

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF TEXTILES IN KENYA

by

Manoharlal Mavji Gohil

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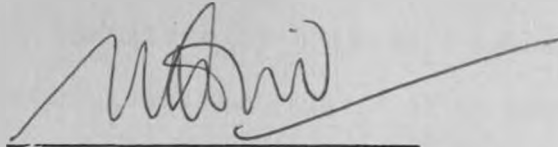
A Thesis

submitted in partial fulfilment
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DECLARATION

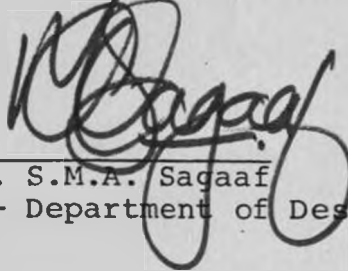
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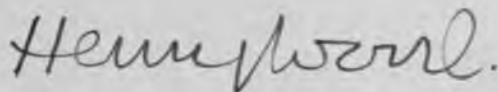
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M.M. GOHIL

ABSTRACTThe Historical Background of Textiles in Kenya

This study was undertaken in an attempt to trace the history behind the introduction of a commodity of Textiles in Kenya. The aim was to establish the significance and the validity of the past and to bring to the attention, wherever possible, many facts about textile substitutes in form of traditional dresses of various ethnic groups of Kenya. The challenge was of probing the past so as to understand and assess the reaction, of the country as a whole, to an innovation like textiles which was presented to the indigenous people by the foreigners who visited the country in its early history.

For the purpose of seeing a cross section of the distribution of textiles into the country a selection was made of seven ethnic groups in Kenya, representing the areas from the coast to the western and north eastern regions of the country.

The study is divided into nine chapters starting with an introduction which mainly deals with the early history of the coast in an

attempt to stress various activities taking place as early as the 15th century while the interior of the country being left unexplored to as late as 1840.

Since textiles were introduced at the coast, the Swahili people of the coast form the basis of the second chapter and it marks the starting point of the study. Detailed early history of the region is entered into with an aim of emphasising, who the earliest settlers on the coast were, how they associated with local inhabitants and what the results of their interactions were.

The social and cultural conditions that prevailed with the foreigners settling at the coast as well as the trade and commerce which flourished, became responsible for introduction of textiles which through a system of caravan trade found its way to the interior of the country. This activity marked a change in the history of the people of the interior who until early 1800, were interacting only at local levels.

The chapters on the ethnic groups are based on, in order of their contacts, with the

coastal people. Thus the study moves from the Kenya coast to the interior in stages with the Giriya people, who were the immediate neighbours of the Swahili, forming chapter four. The Akamba people who were heavily engaged in trade, as the middlemen, between the people of the interior and the coastal people form the basis for chapter five. The Maasai constitute the sixth chapter and the Abaluyia and the Luo people constitute the seventh and eighth chapters respectively. The north eastern section of the country is looked at under the Somali group which makes up for information in chapter nine.

All the above chapters are looked at under headings such as:

- (i) History of the people where stress is laid on the origins of the people, migratory movements and circumstances under which they settled into specific areas;
- (ii) The people whereby traits and peculiarities of the people are looked at;

- (iii) Clothing whereby traditional form of dressing for men, women and children is investigated through comments made by various explorers and missionaries, with particular emphasis on their reaction to cloth which they encountered under different circumstances;
- (iv) Trade whereby the earlier form of trading is outlined and recent trade in items of textiles is looked into, with emphasis on the value attached to textiles to the point of them becoming a primitive form of currency in the barter trade.

The last section in each chapter is made up of photographic plates of the traditional items of dressing of the ethnic groups.

Chapter ten which is the final chapter in the study is entitled "The impetus of change". The chapter is made up of a summary of information from chapters two to nine and lays emphasis on how the commodity of textiles has been responsible for changing patterns of everyday economic activities in the traditional Kenyan societies and how it has helped to establish a

significant interaction between different ethnic groups. The chapter goes through the early history of the British interest in Kenya and the colonial era in Kenya whereby the British attitude and policies towards textiles and textile industry are outlined.

The import situation of the British colony is traced and shows a diversity in origins of various textile goods. The serious competition which arose as a result, gave way to the British demands for consumption of only British textile goods.

The increasing demand, as seen from statistical figures created a need for locally produced raw materials which gave rise to the local cotton growing and the first phase of industrialization. The second phase of development of the textile industry is marked by the early days in independent Kenya whereby the Government measures, distribution, expansion and protection are emphasized.

The whole of chapter nine, which is the concluding chapter, is devoted to emphasize the speed at which the textile goods, which

were a new innovation to the indigenous people, have 'taken off' towards its industrialization, and local production and thus becoming a vital factor in the economy of Kenya.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

This study was undertaken in an attempt to trace the history behind the introduction of Textiles as a commodity in Kenya. Textiles was first introduced to the indigenous people of Kenya by foreigners who visited the country quite early in the 14th Century.

Various communities who were affected by this commodity had their own modes of dressing and body covers which in some cases were completely replaced by manufactured cloth.

The aim of the study was first to establish the environmental, social, cultural and economic factors which contributed to the traditional forms of dressing and second to trace the spread of the manufactured cloth and how it changed the ways of life of the traditional communities.

Upon its introduction in Kenya, Textiles as a commodity, widely featured as a major item of trade which was being taken by caravans into the interior of the country. The urge to obtain

this commodity led some of the communities to assuming roles of traders and middlemen, thus changing the economical and social activities of the affected groups.

Cloth assumed the role of a primitive currency and had a purchasing power which no single commodity had previously exhibited. It became a fashion in the dressing style of the local communities, much favoured as a substitute for the skin garments which were in use. It also began to feature prominently in ceremonies, rituals and other cultural and economic activities of these communities.

1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study was:

1. To trace the history of Textiles as a commodity in Kenya.
2. To establish the significance and the validity of the past and to bring to bear, whenever possible, traditional forms of dressing of various ethnic groups of Kenya.

3. To assess the impact on local people of this new and foreign commodity.

1.3. DESIGN OF THE STUDY

For the purpose of seeing a cross section of the distribution of Textiles into the country a selection was made of seven ethnic groups in Kenya representing the areas from the Kenyan Coast to the Western and North Eastern regions of the country.

The chapters in the study were arranged in the order in which the ethnic groups initially got in contact with the Textile commodity. The North Eastern region, which although had felt the effect of Textiles much earlier in its history, was considered last to gain an overall view of the spreading of Textiles in Kenya. The chapters are as follows:

- | | | |
|---------|-----|---|
| Chapter | I: | The introductory chapter to the background of the study. |
| Chapter | II: | History of the East African Coast was used as a starting point since most of the early contacts with the country were established here. |

- Chapter III: The Swahili group was considered as the first community to come in contact with Textiles and were very much affected by the ways of dressing of the people who visited and settled in their area.
- Chapter IV: The Giriyaama who were the immediate neighbours of the Coastal Swahili were the first to be in contact and therefore received the first exposure to new Textiles.
- Chapter V: The Akamba, who were in close contact with Giriyaama, especially with regards to the ivory trade were selected to be the next ethnic group to be in contact with the coastal people and thus to Textiles. The Akamba assumed the role of middlemen between the people of the interior and the Coast.
- Chapter VI: The Maasai were considered as an important factor so far as the interior of the country was concerned. This is because they were very hostile, fierce and war-

like and did not easily allow visitors, explorers or missionaries to pass through their country. Once the passage through Maasailand was established, the travellers and trade caravans could proceed to the West and thus the contacts with Baluiya and Luo people were established.

Chapter VII: The Baluiya were considered as a Bantu group in Western Kenya, the other Bantu groups being Giriyaama on the Coast and Akamba in Central Kenya. The idea was to observe differences in reaction to Textiles by the Bantu communities in Kenya.

Chapter VIII: The Luo who are the Nilotic were considered to trace the penetration of Textiles to the extreme West of the country.

Chapter IX: The Somali who inhabited the North Eastern region of the country were considered to gain an overall view of the spreading of Textiles. They had a strong

Islamic background and thus a lot of exposure to the Islamic way of dressing.

Chapter X: The final chapter of the study is entitled "The impetus of change" and is made of summary information from the preceeding chapters while laying emphasis on how Textiles have been responsible for changing patterns of life in Kenyan societies.

Chapters III to IX have been broken down under the following headings:

- 1: History of the people where attempts have been made to trace the origins of the people and the circumstances under which they have settled into their present areas.
- 2: The people where traits, customs, traditions etc. are looked at.
- 3: Clothing under which the traditional forms of dressing of

men, women and children are looked at and how these people have reacted to the commodity of Textiles.

- 4: Trade has been considered as an important factor because it has been responsible for the introduction of Textiles into the country.

1.4 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The period between the 15th Century to 1960 has been the general scope of the study. The historical aspects of Textiles were well encompassed in this period.

Information on the study has been drawn from a wide variety of sources which have all scantily mentioned the item of Textiles. Information in form of lists of Trade goods has also been very sparse. Only some writers have mentioned items of trade goods while dealing with the constitution of the trading caravans. This may be due to the fact that those who have written about the people, especially before 1880, have mainly been missionaries or explorers who were venturing into the country with distinct

aims and did not have trade as a major factor for consideration in their venture. The items of Textiles were mainly for gift purposes and therefore did not need any elaborate descriptions.

Instances whereby cloth was demanded as gifts, bribes and being used in various ceremonies are all generally dealt with by the early writers. There is very little indication of colours or quality of fabrics which were in use.

The study has been based on analysis of the descriptive historical accounts by the early visitors in the period before 1895 and on records of the Colonial offices from 1895 to 1960.

The Colonial records are drawn from sources at the Kenya National Archives where the Political Record Books kept by various colonial administrators have proved very helpful. Details of colours, quality and quantity of Textiles, however, appear mostly after 1910 which makes the Textile history as recent as 75 years.

1.5 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This is a historical study and therefore information has mainly been drawn from various descriptive accounts by various early travellers, missionaries, colonial administrators and from early colonial records. Most narratives by these people have mentioned Textiles in the passing.

Being a historical descriptive study, references have been mainly drawn from Libraries and Archives. The records have been, in many instances, vague and authenticity of facts has been difficult to establish.

The earliest accounts by visitors to the Coast are geared towards painting a glorious picture of the time and therefore cite instances of the kings wearing the most expensive and luxurious fabrics without mentioning the origins of the fabrics. These accounts seldom refer to the indigenous people's dressing.

From 1840 onwards written accounts by missionaries such as Krapf and New have not significantly mentioned textiles. In many instances they noticed people wearing some form

of cloth but did not elaborate on it. They were mostly struck by the nudity of the people whom they met. It must be understood that cloth was used as an item of exchange and therefore those who did not have products to exchange for cloth were not able to purchase it for wearing. This is the reason why most people in the interior were not seen wearing cloth although it has found its way into the country through the Arab caravans.

It has not been possible, within the scope of this study, to consider specific Design and colour elements of Textiles which found their way into Kenya in its early history. This is because the records from which the information has been drawn have been very limited in their mention of this item.

The early historical accounts which mention silk, Damask Tafetta etc. only indicate the luxurious nature of the fabrics in circulation in the coastal settlements. Most of these items were exotic trade goods or gifts and only suggest the expensive nature of the fabrics. A comparative study of the Textiles and designs which were in circulation in Europe and Asia,

during the same period, would give an indication of the kind of goods which were brought by foreigners to Kenya. However, this would be a very wide field for consideration within the scope of this study.

The study would have been even more interesting if it had been possible to make analysis of various communities' attitudes and reactions to various colours and Designs on the Textiles. It is possible that certain colours and designs were much favoured in some areas of the country than others.

The attitudes of the communities could have been manifested in how certain fabrics and colours were applied to specific occasions, how textiles were related to traditional garments through either design or colour or how the fabrics were applied to other uses such as architectural, environmental, etc.

Because there is very scanty information on the above the study had to be limited to the information available on the penetration of Textiles into Kenya. It is felt that the Design and colour aspects of Textiles could form the

basis for continuation of this study. A modern day analysis of preferences for Textiles and Design could be based on considerations of social and cultural activities, customs, economic activities and environmental factors of the communities which would be studied. Designs and colour work drawn out from the above factors could be marketed in its own distinctive area with more authenticity and greater success.

1.6 DEFINATION OF TEXTILE TERMS

- Brocade:** Rich woven fabric with all over interwoven design of raised figures or flowers often giving an embossed effect by contrasting colours and surfaces. It is used for decorative fabrics and apparels. The name is derived from French meaning "to ornament".
- Bui Bui:** A form of veil, originally worn by women (Kiswahili) from Hadramaut in Arabia. Worn by Swahili women today as a part of their regular dress. Usually made of black colour satin, silk or Nylon fabrics.
- Calico:** One of the oldest basic cotton fabrics with its origin in Calcutta, India.

Usually a plain closely woven inexpensive cloth.

- Cloth:** Used in a broad sense, is synonymous with fabric material and goods. The Swahili name for Cloth is 'Nguo'.
- Cotton:** Soft vegetable fibre obtained from the seed pod of the cotton plant and a major fashion fibre in the Textile Industry. Origins date back to 3000 B.C. The longer the fibre, the better the quality.
- Damask:** Firm glossy woven fabric brought to the Western world by Marco Polo in the 13th Century. Similar to brocade but flatter and reversible; used mainly for draperies and upholstery. Origin was in Damascus the centre of Fabric trade between East and West.
- Drill:** A strong cotton fabric similar to Denim which has a diagonal weave running upwards to the left selvage. Also referred to as Khakhi when dyed in that colour.

- Dye:** The process of applying colour to fibre, yarn or fabric.
- Dyed in the Piece:** The dyeing of fabric in the cut piece form. It usually follows the weaving process whereby a single colour for the material is provided.
- Embroidery:** Ornamental needlework consisting of designs worked on the fabric with either silk, cotton or other threads.
- Fabric:** In its broadest sense the word fabric means any woven material, knitted, plaited or non woven material made of fibres or yarns. The industry distinguishes three kinds of fabrics - apparel, decorative and industrial.
- Fibre:** The fundamental unit comprising of Textile raw material such as cotton, wool etc. Originally meant, spinnable material including natural fibres and man made fibres like Nylon and Polyester. Today used in broad sense to include all filament yarns.

- Grey Goods:** Cloth irrespective of colour that has been woven in a loom but has not received any dry or wet finishing operations.
- Hand Spinning:** Yarns which are spun by hand or fabric made from such yarns.
- Hand Woven:** Fabrics which are woven on either the hand or hand and foot operated looms.
- Jute:** A coarse brown fibre from the stalks of a bast plant used mainly for cordage and as a backing for carpets.
- Khakhi:** Yellow brown tone with some greenish tinge as a colour. Also an unusually strong cloth made of cotton. First used by the British army as an official colour for uniforms in the Crimean War in 1853.
- Khanga (Swahili):** A rectangular piece of cotton cloth usually in a pair, with an all round broader. A garment worn by Swahili women - one tied round the waist; the other covers the head. The central ground is known as 'mji' and it has

a central motif with a Swahili slogan under the motif. First appeared in around 1850.

- Kanzu
(Kiswahili): A long, narrow garment, reaching to the ankles worn by Swahili men as a shirt. The collar was generally round and sometimes embroidered.
- Kikoi
(Swahili): A rectangular cotton cloth with a heavy weave, worn by Swahili men as a loin cloth. Usually has a bright red and yellow woven boarder.
- Kitambi
(Swahili): A rectangular coloured cotton cloth worn by those who could not afford Kikoi. Also worn by the Giriyaama as a loin cloth.
- Knit Fabrics: The Art and Science of constructing Fabric by interlooping of yarns. The essential unit in a knitted fabric is the loop or a stitch.
- Leso
(Swahili): Synonymous to Khanga but slightly smaller in size. Many times referred to as an earlier name for Khanga. Also with a four sided boarder and central printed motif.

- Linen:** Fibre from Flax plant. Properties of linen are rapid moisture absorption, no fuzziness, does not soil quickly; has a natural lustre and stiffness. Uses are in table cloths, towelling, crease resistant clothing, sportswear etc.
- Mericali (Swahili):** Originated from 'American' meaning unbleached calico imported from Massachusetts in America in the early 1800. Very widely used fabric in the East Coast of Africa.
- Muslin:** Generic term for a wide variety of cotton fabrics which includes cloth made from light weight sheers to the heavier weight firmly woven sheeting. Swahili version was the Ribbed type; Muslin referred to as 'Doria'.
- Printed Goods:** Fabrics which have patterns, designs or motifs of one or more colours printed on them.
- Rayon:** A manufactured fibre composed of regenerated cellulose.

- Satin:** A fine fabric made of combed yarns for a very smooth and lustrous surface effect. Originally from China, were made of silk threads. The back of the material is dull.
- Sheeting:** Plain weave carded or combed cloth which comes in light, medium and heavy weights. Usually is about 40 inches wide and can be unbleached, semibleached, bleached or coloured. Swahili reference to sheeting is 'Shuka'.
- Silk:** The only natural fibre that comes in filament form from 300 - 1600 yards in length as reeled from the cocoons. The fabric made from this fibre is referred to by the same name.
- Sisal:** A hard bast fibre obtained from the leaves of the sisal plant "agava sisalana".
- Taffeta:** A fine plain weave fabric, smooth on both sides. Named after Persian Fabric called Taftan. Originally made of silk but now often made out of synthetic fibres.

- Tapestry:** Originally ornamental, oriental embroideries in which coloured threads of wool, gold, silk or silver were interspersed for adornment. Hand woven tapestry is still made in centres founded centuries ago.
- Textiles:** Traditionally a textile is defined as a woven fabric made by interlacing yarns. The name derives from the Latin verb 'texere' which means to weave. In the market sense the word includes any fabric or cloth, which have been made on looms, knitting machines or even needled. If it forms a structure it is a textile.
- Twill:** Usually a weave identified by the diagonal lines in the goods. The goods imported in this category were referred to as Turkey Twill which was almost like the Drill and was called 'Maradufu' by the Swahili.
- Unbleached:** Usually cotton sheeting cloth, before the process of bleaching, which shows the characteristic specks, impurities and

has an off white colour. Since it is unfinished it shows some qualities of hand woven cottons.

Velvet: A warp pile cloth in which a succession of rows of short cut pile stand so close together as to give an even uniform surface. It has an appealing look and a soft colour with the light shining on it from different directions.

Wool: Strictly speaking the fibres that grow on the sheep fleece.

Woolens: Cloth made from wool yarns but not always 100% wool in content.

Yarn: A generic term for an assemblage of fibres or filaments either natural or manmade, twisted together to form a continuous strand which can be used for weaving, knitting, plaiting or be made into a textile material.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORY OF THE EAST AFRICAN COAST

A brief look at the early history of the East coast of Africa is of significance to this study since it has a lot of influence and bearing on aspects of culture, economy and life, not only on the coastal belt but even in the interior.

All the foreign penetration into Kenya was mainly from the coast since the explorers, missionaries, and traders who visited Kenya travelled by ships and either landed at Zanzibar first or directly at Mombasa.

By the 1840s the coast of East Africa and the interior South of Kenya were incorporated into a rapidly expanding world trade. Cloth which was introduced into this market from Europe and America, assumed a very significant role in the change of dress pattern for many of the people in the interior of the country who hitherto, were mostly adorned in robes and garments made out of the hides and skins of animals.

As we shall see, a great value was attached to the commodity of cloth in the barter system of trade that was then followed.

Many examples cited in various sections of the preselected tribal groupings suggest and support this argument.

Even as late as the 1840s not much was known about the interior of the country although there were written accounts and documents about the coast of Kenya by explorers as early as the 15th century.

It is quite amazing to note that by about the 15th and early 16th century there were a lot of activities taking place on the East African coast, trade was rife and luxuries such as velvets, silks and gold were mentioned while in the interior of the country, except for some ivory trade - no similar influences have been mentioned.

The actual penetration into the interior was the venture of Rebman and Krapf, two German missionaries, in 1846. In many cases the earlier historical references to garments and clothing have proved very difficult to trace except mainly from whatever information has been found from missionaries and travellers' notes.

However since Mombasa became prominent

as a port for the export and import of various goods it is thus only appropriate that we consider the early history of the East African coast to visualise the circumstances that led to such trade.

2.1 EAST AFRICAN COAST

Arabs and Persian traders started establishing settlements along the coast of East Africa from about seventh century. From these settlements they traded with Zanzibar and with countries bordering the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea.¹ Arab control of this area was maintained until the end of the 15th century when the Portugues emerged on the scene in the wake of the exploration of Vasco da Gama, who landed at Malindi in 1498. Over the next two hundred years struggle for supremacy continued between the Arabs and the Portuguese. The latter were at first successful but were eventually driven out and by 1740 all Portuguese possession of any importance had been lost and the Arabs were once more in control of the coast.

So very little was known of the East African region that even by about 1812 there were still assumptions in Europe that the main

coastal towns were still under Portugese control. In fact any effective domination by the Portugese had come to an end when Fort Jesus, at Mombasa, fell into the hands of the Omani Arabs in 1699.²

The early history of the East coast was punctuated by a great number of conflicts amongst the local Arab rulers and occasional reappearances of the Portugese. Conflicts amongst the rulers were finally resolved when the Sultan of Zanzibar enforced his sovereignty over the area.

The Mazrui clan in Mombasa sought British protection in 1822 when they were faced with the forces of the Sultan Seyyid Said who wanted to take control of the city. Captain William Fitzwilliam Owen who was at that time leading an Admiralty Hydrographic Survey of the coast of Africa, and who was present in Mombasa offered this protection in return for an undertaking that the slave trade at Mombasa should stop. Mombasa remained under the British protection temporary for only 2 years from 1824-1826.

The Omani Arabs who were interested in

trade with East Africa started their operation from Zanzibar and by about 1836 they overcame the Mazrui of Mombasa. The leader of these Omani Arabs was Sultan Seyyid Said bin Sultan who became a very important figure in the early history of East Africa. He established a great deal of influence on the economic development of the East African coast and was also responsible for the penetration of Arab traders into the interior of the coast.³

By about 1840 this region offered a lot of attraction for explorers and traders from Europe. The Sultan's effort to develop trade in East Africa gave a lot of encouragement to Europeans and Americans who had hitherto been present in Zanzibar for diplomatic and strategic purposes, to venture into the interior of East Africa.

Out of the European countries France had always been trading in Sultan's dominions from 1840s and the German trade also developed from 1840. The American traders had been present in Zanzibar from around 1820. Direct British trade with Zanzibar was almost non-existent although British influence was quite obvious by 1840. This was in form of the Asian traders who were operating in full swing

and who were mostly British subjects. These traders were very important in the economic development of East Africa since they mostly dealt with retail business and financed the Arab ventures into the interior of the country. The British in Zanzibar were represented by an official who held the simultaneous posts of an agent for the East Indian Company and Foreign Office Consul.

Besides trade, other considerations like exploration and need for geographical and scientific information drew more foreign interest towards East Africa. There was also the growing British concern about the slave trade in this area although an abolition of this trade meant a great loss in revenue for the Sultan of Zanzibar.

The British signed their commercial treaty in 1839 and in 1841 captain Atkins Hamerton was appointed as consul. Hamerton preferred not to stir up Arab jealousy and hostility by allowing any moves which could be interpreted as poaching on their monopoly on the mainland.⁴ This was also because the Sultan was not keen on any European interferences at the sources of supply for goods

like ivory and gum. This he wanted to preserve as a monopoly for the Arabs.

Attempts hitherto, by Europeans to penetrate the interior of the East coast had failed and was not really advocated because of fears of jealousy by Arabs on the sources of their trade. Attempts by John Reitz, an officer of Mombasa Protectorate, and by Lieutenant Maizan of the French Navy to penetrate the interior had resulted in their deaths. A lot of reasons like, physical difficulties of land, unnavigable rivers, fierce tribes and diseases were used as speculations for the failures of any penetration into the interior.

Although it should be pointed out that the Arab penetration of the interior was common from about 1825 when they were following African trade routes for trading in ivory and slaves. The first penetration into the interior of the country began with German missionaries, Rebman and Krapf in 1849.

This development linked the destiny of the people of the interior to the coast. Connection between people in the interior ceased to be on local level only.

The transportation of ivory down to the coast established important manifestations of change which had far and wide consequences. Existing inter-tribal trade took different dimensions with the arrival of goods like cloth and beads from the coast. The Kambas who generally transported ivory to Mombasa opened up regular contacts. This aspect of trade will be dealt with in some detail under the Kamba group.

The boundaries of Kenya today are as a result of the Anglo German Agreement of 1886 which established the spheres of influence of the Germans and the British on the East coast of Africa. This agreement also helped to establish the coastal limits of the two countries and in some ways to establish the direction of expansion into the interior. Both Germany and England wanted to exploit the trade potentials of the interior using the coast as their foothold.⁵

The second stage in the establishment of the Kenya boundary came in 1891 with the Anglo Italian Agreement whereby the Italians were granted Protectorate status over Ethiopia and this stopped any further

expansion of the British domain towards the North and North Eastern regions of Kenya. In 1899 an agreement was reached with the Italian government over the Eastern boundaries of its Protectorate whereby the Italian sphere of influence was limited to the East and North of river Juba. Later in 1925 the Juba land Province of Kenya (see map No.1 p. 30) was transferred to Somali land and this marked the earliest demarcation of the present Kenya boundary to the East and North East.

The third stage in the demarcation of boundaries came with the Western Kenya boundary. The important factors here were strategic position of Western Kenya for a route to Uganda and also the economic considerations for opening up various markets for trade. The extension of the boundary towards Lake Victoria and to the West came after the declaration of the British Protectorate on 1st July 1895 and the subsequent definition of the boundaries of the protectorate by a proclamation in August 1896.

The establishment of boundaries to the West helped the British East Africa Company to set up a base in the Western regions from

where they could control Uganda and also could exploit the natural resources and manpower of this region.

We have seen from the early history of the coast that Kenya began as a coastal based interest by various foreign powers.

Immediately after the declaration of the British Protectorate the coastal land was first divided into three provinces:

1. Seyidie Province
2. Tanaland Province
3. Jubaland and Ukambani.

Administrative convenience for the British was the main factor taken into consideration while marking these provinces which included three distinct ethnic elements.

Seyidie Province was the most important at this time and included the area between Tana river and the Tanzania boarder. The Tanaland Province consisted of the area North of Tana river and the rest of the interior of the country from the Seyidie Province to the rift valley was called the Ukambani Province. The only tribe from the interior that traded frequently with the coast were the Kambas and

the land they occupied was thus called Ukambani.

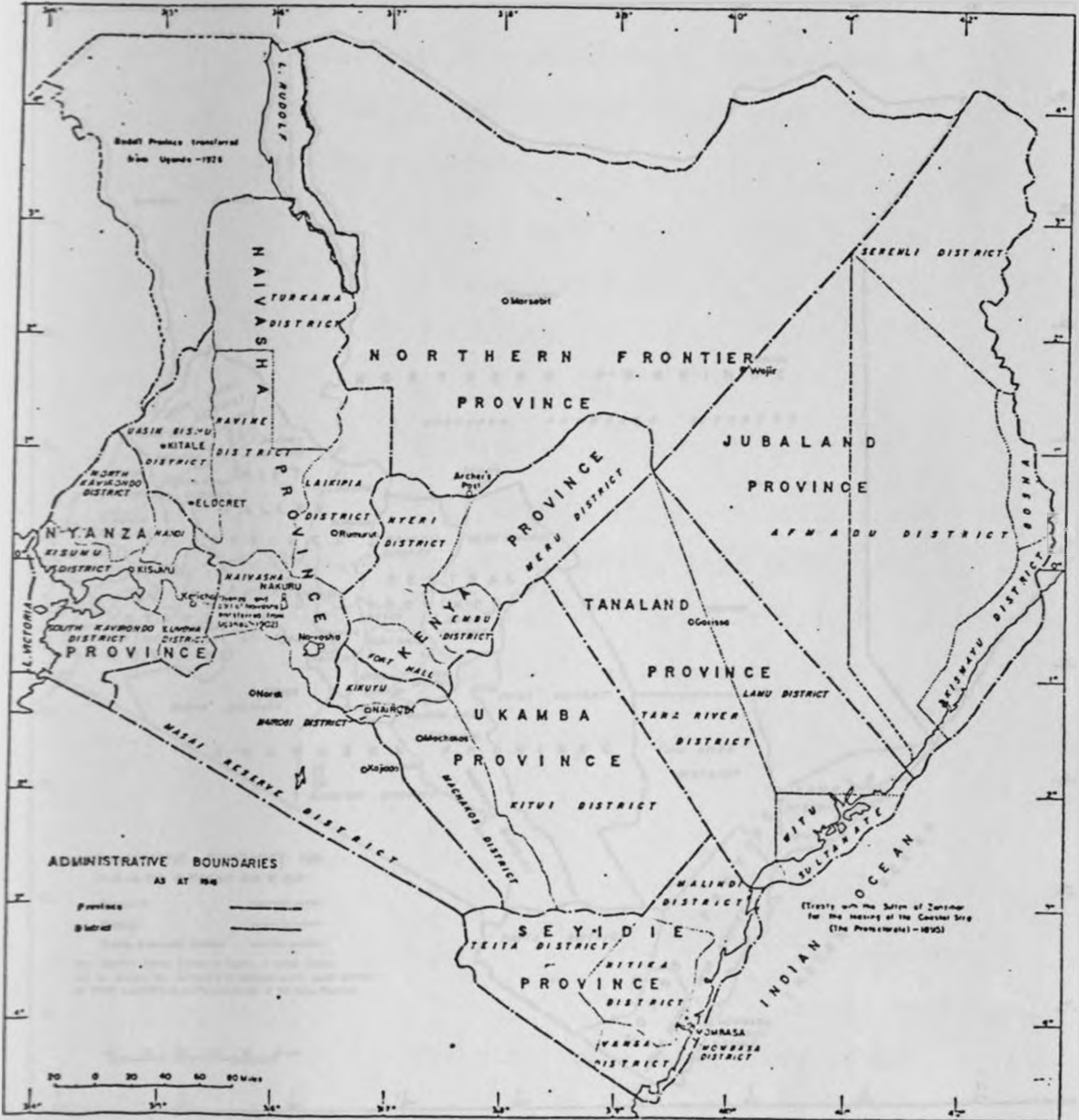
The districts which emerged as a result of this demarcation were mainly named after the important settlements on this area. Seyidie was thus divided into Mombasa, Malindi and Vanga District.

With the subsequent evolution of administrative boundaries, new Provinces and Districts were formed. (See map No.2 p.33 for the administrative boundaries as at 1918).

1961 saw the first boundaries of the Republic of Kenya (see map No.3 p.34). For the first time ethnic identity was given a recognition and the boundaries were examined by the desire of the local inhabitants.

2.2 THE NATIVE TRIBES EARLY HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION

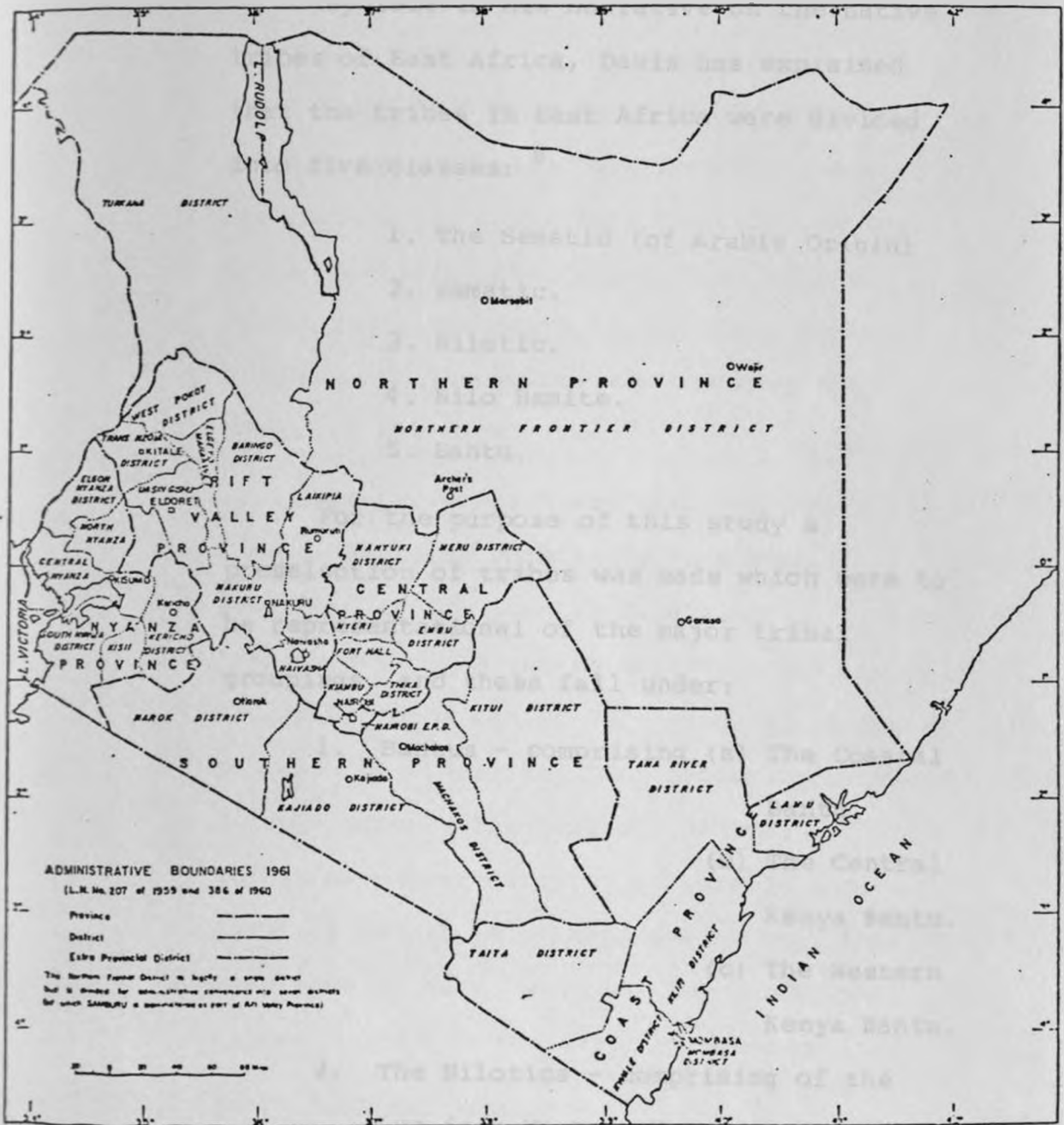
Ethnologically a general survey of the tribes of Kenya is of a great interest and a look at its early history and classification by people like Sir Harry Johnston and Charles Elliott can form a basis for early history and classification of the groups which are to be examined under this study.



MAP NO.2

ADMINISTRATIVE BOUNDARIES OF KENYA - 1918

SOURCE: Evolution of Boundaries.



MAP NO.3

BRITISH ADMINISTRATIVE BOUNDARIES - 1961

SOURCE: Evolution of Boundaries.

2.3 CLASSIFICATION OF TRIBES

By 1908 in his narrative on the native tribes of East Africa, Davis has explained that the tribes in East Africa were divided into five classes: ⁶

1. The Semetic (of Arabic Origin)
2. Hamatic.
3. Nilotic.
4. Nilo Hamite.
5. Bantu.

For the purpose of this study a preselection of tribes was made which were to be representational of the major tribal groupings, and these fall under:

1. Bantus - comprising (a) The Coastal Bantu.
(b) The Central Kenya Bantu.
(c) The Western Kenya Bantu.
2. The Nilotics - comprising of the Luo from Western Kenya.
3. Nilo Hamites - comprising of the Masai.
4. Hamitics - comprising of the Somali.

5. The Muslim/Arab influence group
comprising of the coastal Swahili.

2.3.1 BANTU (Coastal)

Minor tribes of Bantu origin were found to be occupying the Northern coast of East Africa and these were described as the Nyika, inhabiting the region North of the Sabaki river and South to the Anglo German boundary and the Pokomo living along the banks of the Tana river.

The Nyika which are referred to as the Coastal Bantu in this study have been described by Sir Charles Eliott as "representing a Southern migration" and coming originally from behind Port Dunford.⁷ Being so near the coast they had naturally received in some cases a tincture of the Arab influence either directly or through the Swahilis and it is perhaps due to this that they seem to have occasionally chiefs who became rulers in the style of sultans.

2.3.2 BANTU (Central Kenya)

Kamba as a tribe were selected for the Bantu of Central Kenya since they have been described in the early history of Kenya as

one of the largest and the most important tribes of East Africa.

They occupied the larger portion of Athi River Basin and were also found as far East as Rabai and North to Kitui. According to their origins they have been stated to have come from the South and have been influenced by the Masai, with whom they were at war.

Around the great lakes, according to Sir Harry Johnson was the nucleus of Bantu type with language that could be traced from eastern confines of the Congo to Zanzibar.⁸ The Swahili language at the coast, whose vernacular had begun to spread throughout East and Central Africa had a definite basis in Bantu.

2.3.3 BANTU (Western Kenya)

On the shores of Lake Victoria dwell another variant in the diversified tribes of Kenya. These were earlier referred to as the Kavirondo. This tribe was subdivided into Northern Kavirondo being the Bantu type and the Southern Kavirondo being the Nilotic type.⁹

2.3.4 THE NILOTICS

The Nilotics occupy the part of country surrounding the shores of Lake Victoria.

They represent a southern migration from the southern areas of Baher-el-Ghaza in the Sudan and they originally inhabited the White Nile region. Being of riverine origins they were keen fishermen and were mainly pastoralists.

In their early history both men and women went about in complete nudity.

2.3.5 NILO HAMITES

The Masai are classified under this group. They are essentially a pastoral tribe and were described in early Kenyan history as being very advanced in Arts and industries. In origin they are considered a mixture between the Nilotic and the Hamitic. They are described as tall and slender. Historically the Masai were inhabiting the region between the White Nile and Lake Rudolf. Portions of original Masai still remain around the Uasin Gishu and the South end of Lake Baringo.

Tribes which are akin to the Masai are the Nandi - Lumbwa group which includes the Nandi, Lumbwa, Kamalia, Elegeyo, Bunei and certain other tribes of Mount Elgon.

2.3.6 HAMITIC

Encountered generally North of Tana river to the banks of Juba: the Somali people are of the Hamitic group. Neither the physique nor habits are essentially of Bantu or Nilotic origin. They were described by Sir Charles Eliot as "the most intelligent race in the protectorate though also proud, trecherous, fanatical and vindictive."¹⁰ They generally wear white robes and are Moslems. In the deserts they live as cattle herding nomads. In the colonial times they were employed as gun bearers for the white man.

2.3.7 THE SWAHILI

These were the predominant type all along the coast from Lamu to the Tanzania boarder. The group embraced a mixture of various African natives inhabiting the coastal region. They have adapted the religion and dress of the Arabs from Muscat being subjected to slavey and also many times being off-

springs of these due to intermixing. This process being in operation for several centuries has resulted in an assimilation of the coast Swahili with their Arab conquerers. Sir Charles Eliot described Swahili as "They have little indication of agriculture or cultivation, but have aptitude for smaller forms of trade."¹¹ The Swahilis of Mombasa divided themselves into twelve tribes according to the towns they were supposed to have come from - Mombasa (Mvita), Mtwapa, Kilifi, Pate, Shaka, Faza, Akatwa (or Somali), Gunya (or Bajun) Junda (or Jomvu), Kilindini, Tangana and Chagamwe.

