular indigo cloth known locally as *kaniki* was made from English cotton goods dyed in India. Imported cloth was also redesigned in East African centres of trade and on caravan trails before being sold to consumers. In Unyanyembe (Tanzania), for example, artisans tailored English broadcloth into the short coastal-style men's sleeveless coat known as *kizibao*. Artisans in Zanzibar also re-fashioned imported cloth by adding fringes, borders and stamped patterns. For example, Indian silk-cotton wrappers known as *uzar* and worn by the moderately wealthy on the coast were woven with gold thread at Zanzibar as a way of attracting local consumers and increasing the fabric's value.[13] In Chap. 9, Sarah Fee shows how artisans in East Africa finished Muscat cloth by adding bands made of silver or gold thread. This increased the textile's value by as much as forty per cent. Zanzibari artisans similarly realized tenfold increases in profit when they embellished Surati silk *dewli* with gold thread borders. Artisans thus added significant value at multiple junctures in the life cycles of textiles.

Value adding was often essential for selling to niche markets in the eastern African interior. In nineteenth-century Zanzibar, common white cotton loincloths made in Surat were given broad border stripes of indigo, red and yellow to appeal to different mainland markets. Textiles from India and the United States were also sewn together to make composite cloths for specific markets. Much as in continental East Africa, artisans in Madagascar paired imported cloths to make the popular *lamba*. Before the 1860s, as Gwyn Campbell demonstrates in Chap. 12, Malagassy weavers also dismantled imported cotton cloth, reweaving it with local yarn to create entirely new textiles. Similarly, in Chap. 6, Steven Serels notes that in early twentieth-century Eritrea imported Indian textiles were unravelled and their colourful threads used to weave new cloth. Like tailoring imported cloth or adding borders, disassembly and reassembly was important to regional trade in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries because it produced cloth that catered to niche markets and thus generated additional profit.

The consumption of industrially produced cloth in Indian Ocean rim societies had numerous consequences. Some textile traditions lost

[13] Prestholdt, *Domesticating the World*.

ground to imports. However, several essays in this volume caution against presumptions of local 'de-industrialization' as a consequence of imported cloth. For instance, Gwyn Campbell argues that in nineteenth-century Madagascar the local production of textiles declined as a result of complex socio-political circumstances, not as a direct result of cheap European imports. In early nineteenth-century Indonesia, we see other consequences of foreign imports. As Kenneth Hall argues in Chap. 8, Indian cloth stimulated the greater production and circulation of Javanese batik. High-quality Indian manufactured white fabric provided a base for local stamps and sophisticated Javanese dying technologies. Artisans thus domesticated Indian cloth into Java's 'batik tradition', resulting in higher-quality batik. Additionally, making batiks out of imported cloth and industrial cotton thread meant that they were no longer prohibitively priced. While the audience for batik had once been limited to elites, the new batik found a large Southeast Asian market and consumers well beyond the eastern Indian Ocean region. In sum, imported fabric and yarn spurred what Hall terms a new "'consumer' batik", which to a great degree democratized consumption and so contributed to the expansion of the Javanese batik industry.

The industrialization of textile production in Britain, the United States, Holland, Germany, India and Japan, among other places, resulted in the availability of cheaper textiles in the Indian Ocean region. But the demands of niche markets also encouraged complementary technologies and varied scales of production. The case of East African *kanga* is once again instructive. Since machine printing could only produce new designs at great expense, late nineteenth-century British textile producers were not able to stay apace of the quickly changing demands of the *kanga* market. However, Dutch manufacturers succeeded in East African markets, as MacKenzie Moon Ryan demonstrates, by returning to the older method of woodblock printing, albeit on industrially produced cotton cloth. While this technique was laborious, it allowed for greater flexibility in production and, when combined with cheap labour, reduced the price of the finished product. In inter-war Japan production was mechanized, but a great many small mills—usually of thirty looms or fewer—manufactured cloth for Indian Ocean markets. These smaller facilities had the distinct advantage of being able to shift production easily in response to the oscillating demands of niche markets. The contours of Indian Ocean markets thus affected the means and scale of production in distant locales.

As the research presented here suggests, artisans, merchants, brokers and consumers in the Indian Ocean region have all reimagined cloth and, in the process, they have often made it more fashionable and more valuable. This value adding has not only connected and articulated the different social worlds of manufacturers, merchants and consumers, but it has also evidenced the complementarity—in some cases, even symbiosis—of manual and mechanized production. In short, tracing the extended economic life cycles of textiles highlights the many and diverse sites of production that have contributed to the end value of cloth for consumers along the Indian Ocean rim and beyond.

Conclusion

Cloth is a dynamic object and a medium of connection. Given their long production chains and myriad uses, textiles offer an important lens through which to view the world of the Indian Ocean, the world from the perspective of the Indian Ocean and processes of global integration over many centuries. Throughout this volume we have seen how cloth has at once reflected global trends and particular Indian Ocean relationships. Just as important, we have seen how it has embodied complementary industrial and manual production processes, which both catered to niche markets and transcended the Indian Ocean region. In the current era of globalization the history of Indian Ocean connectivity and the notion of regional equivalency, in fashion as in much else, have gained greater relevance. Tangible and imagined Indian Ocean affinities shape regional consumer interests and, thus, textiles remain an important vehicle of communication among the related yet different social worlds of the Indian Ocean.

The history of textiles in the Indian Ocean region evidences the vitality of cloth as an object imagined, fabricated and creatively adapted. In fact, cloth is an apt metaphor for the changing Indian Ocean world: diverse threads of social and economic relation woven together to form a discernable fabric. At the same time, the fabric of the Indian Ocean world has been altered, elaborated and reimagined for new social and economic demands. In the present as in the past, cloth expresses the Indian Ocean as a matrix of inter-societal relationships and a dynamic idea.

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