The most remarkable feature of this mixed Bantu type is its language which has been widely adapted to being a National language in Kenya today.

Historically the Europeans adapted the Swahili language and found it of great service right through to the interior of the country. Being of simple construction it was easier to learn avoiding the gramatical and philosophical intricacies of the Bantu tongue of the South and its variants in the interior. The pure Swahili forms of this tongue is complex and needs the understanding of the basis.

Chapter 2

2.3.8 Footnotes

1

Mombasa, An Official Handbook (University Press of Africa, 1971), p. 108.

2

J. Lewis Krapf, Travels, Researches and Missionary Labours, (2nd Edition, Frank Cass & Co., 1968); Intro. R.C. Bridges, p.16.

3

Krapf, p.17

4

Krapf, p.20.

5

Evolution of Boundaries of Kenya "Evolution of International Boundaries" Para 2. Kenya National Archives.

6

Alexander Davis, "The Native Tribes of East Africa". East Africa (British), eds. Playne S., Gale, (Foreign & Colonial Compiling & Publishing Co., 1908-9) p.p. 55-57.

7

Charles Elliot, The East Africa Protectorate (Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1966) p.123.

8

Davis, p.55.; Elliot, p.109.

9

Elliot, p.129

10

Elliot, p.121.

11

Elliot, p.113.

CHAPTER 3

SWAHILI

3.1 Early History

The inhabitants of East Coast of Africa had been greatly affected by their political and commercial contacts with the people who had visited their homeland for trade purposes and some of whom had settled to do business at the coast. A look at the early history of the East Coast of Africa would help in the understanding of the various influences on the people particularly in their customs and ways of dressing.

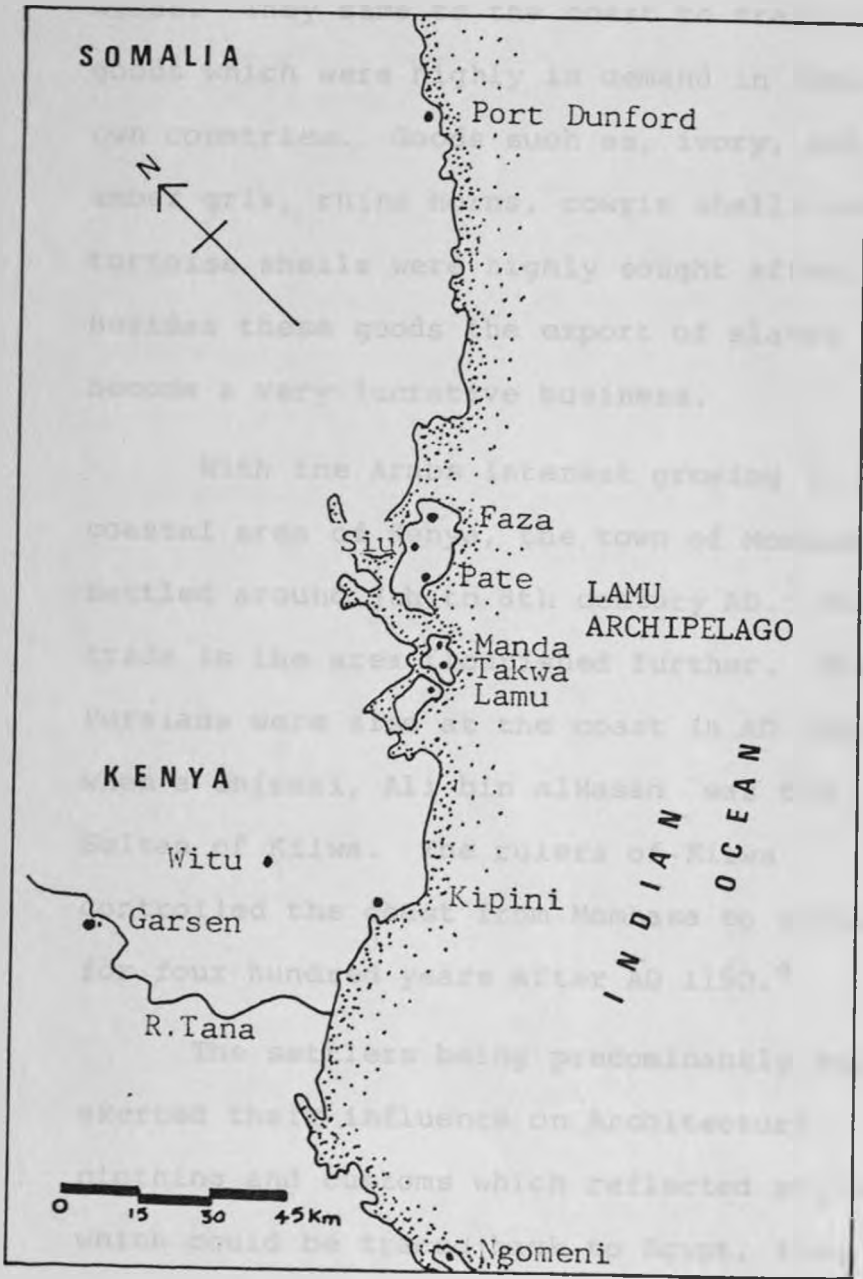
It is believed that Bantu people lived on the coast from about 3000 B.C. and were later invaded by people of Hamitic origin from the North. About a thousand years later a southern flow of Semitic races from Persian Gulf touched the East Coast of Africa and their influence was to be felt by the people of East Coast for a long time to come.¹ The coast which was referred to as Azania in the early historical records had featured prominently in tales of the early travellers from Egypt but no definite records exist to support the claims made by the travellers of that time. Early records,

however, show that Arabs from the Persian Gulf had settled down on the coast some centuries before the birth of Christ. The coast was visited by some Greek and Roman traders who indicated that they traded with the Arabs whom they already found living there. The first account of this is mentioned in a manuscript called the "Periplus of the Erythraean Sea" which gives a description of trade at the ports on the East coast.

The document describes a significant trade between Rome and parts of West India. The next documentary glimpse at the early history comes through Ptolemy, who appears to verify the 'Periplus'.

Written evidence, however, exists that Arabs were trading with the people of Azania and the result of their interactions with the people of the coast who were predominantly the Bantu types inhabiting the hinterland of the Swahili coast produced the Swahili people.² These traditions and practices of these people showed a clear picture of their associations with the merchants from the Persian Gulf. Under the influence of these traders the people of the coast became Muslims.

The traders from Persian Gulf, Arabia

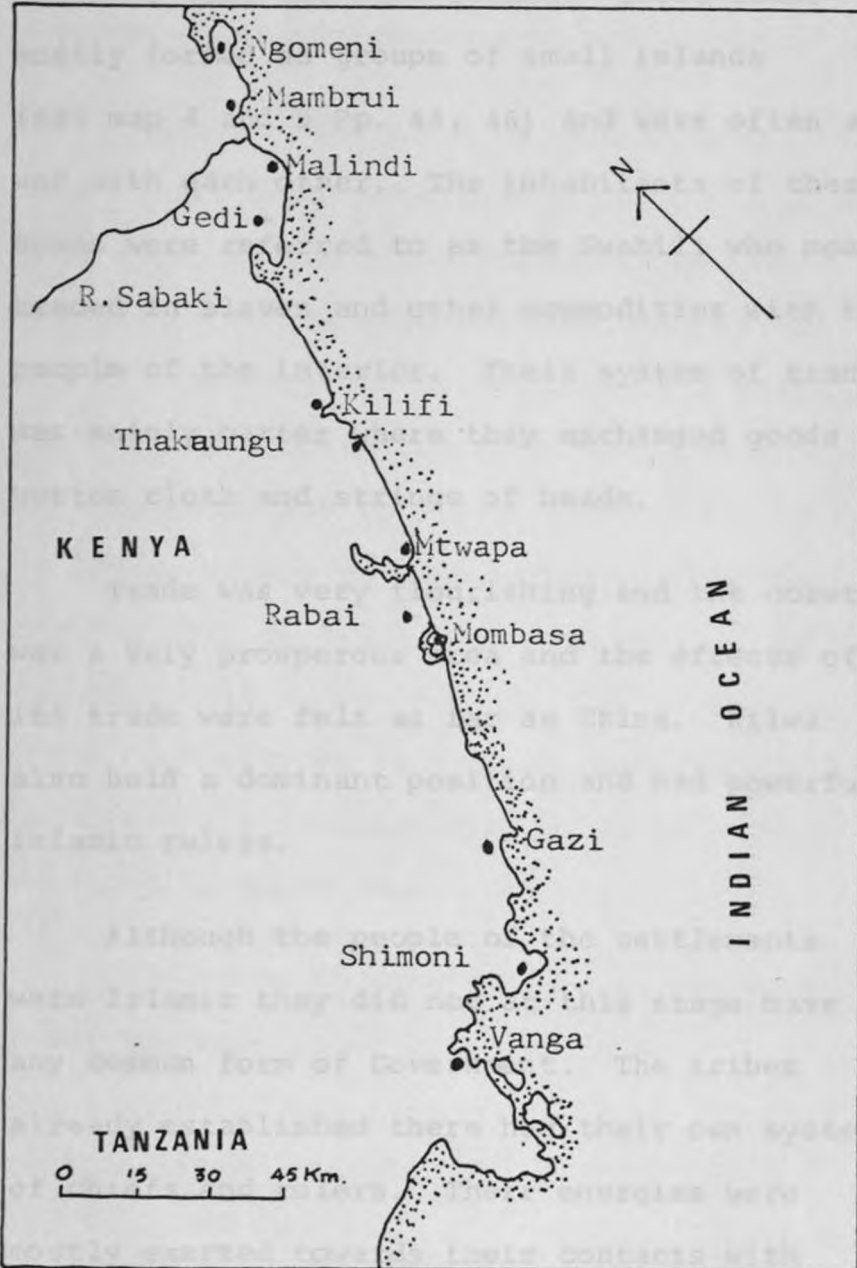


Map.No. 4
Historical sites of Northern Kenya Coast - 16th Century
Source: The Land of Zinj.

and India ventured to the East coast by sailing from their countries, with the Monsoon winds. They came to the coast to trade in goods which were highly in demand in their own countries. Goods such as, ivory, gold, amber gris, rhino horns, cowrie shells and tortoise shells were highly sought after. Besides these goods the export of slaves had become a very lucrative business.

With the Arabs interest growing in the coastal area of Kenya, the town of Mombasa was settled around 7th to 8th century AD.³ The trade in the area flourished further. The Persians were also at the coast in AD 1200 when a Shirazi, Ali bin alHasan was the Sultan of Kilwa. The rulers of Kilwa controlled the coast from Mombasa to Sofala for four hundred years after AD 1150.⁴

The settlers being predominantly Muslims exerted their influence on Architecture, clothing and customs which reflected styles which could be traced back to Egypt, Iraq, Turkey, Persia and India. These styles were derived from the styles of the original homelands of the settlers.



Map No. 5
Historical sites of Southern Kenya Coast - 18th Century
Source: The Land of Zinj

The Arab towns and settlements were established along the coast over 2000 years ago. Among the important settlements were Malindi, Mombasa, Lamu and Pate Island. These towns mostly formed as groups of small islands (see map 4 and 5 Pp. 44, 46) and were often at war with each other. The inhabitants of these towns were referred to as the Swahili who mostly traded in slaves and other commodities with the people of the interior. Their system of trade was mainly barter where they exchanged goods for cotton cloth and strings of beads.

Trade was very flourishing and the coast was a very prosperous area and the effects of its trade were felt as far as China. Kilwa also held a dominant position and had powerful Islamic rulers.

Although the people of the settlements were Islamic they did not at this stage have any common form of Government. The tribes already established there had their own systems of chiefs and rulers. Their energies were mostly exerted towards their contacts with the visiting traders since their prosperity depended entirely on this.

The early Arab link with the East Coast of Africa was also emphasised by the famous Arab explorer Ibn Batuta who visited Mombasa in 1331, and found the Arabs there in possession of the coastlands.⁵

Later in 1498 Vasco da Gama with the first Portuguese expedition round the Cape of Good Hope, sailed along the East Coast of Africa. This was also the beginning of the era of discovery and colonization for Portugal. The principle objective in sailing around the African coast was to find a short trade route to India. Vasco da Gama referred to Mombasa as a great city of trade with many ships. Sailing further north he visited the city of Malindi which he described as a great one with noble buildings and surrounded by walls which made an imposing appearance.

With Vasco da Gama's visit to the East coast the Portuguese interest in the acquisition of the East coast of Africa as a territory grew rapidly.

The religious differences between the people of Mombasa and the new invaders became a strong basis of antagonism. The Portuguese

interest in the conquest of land on the coast was met with hostile attitude from the local people, but the Portugese continued to grasp control by use of force, cruelty and ruthlessness.

In their struggle to grasp a hold over coastal lands, the Portugese, invaded and looted Mombasa twice, once in 1500 and again in 1505 when Fransisco Almeyda attacked and destroyed the town. Mombasa was one of the fewer settlements on the coast which had shown any resistance to the Portugese settlement on coast and it was not until 1528 when Nuno da Cunha burnt the town, did the Portugese succeed in dominating it.⁶ To strengthen their hold over Mombasa people and to consolidate their presence in the region, the Portugese built a fort in Mombasa in 1594. The building of Fort Jesus took about two years. Today this Fort, named as Fort Jesus, remains as a fine example of 16th century architecture and is being appropriately used as a museum.

The tyranny and oppression used by the Portugese was so severe that it drove the residents of Mombasa to seek the support of the Sultan of Oman to drive out the Portugese

from this region. From about 1630 the struggle between the Portuguese and the residents of Mombasa continued. This struggle lasted over the next two hundred years. In about 1660 the Mazrui who were the leading Arab clan in the East coast made an alliance with the Imam of Oman and finally the Arabs were able to expell the Portuguese from Mombasa in 1729.

Delegations which went from Mombasa to Oman to seek the support of the Oman rulers comprised of representatives of various tribes inhabiting Mombasa at the time. These also included the representatives of the Nyika tribes and the leaders of Malindi and Kilindini.⁷ This marked a beginning of the Omani rule over the coast. Omanis ruled the coast through their own governors and liwalis.⁸ The first governor after the delegation's visit to Omani in 1728 was Muhammad Ibn Saaid who left behind Salih bin Muhammad as the governor of Mombasa upon his return to Oman. Salih bin Muhammad proved to be very cruel and wicked to the residents

and had to be replaced by Mohamedbin Othman. The replacement of governors became a common feature in the local squabbles at Mombasa.

The Omani rulers were heavily involved at this stage in the domestic affairs of their land which revolved around the succession to power. This led to a civil war which in turn split the Omanis into two factions. As a result of this chaos the Oman governors at the East African coast were confused and the Swahili settlements on the East African coast became indirectly involved in the internal struggle of Oman.⁹ The new rulers in Oman tried to recruit as governors, people whose loyalty they could trust. This resulted in a form of government where the governors thought more in terms of their own individual authority rather than gearing their responsibility towards the central authority in Oman.¹⁰

It was in 1746 that Mombasa under the leadership of Ali bin Osman, of the Mazrui family, was led to throw off its allegiance to the Imam of Oman. In practice this meant an end of the revenues which were hitherto sent to Oman. The Mazrui held control over Mombasa for over a hundred years after this,

but during this period the insecurity of the tenure of the rule by the leaders led to frequent quarrels amongst themselves.

The Swahili people at the coast by now had been affected in various ways by their interactions with the Omani Arabs, and it was during this period that the Islamic way of life was restored at the coast.¹¹ The settlements which were in existence at the time were politically independent although they had cultural similarities. Trade now flourished and new markets were found for slaves and ivory.

The Swahili towns grew mostly as isolated units with their own political and economic systems.

The Omani's interest in this region did not subside by the breaking away of their hold. They had profited greatly by the revenue which was derived from duties at Kilwa and Zanzibar.¹² By 1800 the centre of Oman's rule on the East Coast of Africa was Zanzibar. The flourishing trade at the coastal towns attracted the Omani rulers once again. In 1804, Seyyid bin Sultan inherited the throne

of Oman and took over Pemba and Pate on the East Coast of Africa, changing his residence from Oman to Zanzibar.

Suleman bin Ali who was, at that time, the Mazrui ruler at Mombasa was quick to notice the Omani interest. This marked the beginning of the British interest in East Africa. It was in 1823 that two British ships the Barracouta and Leven comanded by captain Vidal and captain Owen arrived in Mombasa when the inhabitants of Mombasa begged the British to extend their protection over Mombasa. This request was granted by captain Owen although the protectorate over Mombasa was not confirmed by the British government. The protectorate lasted informally for two years when in 1824 captain Reitz who was the commandant incharge of the new protectorate died. There were no records of the termination of the protectorate.

Seyyid bin Sultan got to hear of this and he appealed to the British authorities in India that the Mazrui on the East coast were trespassing on his territory. The British granted the appeal and repudiated the temporary protection that captain Owen had declared over

Mombasa, thus leaving the Arabs and the inhabitants of Mombasa to fight against each other.

Seyyid Said became an important figure as far as the history of East Africa was concerned. He converted his Omani rule over the East coast of Africa into a separate sultanate. He encouraged the Arab penetration into the mainland which changed the usual style of trade which was only carried out at the coastal towns. His empire thus became wider and his rule was that of influence and trade rather than emphasising on only the political control. In his attempt to develop East Africa economically and commercially he encouraged the European and American traders to visit these regions.

Britain in its attempt to abolish slave trade was becoming increasingly powerful in the Indian Ocean. The series of wars between Britain and France during the period 1740-1815 had proved this clearly. Direct British trade with Zanzibar was almost non-existent at the time.¹³

The British were represented in

Zanzibar by an official of the East India Company who also held the post of the Foreign office consul. The British had employed a strategy of good relations with Seyyid Said to safeguard their North West approach to India, which invariably involved the sultan's position at Muscat.

East Africa had finally begun to open up. Various explorers and missionaries had started visiting this region. One of the first missionaries to visit this region was Ludwig Krapf who arrived in 1844.

Several scientific organizations were beginning to take keen interest in accurate data about this region. These were organisations like the Royal Geographical Society, the African Association, Bombay Geographical Society etc.¹⁴ The British concern over the slave trade was also an important factor in the activities that had started taking place on the East African coast.

Seyyid Said with Pate and Zanzibar as allies finally defeated Mombasa in 1837. The difference was that the Omani now ruled the coast from a much more local base than before.

marked the formal beginning of the British rule in East Africa.

The declaration of a British Protectorate on July 1, 1895 marked the first important step towards the boundaries of Kenya.

This original coast based boundaries consisted only of four provinces of Seyidie, Tanaland and Jubaland and Ukambani which had begun to feature at the coast as a trading centre. (See Map No. 6 p. 58).

3.2 Swahili Settlements

In order for us to understand the Islamic influence on the Swahili people of the coast it would be a useful point to look at the Swahili towns separately. This is because although the towns had cultural similarities, politically they were independent of each other. They had been settled at different times in history and had peculiarities related to the early settlers. For reasons of defence some towns were situated off shore. Most of these towns had grown as isolated units and had no territorial backings. The interior of the country had not been penetrated into and their only connection with the interior was that of

The sultan collaborated with the British and their efforts to stop the slave trade. Thus the East African coast finally entered into a new era of peace which strengthened its link with the Arab influence.

By 1839 the British had signed their commercial treaty with Seyyid Said and in 1841 captain Atkins Hamerton was appointed as a consul. Seyyid Said died in 1856 leaving his Zanzibar and mainland dominions to his second son Seyyid Majid. Said Majid died in 1870 and was succeeded by his brother Seyyid Barghash. It was during this time the British influence under Sir John Kirk grew in the East African region.

In 1855 the British East Africa Association was formed and obtained a fifty year concession over the 200 mile long coastal strip of the mainland. In 1888 it was granted the Royal charter under the name of Imperial British East Africa Company and in 1895 the area administered by this company became the British Protectorate. The British paid a rent of £17,000 a year to the Sultan of Zanzibar for this portion of land. This

marked the formal beginning of the British rule in East Africa.

The declaration of a British Protectorate on July 1, 1895 marked the first important step towards the boundaries of Kenya.

This original coast based boundaries consisted only of four provinces of Seyidie, Tanaland and Jubaland and Ukambani which had begun to feature at the coast as a trading centre. (See Map No. 6 p. 58).

3.2 Swahili Settlements

In order for us to understand the Islamic influence on the Swahili people of the coast it would be a useful point to look at the Swahili towns separately. This is because although the towns had cultural similarities, politically they were independent of each other. They had been settled at different times in history and had peculiarities related to the early settlers. For reasons of defence some towns were situated off shore. Most of these towns had grown as isolated units and had no territorial backings. The interior of the country had not been penetrated into and their only connection with the interior was that of



Map No 6

East Africa Protectorate 1995

Early coast based boundaries

Source: Evolution of Boundries.

basic trade items.

The main settlements that featured prominently on the Kenya coast were Mombasa, Malindi, Lamu and its neighbouring Islands of Pate. (See Map No. 7 P. 60).

3.2.1 Mombasa

Mombasa which is an island, off the coast of Kenya is about three miles broad. The island has a natural harbour and has a long history of various influences that it was subjected to being a central trading port on the East Coast of Africa. (See Map No. 8 P.61).

Mombasa was an established settlement centuries before the European colonizers first saw the East Coast of Africa.

The Arabs and Persians had been able to visit the East African coast regularly because of the monsoon winds. They used to set out in their "dhows" (boats) which sailed with the monsoon winds to the harbours on the East African Coast. These people came to trade in various commodities which were highly in demand in their own countries.

When Ibn Batuta visited the coast in 1327



Map No. 7

Prominent Swahili settlements on the Kenya coast in the 17th Century.



Map No. 3
Mombasa Island

he found the Arabs there and he described Mombasa as a place of plentiful fruits and praised the people living there as being "religious, chaste and honest." ¹⁵

Accounts given by Leo Africanus in 1492 talk of houses which "are of many stories high and beautiful with pictures both graven and painted."

Vasco da Gama who arrived in Mombasa on 7th April 1498 described Mombasa as a "large city seated upon an eminence washed by the sea. The port is entered daily by numerous vessels. At its entrance stands a pillar" ¹⁶ Here he found the christians living under the Islamic King.

"Duarte Barbosa who wrote the coast of East Africa and Malabar," in 1514 described Mombasa as "very large and beautiful and built of high and handsome houses of stone and whitewash, and with very good streets in the manner of Quiloa (Kilwa).... The people are of dusky brown complexions and likewise the women, who are much adorned with silk and gold stuffs. It is a town of great trade in goods" ¹⁷

The coastal population at that time was often described as comprising of Arabs, Moors and Africans.¹⁸ The Arabs were the residents who had migrated from Oman and other locations around the Red sea and Persian Gulf. Those who were referred to as the Moors were generally of mixed parentage of either mixed or pure Arab blood. These were the people who were later referred to as the Swahili. The Africans were those who were unconverted Bantu tribes which inhabited the hinterland of the Kenya coast.

By the beginning of 19th century some Swahili acquired wealth and were holding position of importance in the political structures of the town. They were merchants and landowners and often possessed estates which were cultivated by their slaves. Distinctions, could however, be made between those who had property and those who lived at subsistence level.¹⁹

Mombasa had emerged as a focal point of trade on the East coast and it often fell victim to its colonial rivals. The town has a history of repeated wars and the Swahili name for the town at one time was 'Mvita'

meaning a place of war.

Mombasa, to begin with was subjected to Arab domination for a very long period in history before the Portuguese rule which started as early as 1505. The Omani influence was the next on the scene when the Sultan of Zanzibar took Mombasa under control. Later the British overlordship created a Kenya Protectorate under the administration of Zanzibar.

The Portuguese fort which was built in Mombasa attracted attention of all those who sought power along the coast of Africa. This was the stronghold of the rulers and almost every battle that took place at Mombasa was fought at the fort.

3;2.2 Malindi

Malindi was another place which was visited by Vasco da Gama in 1498. The residents of Malindi at this time were mostly Arabs, Africans and a few Indian traders.

The trade in Malindi was mainly with the other towns of the East African coast and like Mombasa its main items of trade were ivory, ambergris, gum copal and beeswax.

The imports were mainly cloth and grain and luxury items such as silks, damasks,, carpets and Chinese porcelain.

In 1500, the township of Malindi covered a very small area and there was a built up wall on the outside of the town for defensive purposes.

Most of the houses which belonged to the Arabs were multistoried and bore resemblance to the architecture of Lamu in the early 16th century. There were more stone houses in Malindi than less permanent Swahili houses. For a good part of 16th century Malindi was protected by the Portugese. Later in 1593 the Portugese decision to build a fort at Mombasa brought about a gradual decline of flourishing economy of this town. The decision perpetuated by the fact that Mombasa as an island offered a better harbour and served better for defence purposes than Malindi which had a poor harbour.

For Malindi the portugese selection of a new headquarters meant the removal of the Portugese Garrison at Malindi and so many of the traders and workers also moved from Malindi

to Mombasa. During 1661 when Sultan of Oman was busy planning the capture of Malindi the Sultan of Malindi relocated his residence from Malindi to Mombasa.

Later in 1698 when the Omanis defeated the Portuguese at Fort Jesus in Mombasa there emerged the war like tribes of the Gallas who attacked many of the settlements on the North coast including Malindi which they captured in the later half of the eighteenth century.

The famous missionary Krapf who visited Malindi in 1845 described found the town deserted and ruined. This was because the Gallas were mainly pastoral people and did not wish to live in the town with their big herds of cattle. They also did not allow any one else to reside in the town.

In 1861 the Sultan of Zanzibar helped to settle this town once again with the aim of growing grains for export to Zanzibar. From this period to 1890 the agricultural activities and plantations grew larger with the slave labour that was used by the Arabs who had now settled in Malindi. The slave labour was an important aspect of the agricultural system of Malindi.

With the coming of the British and a subsequent stop of the slave trade, the agricultural system of Malindi suffered once again. It was not until after the World War II was over that Malindi began to grow and became a second most important town on the Kenya coast.

3.2.3 The Lamu Archipelago

The Muslim settlements that sprang up along the coast of East Africa reflected similarities. Most of these settlements were on islands separated from the mainland by narrow creeks. One such settlement was the Island of Lamu.

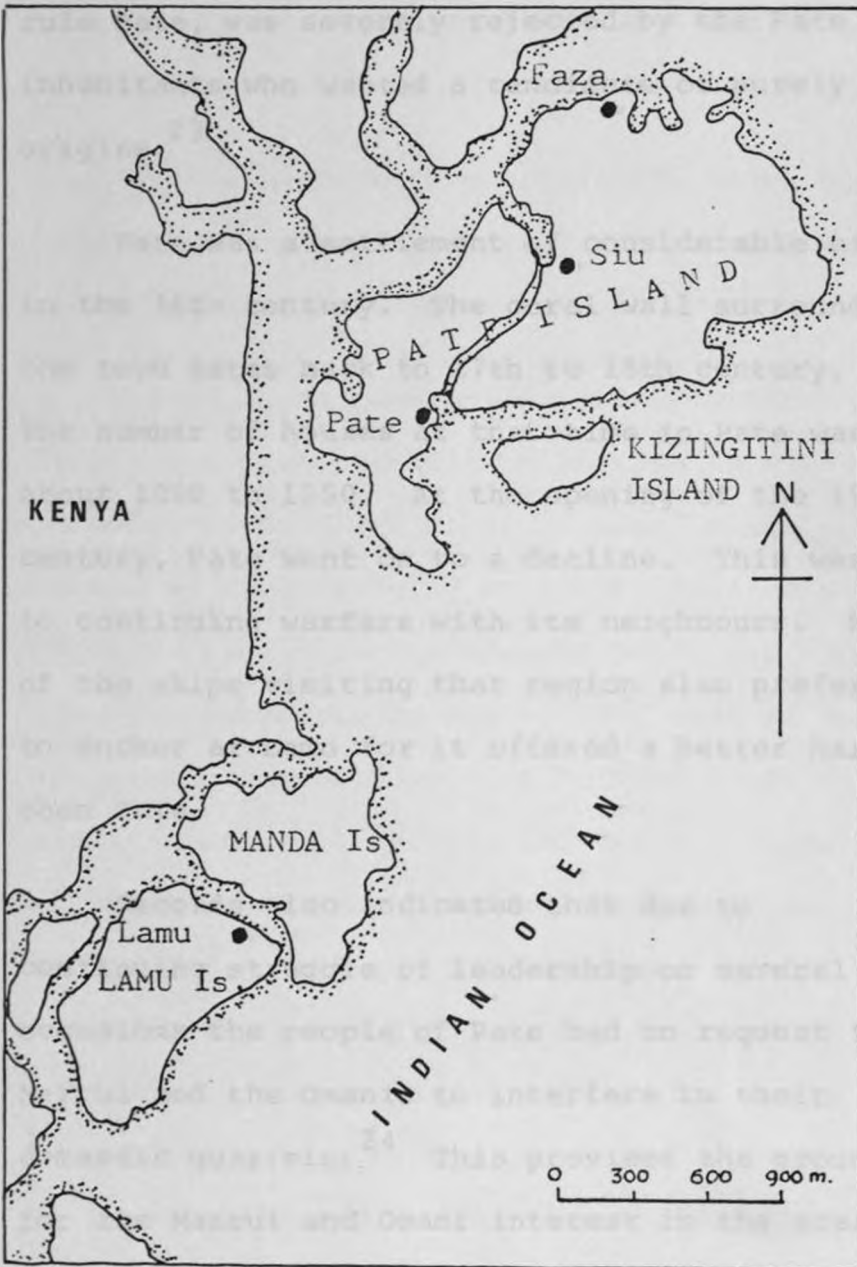
The name Lamu is said to be derived from Banu Lami, an Arab tribe, from the Persian Gulf, which had settled in Lamu.²⁰

The third important area of settlement was the Lamu archipelago to the North of Mombasa. This was made up of the islands of Lamu, Pate and Manda with other smaller islands.

The island of Lamu had two settlements, that of Lamu town and the village of Shella. The Pate island had settlements which were Pate town, Siu and Faza. Manda island at the beginning of the 19th century still had no

settlement. (See map No. 9 P.69).

The inhabitants of this region were arabs of two classes. The higher class Arabs were descendants of Muscat families and formed the aristocratic part of the society. The other class was that of the Arabs who had mixed with either the Swahili or the Baluchi. The Swahili people of this area were also of mixed breed. The higher class of Swahili people at one time owned slaves, took up to professions like tailors, sandlemakers, capmakers, goldsmith and silversmith. The middle and the lower class Swahili people were composed of slaves and natives from the interior. They took up to professions such as cultivating, house building, fishing, sailing etc. The largest group was made up of the Swahili people called the Bajun group to which the people of Pate referred to as the "Watikuu".²¹ At the beginning of the 19th century Pate had emerged as the most powerful of settlements in the Lamu archipelago.²² The proximity of Lamu to Pate island brought about rivalries and both were continually involved in disputes which mostly revolved around the succession to the rulerships. An example of this would be the Pate ruler Bwana



Map No. 9
Lamu Archipelago.

Bakari wa Ewana Mkene who married a Lamu lady and whose child was later offered as the candidate to rule Pate, was severely rejected by the Pate inhabitants who wanted a candidate of purely Pate origins.²³

Pate was a settlement of considerable size in the 18th century. The coral wall surrounding the town dates back to 17th to 18th century. The number of houses at that time in Pate was about 1000 to 1250. At the opening of the 19th century, Pate went on to a decline. This was due to continuing warfare with its neighbours. Most of the ships visiting that region also preferred to anchor at Lamu for it offered a better harbour than Pate.

Records also indicated that due to continuing struggle of leadership on several occasions the people of Pate had to request the Mazrui and the Omanis to interfere in their domestic quarrels.²⁴ This provided the grounds for the Mazrui and Omani interest in the area. The Omanis took control of Pate in 1698. The succession disputes were instrumental in this and historical references do indicate an association of the Omanis with Pate for attacking Mombasa in 1698.

As for Pate's relationship with Siu and Faza has not been clearly defined but being on the same island they cannot be isolated from Pate's affairs.²⁵

As the 19th century progressed Lamu, Siu and Faza started becoming more prominent settlements in the Lamu Archipelago.

The earliest mention of Lamu in written records is perhaps by Al-Masudi who in 940 AD wrote his "Meadows of Gold and Mines of Gems" where he mentioned Lamu as being an island full of coconut trees swaying with the Monsoon Winds and having the best ambergris in the world. Most of these very early accounts were in form of tales by the various merchants who visited these islands in search of trade items and invariably their information has been vague. With growing European interest in this region in the 15th century the coastal settlements became targets of several raids especially by the Portuguese. Lamu was not very seriously affected by these raids due to its very Northerly position on the Kenya coast, but it did have a small share of it.²⁶ The Portuguese with their interest of generating revenue had

reached as far as Pate and Siu and in their efforts to retaliate against those who helped the inhabitants of Pate against their authority, had on two occasions killed the Kings of Lamu.

With the turn of the 19th century, Omani interest in the region was revived and then subsequently the Portugese were driven away from the coast of East Africa. At this time the Sultan of Pate conquered Lamu. The Lamu inhabitants decided to hand over their Island to Mazrui from Mombasa rather than be ruled by the Sultan of Pate. The Mazrui who were now the rulers at Mombasa landed in Lamu in 1813 and convinced the people of Lamu to finish off, the building of a Fort at Lamu which had been initiated by the Pate rulers.

The Mazrui interest in the Lamu Island was in collaborating with the Pate people to take over the Island. The encouragement by them to finish the building of the Fort at Lamu was to station their forces in Lamu archipelago. The Lamu elders having sensed the plot set a trap for the Mazrui leaders who then fled to Pate from where he collected

forces to attack Lamu. The war resulted in a defeat for the Mazrui and can be said to have rendered a severe blow to them in their interest to possess the Northern part of the East African coast.

The Mazrui defeat in this region aroused the interest of the Sultan of Muscat. The Sultan wanted to revenge the Mazruis who had proved to be very insubordinating in Mombasa.

The sultan agreed to station a force of some Baluchi soldiers at the Lamu Fort just in case of another Mazrui attack.

This security attracted several Arab traders to settle in this island and as the 19th century progressed Lamu started becoming a more prominent settlement on the coast. During the later part of the century Lamu could boast of being the second important settlement to Mombasa on the East African coast.

Coming of Seyyid Said to Zanzibar and his subsequent take over of the East African coast brought prosperity to several of the settlements. The towns prospered by trade and the sultan also standardized the custom

collection at all the ports in his domain.

Lamu now became a supplier to Zanzibar for foodstuffs and animal products like hides and skins. Several Indian immigrants came to settle in Lamu and introduced various crafts to Lamu people who have greatly benefited from this influence. The notable of these crafts were that of carving and jewellery.

After the formal declaration of the British Protectorate in East Africa, the golden age of Lamu came slowly to a decline. The harbour not being deep enough for a major port paved the way for Mombasa to become a focal point on the East African coast. The slave labour disappeared from Lamu after the abolition of the slave trade and the people of Lamu resorted to in century old commodities such as fish, mangrove poles, mangoes, copra, tobacco, mats and matbags etc. Even today the trade continues with the traders from Arab countries who visit the Island once a year during the monsoon winds.

3.3 PEOPLE

There were a lot of political and religious differences generated amongst the Arabs after the death of prophet Mohamed. The defeated party in about AD 740 abandoned its birth place and set out to settle at various points on the East African coast. These people were referred to as Emosaidis or adherents of Said, a great grandson of Ali, the prophets cousin and son in law.²⁷ Of the various migrations which were to follow was that of Ammu Said of Oman when his country was raided by Mesopotamia in the 7th century. After this several migrations followed from Arabia and Persia to East coast of Africa.

The inhabitants of the settlements on the coast cultivated trade relations of considerable importance with the outside world, sufficient enough to create interest in outside countries such as China and India to visit the settlements. This is evident from various coins, beads and pottery which has been traced at several parts along the coast. The early Arab traders visited the East African coast regularly by monsoon winds during which they set out in their 'dhows' (sailing boats) to be blown into

the East African ports. Most of them returned to their homes when the winds changed to the South West, but through the time many of these merchants also settled at the coast.

Closely related to the Arab immigrants were the Indian immigrants whose connection with the East African coast was also that of trade and they had also been visiting this region for a considerable time in history. Indians were mostly involved in manning the boats and dealt in finances. However, the societies which grew up around the Arab immigrants were not purely Arabs. The effects of the Arab interaction with the local inhabitants resulted in an assimilation of the coastal Bantu tribes into a population of mixed tribes referred to as Swahili.

Charles New in his "Wandering in East Africa" explains that "the term Waswahili is a compound of an Arabic word signifying coast preceded by the African prefix "wa" denoting people.²⁸ Its' simplest meaning therefore being 'coast people'. It was originally applied only to the people of Lamu, Pate and Barawa but in modern use its application is extended to

all the inhabitants of the coastline". The Swahili language has evolved as a result of a mixture of some of the Bantu languages and Arabic. Stigand explains "the origin of the word 'Swahili' comes from the Arabic word 'Sawahil' meaning 'coast' or 'shore' and the East coast was thus called by the Arabs 'Sawahil' which in pure swahili becomes 'Sawahili' or 'Sawaheli'.²⁹

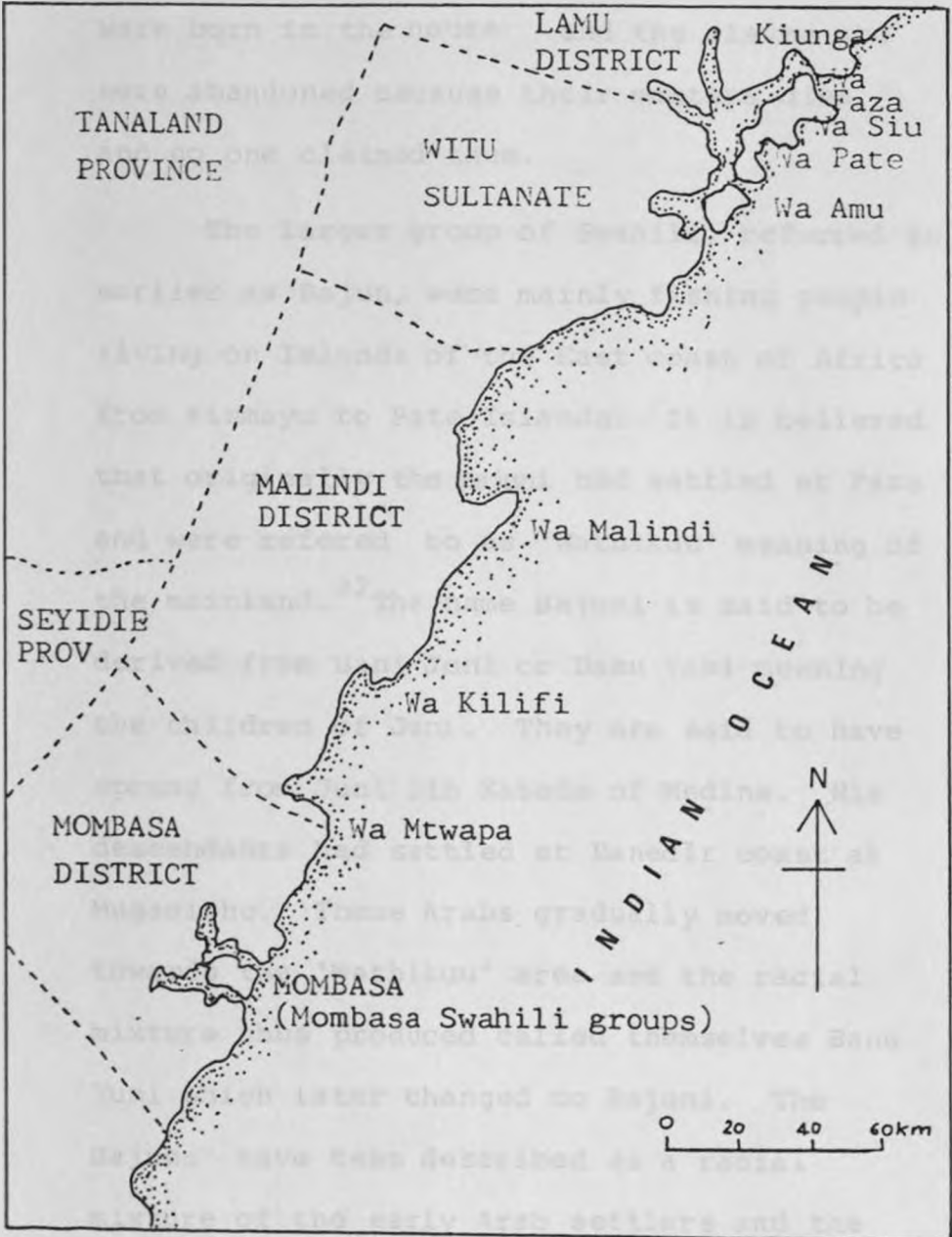
Swahili, however, in a more confined sense of the word may mean descendants of the Arabs and the Africans. The Arabs were from the numerous Arab and Persian settlers of the coast from the early times.

It is difficult to pinpoint the exact origins of the Swahili people, according to their various parentage. During the early 18th century the people of the Swahili coast were classified by some of the French visitors as Arabs and Moors.³⁰ At this time in history there existed three main groups amongst the Swahili people. The town people mostly described themselves as Arabs but were with the exception of the Omani and Arabian merchants, mainly Swahili. The lower class

were referred to as Bajun which formed the largest group in Lamu archipelago and third group was the of slaves and their descendants.

With regards to the French visitor's classification of the coast people, it can only be said that they were referring to the Swahili as being different from the Arabs. Actually the inhabitants of the coast were mainly Arabs and Swahili: the Africans being from the interior of the country and were being referred to by their own names such as Galla and Nyika.

The Swahili were further classified into 'Waungwana' meaning free men or masters and 'Watumwa' meaning slaves.³¹ The 'Waungwana' were the old inhabitants of the coast with more Persian and Arab blood whereas the 'Watumwa' were supposed to be with more African blood and in many cases were a mixture of African races. Those Swahilis who happened to have christian names because they were brought up by Missions were also regarded as slaves by the coastal Swahili . They argued that if the father of such as person was an Arab, he would not have a christian name.



Map No. 10

Swahili groups on the Kenya coast with the Administrative boundaries - 1909.

Amongst the 'Watumwa' group were also distinctions based upon the free slaves who were freed by their masters, the slaves that were born in the house and the slaves who were abandoned because their masters died and no one claimed them.

The larger group of Swahili, referred to earlier as Bajun, were mainly fishing people living on Islands of the East coast of Africa from Kismayu to Pate Islands. It is believed that originally the Bajuni had settled at Faza and were referred to as 'Wathikuu' meaning of the mainland.³² The name Bajuni is said to be derived from Bani Juni or Banu Yani meaning the children of Juni. They are said to have sprung from Juni bin Katada of Medina. His descendants had settled at Eanedir coast at Mugadisho. These Arabs gradually moved towards the 'Wathikuu' area and the racial mixture thus produced called themselves Banu Yuni which later changed to Bajuni. The Bajuns have been described as a racial mixture of the early Arab settlers and the local inhabitants of the interior of the country near the Lamu archipelago. The language spoken by them is Swahili and the

dialect is that of the North East Bantu.

The Swahili people, according to more recent analysis were divided into three groups. The first group is referred to as the Swahili of the Bantu origin having a parentage of complete Bantu origins.³³ They exist by the same name even today and are classified thus:

Wa-Amu (of Lamu).

Wa-Pate (of Pate).

Wa-Thikuu (of the mainland)

Wa-Siu (of Siu).

Wa-Malindi (of Malindi).

Wa-Kilifi (of Kilifi).

The above are residents on the Kenya coast to the North of Mombasa.

The Swahili of Mombasa that fall under this category are:

Wa-Mutafi.

Wa-Mvita.

Wa-Tangana.

Wa-Changamwe.

Wa-Jamvu/Wa Junda.

Wa-Kilindini

The second category of the Swahili are the generation that sprung up after inter-marriages between the Arabs and the Swahili

residents on the coast that have earlier been referred to as of the pure Bantu origins. The children of such marriages followed the ways of life and tradition of their mothers. They spoke swahili as their mother tongue and when they reached the marriage age, they usually married amongst the relatives of the mother who were Swahili.³⁴

The third category of the Swahili are the ones who have intermarried in any of the various people who came to settle at the coast. These were the Asians and the Baluchis who also came to the coast either for settlement or business. The children of such marriages, followed swahili way of life and married amongst the Swahili.

At the time of the establishment of a British Protectorate in 1895 in Kenya, there existed three federations at the coast which were referred to as (1) Thelatha Tayifa meaning three tribes, (2) Tissa Tayifa or Mji Tissa meaning nine tribes, (3) Wa-Arabu or the Arabs.³⁵

These were referred to as the indigenous tribes. The first two of these federations are

alleged to have been formed some thousand years ago during the time of Queen Mwana Mkisi whose Kingdom stretched far along the Eastern coast of Africa. The federations grew up with the assimilation of the Nyika tribes inhabiting the immediate interior of the coast. But their existence has been cited in around 1728 when they sent their representatives to the Imam of Muscat for help in rebellion against the Mazrui. Reference is made to this incident in history as the delegation having comprised of member of each tribe of the Mvita. It is certain that the Sheikhs or leaders of these tribes were confirmed in their appointment after the conquest of the Mazrui, by a Royal warrent under the hand of Seyyid Said.³⁶

The third Federation of the Wa-Arabu was that of the Arabs who either identified themselves with the Mazrui or landed with the re-conquest by Albu-said. As the name implies this group was mainly made up of the Arabs who later intermarried amongst the other two federations and followed their ways of life.³⁷

The constituents of the first federation, "Thelatha Tayifa" were the

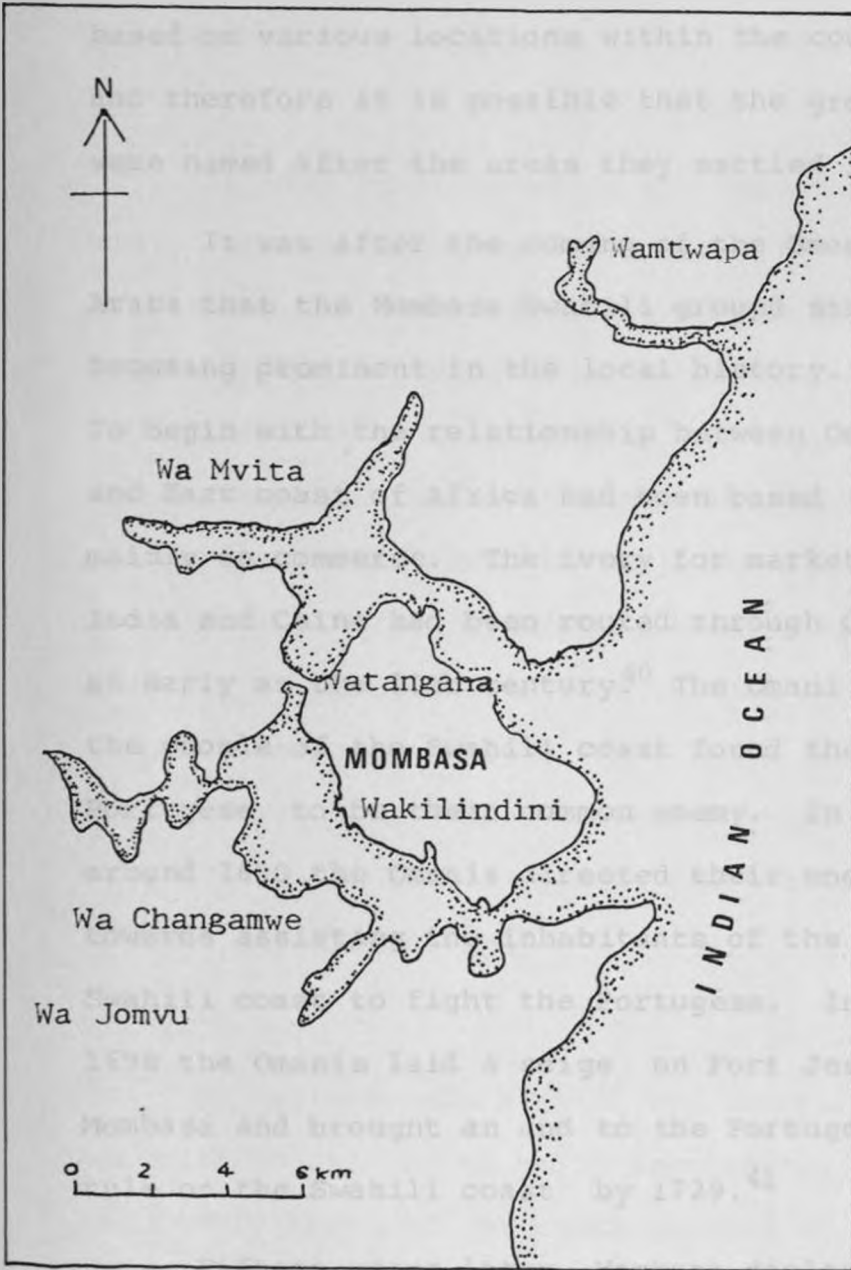
Wa-Kilindini, Wa-changamwe and Wa-Tangana.

The land belonging to this federation was marked out as: ³⁸

1. Wa Kilindini - on South and East Port Reitz and Makupa Creek.
2. Wa-Changamwe - on West by Nika land.
3. Wa-Tangana - on North by Old Trade route of Mombasa Island.

The constituents of the Tissa Tayifa were made up of: ³⁹

	<u>Constituents</u>	<u>Boundaries</u>
1.	Wa-Mvita	North of Mombasa
2.	Wa-Mtwapa	South of Takaungu
3.	Wa-Jomvu/ WaJunda	on West Nyika boundary.
4.	Wa-Kilifi)
5.	Wa-Mshaka)
6.	Wa-Amu) on East Indian
7.	Wa-Pate) Ocean and
8.	Wa-Faza) North coast.
9.	Wa-Malindi)



Map No. 11.

The Swahili people around Mombasa in 1895.

As can be seen from above the names of constituents of the federation were mainly based on various locations within the country and therefore it is possible that the groups were named after the areas they settled in.

It was after the coming of the Omani Arabs that the Mombasa Swahili groups started becoming prominent in the local history. To begin with the relationship between Oman and East coast of Africa had been based mainly on commerce. The ivory for markets in India and China had been routed through Oman as early as the 10th century.⁴⁰ The Omani and the people of the Swahili coast found the Portugese to be their common enemy. In around 1650 the Omanis directed their energies towards assisting the inhabitants of the Swahili coast to fight the Portugese. In 1698 the Omanis laid a seige on Fort Jesus in Mombasa and brought an end to the Portugese rule on the Swahili coast by 1729.⁴¹

Fifteen years later, Mombasa declared itself independent from Muscat under a breakaway group of Omanis called the Mazrui whose leader was Ali bin Osman. The Mazrui

established their influence not only on Mombasa which was their base but to the North and South and to a certain extent as far as Lamu.

It was, most probably, the Mazrui as the governors in Mombasa, who actually emphasised the tribal division of the Swahili people. They exploited the two main federations of Thelatha Tayifa and Tissa Tayifa to their own advantages. The Swahili of the two federations, on the other hand, accepted the Mazrui leadership because they preferred to be dominated by a foreign group rather than be ruled by a rival group amongst themselves. This helped the Mazrui to establish their authority over the Swahili without any difficulty.

3.3.1 Religion

By religion the Swahili are generally all muslims and in the early days education was mostly Koranic. At about the age of seven, boys used to be sent to Koranic schools where they spent about three years perfecting the knowledge of the Koran. Records have shown existence of such schools at Lamu by 1820.

The script used was mainly Arabic and the Swahili did not know it very well. Only the 'Waungwana' benefited from such education and the slaves and their offsprings were deprived of it. 42

Charles New had the following to say: "In his person the Musuahili is scrupulously clean, certain washing being necessary in order to fit him for attendance upon the service of the mosque." ⁴³ This shows that they were devout muslims and followed their religious practices faithfully.

Islam had penetrated in the ways of Swahili life and in 1798 when Commodore Blankett visited Zanzaibar he found the inhabitants feasting after Ramadhan. The early influence of the settlers had affected the ways of Swahili life even in religion and since they had common religion, the Omani Arabs found it easier to establish themselves on the East coast of Africa.

Examples of court incidents during the earlier colonial British rule show that some of the surrounding neighbours of Mombasa preferred their own laws to the Islamic Laws

which were used to govern them. One such report by District Commissioner K.R. Dundas, in July 1915 states that "the Wadigo protested that they wear swahili clothing, or at least they do so whenever they meet the 'Balози' and when they go to the Mosque....." ⁴⁴

This incident however suggests that some of the Wadigos had accepted the Islamic religion as they did go to the Mosque to pray. Swahili clothing which has derived from the Arabic clothing was worn by all those who were affected by the penetration of Islam in their lives.

3.4 DRESS

Wherever the early history has given glimpses into the dressing by the kings and rulers of the East African coast, it has been cited as very rich and luxurious with mentions of silks and satins as being used for robes etc. When Vasco da Gama visited Malindi in 1498 he had the following to say regarding the kings dress and his court.

"The king wore a robe (royal cloak) of damask trimmed with green satin and rich touca (Turban). He was seated on two cushioned chair

of bronze, beneath a round sunshade of crimson satin attached to a pole." ⁴⁵

In 1500, the next Portugese to visit Malindi, Pedro Avarés Cabral, presented gifts to the king of Malindi from the king of Portugal. The gifts consisted of:- "A rich saddle, a pair of enamel bridles for a horse, a pair of stirrups and their spurs, all of silver, enamelled and gilded; a breast strap and cords of the proper kind for the saddle and furnishing of very rich crimson and a halter worked in gold thread for the said horse and two cushions of brocade and two other cushions of crimson velvet, and a fine carpet and a piece of Tapestry and two pieces of scarlet cloth and also a length of crimson satin and a piece of crimson tafeta." ⁴⁶

In return for the gift the king of Malindi who was referred to as a Moor, ordered arms and lengths of silk cloth to be brought and to be given away to those who had brought the gifts for him. This incident shows the splendour of the gifts that were exchanged in early 16th century at the coast.

In about 1569, Father Monclaro of the

Society of Jesus accompanied the expedition of Fransisco Barretto against Monomotapa, the paramount chief of a large area of what was later to become part of Portuguese East Africa. The main objective of the expedition was to capture mines from which gold was believed to come. On this occasion Father Monclaro was able to visit the whole length of the coast under the Portuguese control.

He described the city as a very large Moorish city where different trade was carried out. He also mentioned very rich silk clothes from which the Portuguese derived great profits from other Moorish cities where they were not found because they were only manufactured at Pate and were exported to other cities. The Portuguese exchanged ironware, beads and cotton cloth which the people of Pate did not possess.

This seems to be one of the references related to silk being produced at Pate and unfortunately no other source seems to elaborate on this point which would turn out to be most interesting otherwise. No mention

was made as to the process followed in the manufacture of silks either.

Father Gasper de Santo Barnadino's visit to East Africa in 1606 took him to the Island of Pate, Siu and Faza. He described the king of Pate as being seated in the manner of the Moors, on costly carpets and robes in white in the moorish fashion.

He described the king of Faza whose name was Mubana Mufama Luvale as being dressed in long tailing robes with a stripped turban of damasked silken cloth on his head. His robe was said to be of quilted cotton. From his left shoulder was gracefully slung a curved and perfectly finished Turkish scimitar (a short deggar type sword).

All the above descriptions were given by the Portuguese who started visiting the East Coast frequently after Vasco da Gama. They considered the term "Swahili" as of a loose designation and so hardly employed it to describe the coastal people. Instead they resorted to the use of Moors for the Arabs and Swahili and Kafir for the Bantu in general.

The descriptions do give an idea of the rich variety of cloth such as silks velvets and satins in use on the East coast of Africa from the later part of the 15th century.

3.4.1 CLOTHING FOR MEN

The men generally wore a loin cloth with a coloured boarder which was called 'Kikoi'. The kikoi some times had a woven coloured border at its end and was quite often an imported piece of clothing from Somalia. When the loin cloth was a plain one without any coloured checks or woven border it was referred to as 'shuka'. This item of clothing was generally worn during work with cotton singlets. The poorer people who could not afford the 'kikoi' wore 'Merican' which was unbleached calico from America. The kikoi was worn by men around the waist, and was tucked inwards for fastening. A bright red version with broad verticle stripes was the most common type of kikoi from Hadramaut.

Over the 'kikoi' was worn the long white shirt reaching nearly to the ankles and was called 'Khanzu'. This was a long narrow garment and was often made out of different

materials ranging from white calico to muslin or tussore silk. The most widely used material was 'Bafta' which was a fine bleached calico with a glaze on it. Other fabrics which were used for Khanzu were silk, 'Mel Mel' which was muslin, 'Halaili' a form of white cotton and 'Doria' which was cotton incorporating stripes in its weave. The collar of this shirt was generally round and was often skillfully embroidered with a narrow red border.

Upon the kanzu was worn a sleeveless waist coat called 'Kizibao'. This was mostly bright coloured with elaborate braiding and fancy buttons. Sometimes embroidery work was done in the same colour as of the Kizibao and yet it showed very well. The designs were mainly islamic and mostly from Omani sources.

In place of kizibao sometimes a long flowing robe was worn which was called "joho". This was a long overcoat type of garment made of fine cloth and usually of blue, purple, scarlet or black colour. This garment was embroidered with rich ornamental embroidery work over the shoulders, in gold and silver lacework. This garment was open in front

but falling over the back in one seamless piece reaching the heels. This garment was worn on important occasions like marriages and also worn sometimes on Friday visits to the mosques. 47

Costume was never considered complete without a cap and the head was always supposed to be covered. A typical type of cap which had elaborate needle work done on it was called 'Kofia'. There were varieties in 'Kofia' depending on the involvement in the needle work which was done on it. The caps were identified by the designs on them. Some of the favourite ones were named as "Ya Kibandiko, Sina hasara, bondi, wimbi Mtama, darizi" etc. The Darizi was a beautiful and expensive white cap embroidered with various motifs but generally consisting of zig zag lines called 'Vinara' all round its base followed upward by designs known as Mera, Viboko, etc. These designs were derived from objects such as safety pins (see Plate No. XII, P.130). Sometimes a red fez was also worn over the head but the traditional cap even today is the white, Kofia.

Around the 'Kofia' was wound the

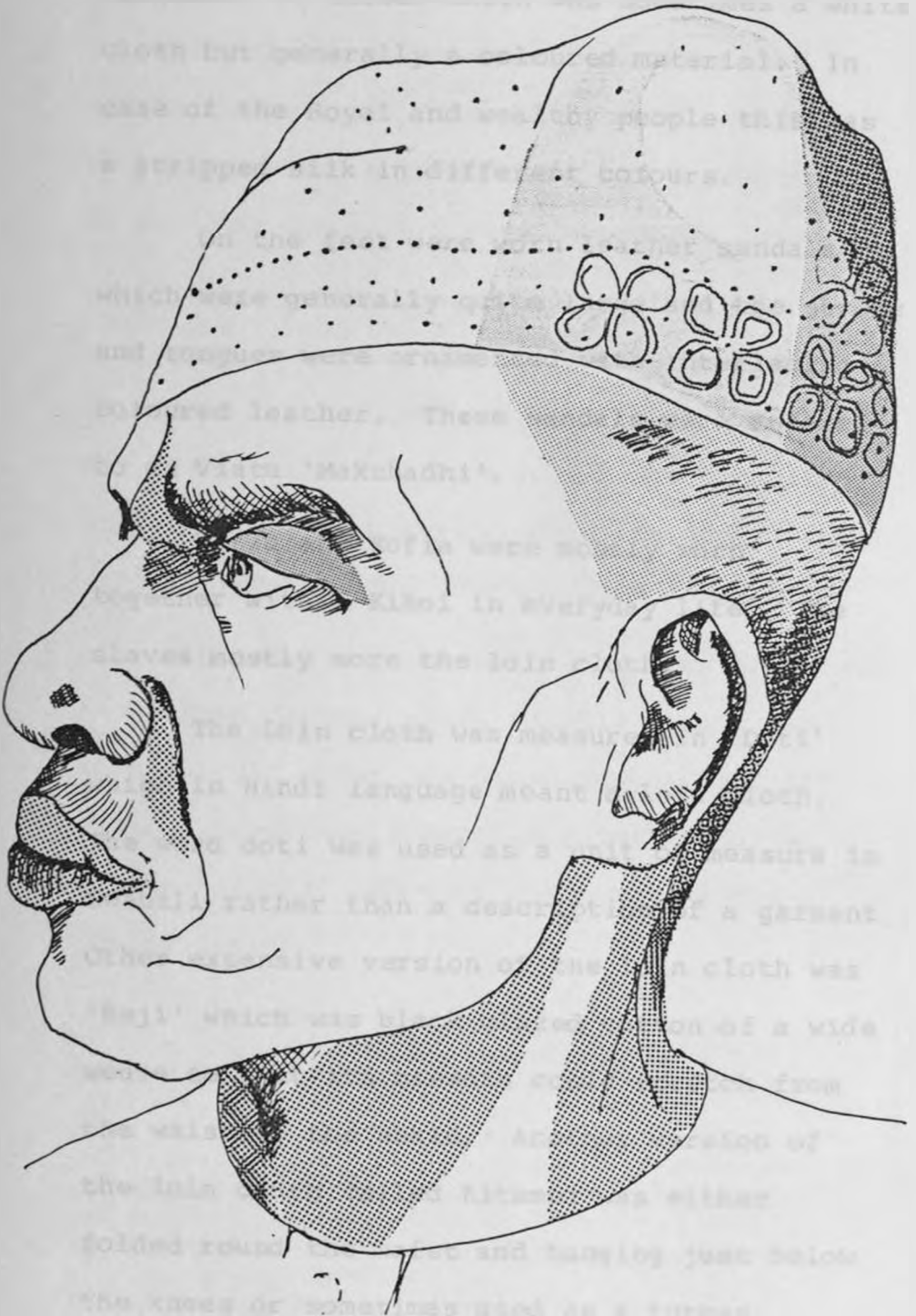


Fig. I

A Swahili gentleman dressed in the traditional cap (Kofia).

'Kilemba' or turban which was sometimes a white cloth but generally a coloured material. In case of the Royal and wealthy people this was a striped silk in different colours.

On the feet were worn leather sandals which were generally quite large and the straps and tongues were ornamented with interlacing coloured leather. These sandals were referred to as Viatu 'Makubadhi'.

Kanzu and Kofia were mostly worn together with a Kikoi in everyday life. The slaves mostly wore the loin cloth.

The loin cloth was measured in 'Doti' which in Hindi language meant a loin cloth. The word doti was used as a unit of measure in Swahili rather than a description of a garment. Other expensive version of the loin cloth was 'Beji' which was black glazed cotton of a wide weave so that its breadth could stretch from the waist to the ankle. Another version of the loin cloth called Kitambi was either folded round the waist and hanging just below the knees or sometimes used as a turban.

There were several types of 'Kitambi' in use and each had different name being

identified by the type of fabric or the design on them. One popular name in Kitambi was called "Vitambi vya Said Hemed" which was made of silk and was coloured but had no design on it. It was mostly used by wealthy people.

Other variations to the garments mentioned were 'Bushti' which was similar to Joho but a little narrower. This garment was also ornamented with gold braid boarder and with heavy ornamental gold embroidery work with intricately and closely done line work.

In addition to the full costume sometimes a J shaped dagger called 'Jambia Tausi' was worn in front under the broad sash around the waist. Sometimes a Persian scimitar called 'Kitara ajamia' occupied the place of the J shaped dagger.

To complete the outfit a Swahili gentleman carried a walking stick of Tamarind tree called 'Bakora ya mkwaju'. This was generally the dress men wore but there were variations to this depending on the social standing and financial capabilities of the individuals.

3.4.2 CLOTHING FOR WOMEN

The women's dress differed considerably from the grand dressing of the male. The main type of dress which was worn generally consisted of two big pieces of cotton of which one was worn around the body, from the chest reaching to the ankles and the other one was thrown over the shoulders or over the head and was used either as a shawl or a veil.⁴⁸

The cloth that was much preferred for this type of dressing was called 'Kisuto' which was a square coloured cloth and Kaniki which was an indigo dyed cotton cloth packed in separate lengths.

The most popular type of cloth that was much favoured by the women was the lesa which were rectangular cotton pieces with a printed border and a printed central motif. The different designs in the centre were based on objects that were familiar to the locals and included things like pineapple, palm trees, bunches of three oranges, cashew nuts and so on.⁴⁹ Lesa were also classified according to the design on them. The ones with broad stripes on them were referred to 'Mkeka' which meant 'mat' and was a reference to the straw

mats which were made at the coast. The other variation was where the leso was cut into parts and sewn together to make one square cloth. This cloth was wound around the body under the arms. A similar piece was worn over the shoulders.

A veil was worn by many women in Zanzibar, Mombasa and Lamu. This system was strictly enforced and it was considered respectful if the woman walked about in a form of 'purdah' Mombasa women were more casual about this as compared to Zanzibar women. The Swahili women in Mombasa who were of African and Arab descent mostly went about without a proper veil but nevertheless went about in a long covering of blue calico or gauze which was fastened over the forehead by a cord round the chin and it fell downwards over the head to the back. This form of covering was known as 'Ukaya'.⁵⁰ This was a fashionable aspect of dress around 1850.

The Swahili women in Lamu wore, in addition to the usual two robes described above a short bodice of doria (ribbed muslin) fastened with four large silver buttons. This garment was worn above the cotton robe.

Beneath the robes they wore a tight fitting Swahili trousers of which only the ends showed under the robes.⁵¹

The women of Siu mostly wore a robe fastened over one shoulder crosswise which was of a dull red and black colour. They did not wear the colourful lesa which was worn in Mombasa and Lamu.⁵²

The women in Lamu went about in form of purdah which was called 'Shiraa'. This was a tent like cover that was made by using two sticks and lesa sewn together to form a kind of tent. Slaves usually supported the tent and the lady walked inside. Those who did not have slaves devised the system so as they could carry the tent like veil themselves. A similar nature of veil was also used in Mombasa around 1850 and was referred to as 'Ramba'.⁵³

By 1870 the Ukaya became a dress for the lower class women while the ladies of higher status started wearing a mask of 'black silk mentle'. The 'Ramba' in Mombasa gave away to the 'BuiBui'.⁵⁴ The origin of the buibui is said to be from Hadramaut in Arabia and actually signalled



Fig.2

Rear view of a Swahili lady dressed in BuiBui.

out the presence of Hadramaut immigrants to the coast at the turn of the century.

There were also variations in the dressing of women from what has generally been described above. The higher class of women wore trousers called 'suruali' which was copied from the Omani women. Upon their heads they wore silk handkerchiefs or caps. Some wore tunics and kanzu, tastefully embroidered. They also wore sandals of leather. ⁵⁵

The lesa that was worn by the Swahili women adapted a wider social meaning as its use increased. On many occasions it featured as a prominent gift article and its use signified the importance of some occasions. Customary gifts of lesa were offered at funerals and marriages. Examples have been cited where a Jora (pair) of lesa was given away to those ladies who were responsible for bringing clothes for the corpse at the funeral.

Leso was widely used at 'Unyago' which were schools for the initiation of young girls, on reaching puberty. This custom was practiced at Lamu and amongst the ceremonies there was always a lesa. Amongst the traditional women dances like lelemama, the



Fig. 3.

Swahili lady dressed in Leso.

Two pieces are used. One is wound around the waist and the other around the shoulder.

leso was worn as a prominent garment, sometimes tightly wound at the hips.

The importance of this article was exemplified in the 1942 boycott of the leso by Mombasa women when its prices soared together with prices of food and other commodities as a result of wartime inflation. Although the leso was not considered as a necessity on the same sense as essential commodities such as food but nevertheless it held an important place in the social life of the swahili women. The swahili women who had organised themselves into an Association called the 'Lelemama' joined forces not to buy 'Leso' from the Indian merchants who were charging nearly three times the wholesale price of the item. Although there were exceptions and it was difficult to enforce a total boycott, the leader of the association Nuru Shatry, stationed swahili women with sticks at the Indian shops, to beat up any men or women who decided to break the boycott. The boycott lasted for nearly a year but was not highly successful due to many reasons. The wartime recession, supply and shortages in leso caused some panic buying of the item. One of the

Indian merchants approached Nuru Shatry and sold her the lesos at wholesale prices and she in turn started retailing the item. This was received with mixed feelings and as the lesos were sold at lower prices than the market, many of the swahili women considered them as cheap and resorted to buying from European or Indian merchants. This incident clearly outlines the importance of lesos for the swahili women.⁵⁶

Amongst the other fabrics that featured prominently in the swahili people's lives were an item in cotton referred to by the locals as 'China'. This was a type of lesos but of very good quality. Another substitute for the lesos was called "Visutu" which was again cotton, slightly larger in size and cheaper in price than a lesos. This was worn by slightly poorer folks.

Various fabrics featured in the dresses of women some of which were:

'Itilas' which was silk imported from Bombay, 'Mel Mel' which was muslin, 'Halaili' another white form of cotton and 'Doria' which was cotton in two designs. One design had

vertical stripes in weaving and was referred to as 'Ubawa wa Khanga! The other design had checks on it and was referred to as 'Hinzrani.'

Around their heads, the women wrapped a twisted oblong type of turban made of brightly coloured cloth. Sometimes it was of silk and has earlier been referred to as 'Vitambi vya Said Hemed'.

Besides the usual dress, the swahili women were also very keen on their own make up, hair styles and ornaments. The hair styles of the women is described by Charles New as:

"The head is dressed in the most fantastic fashion. Sometimes, the wool, parted in the centre is gathered together and set up in two large heaps, one on either side of the head. But as a rule a large number of partings are preferred extending from the forehead over to the nape of the neck. This is done by dividing the locks into as many parts as may be desired, and then plaiting them tightly down to the head, finishing of the ends into what may be designated small rats' tails....."⁵⁷
At times coconut oil was used for oiling the

hair.

The women also liked to decorate themselves with a black mixture made by soot and referred to as 'Wanda'.⁵⁸ They darkened the rims of their eyes with this sooty mixture. This was a custom adapted from copying the Arab women. Descriptions of some of the Arab women who visited the Islands of Lamu during the monsoon times, in the dhows, also suggest that "their flashing eyes were darkened with 'Kohl'.⁵⁹

The swahili women's, ornaments consisted of a gold or silver button worn on the nose which was also a custom amongst the Arab as well as the Indian women. The ears were pierced and the lobes of the ears were extended to wear earrings of about 2 cm or more in diameter. The ornaments in form of ear rings were made up of silver, gold, small round piece of lime, rounded discs of wood.⁶⁰ On the upper rims of the ear were also worn rings and studs of silver. (see Fig.4 p. 109).

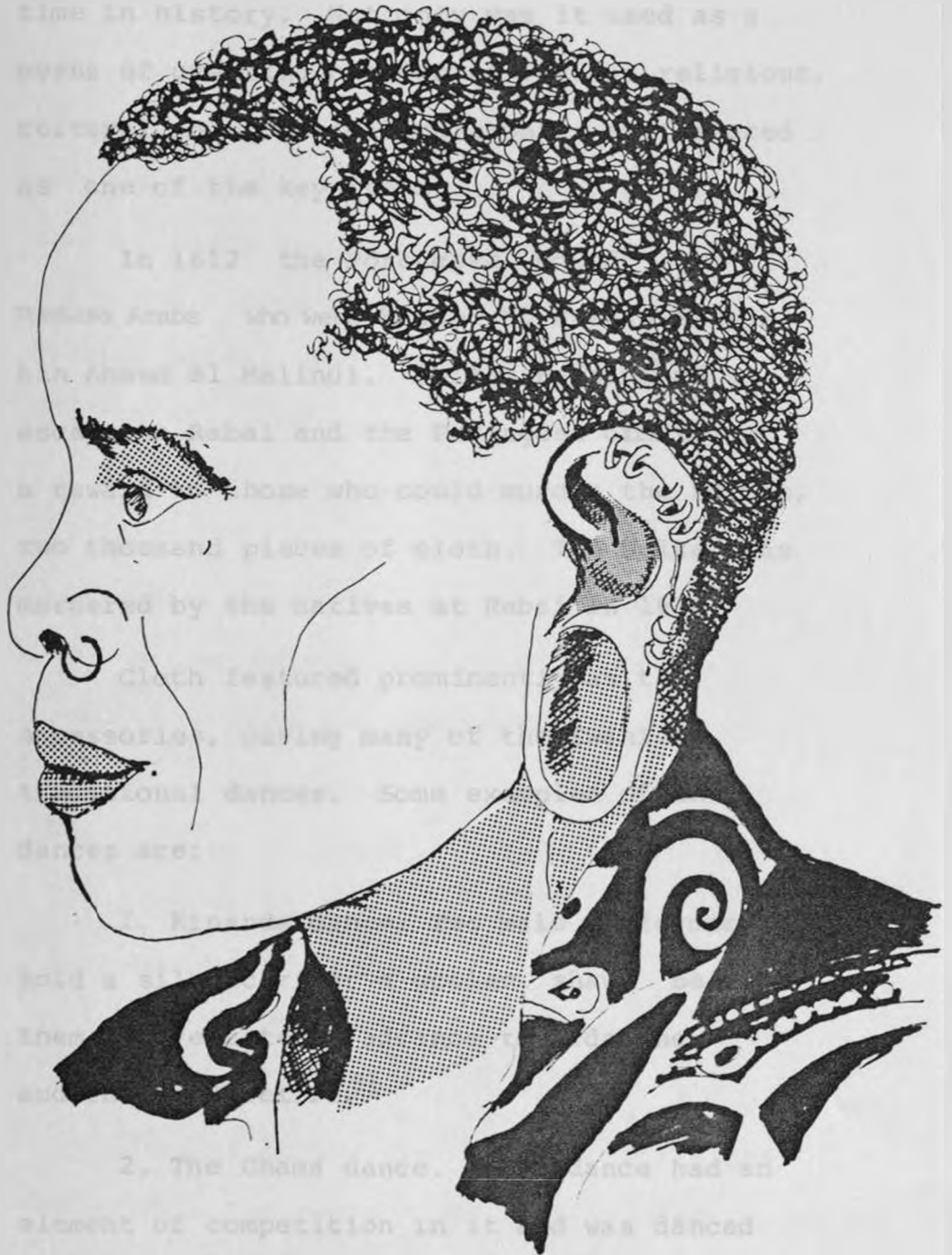


Fig. 4
Swahili lady dressed with a lesa around the shoulders
and ear studs on the rim. (Early 1900).

3.5 IMPORTANCE OF CLOTH IN SOCIAL LIFE OF SWAHILI

Cloth has held an important position in the life of the Swahili people from a long time in history. Not only was it used as a means of dressing but during various religious, cultural and political ceremonies it featured as one of the key items.

In 1612 the Portugese traded with Mombasa Arabs who were headed by Sultan Hassan bin Ahmed el Malindi. Sultan Hassan had to escape to Rabai and the Portugese offered, as a reward to those who could murder the Sultan, two thousand pieces of cloth. The Sultan was murdered by the natives at Rabai in 1614.

Cloth featured prominently as the accessories, during many of the Swahili traditional dances. Some examples of the dances are:

1. Kinanda dance: Two male performers hold a silk scarf or a woolen shawl between them and repeatedly advance towards the audience and retire.⁶¹

2. The Chama dance. This dance had an element of competition in it and was danced by men in two opposing teams. The men dressed

up in their best clothes in the Arab fashion and also wore Arab daggers. Each team tried to overshadow the other by their fine show.⁶²

During their ceremonies, to rid off the evil spirits cloth again featured as an accessory in the ceremony. The Swahili people believe in the existence of evil spirits and some of these spirits were considered harmless while the others entering the human body created pains. The local name for these spirits was 'Pepo'.

In the early days the pepo was believed to be from some of the tribes around the coastal belt. The various kinds of 'pepo' which seized people were named after the locality. Some of the names were:

Pepo wa Kigalla	Pepo wa Ki-Shakini
Pepo wa Ki Samya	Pepo wa Ki-rima.
Pepo wa Ki Nyika	
Pepo wa Ki Pemba	
Pepo wa Ki Arabi	
Pepo wa Ki Somali	

Usually during the ceremony to rid the bad spirit, the patient was made to wear clothes in the manner of the tribe to which the evil spirit belonged.⁶³

For example during the ceremony of Pepo wa Ki-Galla if a patient was a man, cloth was tied around his chest and hung down to his feet. Another white cloth was put over his head and shoulders so that only the face was left visible. A pair of white cotton trousers, tight at the ankle was also worn. In case of a woman patient similar clothes were worn but the first cloth was tied at the waist rather than the chest.

After seven days of dancing the cloth which was over the head was dropped to the shoulders and a new cloth was replaced on the head.

During Pepo wa Ki-Shakini ceremony similar clothing to that of the Pepo wa Ki-Galla was worn but the cloth was usually a dark blue cotton (Kaniki). The trouser was also made up of Kaniki or sometimes of a red cotton cloth (bendera).

During the ceremony of the Pepo wa Ki-Nyika the male patient dressed in dark blue cotton clothes (Kaniki) and if the patient was a women on the second day she exchanged this form of dressing for a kilt which was

the same as that of the Nyika women.

References have been cited of different coloured flags being hoisted on the early sailing boats from Lamu known as 'Mtepi'. These were decorated with numerous flags and steamers. A big white steamer at the mast head was an indication of peace. Small white flags on the bow spirit indicated the importance of the passengers.⁶⁴

A red flag in the stern with small red flags under the big white steamer indicated the boats which were in competition and who had set sail at the same time.⁶⁵

With reference to some local legal cases as early as 1914 - related to collection of taxes for the British government - cloth or clothing items were taken away from the defaulters who failed to pay the taxes in currency form. Some times such items as 'khanzu', 'shuka' and 'fulana' were recovered as part of the taxes.⁶⁶

Amongst some of the neighbouring tribes of Mombasa sometimes blood money for death was partly paid by 'mericani' cotton.⁶⁷ (Taking of human life was brought under justice by fines paid in form of money, animals or cloth).

The foregoing examples show what sort of importance cloth had besides being a very valuable form of exchange commodity for the trade in the interior of the country.

3.6 TRADE

Trade and commerce helped to set up a distinctive form of Islamic civilization along the coast of East Africa from around AD 1000.

Ivory was a major export item to have been documented nearly 2000 years ago. It was an attractive and exotic trade good especially in Europe, America and India, and thus provided an incentive for the early Arab settlers on the East Coast of Africa to penetrate into the interior of the country.

During the period 1200-1500 when the early Swahili settlements were developing as trading sites on the Northern coast, some low level form of ivory trade was in progress with the Arab merchants who visited the coast in their sailing ships. References indicate local ivory trade amongst the Nyika in around 1700. By about 1811 the coastal merchants were definitely in contact with the tribes inland and were trading in ivory. Records

also show that by about 1825 the Kamba traders had showed up in Mombasa and in 1855 the first coastal caravan were in Kamba country.

During the first half of the 19th century there was a big demand for ivory in Europe and America and the Americans had actually reached Zanzibar in 1817 and signed a commercial treaty in 1832. With the Portugese and British interest in the Eastern world and with the major trading ports being at Western India, Goa and Bombay, the East African ports were also tied up with the Indian ports. From 1814 to 1855 Indian foreign trade increased and was virtually in the hands of the Imperial British East India Company.

Ivory from the East African coast came mainly from the interior of the country and the coastal trade goods in low densities were deposited in the interior by a system of exchange of goods.

Glass beads and cloth featured as trade goods that were exchanged. Cloth was the most commonly exchanged form of trade good. This was the common type of trade when the

Portugese visited East Africa in the 16th century and things had not changed much by the 19th century.

In 1887 when Count Teleki let some Swahili traders accompany him to Lake Rudolf, an inventory of trade goods which they took with them consisted mainly of cloth. The fabrics comprised of 21,000 yards of mericani, 2,000 yards of blue calico (Kaniki) and 3,200 yards of red calico (Bendera).

Other items of trade goods which were mainly beads and brass wire and cloth always took the position of a leading item for exchange.

The trade which was carried on with the interior took the form of a trading caravans from the coast which visited the interior of the country and exchanged items of trade at some centres which were mainly exchange centres and not real markets. The mode of exchange was not based on modern market principles.

Most of the trade with the East was 'monsoon trade' carried on by ships that sailed into the East African ports with the monsoon winds.

The second stage of trade on the East coast was during the Portugese rule on the East coast. With the Portugese headquarters set at Fort Jesus in Mombasa, the trade was again chiefly in ivory, ambergris, slaves, grains. All these items were purchased by cotton textiles and piece of goods mainly imported from India.

A custom house was built in Mombasa in 1594 and all the goods for import and export from the coast were supposed to pass from this customs post. All ships which were sailing to or from India were first supposed to call at Mombasa to pay duties. An import duty of six percent and an addition of 1% duty for building of Fort Jesus was imposed on nearly all articles.⁶⁸

The Sultan of Malindi who later became the Sultan of Mombasa was in very good books with the Portugese masters and was thus granted one third of all the duties collected from the 6% duty catagory. He was also allowed to impose taxes on all incoming and outgoing goods from Makupa to the mainland.⁶⁹

In the North coast Pate and Faza were the most prosperous Swahili towns.

The Portugese established a customs house in Pate around 1633 to collect duties from ships which were sailing to India and which found it inconvenient to visit Mombasa.⁷⁰ The Portugese however, removed the custom house from Pate in 1644, on the grounds of Pate becoming too rich and powerful, by the trade it received through the custom house. After several revolts against the Portugese authority by the Swahili residents of the coast the Omani Arabs laid seige on Mombasa and drove away the Portugese in 1729 thus bringing the coastal regions in the third phase of its history in trade.

It was not until 1837 when the Mazrui of Mombasa were overcome by Sultan Seyyid Said of Zanzibar who during the course of his reign converted the maritime trade system of the Mazrui into an economic development of this region whereby he encouraged the penetration into the interior of the country for trade.

The Sultan controlled his empire on the East coast of Africa from Zanzibar where he encouraged European and American traders to set up their bases.⁷¹

In 1833 the Sultan signed a trade

treaty with the Americans who had actually been trading in the East African waters from around 1820. The Sultan's policy of trade imposed only a 5% tax on goods which were brought into Zanzibar. By the end of the Sultan's rule, the Americans were still supreme in trade in these regions, where they were handling 55% of the exports and 37% of the imports in Zanzibar's western trade. ⁷²

The French made a commercial treaty with Zanzibar in 1844 and later appointed a consul at Zanzibar. The Germans were also operating in carrying cowrie shells from East to West Africa in around 1840 and signed a commercial treaty with Zanzibar in 1859.

British interest, although not directly linked to trade in around 1840, was however still there in form of its subjects of Indian origin who traded, by the encouragement of the Sultan, in Zanzibar. ⁷³ The other reason for them to be present in Zanzibar was for good relations with the Sultan to safeguard the North Western approaches to India. The British signed their commercial treaty with Zanzibar in 1839.

During the 1840's the Europeans had not

yet managed to penetrate the interior of the coast. Arab penetration had been recorded from 1825. The first European to penetrate in the inland was Krapf and all the subsequent attempts to penetrate the interior of the coast by Europeans were along the trails left by the Arab caravans who in turn were following the African trade routes.

The American presence on the East coast from 1833 was significant to the trade since they introduced the famous American cotton referred to as 'Americani' which was an item of great demand for exchange of goods. This was an unbleached calico, about 32 yards long on which was stamped "Massachusetts Sheeting".⁷⁴ So much was the popularity of this cloth that the British in 1896, after considerable efforts succeeded in specially manufacturing, in Manchester, a cloth in every respect equal to 'merikani' on which they stamped 'British manufacture'.⁷⁵

The British attempt to manufacture cloth of this nature was in their pursuit to create demands of British goods in British East Africa. The 'British manufacture' cloth was used to pay the troops. The local inhabitants

were also now very much aware of the purchasing powers of Americani and the British wanted to utilize this to their advantage.

In the local trade, coined money did not have a wide circulation in East Africa. Portugese and Indian currency was accepted as standard money amongst only a section of the population. Cotton goods were treated as the real currency. These goods were generally refered to as the trade goods and thus became a primitive form of currency. Even Guillains mention a fictitious coin in Kilwa called 'Doti'. Doti was actually nothing other than a length of cotton material in common use in East Africa.

The cloth which was always the main item in the trade goods comprised of various fabrics imported from America, Europe and India.

Cotton cloth was generally known by the name 'nguo'. 'Mericiani' which was really a grey sheeting and which was a very favourite item. It was usually sold in lengths called 'Doti' which was usually a four yard long piece. The origin of 'Doti' is Indian and it was supposed to be the minimum length of cloth that could be worn around the waist with comfort. ⁷⁶

The smaller unit than 'Doti' was that called 'Mkono' meaning in swahili the forearm and eight of these units made up one 'Doti'.

Other fabrics which were in demand were 'Bombeii' which was an unbleached calico from Bombay, 'Bafta' finer bleached calico with a glaze on it and which was mostly used for making 'Khanzu', 'Kaniki' - an indigo coloured cotton cloth for women, 'Khangas' - rectangular cotton pieces with a central design and an all round border 'Bendera' meaning - flag a red coloured cloth named after Sultan's red flag and 'Kikoi' which was a white cloth with a coloured border generally used by men to be worn around their waists. ⁷⁷

The next item of trade goods was beads and wires. References indicate the importance of these items particularly in trade at Kwa Jomvu in around 1824 where the Kamba middleman traded with the swahili in ivory and in exchange demanded nothing but beads and wires which they exchanged for ivory from the hunters in the interior of the country.

In the days of the Arab administration the 'Wazee' or the elders used to receive a yearly present of cloth and the British

administrators after the British Protectorate were also considering offering similar incentives for assistance in administration.

Upon the establishment of British rule in Kenya and the building of the Uganda railway, the exchange system of trade came to an end. The Indian rupee was used as currency and various shops sprang up along side the railway lines.

By 1898 an Indian Bazar was opened in Machakos and in 1899 another one sprang up in Nairobi.

At the beginning of the 20th century several business sprang up in the interior and the North coast as the branches of the main companies. Some of the earlier established business in Mombasa were:

The Old East African Trading Co. 1903.

Boustead and Clarke Ltd in 1909.

Ogdens and Madeleys Ltd in 1910.

W.M. O'swald and Co. 1919.

The main item for trade which was offered by these company was cotton goods either in piece or dyed or printed. By about 1912-1913, cotton goods took up the major part of the

imports with United Kingdom as the leading supplier of piece goods printed and dyed, followed by India, Arabia, Australia, Hungary, France and Germany. The unbleached cotton piece goods came mainly from United States. 12,553,779 yards were imported into Kenya in 1912. This was followed by imports of 4,811,417 yards of unbleached cotton from India. 78

In 1921 the British government declared a change in the East African currency. The Indian rupee was changed to a Silver Florin on August 10th 1921. Later the Silver Florin was withdrawn in favour of two silver shillings. Trade which was mainly started at Mombasa and later spread through the rest of the country will be looked at in further details in the later chapter in this thesis.



PLATE I: Swahili Lady from
Mombasa (1846-1849).

PLATE II: Swahili lady's
costume in 1846.

(From original lithographs
by Gullians)





PLATE III: Swahili young girl from Mombasa



PLATE IV: Swahili lady with a head covering.

(From original lithographs by Gullians 1846-1849)



PLATE V:

Swahili lady's costume as
seen in different poses.
(Gullians 1846-1849).

Plate VI: Swahili Lady's
Costume seen from
different poses.





PLATE VII:

Swahili men's dress from Pate

(Gullians 1846-1849)

PLATE VIII:

Swahili men's dress from
Mombasa.





PLATE IX:

Swahili family from East
Coast of Africa.

(Gullians 1846-1849)

PLATE X:

Swahili male from Zanzibar.





PLATE XI:

A swahili cap showing a mango shape design called 'Kulabu' design in Kiswahili

PLATE XII:

Embroidered Swahili cap with 'Pini' design (Safety pin).





PLATE XIII:

Swahili male's overcoat
(Joho with decorative designs
at the collar and sleeves).

PLATE XIV:

Details of Swahili male's
vest coat (Kizibao) with
designs showing Omani influence.





PLATE XIII:

Swahili male's overcoat
(Joho with decorative designs
at the collar and sleeves).

PLATE XIV:

Details of Swahili male's
vest coat (Kizibao) with
designs showing Omani influence.





FLATE XV:

Details of a collar of a
'Joho' showing use of rich
silver threads.

FLATE XVI:

Head dress for Swahili
bridegroom (Kilemba), made of
silk.





PLATE XVII:

Details of heavy gold embroidery on the shoulder piece of the 'Joho'.



PLATE XVIII:

Heavy embroidery on the collar of the Joho.



PLATE XIX:

Details of design on the collar of the overcoat (Joho)

PLATE XX:

Details of the edge of the 'Kikoi'. The cloth is usually wound around the waist by a Swahili male.





PLATE XXI:

Kikoi being used as drapes
in some Swahili homes.

PLATE XXII:

Details of the cuff^{ed} edge of
the 'Joho'.





PLATE XXIII:

A full costume worn by the Liwali of Lamu in the Arab manner.

PLATE XXIV:

A traditional costume worn at occasions by the local leaders in Lamu, seen against the European clothes worn by the British administrators.



Chapter 3

3.8 Footnotes

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CHAPTER 4

GIRIYAMA

Of the Bantu group inhabiting the coast of Kenya are the Nyika tribe.

The Nyika according to their own traditions represent a southern migration. Being so near the coast they have been influenced by the Arabs either directly or through Swahilis and it must have been due to this that they have in their history had chiefs who became rulers like the sultans. They were organised through a loosely structured council of elders of a designated generation and showed no clear trace of political organization.¹ They lived in the harsh bushy land and for about a century used to live in forest clearings. They were generally agriculturalists.

The Giriyaama is one of a group of nine tribes inhabiting the range of low hills that overlook the fertile belt on the coast which was formerly cultivated by the Arabs and the Swahili. This is the largest group of nine peoples inhabiting the hinterland of the coast of Kenya between Mombasa and Malindi - the others are Digo, Duruma, Rabai, Ribe, Chonyi, Kambe, Kauma and Jibana. In recent times the

nine tribes are referred to as Miji Kenda.²

The coastal lowlands are quite a contrast to the hinterland inhabited by the Giriyama. It was to these lowlands that the Arabs came to trade and it was here that the Swahili society emerged. Mombasa with its natural harbour became the most prominent city on the coast. It was later that the settlements grew at Mtwapa, Takaungu, Mambrui and Kilifi.

Because of the harsh nature of this area in terms of its vegetation which is mainly thickets with thorn bushes and also its arid climate it was, in simple Kiswahili referred to as the "Nyika" or bush.³ The people inhabiting this area were referred to as "Wanika". The prefix "wa" denoted the people who lived in the bush country according to Charles New in 1896.⁴

The Giriyama country was historically divided into two parts and so were the people.

The mountain range divided the people into two sections. The southerners took the name of the country they occupied and were called Wadigo the northerners were called Wadigo "Alupanga".⁵ The northerners were divided into many subtribes all taking the

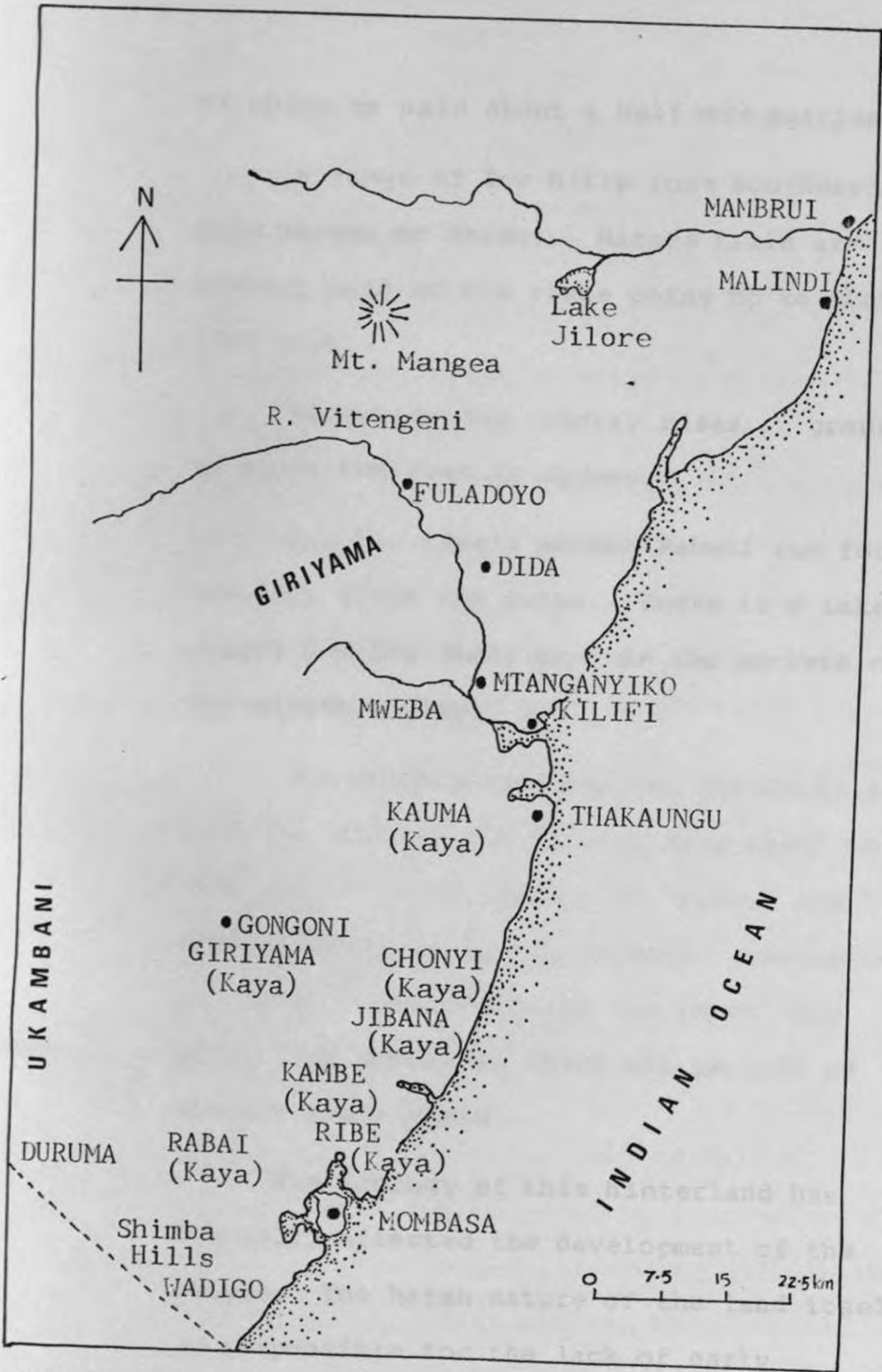
names of the district in which they lived.
(see map No. 12 p.145).

The 'Nyika' tribes occupy an area of country extending from the Kenya, Tanzania boundary northwards to about 30 miles beyond the Sabaki river. In recent years these people have moved to the coast where the land is more fertile. Many of them had settled as squatters on Arab plantations who had given them cultivation rights on a portion of their land in return for labour. Historically the eastern limits of the country were said to be up to the ten mile zone of the Sultan's Domains.⁶

On the western part of this territory is the sandy scrubland known as Taru desert where the inhabitants are the Wataita and Wataveta.

Of the portion of land occupied by the 'Nyika' tribes the Giriya comprise nearly half and occupy the northern portion. A line drawn due south west from Mtanganiko roughly forms the southern boundary of the Giriya land.

Champion in his description of the Nyika tribe estimated a total of about 160,000 souls



Map No. 12

Giriyaama Country, 1850

of which he said about a half were Agiriama.

A range of low hills runs southwards from Mangea to Shimba. Mangea hills are the highest pair of the range going up to about 1700 feet.

Westwards the country rises gradually to about 800 feet at Kademu.

All the rivers except Sabaki run for a few days after the rains. There is a lake at Jilori and few small ones in the pockets of the Galana valley.

The country receives two rainfalls a year the greater one falling from April to June and is known locally as 'Mwaka' and the smaller rainfall during December referred to as 'Vuli'.⁷ The rainfalls are never very prompt and sometimes there are periods of drought experienced.

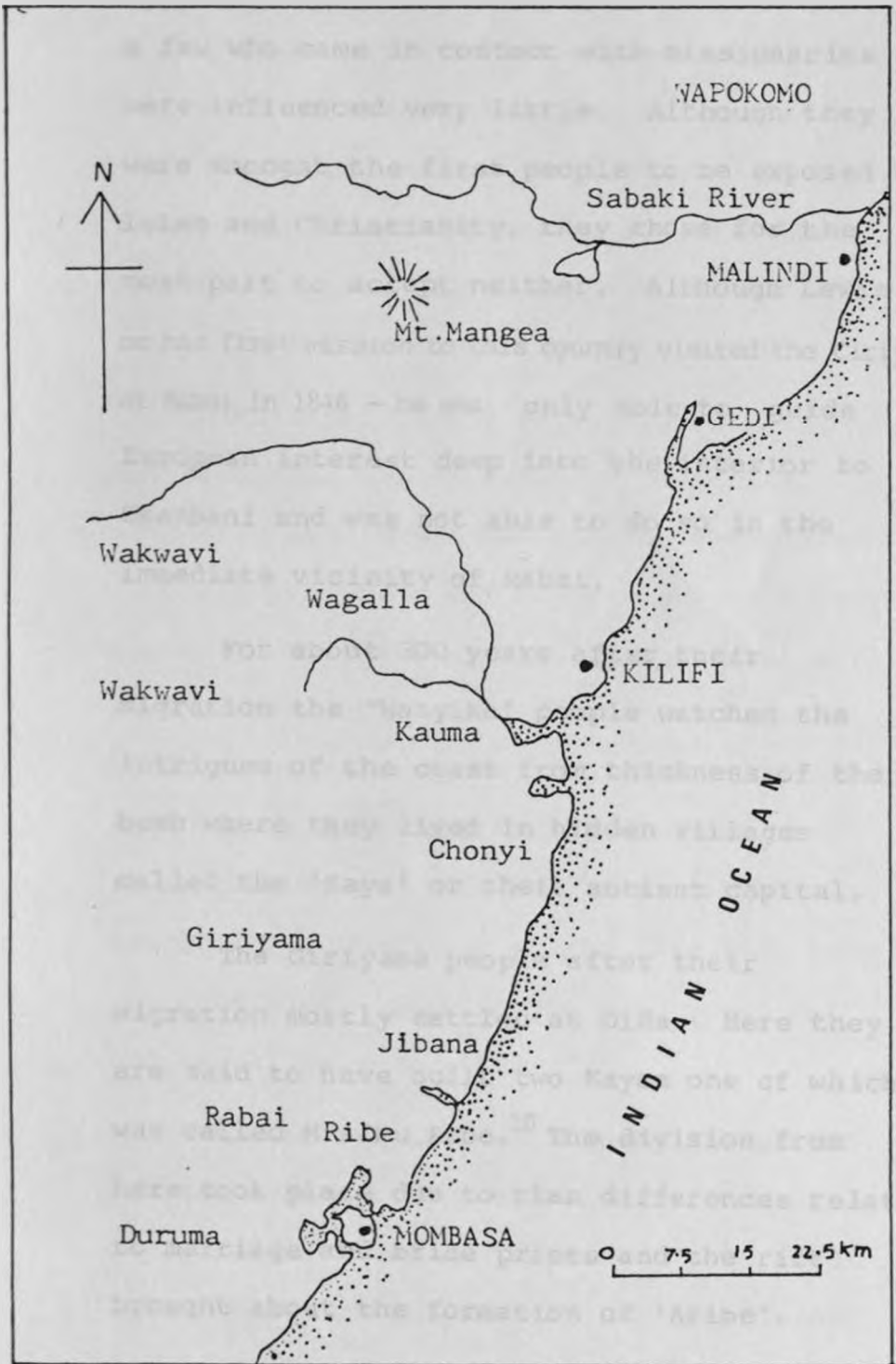
The ecology of this hinterland has crucially affected the development of the people. The harsh nature of the land itself is responsible for the lack of early information on these areas. Due to prolonged droughts at times it becomes evident that many of the ceremonies and customs of the

inhabitants revolve around those powers which are supposed to have control of the rains.

4.1 HISTORY OF THE GIRIYAMA PEOPLE

It is acceptably believed that the Giriyaama belonged to a tribe inhabiting "Sungwaya" a place between the mouth of the Tana river and Port Dunford.⁸ These people were driven from Sungwaya by the more warlike tribes of the Galla and Somali who inhabited the country to the north. The bulk of them migrated southwards to the mountainous range of Mangea and some of them settled to the north near Tana river (see map No. 13 p.148). Those who settled near Tana river are today known as the Wapokomo. This migration has been dated to about 1729 although Barbosa in an account of his visit to the East African coast in the early 16th century described the inhabitants of the town of Malindi as "dusky and black going naked from waist upwards".⁹ This seems to be a reference to the Giriyaama people as the Arabs who had been settled at Malindi wore clothes in form of robes.

Giriyaama people remained extremely superstitious and suspicious of strangers and



Map No. 13
Coast hinterland around 1850

a few who came in contact with missionaries were influenced very little. Although they were amongst the first people to be exposed to Islam and Christianity, they chose for the most part to accept neither. Although Lewis Krapf on his first mission to this country visited the Ciriama at Rabai in 1846 - he was only able to guide European interest deep into the interior to Ukambani and was not able to do so in the immediate vicinity of Rabai.

For about 300 years after their migration the "Wanyika" people watched the intrigues of the coast from thickness of the bush where they lived in hidden villages called the 'Kaya' or their ancient capital.

The Giriama people after their migration mostly settled at Dida. Here they are said to have built two Kayas one of which was called Misimu Ribe.¹⁰ The division from here took place due to clan differences related to marriage and bride prices and the rift brought about the formation of 'Aribe'.

During all this the Gallas were constantly at war with the Wanyika and the Wanyika were at war also amongst themselves.

During these warfares the Giriyama built their Kaya on a hill which has been referred to as the 'Kaya Giriyama' or 'Kaya Fungo'.¹¹ This Kaya became the sacred capital of the Giriyama. In 1834 when the Mazrui invaded Thakaungu they found the Giriyama still at Kaya Fungo.

The chief of the Kaya Giriyama was known as 'Mwanamuli' or 'Mtawala'. Each clan appointed its leader and one of such leaders who was most prominent was Fungo. He was a very powerful chief and a great supporter of the old laws of the tribe and did not stop at using violence to enforce the traditions. By about 1874 it is said that the Kaya became overpopulated and thus the inhabitants migrated to the north. Once again places like Dida were occupied. Some people also moved upto the Sabaki by about 1890.

Whilst all this was taking place the Wanyika were hit by a disaster in form of a great famine known as "Makazengi" in about 1884. This was followed by another famine, four years later, known as "Mkufu" meaning ornaments (mostly copper chains which the Giriyama made in great quantities to exchange for food from the coastal people).¹²

Once again the tribes went to war and many women were captured by the Giriyama people and were sold to the coast people as slaves in return for food.

In 1898 another famine known as "Njaa ya Gunea" (meaning gunny bags because food from the coast was supplied in gunny bags) occurred and forced many of the Giriyama men to work on the railways to earn money for food.¹³

4.2 THE PEOPLE

The Giriyama have been referred to as not being Negroes in ordinary acceptation of the term by Charles New. They are of Bantu origin. The Mombasa swahilis have borrowed many words, customs and superstitions from them. They have been described by Stigand as "finely developed people, though of primitive manners and customs".¹⁴

The Giriyama were governed by their elders who, collectively were known as the 'Kambi'. During the time the tribe was inhabiting the Kayas, the 'Kambi' usually met in the open space in the centre of the Kaya referred to as 'Morho' which was shaded by two large trees usually a 'Mugandi' (fig tree) and a 'Muyu'

(baobab tree). A new Kambi was formed every forty five years.

The elders were graded into groups in order of seniority and these groups were referred to as 'Rika'. These groups had no bearings to time of the circumcision but rather represented a typical event of the period. For example, a Rika with a name like 'Kitambi' could signify the time this type of loin cloth was introduced in this area.¹⁵

The 'Mrika' (plural of Rika) of Kambi had different names which were given during the period when it was an active governing body. The 'Mrika' of one typical Kambi Kavuta occurred in the following order:¹⁶

1. Vula Mehri (first rains).
2. Vula Kahi (middle rains).
3. Vula Nyma (last rains).
4. Tunguza (tomatoes).
5. Poku (rats).
6. Kitambi (loin cloth).
7. Nguluwe (pigs).
8. Mitzeka (sleeping mats).
9. Abekizi (father of kizi).
10. Atzai (wizards).

11. Mafira (snakes).
12. Kitzeka (axes).
13. Nyoga (feathers).

Since each Kambi had a life span of 45 years, and according to Arthur Champion who was the District Commissioner in Malindi in 1914, the Kambi at that time was the seventh, the Giriya migration to these regions could have taken place in the early 1600.¹⁷

Traditionally the food of the Wanyika was made up of coarse corn meal which they called 'sima', cassava, sweet potatoes, melons and some leaves were used as vegetables.¹⁸ Animals as food were not eaten much because they believed in keeping their herds rather than killing them for meat. However, they did eat some wild game whenever they were lucky to trap it in their traps and at other times they caught field rats for food. They also ate fish and sharks which they at times got from the coast.

The luxuries that they used to have were tobacco and palm wine which they called 'uchi'. The tobacco was mostly in snuff form which

they carried around with them in a cow horn.

Although they were amongst the first people to be exposed to the Arabs and their Islamic influence and later to the mission which was established at Rabai in 1846 they mostly chose not to be influenced by either religions.¹⁹ They were however, closely associated with the Arabs and especially with the Mazrui in their struggle for freedom from Muscat. Their link with the Mazrui continued after the Mazrui's flight from Mombasa to Gazi and Takaungu in 1837.²⁰ The last Mazrui Liwali of Thakaungu was an initiated elder of the Giriyama. Giriyama have been mentioned by various early explorers and writers such as Boteler, Owen, and Emry. Their contacts with the mission centres at Rabai and Ribe have been recorded by Krapf (1843-1896) and by Wakefield and New (1862 at Ribe).²¹

During the last century the Giriyama were forced to make many adaptation to life as they formerly knew it in their forest clearings. They however, attempted to maintain their political and cultural independence in

the face of colonial and national administrative demands becoming, many times, regarded as people unwilling to change.

The Giriyama in most cases were recorded, as being reluctant to work on jobs for money and only under severe conditions like famines would they accept employment. A few individuals, however, found their way to the coastal towns and did work on some of the Arabs plantations as casual workers.²²

In the later part of 1912 when there was a considerable shortage of food in Giriyama the British authorities thought that a vigorous collection of hut tax would result in the young men moving to the coast plantations in search of work. This, however, did not happen and the money for hut tax was obtained by sale of goats or payment was avoided by absconding from the locality. On several occasions people of a location would clear out leaving old women behind to look after the huts.²³

The Giriyama people simply refused to join the labourforce that was required by the British authorities. Porters for inland

safaris were also difficult to obtain, and sometimes attempts to force them for labour supply resulted in violence against the authorities. The reasons for this attitude could mainly be attributed to the fact that traditionally a Giriya youth never had any work to do except to look after the land and animals and clear the bush for cultivation. A middle aged man only worked for three days and then took a day of rest and did not assist in either building huts or working on the fields. Women generally did the difficult work of carrying loads.²⁴

Since most of the Giriya men were married at an early age, they had wives to work for them in the homes and on the fields. The wives in turn did not wish their husbands to move away from them in search of any work.²⁵

The Arabs from the coast could not capture the Giriya people as slaves because of the harsh nature of the country and whenever a few slaves were captured, they were most unwilling to adapt themselves to the new life.

The reasons that the Giriya gave to the British authorities for not joining the

labourforce was that they were afraid that the Europeans would ship them off to some distant land.

The Giriyama people were generally great believers in witchcraft and witch doctors were found in almost every village. The British authorities were doubtful that the medicine men or 'Waganga' were responsible for instigating the people to oppose the government policies.

While collecting hut tax and appointing government headmen for the Giriyama area, Arthur Champion, in 1913 mentioned that the people were told by a witch Katilili that the government headmen had received each a thousand rupees to sell the young men to the Europeans who would sell them as slaves overseas. The people were also convinced that the time had come to resist the Europeans and they should return to their Kambis as before to be left to live their own life without any interference from any outside authorities.²⁶

Soon after this a large body of Giriyama people moved into the Kaya Giriyama

The witch, Katilili wore the spell called "Kiraho cha mukushi kushi" which was to kill all government headmen who held council or arrested anyone; all who became government police or clerks, etc; all who went to read and write at a mission school and even went as far as to include all those who wore clothes of European type.

So powerful was the influence of the witch doctors on the people that this particular incident gave way to the 1914 Giriya uprisings against the British authority in Kenya.²⁷

Generally the Giriya people were of a very independent character and this is what helped them to escape from the slavery and also made them take refuge in a country with a very harsh nature which they could live in comfortably.

4.3 CLOTHING

In so far as dressing is concerned, not much has been said about the Giriya except the general comment of them going naked from waist upwards.

Lewis Krapf in his "Missionary Labours"

referred to Wanika as having made a favourable impression on him, for they were both quick and well behaved but wore extremely little in the way of clothes, even the women were not sufficiently clad.

Charles New, in his 'Life wanderings and missionary labours in East Africa' had the following to say about the Giriyama dressing, when he first visited the East African coast in 1862:²⁸

"In dress and ornaments the Wanyika are far below the inhabitants of the coast. The man of years dresses in very sober fashion. He is generally seen with a dirty cloth, sometimes coloured and sometimes plain about his loins - another of the same description, folded up and thrown over his shoulders - a satchel of skin or mulala (fan-palm leaf) and the indispensable horn containing snuff over the other; a head of close-cropped wool, but sometimes shaven bare and carrying a 'fimbo' (a long stout staff) in his hand. This is his ordinary style but there are times when he dresses more grandly.

The young man is far more elaborate

though less decent. There he stands two yards of cloth, saturated with oil, about his loins - a cord or piece of chain with tinkling bells on his ankles - bands of skin from the forehead and neck of various animals, with the long hair upon them, below his knees, and the same kind of thing above his elbows; many brass and iron ornaments upon both arms and large heap of brass and iron chain about his neck - the whole of his head shaven, except a thick turf about the crown; that turf twisted into long dangling locks, dripping with a mixture of grease and red earth - his eyebrows shaved off, his eye lashes picked out, his beard ditto; and his whole person anointed from head to foot with oil so as to make him shine again".

Although there are some exaggerations in this narrative basically it conforms to the general comments made by other observers.²⁹ Mostly the Giriyama dressing has been described as men wearing a cloth about the loins, kept in place frequently by a belt and another carried on the shoulder. Young men have been said to be forbidden to wear a coloured cloth referred to as 'Kitambi' which were

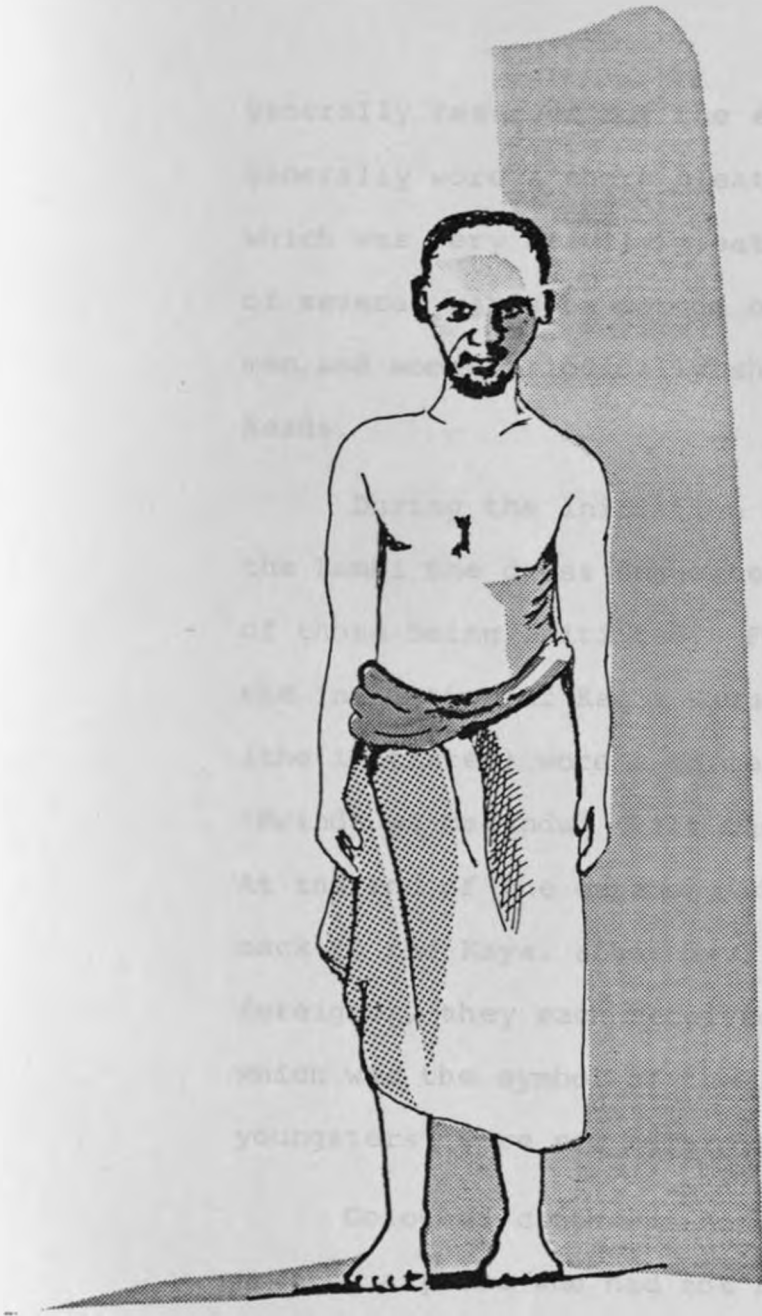


Fig. 5

Giriya elder wearing a traditional loincloth around the waist called 'Kitambi'.

generally reserved for the elders. Women generally wore a short pleated skirt 'hando' which was very heavily pleated and was made of several yards of cotton or twill. Both men and women periodically shaved their heads.

During the initiation ceremonies of the Kambi the dress suggested the age groups of those being initiated. For example at the initiation of Kambi Kavuta the 'Nyeri' (the initiated) wore a garment known as 'Mrinda wa makindu' (kilt made of leaves). At the end of the ceremony when they went back to the Kaya, after having killed a foreigner, they each received a coloured cloth which was the symbol of the Kambi. These youngsters were now referred to as Mrika.

Coloured cloth was not allowed to be worn by any one who had not been fully initiated. 30

Contradictions arise, however, regarding the ornaments whereby Charles New cites the young man as wearing all the ornaments and other authorities e.g. Arthur M. Champion in his paper on Agiriyama of

Kenya cites the young men as not wearing any ornaments.³¹

It is possible that the Giriyama wore brass and iron ornaments due to the fact that they were closely associated to the Kamba who were masters at the craft and who were in close contact with the Giriyama due to the thriving trade in ivory.

The Giriyama women's dress was mainly a pleated kilt (hando) of calico around the waist and from the waist upwards they went about nude. The kilt was not a made up one but was pleated from time to time. Sometimes they went about with a loose piece of cloth around their shoulders. Charles New described the female dress as:³²

"A small skirt reaching from the hips to the knees, with sometimes a loose cloth around her shoulders. About her neck is a heap of partly coloured beads, some ten pounds in weight; her waist is encircled with about double the quantity of the same; her legs and arms are encased in concentric rings of brass and iron wire, as thick as an ordinary lead pencil, reaching from the ankle to the knee,



Fig. 6

Giriyama lady wearing 'hando' a heavily pleated skirt.

and on the arm from the waist to the elbow; the same kind ornaments adorn her upper arms; loops of beads, chains and other ornaments dangle from the lobes and upper rims of her ears; her eyebrows and eye lashes too are gone and the whole of her head is shaven bare."

Although a lot is said about the ornaments and the 'hando' in this narrative - the clothing aspect is dealt with in lesser detail. This is because there are hardly any variations in dressing styles as have been observed by others.

Body tatooring has also been used as a form of decoration. Both male and female usually had scarification on the face and body. There were many different patterns but the most common one was that of a zone of small scars, just below the waist, in case of the women, which consisted of several very close regular rows, It was done by picking up the flesh with the fingers and by snicking little pieces of flesh with a knife.

Besides the cloth being used as dressing material it was also put to use for other purposes. By about 1863 it was observed at

Ribe that the Wanyika buried their dead in deep well dug graves. The corpse was carefully wrapped in first a 'sanza' (shroud) of new cloth when it could be obtained, and over which other coverings of skins and mattings were placed. ³³

William Walter Augustine Fitzgerald, while on his travel to the East African coast to report on the agricultural capabilities in 1891, made the following observation related to the burial:

"An upright post or wooden headstone is placed at the head of the grave, carved for men and plain and small for women. It has a sort of neck. The men's have a piece of old 'Kitsambi' (coloured cloth) and 'Bandera' (Turkey Twill) wrapped around them. The women's have the national kilt in miniature". ³⁴

This seems to be a form of projection of their dressing and would have also served as an identification mark to distinguish graves of different sexes.

References made to clothes or pieces of cloth by Thomas Wakefield in around 1861-62 show how much importance was attached to this

commodity by the Giriyama people. While preaching to these people he mentions them as 'poor creatures' whom he was trying to arouse out of their apathy to let in some rays of light upon their darkness' and goes on to say that the listners would break in with requests for cloth and pice (currency).³⁵

Once while meeting an old woman, Wakefield, willing to show himself friendly, addressed her as 'mother', according to their customs. The old lady returned his greetings by laughing heartily and saying but if you are my son you should give me a cloth.³⁶

Some observations by Wakefield while on his journey to the Galla country are also important as they suggest the importance of cloth. The currency of the Galla was beads, brass, iron wire, coloured cloth, grey and indigo dyed calico and lemali (a coarse cloth) etc. etc,. Wakefield had actually secured a supply of these commodities as presents for the chiefs and influential men. These commodities also helped in the purchasing of foods and supplies for explorers who visited these areas or travelled through them.³⁷

While at Malindi and meeting with the Gallas a ceremony involving cloth is mentioned by Wakefield in which he observed that there could be no talks without the customary presentation of cloth. The ceremony was conducted in the following way. A large hide was placed on the ground and upon this the representatives of the two groups sat. A 'Shuka' (cloth) was laid on the hide on which the first Galla, when the ceremony began, sat down with crossed legs. Around his head a Kikoi (cloth with coloured border) was carefully wrapped by 'Hammadi'. This name is Islamic and actually suggests a local person from around Malindi who was involved in the ceremony from the other side and obviously seemed familiar with the ceremony. After the placing of the Kikoi came the 'Kilemba' (turban) which was wound around the Kikoi. The term 'Kilemba' is also Islamic and did form a part of the dressing of the Arabs and Swahili people inhabiting the East coast of Africa.³⁸

Although the Galla are not related to the Giriyaama but, as seen earlier, they did affect the Giriyaama in some ways and

incidents such as the one above do suggest activities that were actually taking place in the Giriyama country.

4.4 TRADE

All of the 'Wanyika' or 'Mijikena' people had always exchanged foodstuff and bartered cattle for bride wealth but the major trade item amongst them was the palm wine which could be tapped only at Digo until Rabai acquired palm trees in the early 19th century. The Wanyika were not keen traders and were mainly self supporting people who sold their grains in order to purchase cloth, knives and palm wine.

Their main trade was with the surrounding swahili towns of the coast. The Mijikenda were extremely well situated to dominate the trade with the swahili towns and often acted as brokers in trade between the swahili people and the Wakamba or the Gallas. Residing just behind the swahili towns they controlled the access to the towns and also incoming products from the interior.

The Langulo people were instrumental in helping the Giriyama people to establish

relationship and trade links with the Galla people who were constantly at war with them.

The Langulo people were hunters and they befriended the Giriyama people and taught them how to make arrow tips and shafts in iron and how to use feathers instead of leaves for guiding the arrows.

This was a great thing for the Wanyika people since they had always assigned their defeat by the Galla to the fact that they did not know the use of iron for making arrow heads and they winged their arrows with leaves of trees rather than feathers. The Langulo also taught the Giriyama how to make poison for arrows which also became a trade item of great demand in Giriyama country.

The Giriyama exchanged grains for necessary trade items. One such item which they obtained for grain was ivory from the Langulo people who were mostly hunters. The Langulo people sold the tusks to the Giriyama for food. The Giriyama in turn sold the ivory to the ivory traders who were mostly Baluchi or Indian traders from the coast. The sale price for such ivory has been

recorded at three rupees per pound during the early colonial history.³⁹

During the early British administration a lot of emphasis was put on abolishing the illicit ivory trade that went on in Giriya country. From the District Commissioner's reports of 1913 it appears that although the government prohibition of this trade was well understood by the remotest localities of this region, the trade did go on secretly.

The tusks which were brought by the Langulo were buried or safely hidden until an ivory trader would come by. After purchasing the ivory the traders crossed the Tsavo through Voi and reached the Tanzania boarder (then referred to as German border) and sold the ivory at great profits.⁴⁰

Giriya obtained ivory from the Gallas with whom they began their trade and sometimes acted as brokers in its sale to the Swahilis. The Giriya conducted an annual market at Likoni in Biryaa where Giriya, Galla, Kamba and swahili from Takaungu all came together to trade. Krapf observed one such market in 1845. In his observation were noted events

that took place during such a market. Before trading was begun the Galla and the Giriyama slaughtered a goat and swore friendship. Then the swahilis paid the Galla about 400 doti (about 4 yards each) of 'lemali' (unbleached muslin originally from Barawa) and about 20 doti of "Vitambi" (coloured cotton cloth), for ivory they purchased.⁴¹

This incident clearly indicated the value attached to cloth for the people concerned. Since the Giriyama had no difficulties in getting rid of the ivory to their swahili and Arab customers and since they wanted to build their cattle herds, they began travelling to Ukambani in early 19th century. They took with them, cloth, poison and chains as trade items for which they obtained cattle and ivory.⁴²

Their friendship with the Wakamba developed, very much through their trade. During the great famine in Ukambani in 1836, many Kambas sought refuge in the coastal hinterland, choosing to settle near the Giriyama people whom they regarded as their blood brothers. The first Kamba settlement was made at Mariakani just south of the Kaya.

By 1925 there were very few exchange centres in the Giriyama country. Most of the trading was done in central trading centres such as Kilifi, Thakaungu and Malindi. The Giriyama mostly brought products such as gum copal, honey and grains and purchased cloth and other necessary items from the swahili and Arabs at the coast. The Arabs also obtained some timber for ship building from the Giriyama.

The British administration introduced cotton planting in the region and a cotton ginnery was opened in Malindi in 1909. But the cotton production was not very good and the ginnery was recorded as working at half capacity in 1910. By 1910, most of the imports in the country were channelled through Mombasa and the import revenue from Malindi customs had dropped.⁴³

A comparative statement of cotton piece goods imported into Malindi for the year ending 31st March 1919 is appended as Appendix B.

4.5 PLATES



PLATE XXV:

Wooden dolls with rag skirts resembling effigies of Giriya women and children.

PLATE XXVI.

Armlets of beads which were worn by Giriya women just above the elbow.

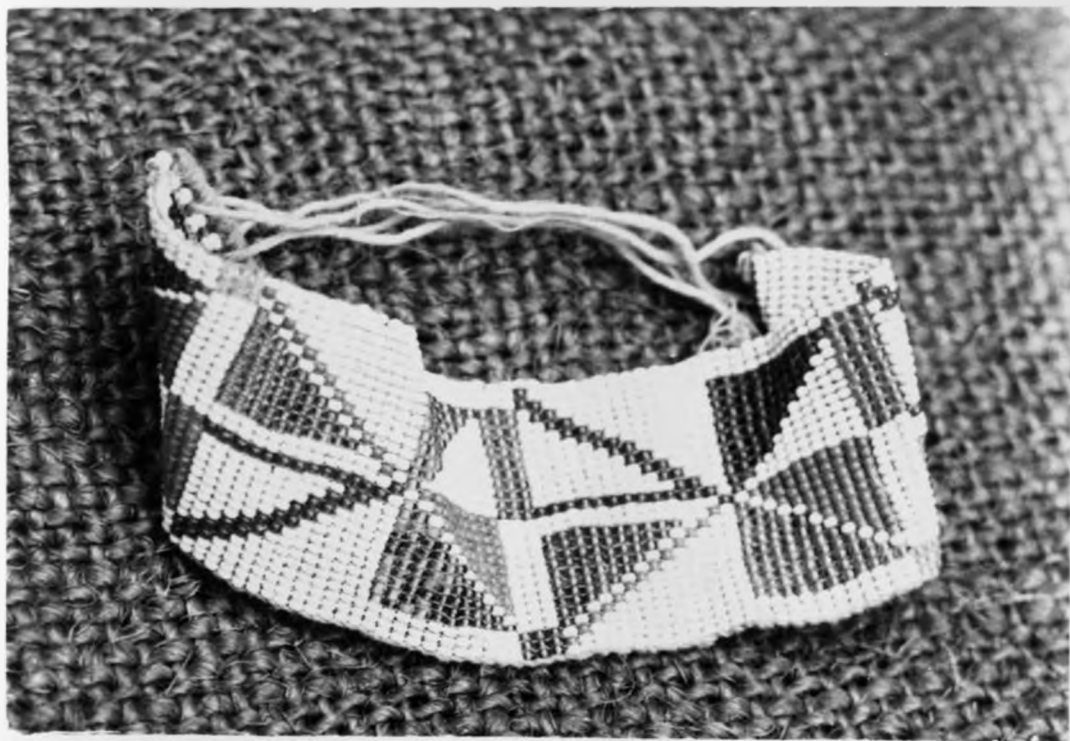


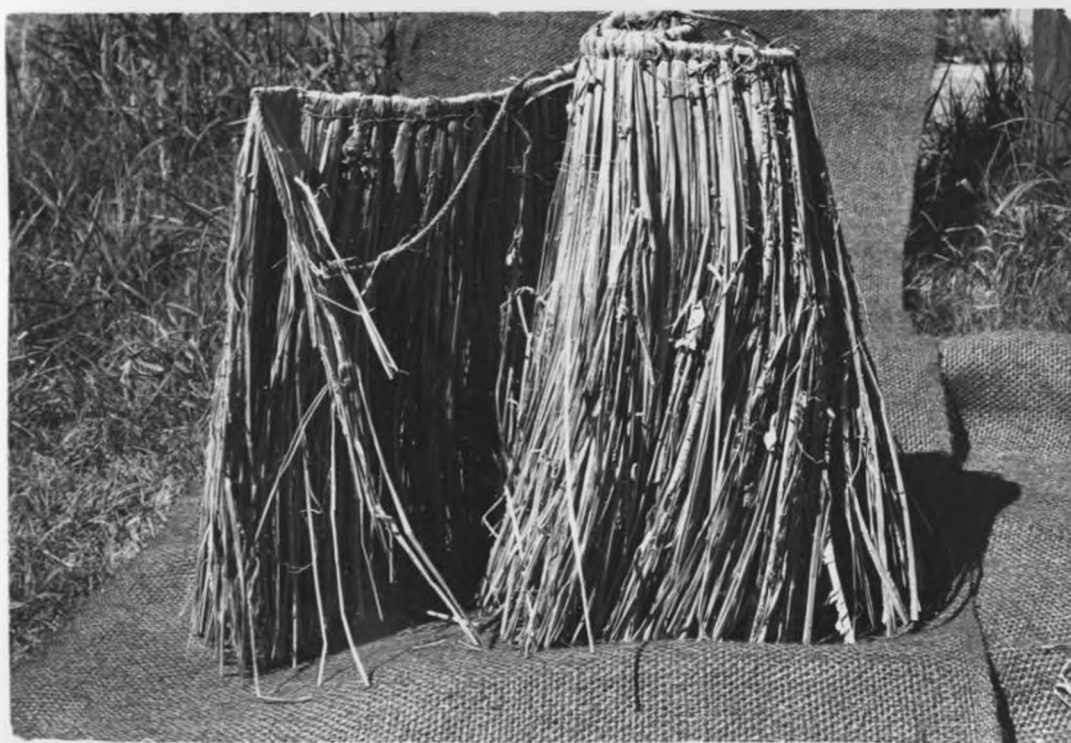


PLATE XXVII

Ciriyama woman's skirt (hando)
made of about 40 yards of
pleated material.

PLATE XXVIII:

Skirt for a man made from palm
leaf ribs worn by the 'miji
Kenda' people before the
'Kitambi' was acquired



CHAPTER 4

4.6 FOOTNOTES

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CHAPTER 5

AKAMBA

The Kambas live on the Eastern slopes of the Kenya highlands. Their land is divided into two by the Athi River which also divides the people into two groups with some marked differences in language manners and customs. The Western part of the country being under Machakos district and Eastern part being under Kitui District.

Machakos takes its name from a native chief called Machakos. His village was built on top of the Machakos hill known to the Kambas as Kilima Kimwe. At the summit of this hill which stands solitary, was a grove of old time trees in which sacrifices used to be made to 'Mulungu' or God.¹

In those days the Masai tribes bordered on the Wakamba and tribal reprisals were frequent. Chief Machako's Karaal was near the border and his men were responsible in forcing back the warlike Masai.

Machakos township is about forty miles South East of Nairobi. The altitude is about 5000 feet but drops to about 3000 feet

to the South East. Some solitary hills and mountains run through the Kamba country from North to South. Three of these ranges namely, Iveti, Kilungu and Mbooni offer sufficient high and fertile land for intensive cultivation.

There are a series of mountain ridges running approximately North and South and varying from 5000-7000 feet in altitude and since water springs were found on the hills, most of the earlier settlements were based at the hills and the surrounding areas near each mountain chain.²

The rainfall in this part of the country is rather small except for places like Ulu, otherwise droughts are quite frequent.

At the time of the establishment of the British Protectorate over Kenya in 1895, the Ukamba province (see map No. 6 p.58) embraced three districts which were Taita, Athi or Machakos District and Kikuyu or Kenia District.³

The Athi or Machakos District represented the Ukamba proper and extended from Tsavo river to the upper waters of the Tana and the Athi river. By 1896 the area to the West of

Athi river comprising of Ulu and Kikumbulini was more populated than the area to the East comprising of Kitui and the less thinly populated regions to the North. The population of the whole district was estimated by Mr. Ainsworth to be at 1,000,000 inhabitants of which 490,000 lived in Ulu.⁴

Kitui was considered a great centre of slave trade in Ukambani. The trade was carried on by the Swahili middlemen from the coast who traded with the different sections of the population of Eastern Ukambani.

5.1 THEORIES OF ORIGIN OF WAKAMBA PEOPLE

There are many theories put forward about the origin of these people but the two most important ones are:

1. They moved Westwards from the coast.
2. They were originally a nomadic tribe from the region of Kilimanjaro from where they were driven by the Masai into the hills of Machakos where the lack of grazing forced them to become partially agricultural.

Lewis Krapf in his journey to Ukamba

land had the following to say regarding the origin of these people:⁵

"As regards to origins of Wakamba, they are said to have come from South East, probably they were driven forward by the advance of Masai towards the East and North. The mountainous land around here forced the Wakamba to cultivate the soil as they could not live a completely pastoral life. They were forced to relinquish their nomadic life and accustom themselves to permanent location. They devoted themselves to agriculture and breeding of cattle and above all in engaging in trade with the coast as well as the interior, by which they attained considerable populance as the commerce in ivory was chiefly in their hands!"

It is interesting to note that small Kamba colonies are scattered in many parts of the country including Tanzania. These settlements have been as a result of famine in Ukamba which forced the people to move away to other parts of the country. The second reason was trade which made it necessary for the people to move from their place of original settlement.

In 1836 came "Yua ya Ngoro" (the famine of disappointment). Those who were looking for food were disappointed. This was a very serious famine to hit Ukamba land where the crops had failed completely. The "Ngoro" seems most likely to have been the great famine of 1836 when a number of Kitui Kamba settled near Rabai in the hinterland of Mombasa. An exodus of some size seems to have taken place at this time.⁶

There were other famines in Ukamba which have been documented as:⁷

1851 - Yua ya Kiasa (The long famine)

1862 - Yua ya Matulungo (The striking famine).

1871 - Yua ya Ngeetele
(The tightening famine).

1882-3 - Yua ya Ndata (The star famine).

The recurrent famine in Ukamba had a two fold significance. They acted as a check on population and at the same time made the Kamba people mobile. The most important effect of the famine was that it brought the Kamba into direct contact with the people of the coast and town, like Mombasa, where

there was much in form of commerce that was going on by this time.

5.2 THE PEOPLE

The Akamba have been described as a much purer Bantu than the Kikuyu around them. Their organization has been termed as being more democratic than that of most tribes within the country.⁸

Social organization was based upon system of age grades. The early grades correspond to various stages of growth through childhood to maturity. The last grade of the man had a greater significance than that of age alone for it also included sub divisions of rank. Admission to this class was by payments and usually took place in the middle age.⁹

Mrs. Stuart Watt described the Akambas as "The people of very fine physique, the women stout plump and erect, while the men were tall muscular, lithe and athletic, and of graceful bearing We found them very much superior in intelligence to many of the tribes we had met in the country....."¹⁰

The Akamba have been in several

instances mentioned as very healthy and immune from diseases. They rarely ever washed their bodies but periodically smeared themselves with red clay and oil.

In a report on Machakos district, the book, East Africa (British) (1908) ed. Playnes mentions the organization of Akamba as being more democratic than most tribes in the Protectorate. The prominent feature cited is of council of elders which administered the tribal laws.¹¹

The youth of both sexes of the Akamba used to have all their front teeth filed to a sharp point. This was carried out in a very painful manner with a small native axe.

The Akamba also used to indulge in a form of cicatrization called Ndoo or Nzomo. Incisions of well defined pattern were made on the chest and the abdomen and into these wounds was rubbed juice of a shrub which caused the wounds to heal with a raised surface so that the ornamental design stood out on the skin in form of a relief. The favourite design were crescent shaped patterns between the breasts and triangular shape on the

abdomen rising from a belt which was carried all around the body.¹²

5.3 CLOTHING

As regards to clothing there is every evidence that in the early history, the Akamba wore very few or no garments at all.

Lewis Krapf, the first European missionary to reach Ukamba, in his journey to Ukamba land in 1849 mentions that Wakamba chiefs whom he met at chief Kivoi's village, were sitting perfectly naked on their stools.¹³

Hotchkiss in his sketches from the Dark continent also describes the Wakamba men in around 1895 as wearing absolutely no clothing, - the women wearing a small apron a few inches square suspended from the loins by a thong of leather. In 1898 when he went to see a dance called 'Kitombo,' he described the women thus: "Forty or fifty women and girls, with a few young men and children are all naked save for a strip of cloth about the loins."¹⁴

At most a strip of cloth or something of the sort wound around the hips seems thus to have been the usual dress about 1850. There is however evidence of some form of

imported textile which had penetrated as far as the Ukamba by 1849. This is mentioned by Krapf during his departure from chief Kivoi's village when while giving his farewell address to the missionary, chief Kivoi made a present of 170 strings of beads and a "doti" (four yards of calico cloth to the Wanika porters). Here he is probably referring to imported cloth - the American sheeting (mericani) and blue calico (referred to as Kaniki in Kiswahili) which the Kambas obtained at the coast in exchange for ivory and cattle.¹⁵

In his description of chief Kivoi's dressing, Krapf while on his second journey to Ukambani, in 1851, mentioned that the chief on his head wore a kind of a hat decorated with ostrich feathers; in his hand he carried a club and by his side hung his sword and powder horn; his body was perfectly naked with the exception of a scanty piece of cloth.¹⁶

Krapf adds however that the Wakambas have clothes but they do not wear them. He mentions the Wakamba as contenting themselves with a single rag wound round their loins and the women wearing pieces of peltry which were profusely decorated with beads, by way of

aprons, while the upper part of their bodies and their feet being left in state of complete nudity.

Mrs. Stuart Watt in 1885 described the Kamba men as roaming in unabashed nudity and not having a tradition of wearing any covering. The grown up girls and women wore a piece of skin a few inches square which was sometimes ornamented with beads and pieces of brass wire. A thong of hide was tied around their bodies under the abdomen and over the hips and a small piece of skin was attached in front of it.¹⁷

A narrow tapering piece of goat skin about twenty four inches long was fastened behind the thong from which it gradually diminished to a point and hung down to the centre of the buttocks. This appeared like a tail in the back.¹⁸ (See illustration Fig.7 p.193).

Krapf had also once referred to this 'tail' as a leather appendage and had gone further to say "no wonder then that people say that there are people with tails in the interior of Africa."¹⁹

All the references towards cloth go to indicate that some form of imported textile was in use but in a very limited way. Even later when cloth did come in

proper use as garments for covering the body it was treated to be made waterproof by traditional methods.

The 'Kaniki' and Americani was generally worn in form of a plaid 2-3 meters long, which was thrown over the shoulders and falling over the chest was fastened at the side. This garment was made waterproof by being rubbed with fat and red ochre. ²⁰

At a later stage these garments were replaced by blankets which were imported from India and Germany.

5.3.1 TRADITIONAL DRESS

A married women's proper dress which was in use in Ulu was called the 'Ua' and was made out of a calf or a goat skin which was scraped of its hair and rubbed with ochre and fat. This was fastened over one shoulder. This garment was made by the husband for his wife and was usually a gift to her.

The method of making it is very well explained by Lindblom as:

"The method of making it is to stretch the skin out to dry in an apparatus consisting of a frame made of osier switches, to which

it is fastened so as not to touch the ground, by three pegs fixed in the ground on the long side of the skin and two on each of the short sides. The hair is scrapped off with an axe. The skin is then placed against a stone and rubbed with the hands and feet until it becomes soft. It is finally rubbed with fat and red ochre (mbu)". Since this garment was a gift from the husbands the women would not part with it for the fear of being left by their husbands.²¹

This garment has not been mentioned as being in existence in the East Ukamba and possibly this was due to the warmer climate or even due to the imported cloth which found its way in East Ukamba. There was also the influence of the neighbouring tribes of the Masai and the Akikuyu. The garment was in use due to the cooler climate in Ulu.

Skin garment of this sort was also worn by men in places like Kilungu district. This was mainly due to the fact that it provided protection against thorny bushes for the men while on their cattle raids.

The 'tail' which has been earlier mentioned was another leather garment worn

by women and was called 'Mupita'. This was a narrow tapering piece of leather and was fastened beneath the thong or a belt of beads which all women wore. A married women's 'tail' garment was generally so long that its end trailed on the ground. For the married women the tail was not ornamented. The young girl's tail garments were decorated with beads and small chains.²²

The rectangular loin cloth which has been mentioned by many travellers and missionaries was also worn by girls and was made out of leather. Lindblom describes it as:

"This is decorated with beads, sometimes arranged in geometrical patterns on the piece of skin, sometimes forming hanging strings - sometimes the whole rectangle consists of beads with a fringe of hanging metal chains at the bottom. It is thus an ornament at the same time."²³

The usual loin cloth which has been mentioned earlier as "a strip of cloth around the waist" was worn by all women and was called "Ndami". This was a rectangular

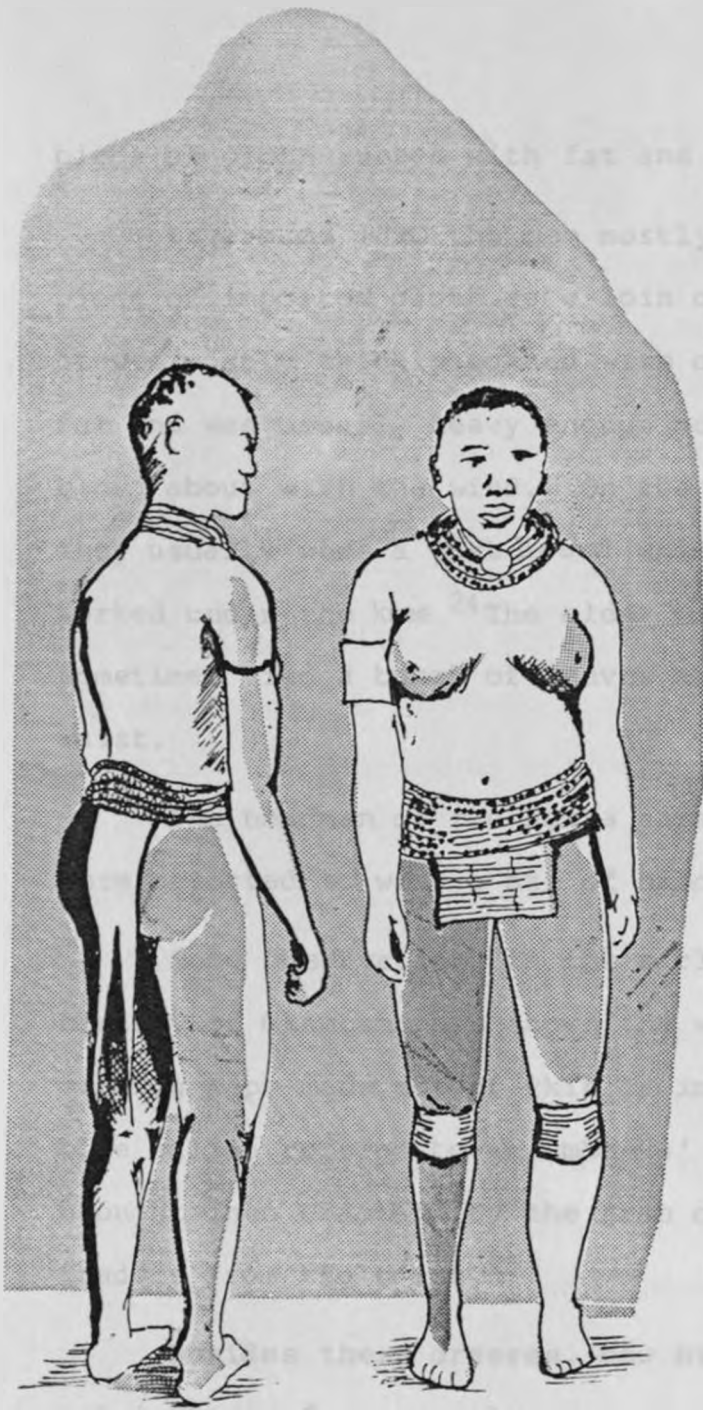


Fig. 7
Kamba women wearing a tail (Mupita) piece and
a front apron with a bead corset.

piece of cloth rubbed with fat and red ochre.

In around 1890 the men mostly wore a piece of imported cloth as a loin cloth. It was mostly thickly coated with ochre and fat and was usually heavy enough not to be blown about with the wind. On the legs they usually wore a goat beard which was worked under the knee.²⁴ The older men sometimes tied a bunch of leaves around their waist.

The headman of the Kamba caravans were reported to wear a hat of baboon skin.

Some observations in the early colonial history of Ukambani has shown the warriors wearing caps made out of skin or imported blue calico referred to as 'mbaeka' which was brought into Ukambani by the Arab or Swahili traders from the coast.²⁵

Besides these dresses, cow hides were put into use for several purposes. On many instances in Krapf's journey to Ukamba cow hides have been mentioned as being used for sleeping on.

The Kamba people have been given the credit of being the most outstanding tribe

in their skills of metal work particularly as regards to their artistic use of brass and iron wire as ornaments. The Akamba people wore a great number of ornaments or 'Mapa' which were made of metal. Ear ornaments were mostly made of brass rings often with chains or spiral brass plates which were called 'Kiloko'. Finger rings were sometimes made out of skins of animals and sometimes out of brass plates. Some galla influence could be traced in so far as the finger rings for warriors were concerned. These were shaped like long shields covering the middle finger and the back of the hand.²⁶

Men and women alike decorated their ears with chains and ornaments. At an early age the lower lobe of their ear was pierced and a piece of stick was thrust into it. This was replaced by a larger piece at a later stage until such time a large piece of ornament could be easily put into the hold in the ear lobe. Because of this practice the ear lobes had a very large aperture. Even a child was given a string of beads only three days after birth.²⁷

In general ornaments varied for

different age groups and consisted of belts, collars, necklaces, armulates, leglets, ear and finger rings. In the early history of this region they have been known to have a higher regard for ornaments than clothing.

5.4 TRADE

Because of the Arab interest in East Africa and the general expansion of the world economy there was considerable commercial activity going on at the coast of Kenya. As a result of the migration by the Kamba, commercial links also developed between the coast and the Eastern highlands.

The Kamba have traditionally had a background in trade even amongst themselves. The earliest form of trade being recorded as that of exchange between Kinsmen and non Kin neighbours. The expansion of Ukamba settlements to the driest part of Ukambani particularly to Kitui was to be a decisive factor in the participation of Kamba in the long distance ivory trade.²⁸

In the early history of trade within the Ukambani, there was no marked specialization in its organization but it

mainly concentrated around particular types of goods. The earliest form of this trade was categorized under "Kuthuua" which literally means searching for food.²⁹

By the middle of the first half of the 19th century the "Kuthuua" traders were replaced by the warriors and hunters called "Athiani" and "Asyini" traders. This change in the trade system was due to the outbreak of the ambushing and raiding of traders in the caravans.³⁰

The Akamba traders eventually took over the trade in the interior from the Nyika who were trading for the Arabs and the Swahilis.

The earliest records of Kamba trade to the coast is a testimony of the English Naval Officer, Boteler who in 1823 found an annual market held in August at the village of Kwa Jomvu to which Kamba traders brought cattle, ivory and some iron. The trade in iron did not last long but demand for cattle and ivory grew rapidly. The Kamba in return obtained beads, wire and cloth. This information is of importance and significance to this study since it shows how cloth for dressing and wire

and beads for ornaments first found their way into the interior of the country.³¹

Ivory was the item in greater demand and was the most lucrative item of trade. The centre of ivory trade was in Kitui rather than Machakos because elephants were plentiful in the open areas around Kitui rather than around the hills of Machakos. The Kitui people also had closer contacts with Mombasa through the settlements at Rabai made in 1836. For this reason Kitui became a centre for ivory trade.³² People from Embu and Kikuyu areas visited Kitui to sell their ivory and in turn the Kitui Kamba visited these places to purchase the same. Kitui was the home of the famous Kamba ivory trader, Kivui wa Mwendwa. By about 1840 weekly Kamba caravans to the coast were carrying about 3000-4000 Frasilas of ivory. (Frasila was the unit of weight made up of 36 lbs, used for such products as grains. For products such as ivory it was made up of 35 lbs, reducing one pound to compensate as the loss recorded when volume was packed together. The origin of this unit is most likely to be Arabian or countries bordering

the Persian Gulf).

The Machakos Kamba did not involve themselves extensively in trade with the coast. They traded in small quantities of ivory which they obtained on barter from the Kikuyu who received in turn livestock, gourds, arrow poison and some metal work. The Machakos traders felt the full impact of trade only when Swahili and Arab traders ventured into the highlands.

Swahili merchants entered the Machakos area as early as the mid 1840s when a caravan from Mombasa arrived at Iveti and found a guide to take them to the Kikuyu land. During 1870 and 1880 trading caravans based in Mombasa entered the Machakos district regularly.³³

Two types of businesses flourished mainly. Small caravans came to purchase ivory and cattle and the larger ones which were long distance mainly entered this area for food supplies.

The influx of Arab and Swahili merchants into the highlands broke the commercial dominance of the Kitui Kamba whose ivory

trade went into decline.

However, the idea that in the later part of the 19th century Arabs and Swahili traders were strongly in control of the trade route is supported by Kamba traditions. These quite strongly, no longer, mention the trade in elephant tusks but rather speak about the trade in the interior as in cloth, copper wire and beads.

It is possible that the traditions correctly indicate the relationship between the decline of trade in goods in which the Kamba played a major part and the rise of the system of profiteering in person in which the Arabs and the Swahili traders may have played a prominent part.

Even after this the Kamba trade was not totally extinguished. By the arrival of the alien traders, trade in Machakos district expanded considerably. The Mombasa demand for ivory and cattle was much keenly and directly felt in the district and the need for its provision created a new market for arable produce too bulky to be otherwise transported for sale and consumption at the coast.

Those of the Arab and Swahili traders who were allowed to go through Ukambani, being dependent on the the Kamba, tried to be on good terms with them so that they could get their slaves and ivory safely to the coast. This, however, did not prevent the alien traders from luring the Akamba into transactions in which the business capacity of the Akamba was blinded by the fine things the Arabs and Swahilis had for sale.

The variegated cotton cloths which then used to be sold for a Rupee for each piece, fetched three goats.. The articles most sought after were the red cloth called 'Mukumbu', and copper and brass wire. The merchants made a little heap of different articles and put on top, as a bait, a cheap mirror, which they gave for nothing.³⁴

Trading also went on without the middleman whereby the Kamba traders met the Arabs and the Swahili caravans in the Duruma country. Hildebrandt tells how the unity of value was cattle which were valued in certain quantity of cloth, beads, metal wire etc.³⁵

The sale of commodities to the Swahili

merchants within the district developed haphazardly along the trade routes. A pattern gradually emerged as certain individuals living close to the routes formed brokerage relations with the Swahili - taking the new comers under their protection and acting as middle men by arranging the sale of cattle, ivory and food for a commission.

But even at this third stage of development it is interesting to note how the Kamba adjusted to the situation. Since the trade caravans had to pass through their country the Kamba found that they could maintain their trade by acting as middlemen. Both Machakos and Kitui Kambas have been known to obtain ivory from the neighbouring people in order to sell it to coastal caravans.

With the coming of the Europeans and missionaries there were caravans organised to the interior of the country which normally carried certain goods to exchange for food supplied.

A. Arckell-Hardwik in the book "An ivory trader in Northern Kenya" described a typical list of goods for trade as it used

to be in around 1903.

A list of goods for trade comprised
of the following items:³⁶

(Textiles only as other items were
mainly beads and wires).

2 loads Merikani (American sheeting).

2 loads Kisuto (Red and Blue check
cloth).

2 loads Blanketi (Blankets coloured).

1 load various including

Gumti (A coarse white cloth).

Laissoses (coloured cloth worn by
women).

Kekois (coloured cloth worn by men).

Cloth became a very sought after
commodity by the people in the interior who
hitherto used mainly hides and skins for
wearing.

Measurement of cloth and barter values
were described by A. Arckell-Hardwik as:

"A 'mkono' of cloth or a handful of
beads bought several 'kibabas' of grain or
beans." A kibaba equalled about a pint and the
term 'mkono' (measuring literally a hand) is
applied to the measure of the forearm from

the tip of the elbow to the end of the second finger generally about eighteen inches. Four 'mkono' equal one 'doti' (about 2 yards) and twenty five yards make a 'Jora' or a 'piece' of cloth.³⁷

In another incident Mrs. Stuart Watt in her book "In The Heart of Savagedom" described a lot of barter goods as consisting of beads, wire and calico.³⁸

Burton describes a caravan which returned to Mombasa on January, 19, 1851 which he mentions had originally started for the interior being composed of about 200 men out of which 150 armed with muskets carried packs to the value of \$3000 in Merikani (American Domestic), sheetings, long cloths and other stuffs.³⁹

Bishops Hannington opened a small market at Machakos so as to get provisions for the men in his caravan while on his way to Masai land and had the following to say, "I found that two yards of cloth would buy food for one man for 10 days".⁴⁰

The slave trade of this region was mostly in the hands of the Kamba people from

Kitui. Records indicate that as late as 1894 when the Kikuyu of Muranga attacked the Masai of Meru near Mount Kenya, they carried off the women and children as slaves and the slaves were being sold and resold through the Swahili middlemen.

The Swahili bought the slaves for a few goats and sold them at Kitui for cattle and ivory. Sometimes they disguised the women as their concubines and took them
41
down to the coast.

The British administrators regarded this as a threat to their authority and observed that if they let this trade continue in Kitui it would offer considerable opposition to their influence in Ukambani.⁴²

A British station was established by the Imperial British East Africa Company (I.B.E.A. Co.) at Machakos in 1889. This coincided with the period of increasing prosperity for the Kamba people. The interference of the British company in the Ukambani, meant that when the Kambas had hardly adjusted to their changed economic position they were to be confronted by

another change. The relationship between the company and the Kamba started off on a hostile note.

In 1892 the I.B.E.A. Company decided to establish its authority in Ukamba and sent up one of its agents, colonel John Ainsworth, CBE, DSO, to open a station there. He settled at Machakos and it is from there that the company spread its authority through the country.

In February of 1895, Mr. Ainsworth actually proceeded to Kitui with a small force and after making friends with the elders "Wazee" arrested a number of Swahili middlemen whom he found there engaged in slave trade. This resulted in the opening up of the East Ukamba district and comprised of the Ukamani area East of Athi river.⁴³

The early records of 1900-1901 of trade in Ukamba province indicate a great deal of import of items such as blanket cloth and wire.⁴⁴ The trade was principally carried out by a barter system but with the Indian and Swahili shops emerging at Machakos in around 1906-1908 the prices of

grain was recorded at 98 lbs per rupee. The principal grains were, mahindi, mtama, wimbi, sweet potatoes together with other products such as bananas, sugar cane, tobacco, arrow roots and honey.

By 1908, trade goods were imported in increasing quantities. Records indicate:⁴⁵

1. Blankets 35,720 pieces showing an increase of 8240 over the previous year.
2. Americani 1240 Joras showing an increase of 178 over the previous year.
3. Wire 22,104 lbs pieces showing an increase of 8164 lbs over the previous year.

Blankets were mainly of German origins and ranged in prices from 1 rupee to 3 rupees and Americani (calico) retailed at Rs. 7/50 per roll of 30 yards.

By 1909-1910, blankets started featuring according to colour and the imports were recorded as:

Blankets red pieces 21540 pieces
imported.

Blankets fancy 8820 pieces imported.

Blankets woollen 2345 pieces imported.

The woollen blankets and the red blankets were much in demand since the woollen ones helped in the cold and the red ones resembled the ochre coloured garments of the local inhabitants.

By 1907 there were already 18 Indian shops established in Machakos and about 22 were recorded as doing business in Machakos.

5.5. PLATES



PLATE XXIX:

Kamba woman's front apron
(Kivuku) horizontally pleated
Khakhi drill with red ochre.

PLATE XXX:

Kamba woman's front apron with
horizontal pleats sewn with
baobab thread.



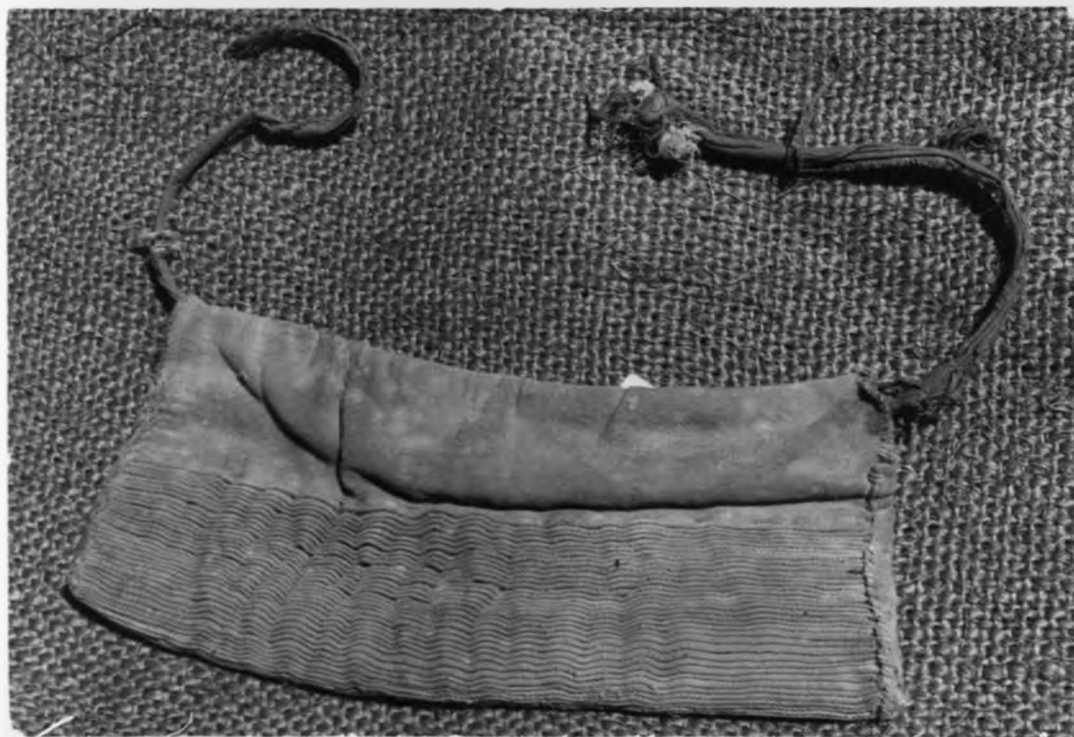


PLATE XXXI:

Kamba woman's apron (Kivuku).

PLATE XXXII:

Kamba woman's front apron
smeared with red ochre made
of Khakhi drill.



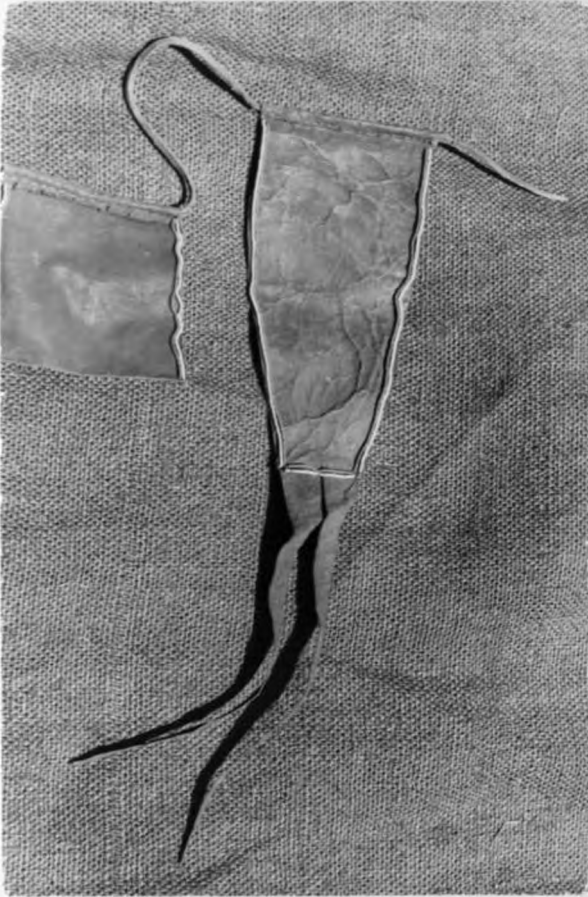


PLATE XXXIII:

Kamba woman's leather front apron
and the 'tail' piece (Mupita).

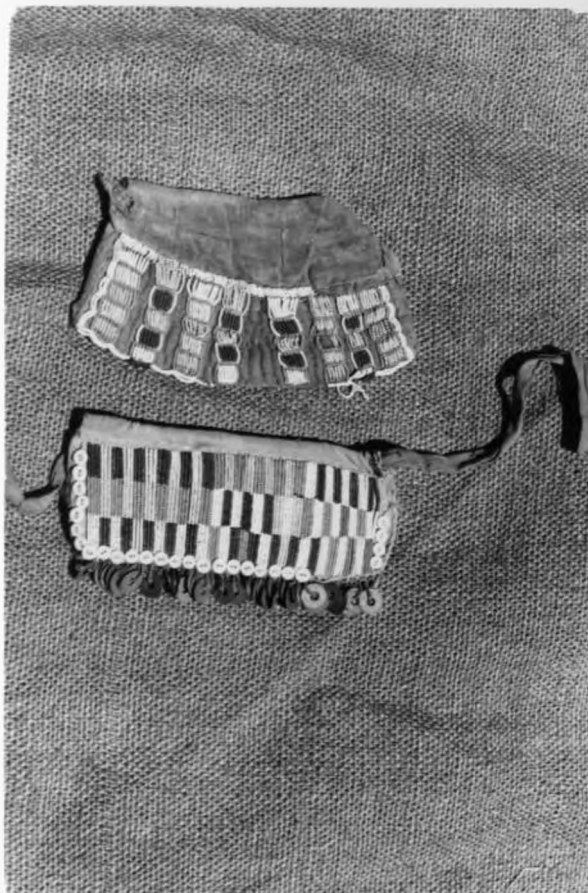


PLATE XXXIV:

Girls' front aprons covered
with bead decorations.

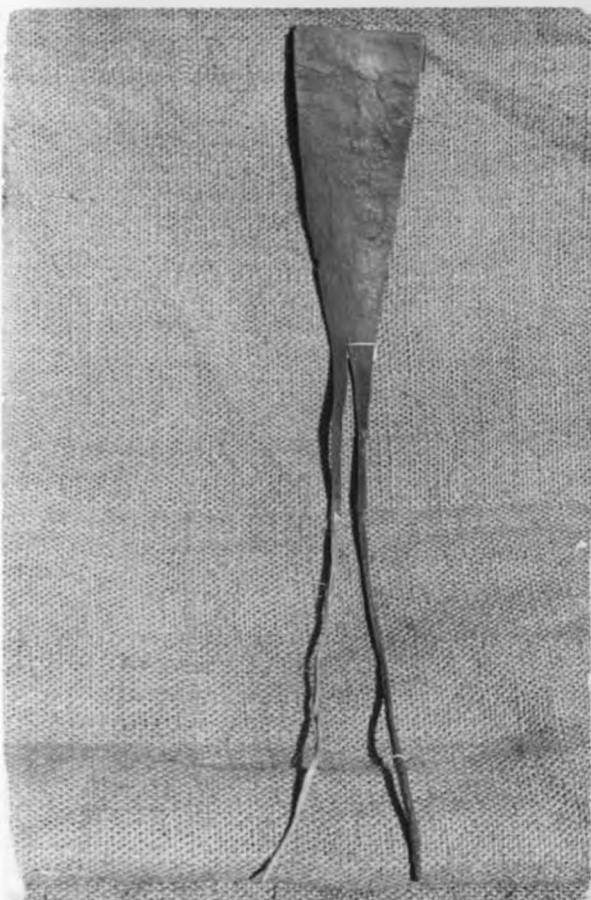


PLATE XXXV:

Kamba women's back skin dress 'Muthita'. Made by cutting a strip from the centre of a cow hide.

PLATE XXXVI

Sandals (iatu) worn by men and women.





PLATE XXXVII:

Kamba women's back skin dress with a less tapering tail.



PLATE XXXVIII:

A Kamba older woman's front apron (Kitemu).

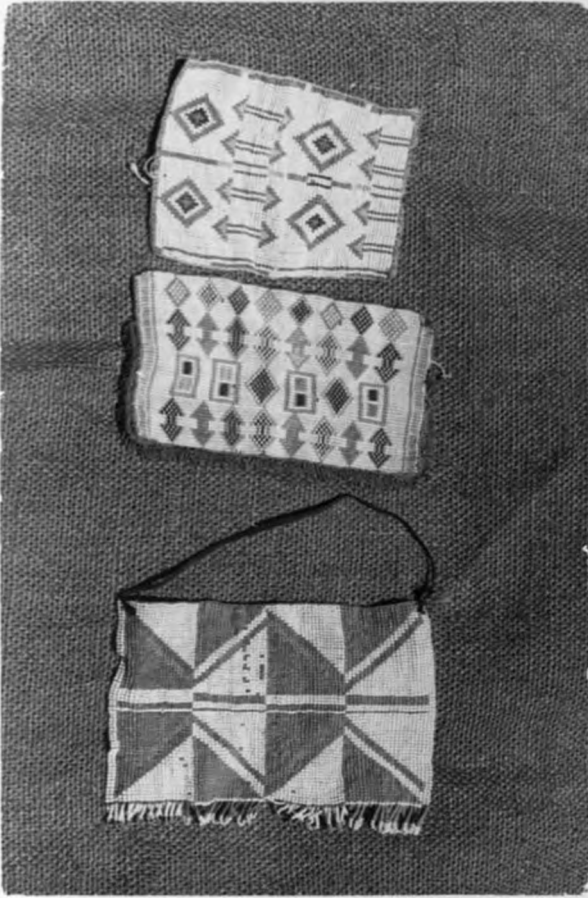


PLATE XXXIX:

Kamba women's beaded apron
(Nzenze).

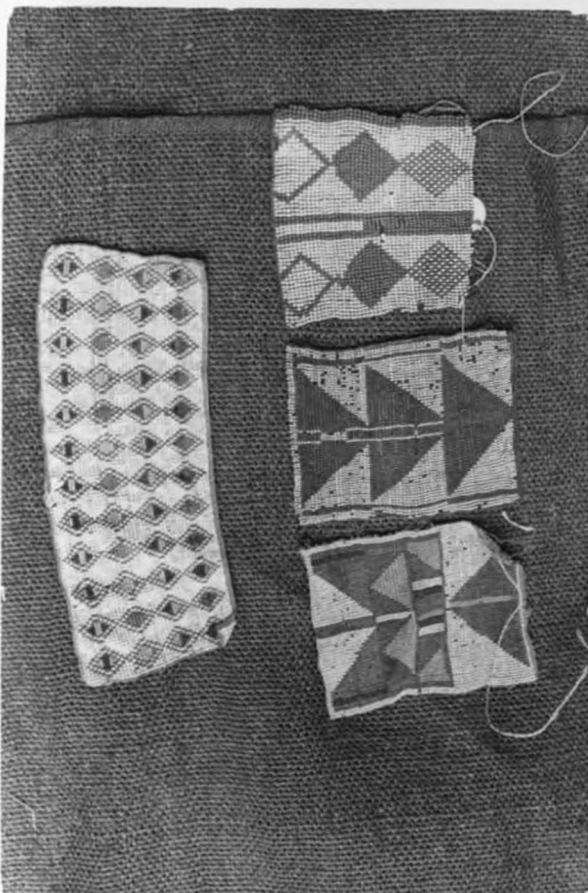


PLATE XL:

Beaded aprons for young
Kamba girls.



PLATE XLI:

Skin dresses for Kamba
women (Uva, wa Kwiuwika).

PLATE XLII:



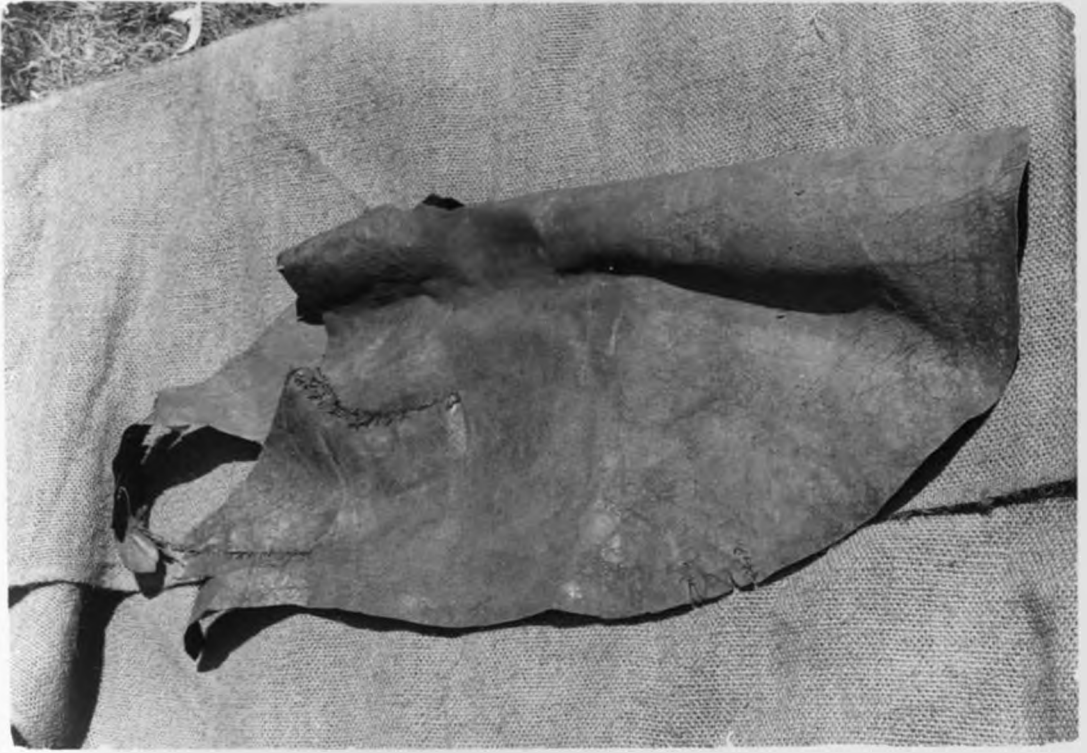


PLATE XLIII:

Skin dress for Kamba women,
presented to a wife on
arrival of a new baby.

PLATE XLIV:

Details of stitching of
the above skin dress.

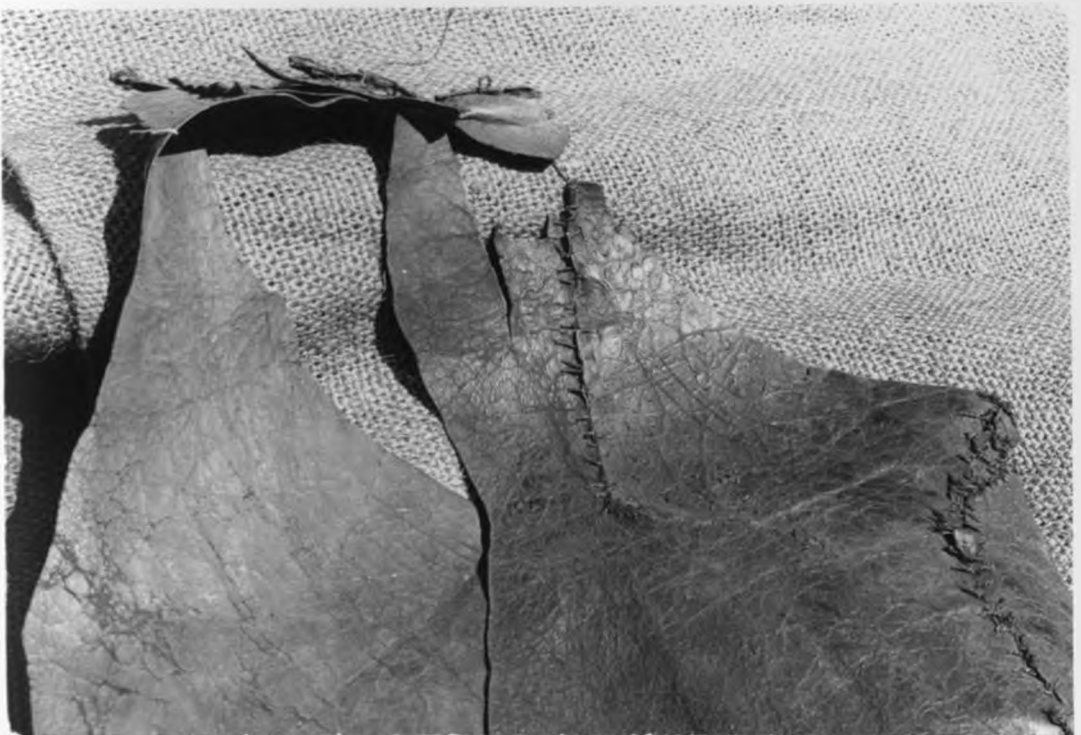




PLATE XLV:

Kamba woman's front apron decorated with chains.

PLATE XLVI:

Kamba woman's bead and fibre front aprons with geometric designs.

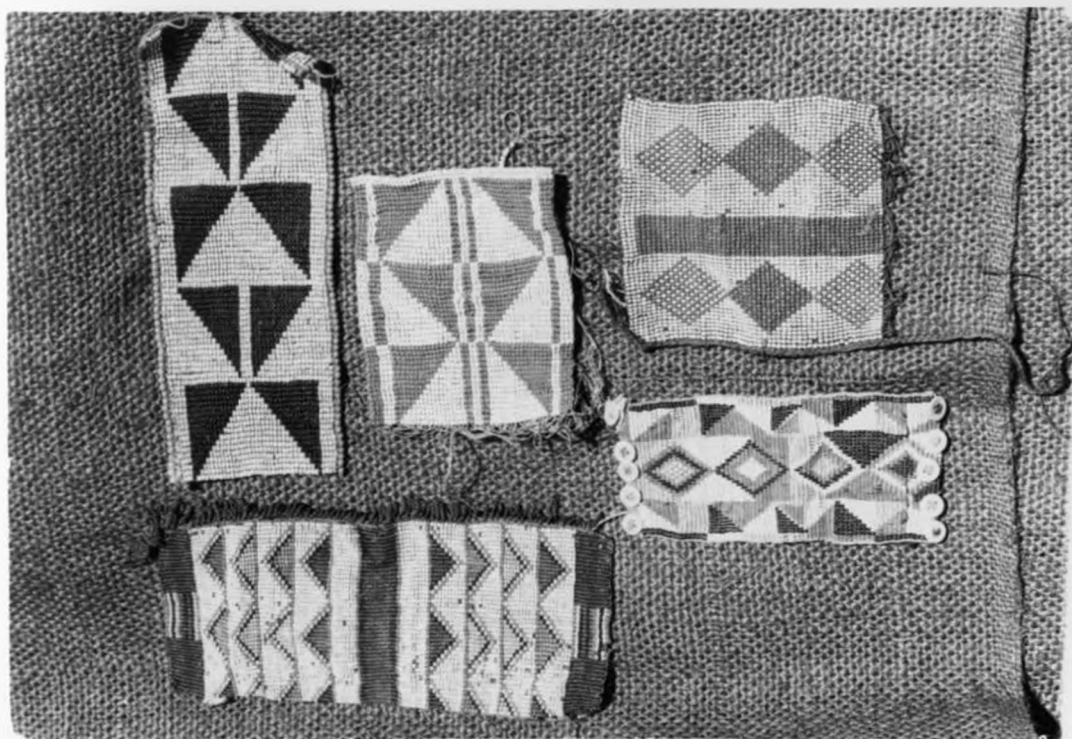


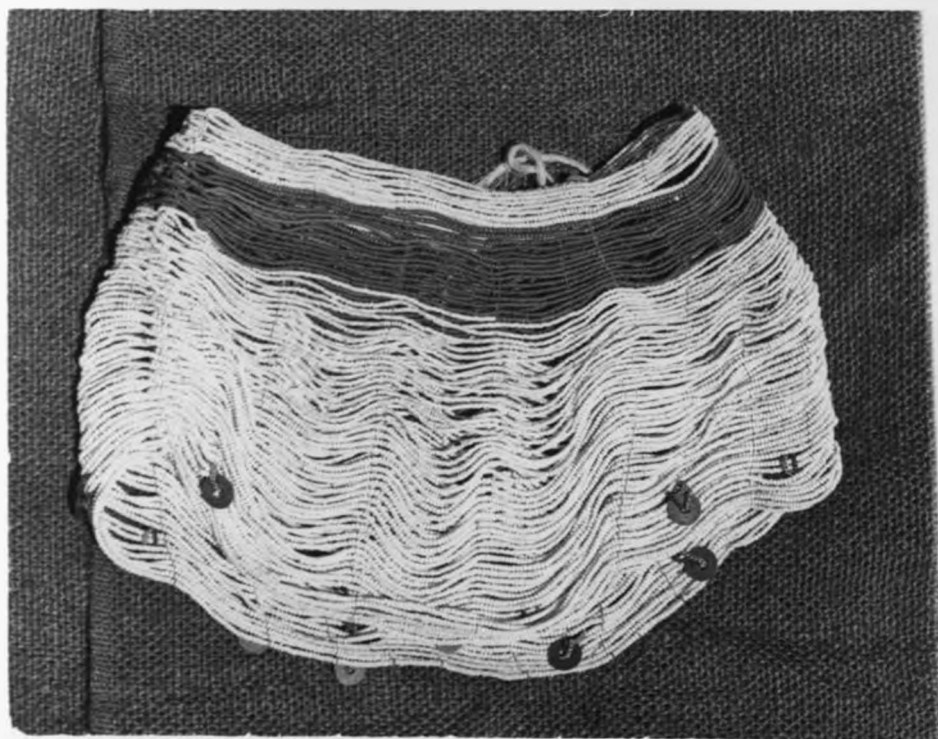


PLATE XLVII:

Beaded apron for unmarried Kamba girls.

PLATE XLVIII:

Kamba woman's bead corset 'Ngeleka'. Red and white beads with cent pieces.



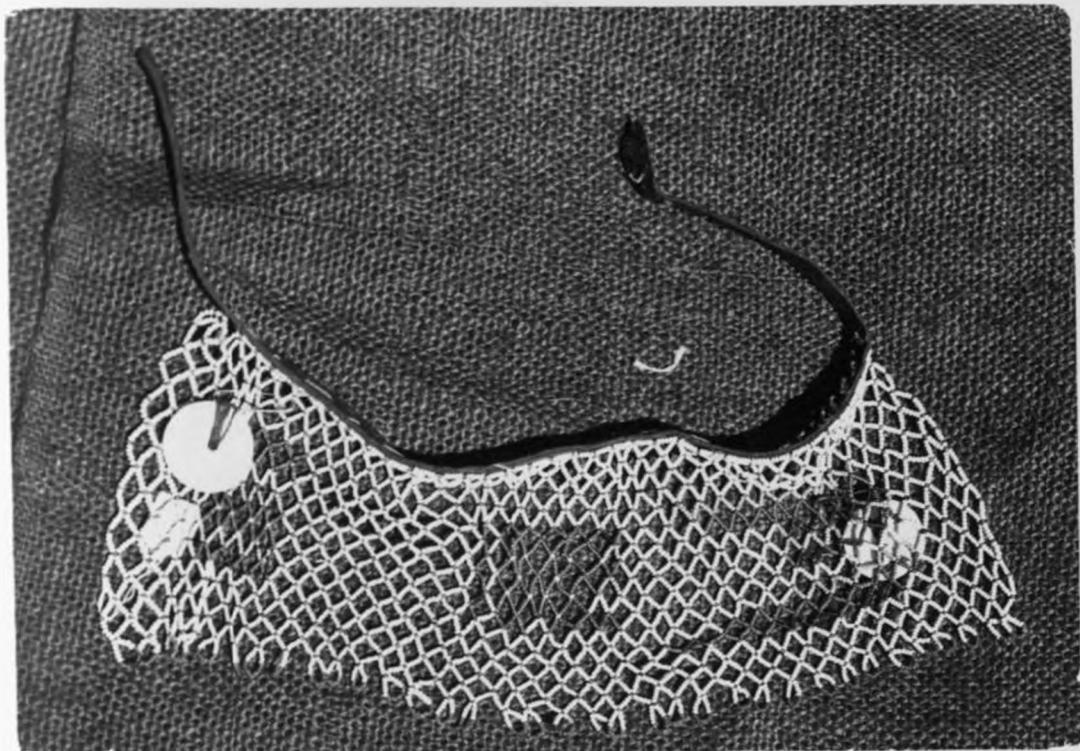
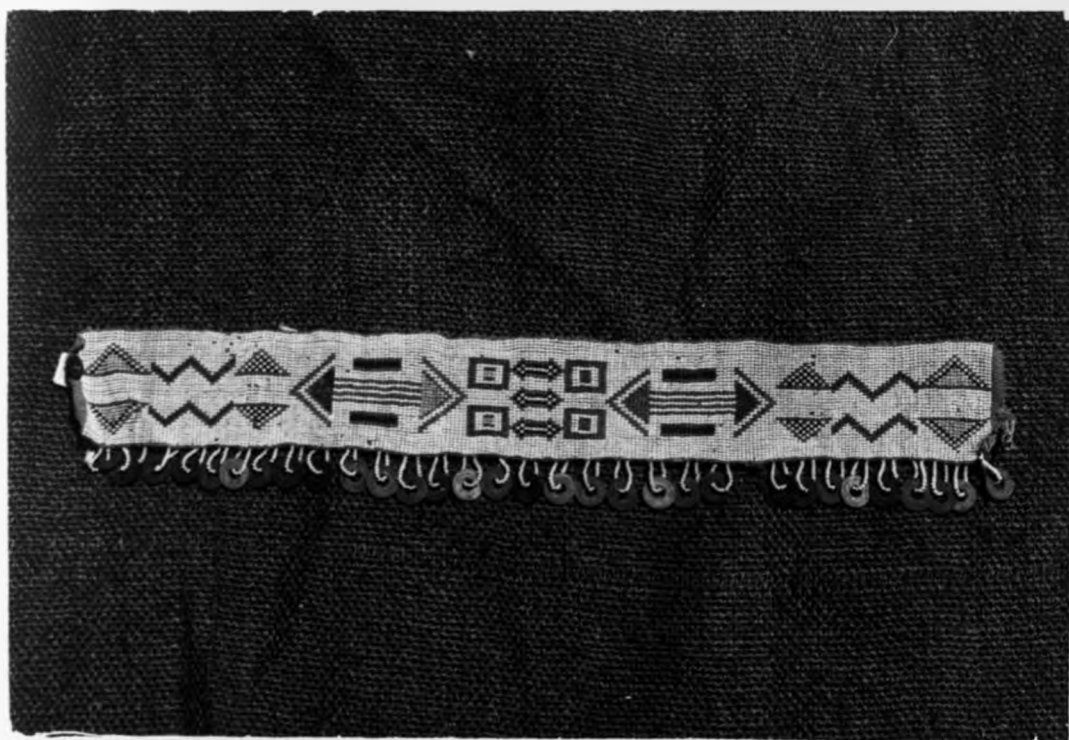


PLATE XLVIX

Kamba woman's front apron 'Wengis' worked in white beads with open squares with a piece of cow hide as the waist bend.

PLATE L:

Woven bead belt (Wangesi) made and worn by Kamba girls from circumcision.



CHAPTER 5

5.6 FOOTNOTES

1

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CHAPTER 6

MAASAI

The Maasai are referred to as being of Nilo Hamitic origins. The term Nilo Hamite implies that the Maasai originated in the Nile Valley and during their migration southwards incorporated some characteristics from the Hamitic people of the North Eastern Africa.

The Maasai have been described as being a mixture of the Nilotic negro and the Galla Somali group.¹

The original home of the Maasai is said to be the stretch of the country between Lake Turkana and the river Nile. They are said to have moved in a south easterly direction from here.²

Long periods of droughts forced the Maasai to move southwards into the country to the East of Lake Turkana from where they climbed up to the highlands of Mount Elgon and moved across Trans Nzoia and Uasin Gishu plateaux and then down to the Rif Valley and further south into Tanzania.

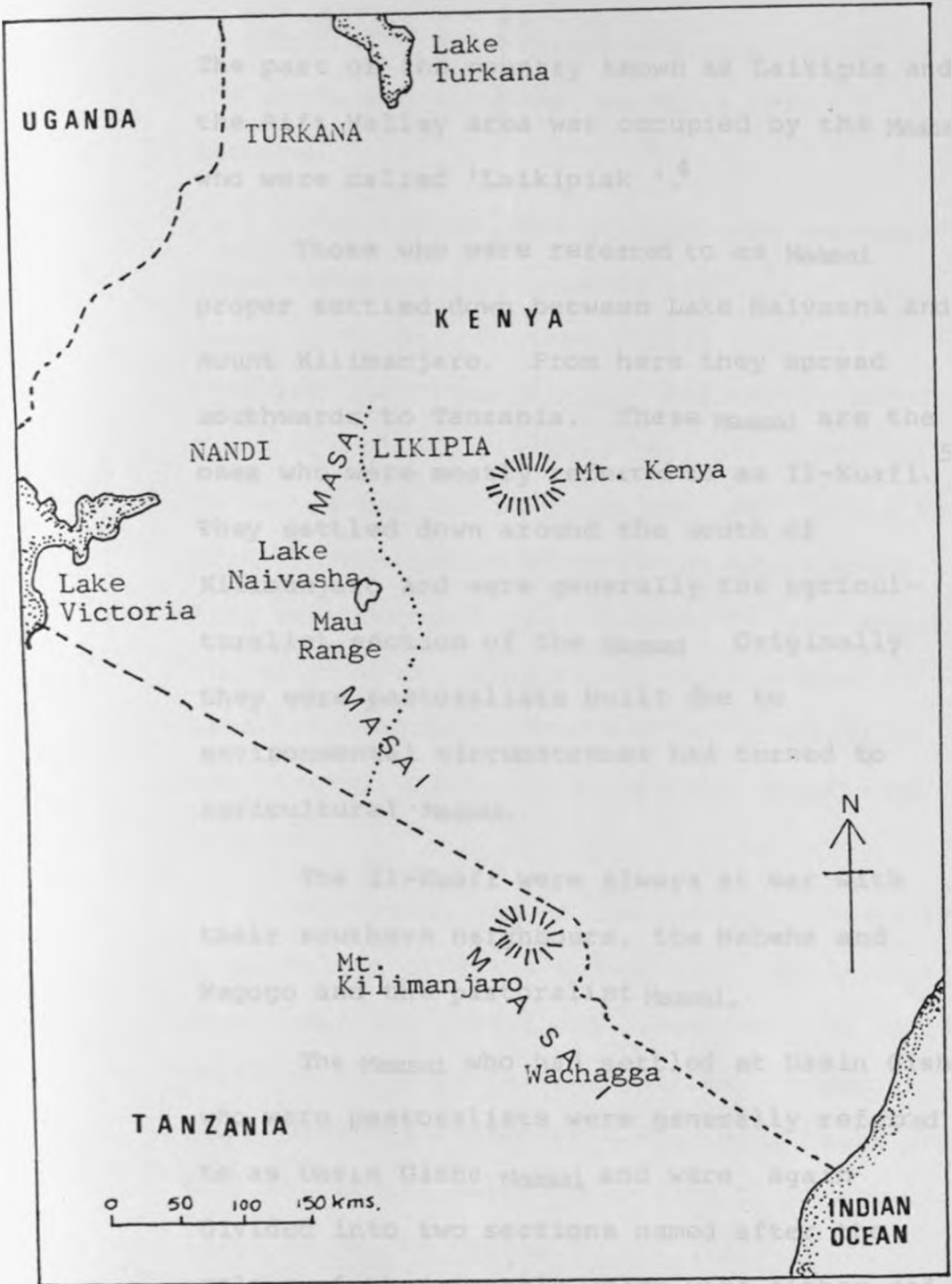
According to Sir Charles Elliott, the Maasai migration southwards was successfully resisted by

the Wagogo and the Wahehe people.³ By 1950 the Turkana from the south of Lake Turkana drove the Maasai to the furthest point in the West. Thus late in 19th century the Maasai people were found over a wide area of East Africa from 2° N to 7° S. and between 35° E and 38° E from Lake Turkana. The dominant geographical features of this area being the great Rift Valley of Kenya.

The Maasai in their early history have been referred to as Il-Kuafi or wa-Kwavi which is a swahili name borrowed from the Maasai meaning 'places' which suggest the nomadic nature of the Maasai.

There were two distinct sections of the Maasai which were described as pastoral and agricultural masai. The distinctions, as the names suggest, rose out of habits, life and customs of people and not out of language or ancestry. Both these sections were continually at war with each other. The Maasai migration drifted to areas offering good grazing and water supply.

The Uasin Gishu plateaux and Mau area was occupied by Maasai who were referred to as the Uasin Gishu Maasai (see map No.14 p. 226).



Map No. 14.
Early Maasai settlements.

The part of the country known as Laikipia and the Rift Valley area was occupied by the Maasai who were called 'Laikipiak'.⁴

Those who were referred to as Maasai proper settled down between Lake Naivasha and Mount Kilimanjaro. From here they spread southwards to Tanzania. These Maasai are the ones who were mostly referred to as Il-Kuafi.⁵ They settled down around the south of Kilimanjaro and were generally the agriculturalist section of the Maasai. Originally they were pastoralists but due to environmental circumstances had turned to agricultural Maasai.

The Il-Kuafi were always at war with their southern neighbours, the Wahehe and Wagogo and the pastoralist Maasai.

The Maasai who had settled at Uasin Gishu who were pastoralists were generally referred to as Uasin Gishu Maasai and were again divided into two sections named after the colour of their cattle which were either red dappled cattle or black dappled cattle. These Maasai lived with Nandi as their neighbours who were also very warlike.

In about 1750 the Uasin Gishu Maasai attacked the Nandi and the Nandi warriors were defeated.

From around 1850 to 1880, the pastoral Maasai became a very powerful section of the Maasai in Kenya. In around 1825 they had attacked the Il-kuafi Maasai and nearly wiped them off and the Il-Kuafi lost all their cattle to the pastoralists. When the Swahili and the Arab traders passed through the Maasai country they were forced to pay tribute to the Maasai and if this was refused the Maasai would attack the whole caravan not being afraid of the caravan guards who were often armed with muskets.

The traditions of the pastoralists Maasai suggest that from the end of 18th century, their need for possessing large herd of cattle resulted in large raiding parties. These Maasai became a fierce cattle raiding tribe and they attributed their prosperity to possessing large herds of cattle.⁶

Records of the Maasai raids are more detailed in the eastern part of the country than the western. This was because they

found their eastern neighbours much easier to attack than the fierce and warlike western neighbours who were the Nandi and Lumbwa. On the east the Gallas, the Wanyika and the Wakamba were frequent victims of the Maasai raids.⁷

Their geographical position placed the Maasai in a quite central position in the country, the main feature of this location being the Rift Valley. The pastures of the Rift Valley varied from grasslands of Nakuru, Naivasha and Suswa plains to the harsh and arid lowlands of Lake Magadi. In dry periods the Maasai moved to highlands or to waterholes where they and their cattle could survive. Most of the land occupied by the pastoralist Maasai received about 30 inches of rain per year which was not good enough for any agricultural activities.

Thus whenever there were droughts and cattle disease or loss of cattle in raids, the Maasai supplemented their pastoral diets with agricultural food which they obtained from their neighbours through an exchange system.

6.1 History of the Maasai

As seen earlier the Maasai are a Nilo Hamitic race, representing a southern migration from the country between the river Nile and Lake Turkana. In their early history the Maasai were divided into clans and families called 'Gilat', 'Or-ot' or 'Njamito'.⁸

The people themselves did not wear any identifying marks as to which 'Gilat' they belonged to. The classification of the northern Maasai was in two groups which was based on the colour of their cattle - the red and the black cattle.

The red bulls used for breeding were referred to as "Oodo Mongi" and the black cattle (black bulls used for breeding) were referred to as "Orok Kiteng".⁹

The Maasai have occupied five districts in Kenya as far as traditions go back. These are: (i) Uasin Gishu, (ii) Laikipia, (iii) Naivasha, (iv) Athi plains, (v) Kilimanjaro area.¹⁰ Of the above five sections the first two sections have now ceased to exist. The Uasin Gishu Maasai who were always at war with their Nandi neighbours were finally defeated

and their women and stock were claimed by either the other Maasai or their Nandi neighbours. A number of the Laikipia Maasai also sought refuge amongst the Bantu Abaluhiyas.¹¹

The Laikipia Maasai were subject to a great loss in their cattle from rinderpest and finally disappeared from the area. Originally this was a very powerful section of the Maasai tribe and their raids extended eastwards as far as Somalia. In their attempts to fight the southern Maasai they suffered heavy losses in their herds of cattle which were captured. The epidemic of rinderpest was accompanied by smallpox which took the lives of many of the Likipiak Maasai.¹² Some of them died of hunger and others moved to the surrounding tribes of Kikuyu and the Wakamba.

With the European penetration of the country, the first Europeans to encounter Maasai was Mr. Rebman and later Dr. Krapf in 1849. Dr. Krapf noted that - the Maasai called themselves 'Orloikob' (possessor of land) and were nomadic people and camped for months

wherever they found water and grass. He also wrote:-¹³

"They say that Engai (Heaven) gave them all that exists in the way of cattle They undertake expedition for hundreds of leagues to attain their object"

"Believing that heaven has destined all cattle for them, they pounce upon it wherever it is to be found"

These two early impressions suggest clearly their love for cattle which they have maintained to date.

The Maasai first came into prominence through the development and opening up of the interior of Africa. The first encounters by foreigners, with the Maasai were through geographical discovery of the source of Nile in 1875 and also through the European interest in Uganda and by the search for possibilities of opening up a direct route from the sea to Victoria Nyanza. The most serious negotiation for the opening of the direct route to Victoria Nyanza was the country occupied by the Maasai.¹⁴

In 1882, Dr. G.A. Fischer was sent out

by the Geographical Society of Hamburg to explore this route and on reaching the Maasai land he was attacked by the Morans (warriors) and finally after struggling for three weeks was not allowed to pass through the Maasai country. ¹⁵

About a year later Mr. Joseph Thomson was sent out by the Royal Geographical Society to explore the possibilities of the same route. Thomson was the first foreigner to cross the Maasai country but he did it with great difficulties. He found the Maasai very troublesome, his food ran out and in his bid to escape from the hostile Maasai through the north of Laikipia he finally arrived at Victoria Nyanza.

Mr. Thomson's records indicated the epidemic or rinderpest which has been mentioned earlier, regarding the Laikipia Maasai.

The third expedition through the Maasai land was that of Count Teleki in 1887. This expedition was important because Count Teleki reached Lake Rudolf without having any conflicts with the Maasai.

There were, however, some more hostile encounters by those who followed Teleki and one of them was Dr. Karl Peters who had to use his guns on the Maasai.

The year 1890 marked the beginning of the decline of the Maasai powers. The Maasai had already suffered losses through the rinderpest and through smallpox which had taken many lives. Even the Kamba neighbours of the Maasai were now much more vigilant. They deployed guards to watch out for any Maasai raid and counter attacked in huge numbers. Their Kikuyu neighbours were also able to drive the Maasai off during some of their attacks. The Maasai warriors had to resort to surprise attacks in the nights to be able to succeed.¹⁶

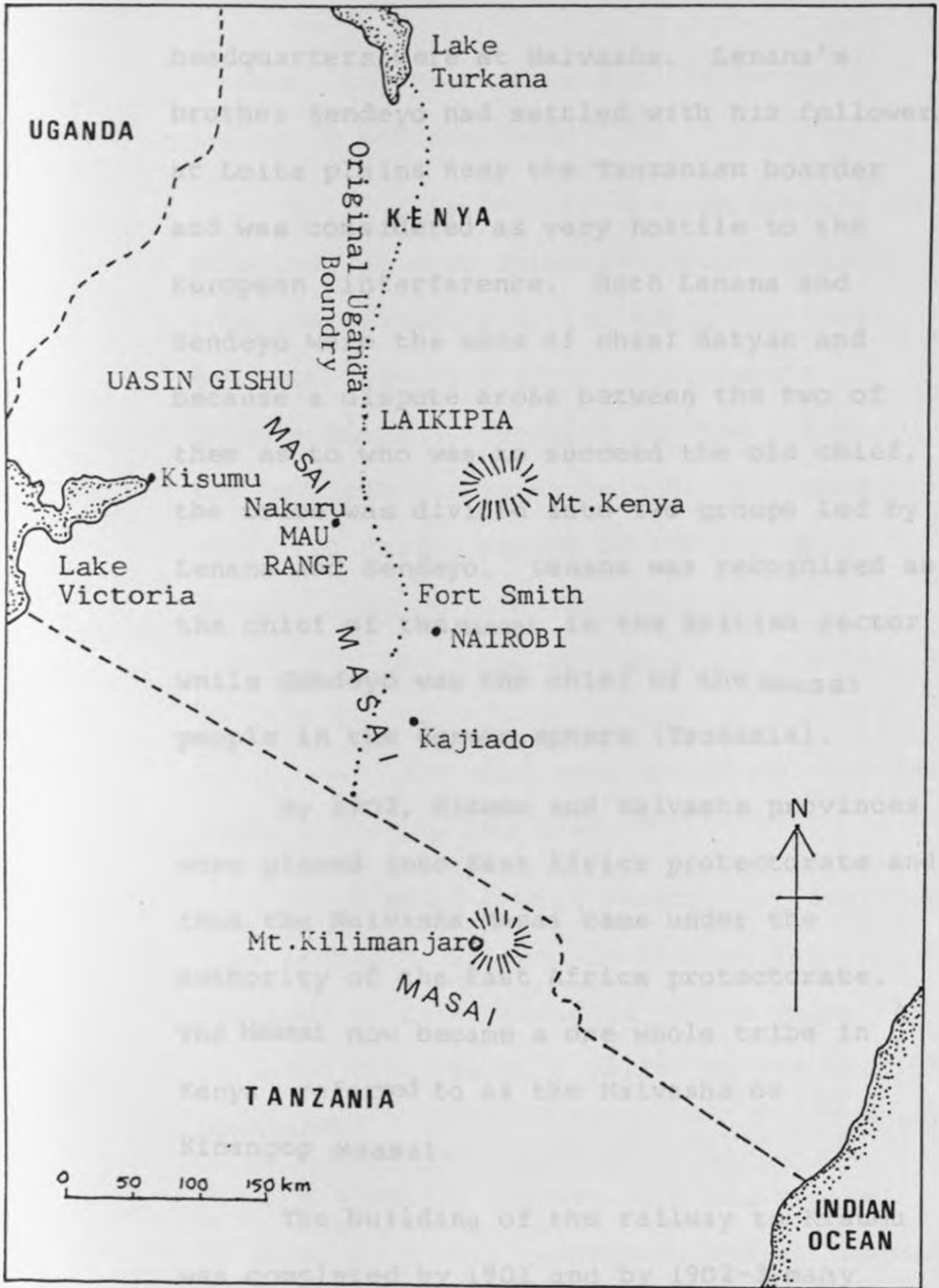
The Kikuyu neighbours took advantage of every opportunity to attack the Maasai Manyattas (Kraals) and took away the cattle and women and children as slaves. Some of these slaves were later sold to the coast traders.

By 1889 a station was established at Machakos by the Imperial British East

Africa Co. and attempts to establish a route to Uganda resulted in a meeting between the Maasai and Mr. Ainsworth in 1892. The results were quite amicable. In June 1894 a protectorate was established over Uganda. The result was that all the land from the West of Kikuyu was included in Uganda Protectorate. This left part of the Maasai into Uganda and the rest under the Imperial British East Africa company in Kenya. (see map No.15 p.236). The company retained control over the Maasai around the Ngong Hills and on the plains of the south east.¹⁷

By July 1895 the rest of the British possession between Zanzaibar and Uganda borders was placed under an administrative whole referred to as the East Africa Protectorate. Laikipia fell under East Africa Protectorate while Baringo, Nakuru, Naivasha and Elmenteita were in Uganda Protectorate. The Maasai of the East Africa protectorate were situated in southern part of Ukamba Province.

The chief of the Maasai inhabiting the Uganda protectorate was chief Lenana and their



Map No. 15.

1894 division of Maasai due to Uganda Protectorate.

headquarters were at Naivasha. Lenana's brother Sendeyo had settled with his followers at Loita plains near the Tanzanian boarder and was considered as very hostile to the European interference. Both Lenana and Sendeyo were the sons of chief Batyan and because a dispute arose between the two of them as to who was to succeed the old chief, the tribe was divided into two groups led by Lenana and Sendeyo. Lenana was recognised as the chief of the Maasai in the British sector while Sendeyo was the chief of the Maasai people in the German sphere (Tanzania).

By 1902, Kisumu and Naivasha provinces were placed into East Africa protectorate and thus the Naivasha Masai came under the authority of the East Africa protectorate. The Maasai now became a one whole tribe in Kenya referred to as the Naivasha or Kinangop Maasai.

The building of the railway to Kisumu was completed by 1901 and by 1902-3 many settlers were attracted towards British East Africa. The Maasai at this stage moved frequently from one side of the railway to the other. They usually spent the cold

weather in the valleys and the hotter season in the mountains.

By 1903 Mr. Hobley who was the acting Commissioner made extensive investigations into the movements of the Maasai and into how much time they spent on different grazing grounds. He also pointed out that the Laikipia highlands were hardly inhabited since the disappearance of the Laikipia Maasai. Through his investigations he found that the Maasai preferred the grazing in Laikipia highlands to that of the Rift Valley and they also were satisfied with the water supply of the area.¹⁸

This coupled with several applications from settlers for land in British East Africa resulted in recommendation of the Maasai to be moved from the Rift Valley to the Laikipia highlands.

Sir Donald Stewart upon his arrival to Kenya gave this recommendation an immediate consideration and the Maasai were to be moved into two reserves. In August 1904 a meeting was held between him and the Maasai chiefs Lenana, Masikondi and Legulishu. Both parties were satisfied with agreements reached at this

meeting whereby the Maasai were to continue occupying the southern reserve which is a game reserve and were to move out from the Rift valley into the Laikipia plateau. Through this agreement the whole of the fertile part of the Rift valley was left open for settlers and the semi arid areas of the country originally occupied by the Maasai were reallocated to them. The Maasai were moved from the Rift valley to the Laikipia area and from around Nairobi area to the Ngong area.

The boundaries of the northern Maasai reserve fixed by the agreement of 1904 were as:¹⁹

- On the north Loroghi mountains.
- On the west the Laikipia escarpment
- On the south the River Nyam and Uaso Narok.
- On the east the Kisima.

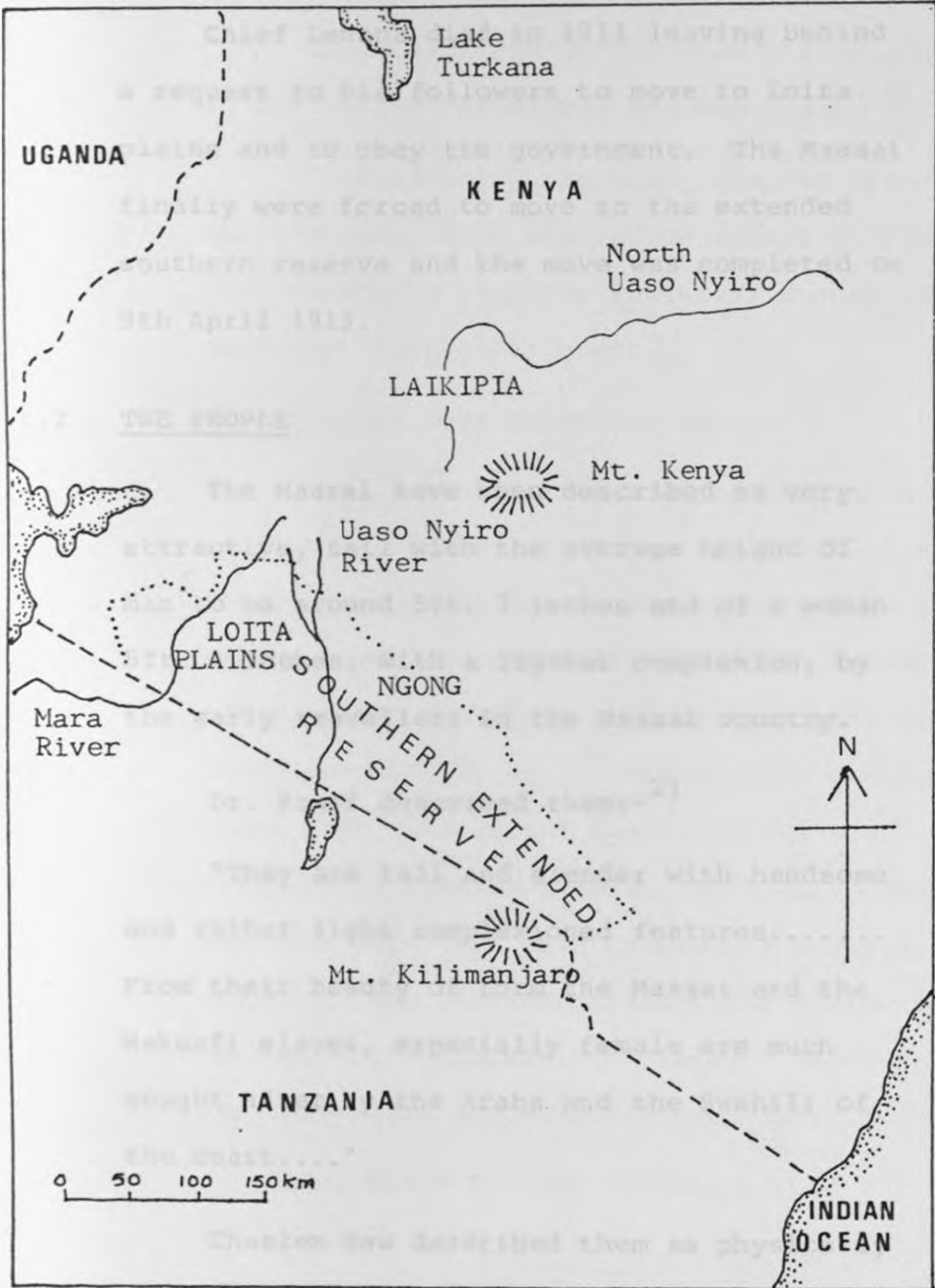
The eastern borders of the reserve, however, remained flexible and during the drier seasons the Maasai could cross the Uaso Nyiro River.

The two Maasai reserves of the north and south were to be connected by a road on which the Maasai were to pass. The British government

failed to keep their part of the treaty and the road which was to be half a mile broad was very much reduced with land on either side of it being given away to the settlers. In any case even the movement of cattle between the two reserves was also stopped in 1908 owing to quarantine regulations.

During this year several suggestions were made to move the Maasai from the Northern reserve to the area lying between the Mara river and the Southern Uaso Nyiro. This land was generally unsuitable for the white settlers and some of them had their eyes on the rich grazing land of the Laikipia area. This proposal was very much favoured by chief Lenana. This move was to put all the Maasai in one reserve rather than leaving them divided into two.

On May 30th 1910, at a meeting held at Ngong it was agreed that the Maasai should live in one reserve and that it was to their best interest. The Maasai were to move from the Laikipia plains to the Loita plains. (see Map No. 16 p241). However the Maasai later felt that the area was too small and the water supply was insufficient and on 27th August 1910; their wish not to leave Laikipia was granted.²⁰



Map No. 16.

The Maasai Reserves at Laikipia, Ngong and Loita Plains
THE EXTENDED RESERVE 1913.

Chief Lenana died in 1911 leaving behind a request to his followers to move to Loita plains and to obey the government. The Maasai finally were forced to move to the extended southern reserve and the move was completed on 9th April 1913.

6.2 THE PEOPLE

The Maasai have been described as very attractive, tall with the average height of man to be around 5ft. 7 inches and of a woman 5ft. 4 inches, with a lighter complexion, by the early travellers in the Maasai country.

Dr. Krapf described them:-²¹

"They are tall and slender with handsome and rather light complexioned features..... From their beauty of form the Maasai and the Wakuafi slaves, especially female are much sought after by the Arabs and the Swahili of the coast...."

Charles New described them as physically splendid people with energy, intrepidity and that they were without their equals in Africa.

Lord Cranworth in his book "A colony in the making, described the Maasai as:- 22

"Individually the Maasai are far from unattractive. Both men and women are slight and well made with pleasing features, though with some what high cheek bones....."

Norman Leys described them:- 23

"..... they are lighter in skin than ordinary Africans, are longer in head - infact the longest in Africa - have thinner lips and narrow noses and are taller, the men averaging 5ft 8 inches in height. Physically they are among the handsomest of mankind with slender bones, narrow hips and shoulders and most beautifully rounded muscles and limbs. The warriors burnished with grease and scantily draped in the skins of animals, have almost to a man, the graceful carriage of atheletes and the elders are scarcely ever fat..."

Dr. Krapf divided the Maasai into six age groups, which are:- 24

1. Engera (In-Kera) - the children
2. Leiok (L-ayiok) - the youth.
3. El moran (il-muran) - warrior
4. Kihiko (young married men who only

occasionally went to war.

5. Elkilimarisho elders.
6. Eekiilsharo - adult men of the tribe.

The above names are related to the ages but mostly the Maasai organisation is divided into groups related to circumcision and age as follows:-²⁵

- Ol-laiyoni - (boy before circumcision)
- Ol-muran - (after circumcision)
- Ol-moruo (after leaving the warriorhood)

The female organisation is:

- En dito - girls before clitoridectomy
- E-siangiki - girls after clitoridectomy
- E-ngoroyoni - woman.

The Maasai boys assume the rank of a warrior after the circumcision. Each circumcision is spread over a period three or four years and consists of three circumcisions. The boys are circumcised when they are about thirteen to seventeen years of age. Those who are ready to be circumcised in the first year are circumcised first and those not ready are either circumcised in the next two ceremonies. This constitutes the right and left handed circumcision.

The circumcision ceremonies are rather long and usually take days before the entire ceremony is completed.

In the right hand circumcision ceremony the boys who are chosen to be circumcised start off by a ceremony whereby they have to seize the right horn of a wild steer which is turned loose in a village. This particular ceremony is referred to as 'Keibung e-mowuo'. The steer is finally killed and the meat is eaten by the older men of the village.²⁶

After the 'seizing of the horn' ceremony the boys compete as sections to spear a lion and the section that spears the lion first goes through the 'Dance of Boys' (En Kipaata-00'l-Ayiok). This ceremony lasts for four days. A leader is chosen from this group of boys who is called 'Ol-aiguenani', and is chosen for his good character and intelligence. After the selection of a leader a grey ox is killed by the old men. The boys are made to sit in a circular fashion in the centre of the village while the grey ox is roasted and the meat is distributed to the boys. The boys sit in their groups of either the grey or the black oxen, opposite each other.²⁷

After the meat eating, the dance begins with the boys remaining in their respective group of the red and the black oxen. They all carry sticks of about eight feet long which resemble spears and to which are tied pieces of coloured cloth.

The boys wear crescent shaped bells tied by thongs to the outside of their right thigh. Some boys are completely naked while others wear a coloured calico resembling the colour of the cloth tied to their spearlike sticks.

The dance itself is made up of chiefly marching in a stright file across the village and the area immediately surrounding the village. Sometimes the dancers stop and form a circle in which two boys jump up and down, trying to get as high as possible with each jump.

The boys are mostly plastered in red ochre (mud) with a variety of patterns dubbed on them with white clay which is obtained from the river banks.

The dance continues in a similar fashion for the next three days, with sometimes an old lady walking alongside the dancers, throwing

some milk over the boys to bring them good luck.

The next part of the ceremony is called 'Nepukunye enk-aji' meaning he comes out of the house. This is held two days before the circumcision. This mostly takes place in and around the mother's hut with the hair of both the boy and the mother shaved off completely from the head. The boys are given a new name by their mothers which the boys use for the rest of their lives.²⁸

On the actual day of the circumcision the boys wear clothes of sheep skin and sandals made out of leather.

As can be seen during the ceremony the things that are used are mainly obtained from the cattle which the Maasai treasure. The mother is held in a very high esteem by the sons and does participate in the ceremony as well.

When the members of the new circumcision group take the position of 'Moran' those holding that position previously retire to the ranks of 'Ol-moruo' (old man).²⁹

In this way the 'Moran' may serve for

about seven to ten years depending on whether they were circumcised at the beginning or the end of the circumcision period.

A chief is usually elected out of the old men of the clan. The old chiefs have little power over the warriors who only seek the chief's blessing while departing for a raid or war.

The Maasai have had a very highly developed and well organised military system which was adapted for raiding purposes. In a big raid the chief of the warriors was responsible for the presence of his men. The war party was divided into small groups with each group having a leader and each member knew his role exactly.³⁰

The Maasai women are held in high respect and are referred to as 'In-Kituak' meaning the important one. The women are responsible for building and repairing houses, giving names to the children, cattle and villages. The women are also responsible for praying whenever there is trouble.³¹

The Maasai practice polyandry as well as polygamy. A man can sleep with any woman of the same age group as himself.

A man visiting a village was always provided with a hut and a temporary wife by his host and it was not considered ill if a woman bore a child by another man provided that the father belonged to the same age group as the husband.

When a baby is born in a hut, one of the women who are in the hut goes out to the centre of the village to announce the good news to all. On the day of the birth the woman's hair is shaved off from the head. When the hair grows again a small metal ornament in a shape of a bird is tied to the new hair above the centre of the woman's forehead. This becomes a mark suggesting a woman who has recently given birth.³²

After the birth, the mother makes amulets from fruits resembling tiny gourds. These are tied around the baby's neck to bring good luck. A woman who has had several babies may give her new baby to her sister or a co-wife.

The mother usually carries a baby on her back and as soon as the baby is able to walk its two front lower incisor teeth are taken

out. At the age of three the ears are pierced with a thorn so that in the years to follow the child can wear the ornaments that the Maasai are very fond of wearing.

When the child gets the permanent teeth the two lower incisors are again taken out. This custom seems to have come about after the Maasai suffered an epidemic in tetanus and it was found that those who did not have the incisors could be kept alive by pouring milk through the gap in their teeth.³³

A moran (warrior) may not marry but could live with one or more women of his own age group. The moran generally married after his moran days are over. Married men or El-moruo took no part in raids. Traditionally the warriors did not do much work but kept themselves very fit for the raids and battles which was their main area of participation in the tribal life.³⁴

The food of the Maasai consists of sour milk, meat and blood which was drawn out of live cattle by making incisions in the neck of the animals. During acute draughts they resorted to eating grains which they obtained from their neighbouring tribes.

Even during the preparation of the warriors for raids, huge amounts of blood and flesh were consumed with a belief that this would give great courage and strength to the 'Moran'. The next day after giving birth the mother would drink a mixture of sour milk and blood as a tonic.

Eating of meat was done at various occasions with definite meanings attached to such feasts. The animals that were slaughtered had different colours for different ceremonies. As seen earlier during the circumcision ceremony a grey ox was killed for the meat to be given to the boys who were undergoing the circumcision.

After the birth of a new born baby, a sheep was killed by suffocation, which was the usual Maasai way of killing an animal. This sheep had to be red coloured. The women began eating the meat, which was well cooked, from the left side of the sheep which was supposed to be a cleanser and they finished off eating the sheep's right side at night. No men ate any part of this sheep for the fear of going mad.³⁵

The mother of the new born was also given fat from sheep to eat so as to contrac+

the muscles of her stomach. The new born babies who were adopted by foster mothers or co-wives who had no breast milk, were generally fed by cow's milk. The foster mothers were given a special diet of curdled milk mixed with cow blood and a mixture of chopped lean meat and fat. This was supposed to induce the milk in the breasts of the foster mother so that she could breast feed her newly acquired child.³⁶

Milk is usually kept in gourds which are cleaned out with the charred wood of the 'loiyiye' tree, which gives the milk a smokey taste and also makes it curdle fast.

The Maasai's religious beliefs are based on a great spirit, who directs their lives and fate. God, the sky rain any other natural phenomena are known by the same name of 'Engai'.

Krapf mentioned Engai as heaven while writing about the importance of cattle in Maasai life.

In some part of the Rift valley, small yellowish objects which are sometimes found after rains are referred to by Maasai as being

fingernails of god and are very much treasured. They usually wear them threaded around their neck. These are in reality some sort of cartilage bones.³⁷

The Maasai huts are usually made up of a frame work of sticks which is plastered with cow dung and mud. Sometimes skins are used on the roof and these are also plastered with cow dung and mud.

Inside these are partitions which have a small opening as doors. There is only one main door to the hut.

As we have seen from the whole of this section of 'people', the Maasai's whole life style revolves around their herds of cattle. They make use of all the products obtained from their animals to live in comfort.

6.3 CLOTHING

The traditional dress of the Maasai again revolves around the hides which were the product of their herds. Most of the references which have been cited indicate that the Maasai wore hides and skins. The men generally wear a square piece of skin which is hung from the shoulder, and otherwise go

about without any other garment. The women on the other hand were quite well covered wearing a short skirt made of leather, with a skin thrown over the shoulder, wrapped around the chest and fastened. In some areas the skin over the shoulder was not worn and thus the women went about naked waist upwards.³⁸

Although there was not much difference in the clothing between men and women, the Maasai had a fair idea of women's clothing as being feminine. This can be seen from the following Maasai narrative during the wars between the agricultural and pastoral Maasai.

Soon after 1825, the Kisonoko division of the southern Maasai attacked the Il-Kuafi in the Kilimanjaro. The bulk of the Il-Kuafi escaped to the west and their Labion (tribal medicine man) prevented pursuit closing by magic, the pass through which they had fled.

A few weeks later a deputation was sent to the labion to beg him to reopen this pass. The deputation consisted of nine Morans, eight of them fully armed as escort for the ninth who wore women's clothing and carried sticks of wild olive and bamboo to show that he was on a mission of peace. The deputation



Fig. 8

Maasai lady dressed in traditional attire.

brought nine heifers and a gourd of honey beer as gifts for the Labion.

The moran wearing female clothing was to indicate peace. The interesting point to note, however, is that the gift items consisted of honey beer and heifers and not cloth as given out in many other tribes.³⁹

Later when the southern Maasai united with the Purrko Maasai to fight the Laikipia Maasai the Purrko Lebions decided to use their magic powers by putting a dik dik skin into the Laikipiak Maasai's manyatta (village). To do this three Purrko Morans were sent to the manyatta, with the dik dik skin, without wearing any clothing or ornaments.⁴⁰ This incident does suggest some form of identification as associated with the dressing. It also suggests that the Morans of the Laikipiak Maasai did not wear any form of clothing and so the Purrko Morans could intermingle with them without being noticed.

The cow hide was the main material used for making the garments, and often times these garments were employed for other jobs. An example to illustrate this would be when

the animals had to be killed during ceremonies a women's robe was used to suffocate it.

On the day of the circumcision the boys wore cloaks which were made of sheep skin, scraped clear of the wool and blackened with charcoal. The boys' mothers made these cloaks especially for this occasion. They also wore leather sandals which were made with a leather sole and three thongs on top to hold the sandal to the foot.⁴¹

For the circumcision ceremony the fathers of the boys wore beaded cowhide robes of the women.⁴² The significance of this is not very clear but it seems one among many situations when the men wore women's clothing.

The boys also wore a head dress made out of feathers of several birds. Around the head, under the feathers was tied a leather thong. This was sometimes decorated with cowrie shells as were some of the cloaks. This was considered a ceremonial headress and the youth could not move around without this.

Around their right leg, the circumcised young men, wore a twisted sheep skin. On the

front of the skin were sewn cowrie shells to which were tied more twisted sheep skin thongs which reached up to another band of sheep skin around the lower calf.

Cowrie shells and beads were extensively used to decorate the cloaks and robes.

Sometimes leaves of certain trees are put to use as towels especially when during birth, a new born baby was wiped clean with leaves from the 'Ol-masaruga' tree. The woman who gave birth generally wore a broad leather belt from the hide of a freshly killed cow. This she would carry on wearing until she became pregnant again and resumed wearing it after each birth. The belt was also sometimes decorated with cowrie shells.⁴³

The old men also wore robes of hyrax skins to keep themselves warm. The warriors were proud to wear a head gear made out of lions mane and circlets of ostrich feathers were worn around the head. They mostly wore blue and red coloured beads.⁴⁴

The Maasai women wore heavy ornaments made out of coils of metal wire, an item which

was greatly sought by all the Maasai.

The Maasai believed very much in rubbing fat on their bodies and this was done at most ceremonies including preparing for a raid or war.⁴⁵

The foregoing notes suggest the extensive use of leather as a mode of dressing. The Maasai however did start coming in contact with imported textiles through their demands of 'hongo' or tributes which they demanded from all travellers passing through their country.

This is evident from Lord Claud Hamiltons decription of Maasai meeting the traders who would refuse to pay the 'hongo',⁴⁶ The Maasai would pull aside a trader's clothes and test his courage with a beaded bow and arrow head touching the trader's twitching skin.

The early European contacts showed the Maasai as being dressed mostly in hides and were much interested in cloth which the Europeans took with them.

When in November 1882, Mr. Joseph Thompson set out with porters to visit the

Il-Kuafi, the Maasai were very much intrigued by his appearance and belongings. Their chief interest was in the stock of cloth which he had brought for them as gifts. After staying in the village for a few days when Thomson spoke of returning, the villagers were very disappointed and said that if he had to go, he should return speedily and bring cloth and beads for their wives and children.⁴⁷

Although it seems that they had an opportunity to possess cloth for the first time it had thoroughly aroused their interest in getting more of it.

Again in 1883, when Joseph Thomson's party entered Maasai district, he had the following to say about a war party that he encountered:-⁴⁸

"....Before long a large party of the Moran, marching in step to a chant, came into view. They were a most striking sight with their long spears, emblazoned shields and coating of glistening mud...." After much discussion Thomson agreed to give each of the six companies of the force half a dozen rolls of wire, thirty iron chains, five lengths of cloth and one hundred strings of beads.

In 1884, Sir Henry Johnstone led an expedition to Kilimanjaro and his only contact with the Maasai was soon after they had crossed the Ng'urung'ani ridge.

Some of the Maasai here became truculent shouting "Entara Il-ashumba" which could be translated as 'Let us kill the people wearing clothes". It seems that clothing in this incident has placed an undue emphasis on the visitors being distinctly different from local visitors.⁴⁹

During Teleki's encounter with the Maasai in 1887, on one occasion when a Maasai warrior's spear was lost in his camp, and could not be found, a compensation in form of two hundred coils of iron wire, one hundred coils of brass wire, one hundred strings of bead and ten lengths of cloth had to be paid in order to avoid any crisis with the rest of the tribe.

By the later part of the 19th century cloth had started reaching the Maasai country. When Teleki in August 1887, reached Ngong, he received a visit from the Maasai Labions and two of the young men in this group were actually wearing blue calico instead of the

traditional skins. During his visit in the Maasai country, Teleki, did meet a part of seven traders from the coast. This clearly shows that the Maasai country was not totally impenetrable.

In 1887 a swahili caravan was attacked near Lake Jipe, by the Maasai and all their goods were looted. Like all other caravans this caravan must have had its usual stock of cloth as a trading item. Thus cloth began circulating amongst the Maasai and started gaining popularity over the leather garments.

Ceremonies which took place after about 1880 do indicate use of various coloured bits of cloth as banners or body garments.

During the circumcision ceremonies, the boys who carried long spearlike sticks started tying banners of coloured calico onto the sticks and also wore similar coloured cloth on the body.

Cloth started featuring in the ornaments as well and some of the Maasai warriors in their war attire have been described as wearing a 'naibere' around the neck, which consisted of a long piece of white cotton with a stripe

of a coloured cloth sewn in the middle, flowing down to the back. The elders were the first to start wrapping themselves in cotton cloth.⁵⁰

As the trading centres started establishing in the Maasai area more and more Maasai started substituting their skin garments with cloth.

In 1903 Sir Charles Eliott reported:⁵¹
"They have taken to wearing red blankets and the astonishing exhibitions of nudity which were common a year ago are now comparatively rare. Lenana even wears a great coat....."

6.4 TRADE

The Maasai unlike the other tribes were not very much involved in trade. Their main preoccupation was gathering large herds of cattle which they considered their main form of wealth. They organised several raids to the East of their country with the main interest of collecting the cattle belonging to the Gallas and Wanyika. They became renowned as fierce cattle raiders.

Their whole life style was dependent upon cattle. They got food, clothing and shelter from their herds and thus did not

have much need for bartering them for other commodities. The only commodities which they preferred to purchase in exchange for their cattle were iron wires, brass wires or chains.

The iron chains were sometimes bought from the Chagga neighbours who were blacksmiths. The Maasai paid for them by giving away their cattle to Chagga.

The chains were also sometimes used as bribes by other tribes to recruit Masai warrirors in seeking revenge against the enemies.

Some incidents of trade have been recorded when some of the Arabs and Swahili caravans penetrated into the Maasai land in search of ivory. They were able to get some ivory from the Maasai who had bought it from the Dorobo in exchange for cattle. These incidents were however not many.

During their early history, the Maasai, have been said to buy grains from their neighbours, the Kikuyus. This only happened during prolonged draughts and epidemics which left the Maasai with no choice.

At Ngong, Joseph Thomson, in 1883,

found that although the Maasai and the Kikuyu men were at war with each other, the women of the two tribe traded freely. The main trade was in grain which the Maasai bought with hides.⁵²

The Maasai were also well known for demanding bribes (hongo) from the traders who passed through their country. This took several forms but mostly involved gifts of beads, wires and cloth. No one was spared of this, including the missionaries who came in God's name.

After establishment of the British rule, and the subsequent Maasai move into the two reserves, the Maasai raids came to an end. The only means left open to the Masai was to start some sort of a trade in cattle either to increase their herds or to get other necessities. Being pastoralists they could only engage in trade which related to their herds.

The trade in southern reserve was mainly carried out by Somalis in small numbers, but the northern reserve became a very big cattle market for the Somalis who came from the north with their cattle to trade. So large

was the number of cattle coming into the northern reserve that the grazing grounds were beginning to get inadequate. The Maasai were not willing to purchase sheep which consumed one seventh of the grazing that a cow consumed. Infact such was their love of cattle that they were willing to exchange as many as thirty sheep for one heifer.⁵³

In 1912 the northern reserve was closed to cattle trading on account of rinderpest outbreaks, In December 1912 recommendations were put forward to the government that no Somalis or foreigners will be allowed to enter the reserves for trading in cattle - that the Maasai should be encouraged to purchase cattle and sheep for cash at recognised trading centres.

The British settlers in their bid to encourage Maasai to work for wages recommended that the Maasai workers who bought cattle from their earnings should be allowed to take them back to the reserve. They feared that unless the Maasai workers were allowed to spend their earnings in purchasing livestock they would not leave the reserves to work for money. They also suggested that cattle and sheep could

leave the reserves freely but could not enter freely unless they belonged to individuals who could prove that they had purchased them from their earnings.

The settlers also suggested that the Maasai pay tax on their cattle in cash which would mean that the Maasai would have to sell his livestock to obtain rupees for paying tax.

The Southern reserve was the first to be opened up in terms of shops. The first shops opened up at Ngong and Uaso Nyiro. By 1911, the trade had started flourishing and had aroused the Maasai interest in imported goods and food.⁵⁴

By around 1912 some trade was carried on between the Maasai and the Kikuyu. By this time there were three European and one Indian shop in the southern reserve and there was a great scope for a local trader who could supply to the Maasai the goods required in exchange for sheep and skins. This type of trade was allowed by the British authorities, but did not prove successful because the Kikuyu traders were exploiting the Maasai by buying large herds of sheep for small amounts

of tobacco. The Maasai capacity for absorbing trade goods was, however, quite great and therefore no restriction was imposed on such trade. The local native traders were however made to understand that they occupied the Maasai area only temporarily for trading purposes and could be removed from the area at any time.

In 1914 recommendations to establish proper trading centres in the Maasai reserve were approved. A rent of twelve rupees was to be charged for each plot allocated to the traders. This was to encourage only better class of traders and to stop the small scale barter trade. The Kikuyu and Lumbwa who traded with Maasai were now to meet outside the reserves at markets. Trade was for the first time to be restricted to resident storekeepers. This marked the beginning of organised trading in the Maasai reserves.⁵⁵

A large business had been built up by 1916, with better class of merchants. The requirements of the Maasai were now met and they could buy goods at cheaper rate. By 1916 about one hundred and twenty businesses were functioning in Narok and Mara area.

Amongst the item that featured very prominently in these shops was cloth. As was the case with the rest of Kenya, this commodity gained very fast popularity. The Maasai way of dressing did not change immediately. Even today many Maasai dress in the same way they used to but the difference is that cloth has replaced the skins they used to wear.



PLATE LI:

Masai woman's back skirt
'Ol, Kesena' made of several
goat skins decorated with beads.

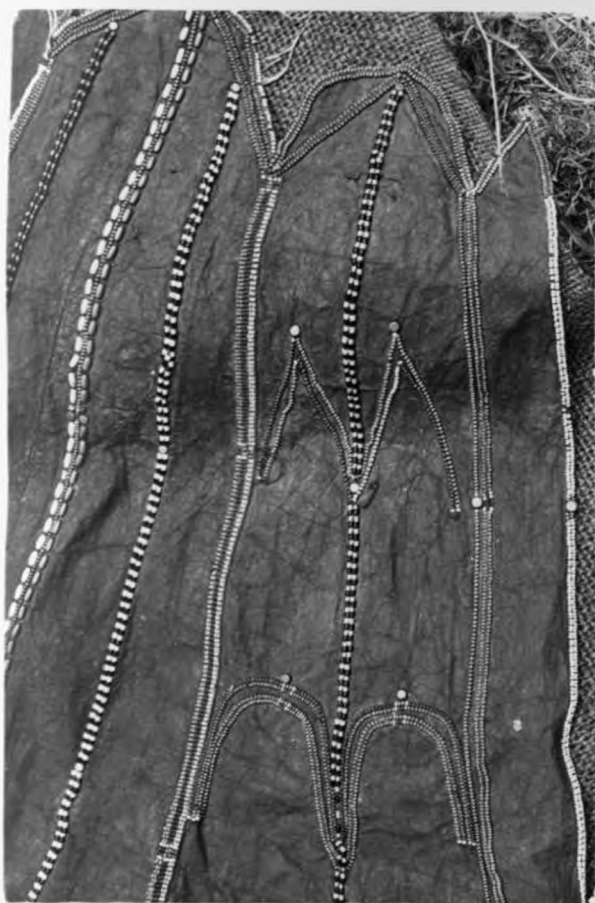


PLATE LII:

Details of the skirt
'Olkesena'.



PLATE LIII:

A cow skin leather bag decorated with beads.

PLATE LIV:

A hat 'Ngaranda' made from mucosal membrane of a cow's stomach, used for protection against rain by warriors.



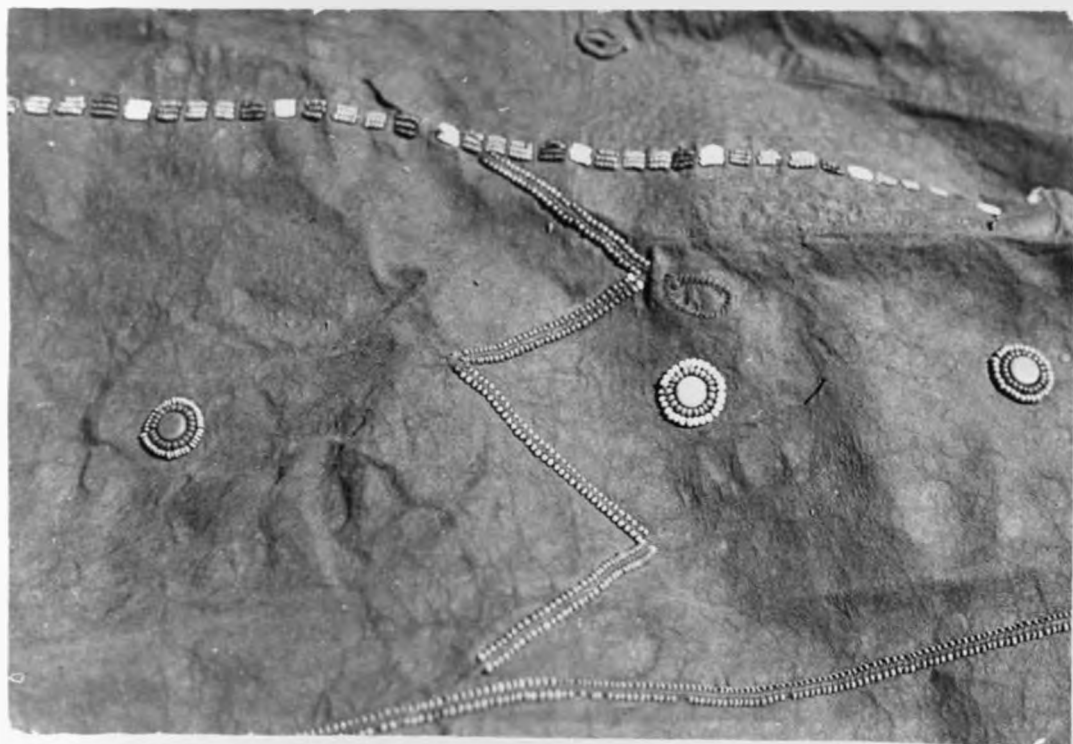


PLATE LV:

A Masai woman's skirt 'Olokesena'
made and used by married women.

PLATE LVI.

Details of the skirt 'Olokesena'.



CHAPTER 6

FOOTNOTES

1

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7

The Maasai Raids on their Eastern Neighbours" (See Appendix C.).

8

C.W. Hobley, "Social Organisation of the Maasai", Political Records, Memoranda on Tribes (Kenya National Archives) DC/MKS/26/2/1.

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|----|--|----|-----------------|
| 32 | Hamilton, p.131 | 33 | Thompson, p.248 |
| 34 | Stigand, p.222 | 35 | Hamilton, p.135 |
| 36 | Hamilton, p.136 | 37 | Hamilton, p.130 |
| 38 | Stigand, p.221; Thompson, p.251 | | |
| 39 | Hamilton, p.151 | 40 | Hamilton, p.35 |
| 41 | Hamilton, p.155 | 42 | Hamilton, p.158 |
| 43 | Hamilton, p.132 | 44 | Thompson, p.250 |
| 45 | Thompson, p.249; Ethel Younghusband,
<u>Glimpses of East Africa and Zanzibar</u> (London MCMX)
p.76. | | |
| 46 | Hamilton, p.10 | 47 | Hamilton, p.43 |
| 48 | Hamilton, p.48 | 49 | Hamilton, p.51 |
| 50 | Thompson, p.249 | 51 | Sanford, p.18 |
| 52 | Hamilton, p.51 | 53 | Sanford, p.59 |
| 54 | Sanford, p.89 | 55 | Sanford, p.92 |

CHAPTER 7

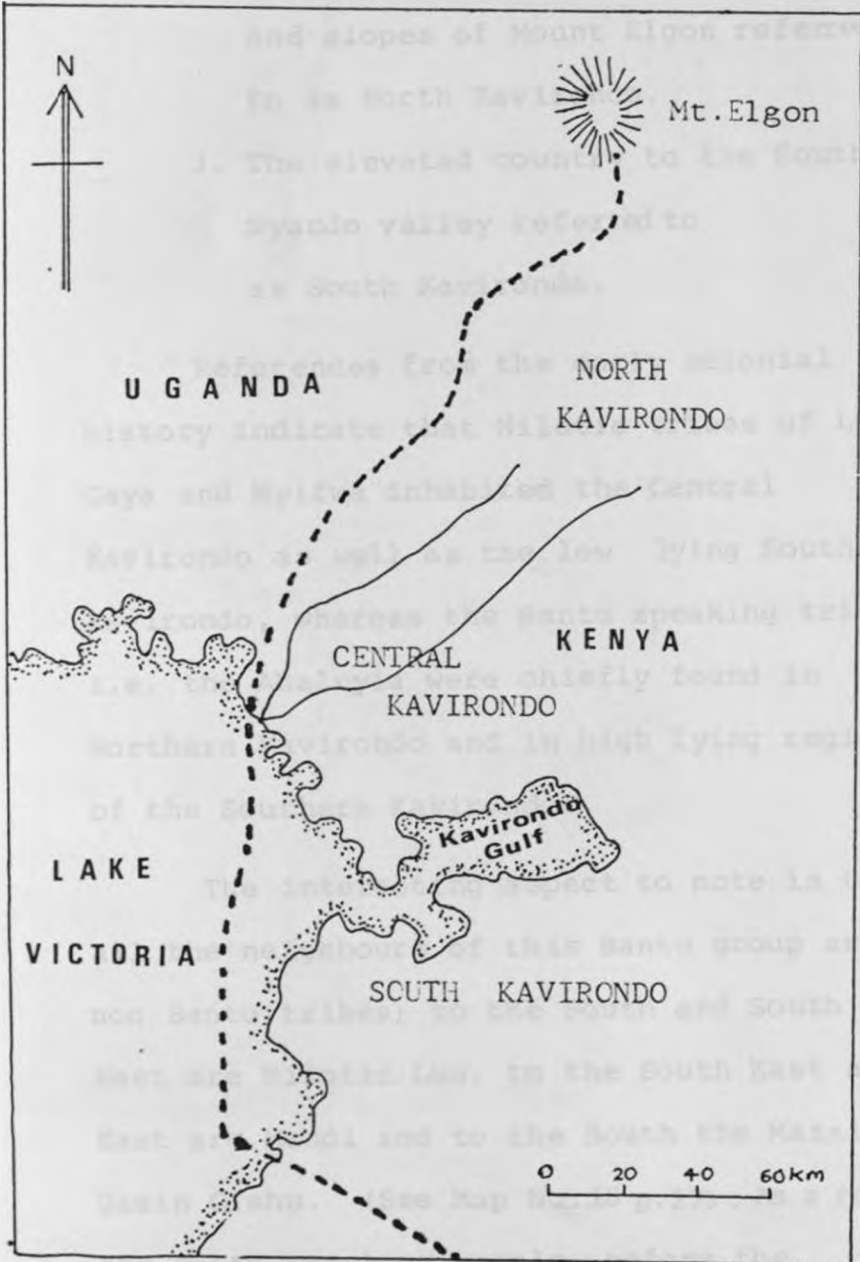
THE WESTERN KENYA BANTU - THE ABALUYIA

The Abaluyia consist of some seventeen major sub-tribes living in the North Eastern part of Lake Victoria in Kenya. All these seventeen subtribes have marked similarities in their background, customs and language although the dialects vary according to the locality.

Although the Abaluyia had common aspects of culture and language they did not have one specific name for the whole tribe. The Europeans upon their penetration of this part of the country gave them the name of Bantu of North Kavirondo. By about 1950 , however, this name was officially annihilated and the name Abaluyia was used with all the subtribes proudly using it as a binding factor.¹

The Kavirondo district during the colonial era was marked as situated to the North East of Lake Victoria on either side of the Equator. The Kavirondo Gulf divided Kavirondo into three geographical district areas:² (See map No.17 p.277).

1. The Nyando Valley and the low lying coastal regions referred to as



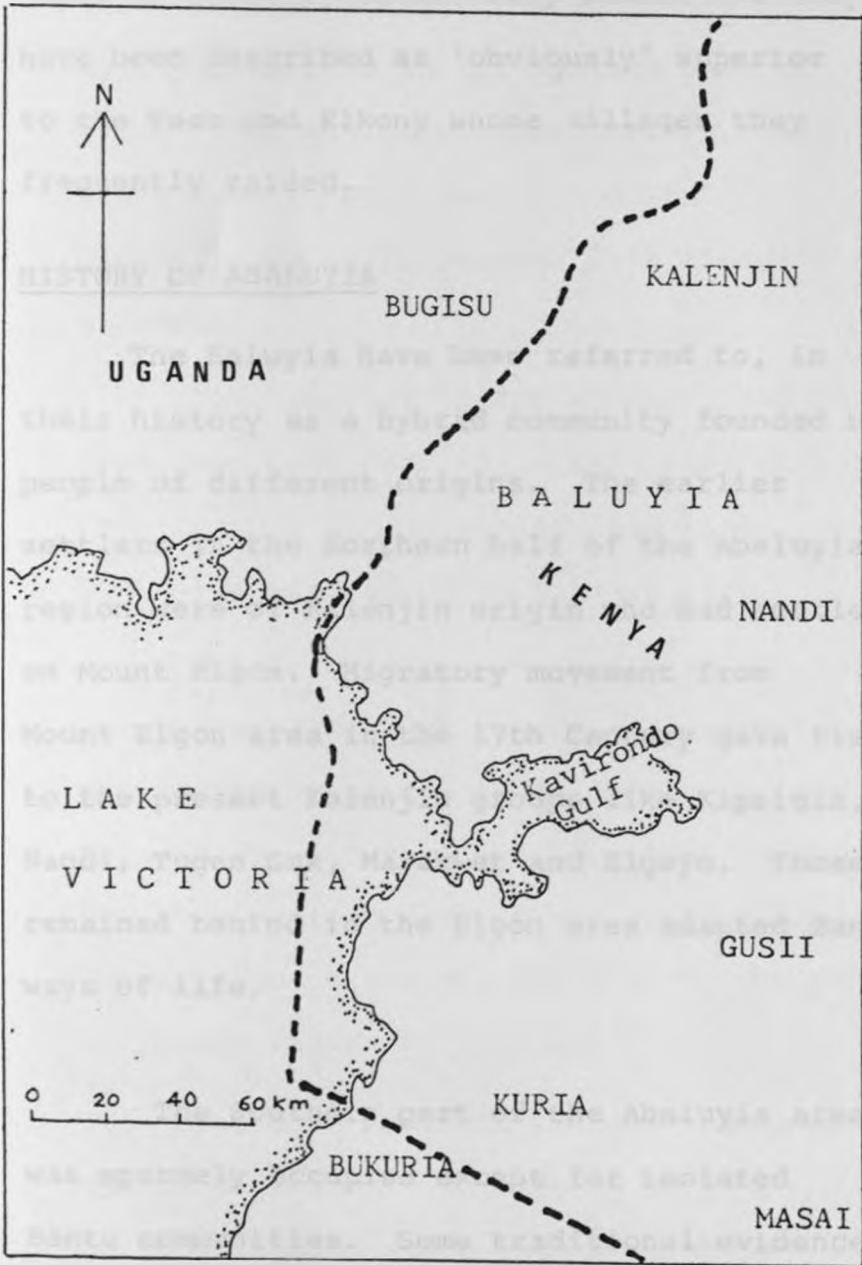
Map No. 17
KAVIRONDO DISTRICTS

Central Kavirondo

2. The elevated undulating plain extending between the Nyando valley and slopes of Mount Elgon referred to as North Kavirondo.
3. The elevated country to the South of Nyando valley referred to as South Kavirondo.

References from the early colonial history indicate that Nilotic tribes of Luo, Gaya and Nyifwa inhabited the Central Kavirondo as well as the low lying Southern Kavirondo, whereas the Bantu speaking tribes, i.e. the Abaluyia were chiefly found in Northern Kavirondo and in high lying regions of the Southern Kavirondo.

The interesting aspect to note is that all the neighbours of this Bantu group are non Bantu tribes; to the South and South West are Nilotic Luo, to the South East and East are Nandi and to the South the Masai of Uasin Gishu. (See Map No.18 p.279. As a result, the Bantu speaking people, before the establishment of British rule were constantly at war with these neighbouring tribes. In their relation with the Masai and the Nandi



Map No 18

The Neighbouring tribes of Baluyia

they were mainly on the defensive. Their relations with the Luo have been said to be based on equality of Military Powers and they have been described as 'obviously' superior to the Teso and Elkony whose villages they frequently raided.

7.1 HISTORY OF ABALUYIA

The Baluyia have been referred to, in their history as a hybrid community founded by people of different origins. The earlier settlers in the Northern half of the Abaluyia region were of Kalenjin origin who had settled on Mount Elgon. Migratory movement from Mount Elgon area in the 17th Century gave rise to the present Kalenjin groups like Kipsigis, Nandi, Tugen Suk, Marakwet and Elgeyo. Those who remained behind in the Elgon area adapted Bantu ways of life.

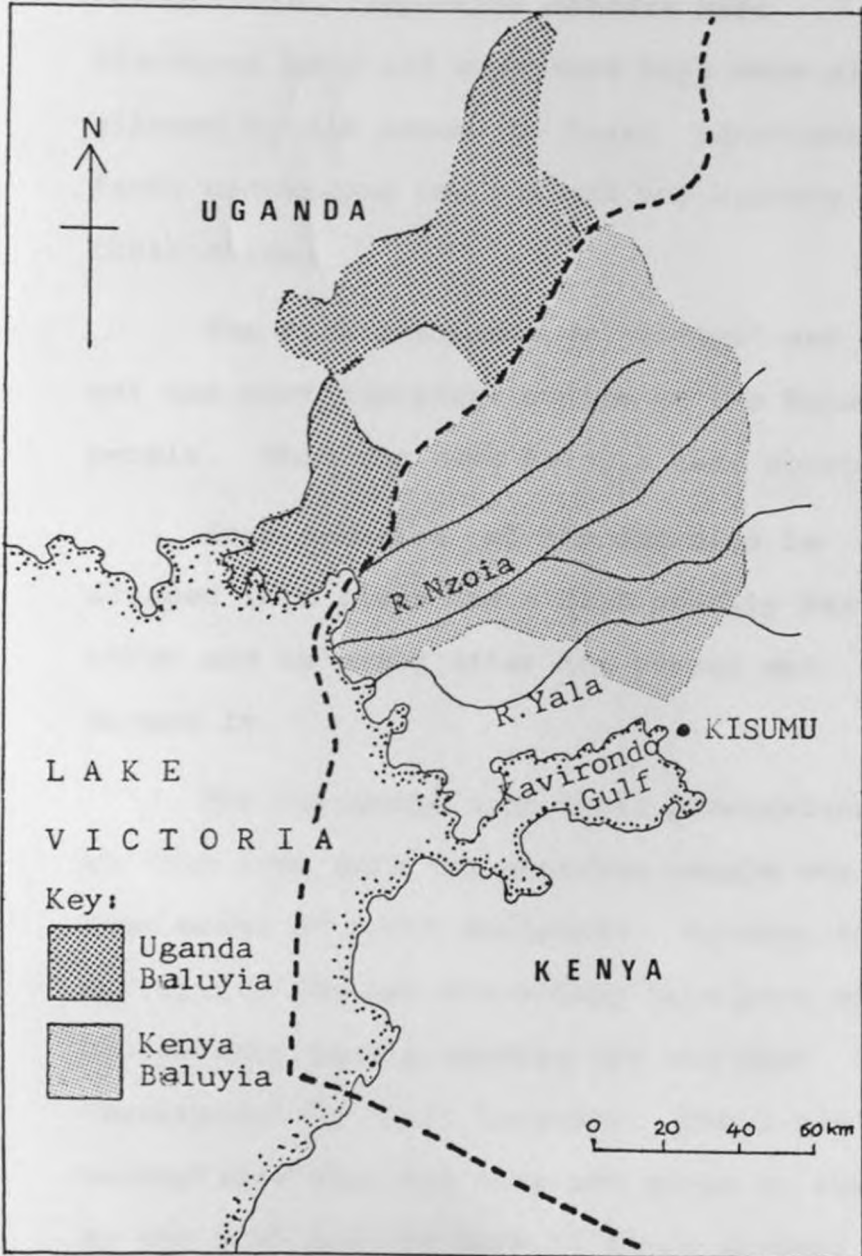
The Southern part of the Abaluyia area was sparsely occupied except for isolated Bantu communities. Some traditional evidence goes to suggest that Abaluyia were founded by people from a country called 'Misri' who settled in Eastern part of Uganda.³

From 1598 to 1733 there were large scale migrations from Uganda and some of these people who were the ancestors of the Abaluyia settled in the Western part of Kenya. The migration from Eastern Uganda seems to have been due to difficult country and health hazards like sleeping sickness.

Some smaller groups of Maasai and Nandi from East also settled in this part of the country in a period around 1570-1650. They also adapted Bantu ways of life.

This migratory move and also the Teso invasions of Eastern Uganda dispersed the people and brought them to settle in the Baluyia areas. Thus by the second half of the 19th century most of the Baluyia area was settled. (See Map No. 19 p.282) for references to Uganda and Kenya Baluyia).⁴

The word Abaluyia actually means a fellow tribesmen. This seems to be an acceptable term since the whole group consists of some seventeen major subtribes. The term Baluyia is derived from the verb 'Okhuyia' which means to burn.⁵ It was a



Map No. 19.

Baluyia of Uganda and Kenya
Source: A History of Buluyia

Baluyia tradition to sit around a fire in the evenings, in groups depending on their family connections. Important matters were discussed here and sometimes boys were also allowed to sit around to learn important facts concerning the customs and history of their clans.

The fire was known as 'Oluiya' and this was the most important custom of the Baluyia people. Thus the name Baluyia came about.⁶

Each subtribe of the Abaluyia is divided into clans and a clan usually has a title and is named after the person who formed it.

The Europeans upon their penetration to this area gave the Abaluyia people the name Bantu of North Kavirondo. Neither the Abaluyia or the Luo who occupy this part of the country have a meaning for the word "Kavirondo" in their language. There are assumptions that the name was given to them by the Arab and the Swahili slave traders of the 19th century. In 1883, Joseph Thomson referred to the inhabitants of this area as 'Wakavirondo'.

Joseph Thomson however distinguished between the Nilotic and Bantu people of the 'Wakavirondo' by indicating a difference in their language. He found out that it was easier for himself and his men to understand the Bantu language due to its similarities to Swahili language.⁷

7.2 THE PEOPLE

In pre-European days the Bantu Kavirondo were said to be well organised politically. After the establishment of the British rule they were organised into chieftancies. Mostly the chiefs were chosen from the oldest and largest clans of the tribe.⁸

The Bantu Kavirondo have been described in many instances as healthy and verile people but diseases were rife in their areas in form of plague, yaws and sleeping sickness with the tsetse fly breeding in the swampy areas.

This Bantu group has also been credited as being great fishermen persuing the river fish with unflagging patience.

The environment is full of well watered land which flows across the area from

East to West. The Kavirondo belong to the broad undulating spaces where trim villages and well cultivated crops cover the fertile land.

They have also been said to be keen seekers of education that the missions offered them.

They have been described as a handsome race of Bantu type and language, and before the advent of the Europeans the men and women went about in absolute nudity. Yet this group has been quite characteristically reputed as moral in customs and character.

In the Eastern and North Eastern parts of the Luhya band, the clothing, ornament, weapons and style of dressing were largely influenced by the Masai and the Nandi.

As regards to the physical appearance, the Bantu of Kavirondo have been described as tall and well proportioned, especially the men while the women have broad hips and short limbs. The majority of this group being healthy and robust. With the exception of the aged, they were as a rule well nourished.

Sir Joseph Thompson was however not impressed by the appearance of the Bantu Kavirondo as is evident from the following description:⁹

"The Wakavirondo are by no means attractive in their appearance and they contrast unfavourably with the Maasai. Their heads are of distinctly lower type, eyes dull and muddy jaws somewhat prognathous, mouth unpleasantly large and lips thick, projecting and everted; they are in fact true Negroes. Their figures are better, though only among the unmarried women could they be said to be in any sense pleasing to look at. Among the married the abdomen is aggressively protuberant and roughly tattooed without betraying any attempt at ornamentation."

This description seems to be rather unfriendly and can be noted that while looking at this group, was very much influenced by the Maasai with whom they compared unfavourably at that time.

Wagner has described the facial features thus:¹⁰

"Head and face are moderately long,

back of the head often pronounced and pleasantly rounded; the nose is straight and only fairly broad and flat and the lips although full are not very thick."

As opposed to Thompson, and somewhat like Wagner, Sir Harry Johnstone arrived at a more favourable description.¹¹

"The Kavirondo proper.....are as a rule a handsome race of negroes, exhibiting sometimes, especially among the men, really beautiful physical proportions and statuesque forms. Here and there as throughout most of the negro races.....there are reversions to an ugly and interior type....."

Hobley on the other hand, could compare this tribe with the others due to his vast experiences with almost all native tribes of Kenya. He mentions the Kavirondo as:¹²

"The great point about the Kavirondo, however, was that they were men. Once they were beaten they readily made peace and once they made peace it was peace, for within a few hours the women were in camp selling food and we had no anxiety about a subsequent trecherous attack either at night or on the

road."

This description shows a great harmony and truth that this Bantu type has many times been credited with.

7.3 CLOTHING

Very small covering was used by both men and women. Both sexes wore a waist belt of beads to which the married women attached a small apron made out of leather and this was embroidered with beads. To supplement this they wore 'behind a tail' made out of marsh fibre. Great importance was attached to these womens' coverings and should a strange man by any chance touch them, a sacrifice of a goat was demanded in satisfaction of the insult.¹³

What the Kavirondo men lacked in clothing on their bodies, they piled it on their heads. They generally surmounted themselves with skins and feathers and so sometimes had or wore huge hats made of basket work ornamented with feathers.¹⁴

Traditionally the men wore skins of goats or calfs which were well prepared. This skin was passed under one armpit and

fastened with a strap over the opposite shoulder. This was, however, not sufficient enough as a cover and often had to be adjusted by the wearer. The skin which was used for wearing was prepared through a laborious process first by spreading and pegging it on the ground with its fleshy side up. Pieces of meat and hair were removed until it was clear of them. The hide was then soaked in some salt water solution and thoroughly rinsed. The final result was a soft skin called 'ingubo'.¹⁵

Young boys mostly went around naked but at times used a wide strap of leather which was attached to a string around the waist.

Sometimes the wealthier people and chiefs wore caps as part of their dressing which was called 'Shimwata.' This cap was covered with an animal skin and was decorated with beads and cowrie shells.¹⁶

Men wore ornaments which were made out of iron in form of rings called 'ebitiiri' on the ankles and legs and the richer ones wore bands of twisted wires called 'emisanga'.¹⁷

The apron that the women wore was

referred to as 'liboya' and was generally made of banana fibres, sisal or sometimes out of animal tail hairs. This tail apron was mainly worn by richer women and was referred to as 'abakhaye'. The women also wore strings of beads around their necks and waists. Cowrie shells on leather straps were also worn around the back and the waist. Sometimes the apron was also made by decorative cowrie shell work and was suspended in front with the aid of leather straps.¹⁸

For ornaments the women also wore iron rings on their ankles and some wore rings of wire around their arms and necks. Their bodies were tattooed; usually on the forehead, abdomen and backs. This is also mentioned in the quotation by Sir Harry Johnstone earlier.

During dances little bells referred to as 'Tsindeke' were tied by women around their legs and ankles.

The younger women or girls also wore strings of beads and tattooed themselves. The tattooing was done on the forehead, back, chest

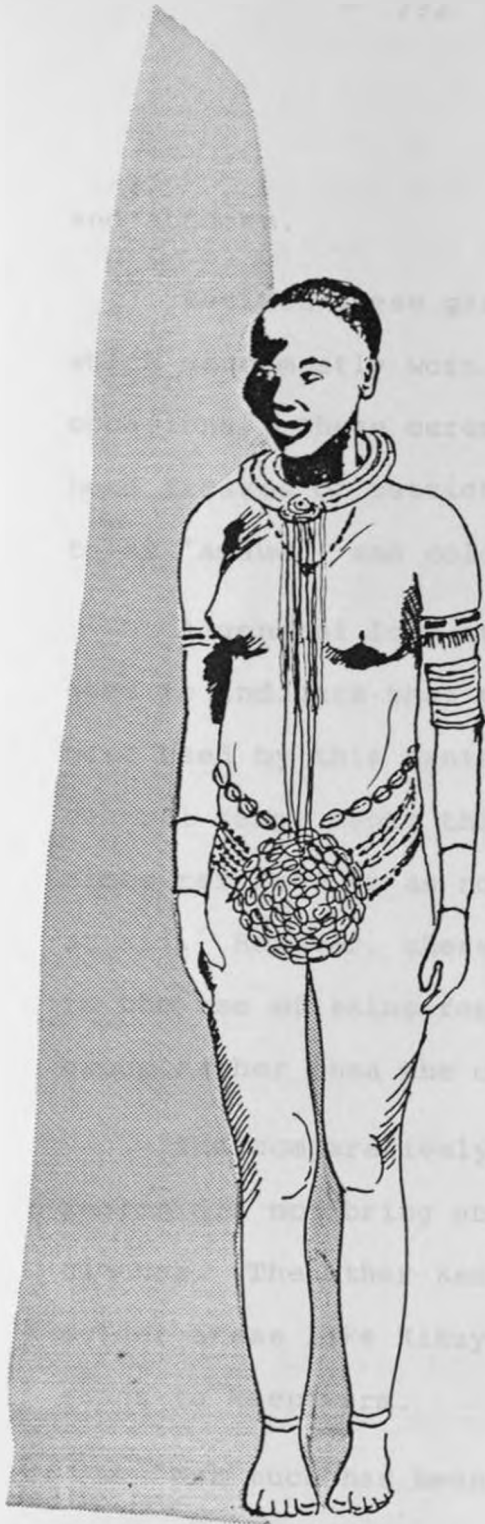


Fig. 9

Baluyia lady wearing a bead corset with a leather apron in the front, embroidered with cowrie shells.

and abdomen.

Besides these garments there were others which were mostly worn during festivities or occasions. These ceremonial outfits included head dresses of ostrich feathers, referred to as 'amaudo' and colobus monkey skin for men.

A general look at the traditional attire goes to indicate that mostly hides and skins were used by this Bantu group. Like the central Kenya Bantu this group has been many times referred to as not wearing any clothings at all. However, there are more references to the use of skins for garments for this group rather than the central Kenya Bantu.

The comparatively warm climate of this region did not bring about real need for clothes. The other Kenyan tribes living in colder areas like Kikuyu had to wear heavier skins to keep warm.

Not much has been mentioned about imported clothing in this area and the reason is that these areas were penetrated by the foreigners, especially Europeans, at a much

later stage than the central Kenyan group. Many references have been cited about the decorative beads and cowrie shells which were brought in by the slave traders who were really more interested in securing slaves than bringing in trade items like clothes.

However, as is the case in the history of rest of Kenya, the imported clothing especially blankets were very much valued by the people. They provided ready substitute for the laboriously prepared skins which were not all that satisfactory as garments. Later on cloth became an important aspects of life to the point of being used as a form of currency for the barter trade.

7.4 TRADE

The Baluyia lived mainly by subsistence farming and practiced shifting cultivation. Trade was carried out locally through exchange of grain for implements. Cowrie shells were also used as a form of currency besides being used for decorative purposes for ceremonial head gears and

important items of dresses.

The traditional forms of currency were, glass beads, cloth, brass wire and cowrie shells. These items gained popularity in this region as they had gained in other parts of Kenya. As elsewhere in Kenya, these items came with the penetration of the Swahili and Arab trade caravans. These were however, slightly different caravans in the sense that they came for slaves from this region. The Swahili and Arab slave traders had penetrated the Baluyia area several decades ahead of the Europeans.¹⁹

The Northern and the shortest trade route leading from the coast of Kenya to Uganda passed right through the middle of the Abaluyia area and thus the Baluyia people had indirectly maintained their contact with the outside world. The main trade route to Uganda was longer and followed round the Southern tip of Lake Victoria. This was mainly to avoid crossing the country controlled by the fierce and war like Masai people. There are indications, however, that Swahili and Arab traders used the route through Kavirondo at times.²⁰

Mention has been made in history about Sudi the slaver who ravaged Bukusu shortly before the arrival of Thomson in 1883. Incidents in slave trading have been cited in part of Baluyia adjoining Uganda. The slavers used to enter Baluyia from the North of Lake Victoria; or paddled their boats across Berkely Bay to Bunyala or Samia, capturing slaves and taking them to Busoga.²¹

After the coming of the Europeans, ivory as an item of trade was developed. The centre for this in the second half of the 19th century was Kwa-Sundu (Mumias). In 1889 Jackson and Gedge paid a visit to North Kavirondo to buy ivory on behalf of the Imperial British East Africa Company.²²

The barter trade of Baluyia was quite interesting whereby three chickens bought a hoe, three hoes bought a goat and three goats bought a cow.²³

The history of this area since the establishment of the British rule featured among other things, educational and economic development of this area.

The first European to set his foot on

this area was Joseph Thomson who visited the area in 1883. In October, 1885 Bishop Hannington passed through North Kavirondo on his way to Uganda. Sir H. Coville, the first commissioner of the British government to the protectorate of Uganda, founded an administrative sub-station at Mumias, with Mr. F. Spire in charge of it and in February 1895, C.W. Hobley was sent up to Mumias as a sub commissioner to open up an administrative centre in North Kavirondo.

The years from 1895 to 1902 were busy ones for the British officers at Mumias as the task of bringing all the subtribes of Baluyia under the British rule, was not an easy one. Most tribes and subtribes succumbed without much fuss with the exception of Bukusu and Kakalelwa. The British were forced to make use of Sudanese and Baganda soldiers to drive these people out of their forest hidings. During this warfare the groups who were resisting the rule were forced to destroy their forest dwellings and were made to settle in the open country. However after this peace reigned over Kavirondo area.

The establishment of the actual European rule began to be felt by the natives when taxation was introduced in 1899.

Taxes, to begin with, were levied in kind i.e., timber, goats, iron hoes, crocodile, labour, etc. which even owner of a hut had to pay to an extent equivalent to the sum of 3 rupees per year.²⁴

In subsequent years the traditional form of currency i.e., glass beads, cloth, brass wire, cowrie shells etc, were replaced by money currency and eventually the tax itself was levied in form of money.²⁵

With the completion of the Uganda Railway in 1901, Swahili and Indian traders arrived in Kakamega. These people opened up their businesses in remote parts of Kavirondo. By 1903 there were about 65 traders, Indians, Swahili and Arabs living at Mumias.²⁶

A few years later in 1905 a mission centre was opened in North Kavirondo. Missionary bodies have since played a part in the development of this areas as elsewhere. The Catholic Mill Hill Mission entered Kenya from the Ugandan side because Baluyia

was still a part of the Eastern province of Uganda in 1904. They established a permanent mission at Mumias. Later on many mission stations were set up and got involved in promotion of education for the people. The C.M.S. started Maseno School as early as 1908 having arrived in 1906. They opened Butere in 1927 and founded hospitals and schools in both places.

The spreading of Islamic religion is not so marked in the history of this area. The main factors of influence were the Swahili and Arab traders who gained a little influence over Mumias and Mbale in Maragoli.

By 1909 there was a flourishing native market at Mumias and Indian shops had been established at Yala, Marama, Malakisi and Kakamega. The British government started issuing cotton seeds for growing and by 1910 government experimental cotton plots had started in Butso. Things like bicycles and clothes were now being sold at shops in full swing.²⁷

The history of this area from the

beginning has been characterised by a steady process of westernization which has transformed the ways of life of the people.



PLATE LVII:

A monkey garment (Shisero Shieikhondo) worn by old men at funerals of important people.

PLATE LVIII:

A skin garment for the back.

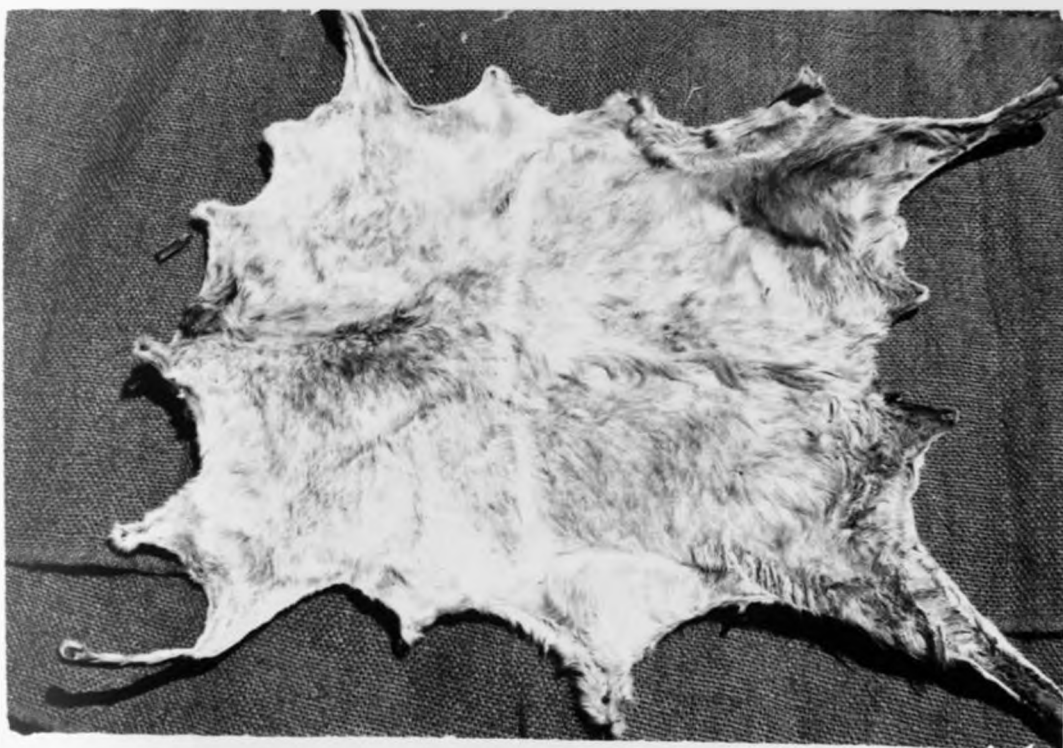




PLATE LIX:

A cap (Induviri) colobus monkey skin attached to a wooden frame, lined with a band of silver brocade (of recent times). Worn at funerals and weddings.

PLATE LX:

The Inside View of the Cap (Induviri)



CHAPTER 7

7.6 FOOTNOTES

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CHAPTER 8

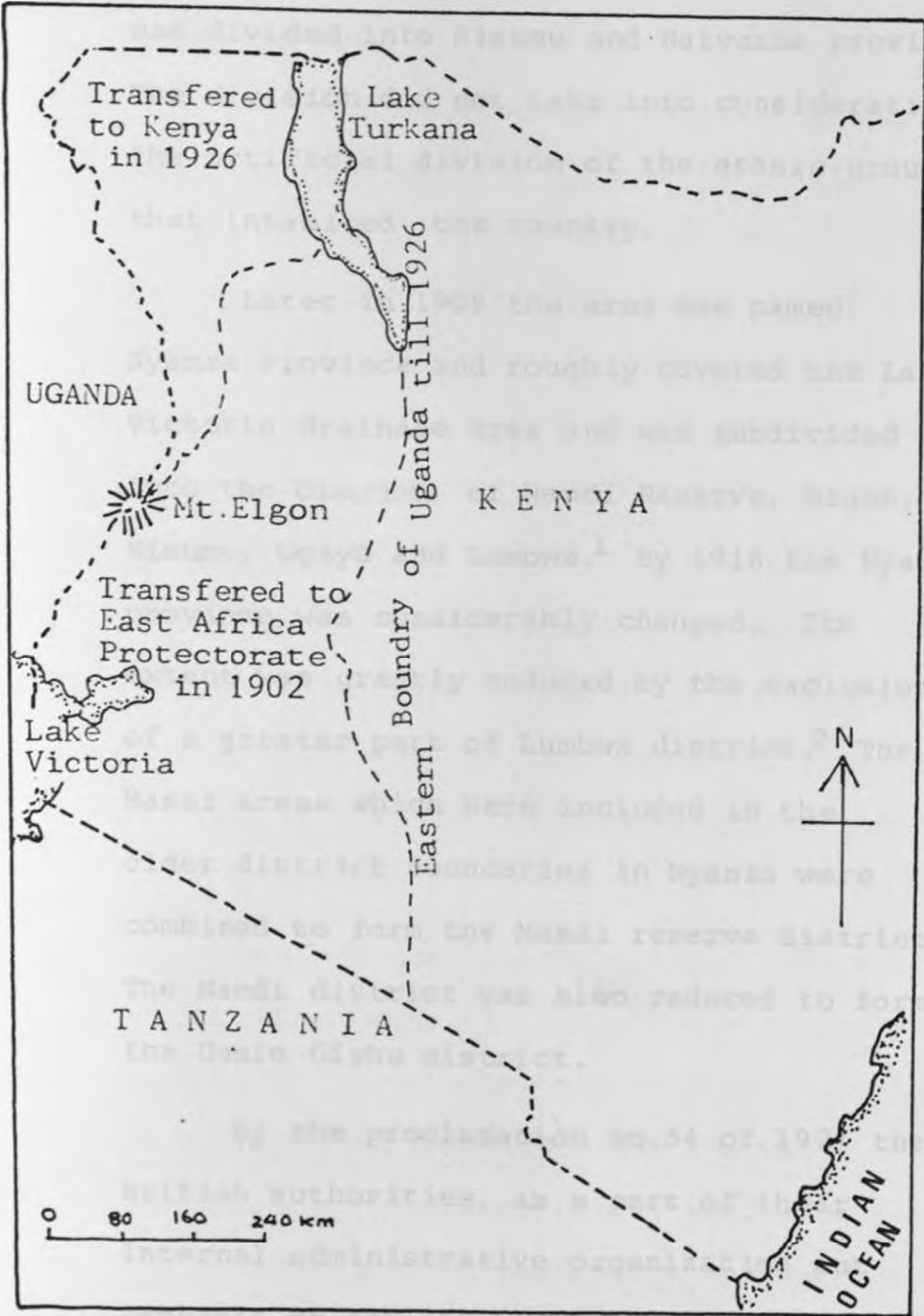
THE LUO

The Luo of Kenya occupy the part of country surrounding the shores of Lake Victoria which fall into the Kenya border.

The area is bound on the north by mount Elgon, on the east by the Nandi hills and on the west by Lake Victoria. The Luos are generally settled on the part of the lake called the Kavirondo Gulf which pushes into Kenya to about thirty five miles. The area generally referred to as Nyanza Province took its name from the Lake Victoria which was also called Victoria Nyanza.

As seen earlier, Kenya began as a coast based interest and it was not until the declaration of the British protectorate in 1895, that the boundary of the protectorate was actually extended to Lake Victoria to the west. This was done to strengthen the British East Africa Company's hold over Uganda and it also provided the land and human resources which were badly needed by the company. The whole of the lake basin was extremely well populated.

The transfer of this area (see map No.20 p.305)



Map No 20
Western Boundary of Kenya 1926

was formally finalised by the British foreign office in March 1902 and the area was divided into Kisumu and Naivasha province. The division did not take into consideration the artificial division of the ethnic groups that inhabited the country.

Later in 1909 the area was named Nyanza Province and roughly covered the Lake Victoria drainage area and was subdivided into the Districts of Nandi Reserve, Elgon, Kisumu, Ugaya and Lumbwa.¹ By 1918 the Nyanza province was considerably changed. Its extent was greatly reduced by the exclusion of a greater part of Lumbwa district.² The Masai areas which were included in the older district boundaries in Nyanza were combined to form the Masai reserve district. The Nandi district was also reduced to form the Uasin Gishu district.

By the proclamation No.54 of 1924 the British authorities, as a part of their internal administrative organization put emphasis on the settled urban areas as opposed to the predominantly African Areas, Thus in the Nyanza province, Kisumu town, Miwani and some settled areas overlooking

Nyando valley were designated Extra Provincial District.³

In 1933 the ten provinces in Kenya were amalgamated into four large provinces of Nyanza, Rift Valley, Central and Coast Province. This marked the beginning of the present day boundaries in Kenya. By 1962 the boundaries of Nyanza Province were again changed with the North Nyanza becoming the Western Province.

The Luo mostly lived in the south and central Nyanza and in the southern part of Uganda with a few of them occupying areas located in Western province bordering the Central Nyanza.

The Luo area can be divided into two distinct geographical zones. The lowlands bordering the shores of Lake Victoria with an altitude of 3000-4000 feet and the highlands with an altitude of 4000-5000 feet, the country sloping westwards to the shores of the lake. In Central Nyanza there is a narrow strip of lowland surrounding the Gulf. To the north eastern direction are the Kano plains and the Nyabondo valley. To the north

of the gulf is the Nandi escarpment.

The soil conditions of this varied geographical region also vary according to the lowlands and the highlands. The Southern Nyanza has a deep red soil with heavy grass growth. The Central Nyanza area is covered with laterite red soil with grass land and occasional bushland.

The lower areas have always been well suited to a mixed agricultural economy of pastoralism, fishing and seed agriculture, the average rainfall of the area being 30 to 40 inches a year with the highlands receiving as much as 60 inches a year.

The three main tribal groups that occupy the Nyanza area are the Luo, Gusii and Luyia. In the early history they were referred to as the Kavirondo. The Luyia occupy the country to the north of the Luos, the Nandi and Kipsigis to the north east and south east and the Gusii to the south. The Gusii and Luyia are of the Bantu origin and the Luo are of the Nilotic origins.⁴

8.1 THE HISTORY OF LUO

The Luo of Kenya who were earlier referred to as the Luo speaking people represent a southern migration from the southern areas of Baher-el-Ghaza in the Sudan.⁵

Racially the Luos are classified as Nilotes who mostly inhabited the White Nile region from 200 miles south of Khartoum to Lake Kioga.

During their migration they moved gradually into Uganda, parts of Congo, Ethiopia and eventually into western parts of Kenya. It is not very clear as to why they migrated but it is widely assumed that they may have come under frequent attacks from Ethiopians who have at various periods conquered parts of the Sudan. The Luo migration could have taken place due to overpopulation in their homelands.

Professor Ogot points out that 1000 AD is the most likely date by which the Nilotes had evolved as a distinct group.⁶

During the migration which lasted for several generations, some of the Luo broke up into smaller communities such as Acholi or

Alur with slight language differences.

The Luo migration into western Kenya is described by Professor Ogot as being into four successive waves:- ⁷

1. The Joka-Jok.
2. The Jok Owiny.
3. Jok Omolo.
4. A miscellaneous group comprising of the Suba, Sakwa, Asembo, Uyoma and Kano.

It is believed that a very large group of Luo first settled at Ramogi hill in Central Nyanza between 1490 and 1600. They remained around this area till about the middle of the 16th century and then finally moved into the Lake region. ⁸

The Joka-Jok were the first Luo to enter western Kenya and the majority of them migrated into South Nyanza between AD 1700-1760. They had settled at Uyoma and further migrated to Kanyamwa. The process of the Luo migration was finally completed when due to increasing population the Luos finally settled on the higher areas of Gem, North Ugenya, Kisumu and North Seme. ⁹

Upon their arrival in western Kenya the Luos were mainly pastoralists and cultivated mainly sorghum and millet. Being of riverine origins they were also very keen fishermen. Their selection of this area for settlement was mostly based on its close resemblance and similarities to their own homeland in Sudan.¹⁰

8 .2 THE PEOPLE.

The Luo being of Nilotic origins have Nilotic features and have at many times been referred to as having very dark skin, thick lips and broad noses, being very tall.

The Luo divide up the period of life as follows:-¹¹

Male:-

Raweri - Age from birth to twelve years.

Yawor - from Raweri to marriage.

Jadongo - middle age to death.

Female:-

Raweri - from birth to marriageable age.

Mbingi - from Raweri to marriage.

Nyanburi - young women with children.

Pim - past production.

The Luo social organization is based on a lineage system based on a patrilineal descent. The individual homestead which is controlled by the authority of its owner, referred to as 'dala' is the social and economic unit of utmost importance.¹²

The homestead is made up of the entire family of the owner including his children. A homestead may have as many as twenty or more people at a time.

The homestead is built in a circular fashion with a hedge around it and all the huts inside arranged in a set pattern. (see Fig. 10 p. 313).

The senior wife's hut or 'mikayi' is a little larger than the rest and is placed at the back of the circle, the second wife's hut (Nyachira) is placed to the left of this; the third wife's (Rero) hut is placed to the right; the fourth wife's (Rero) hut is again to the left.

The owner's hut (Abila) is centrally placed. The bachelor's hut 'simba' is placed

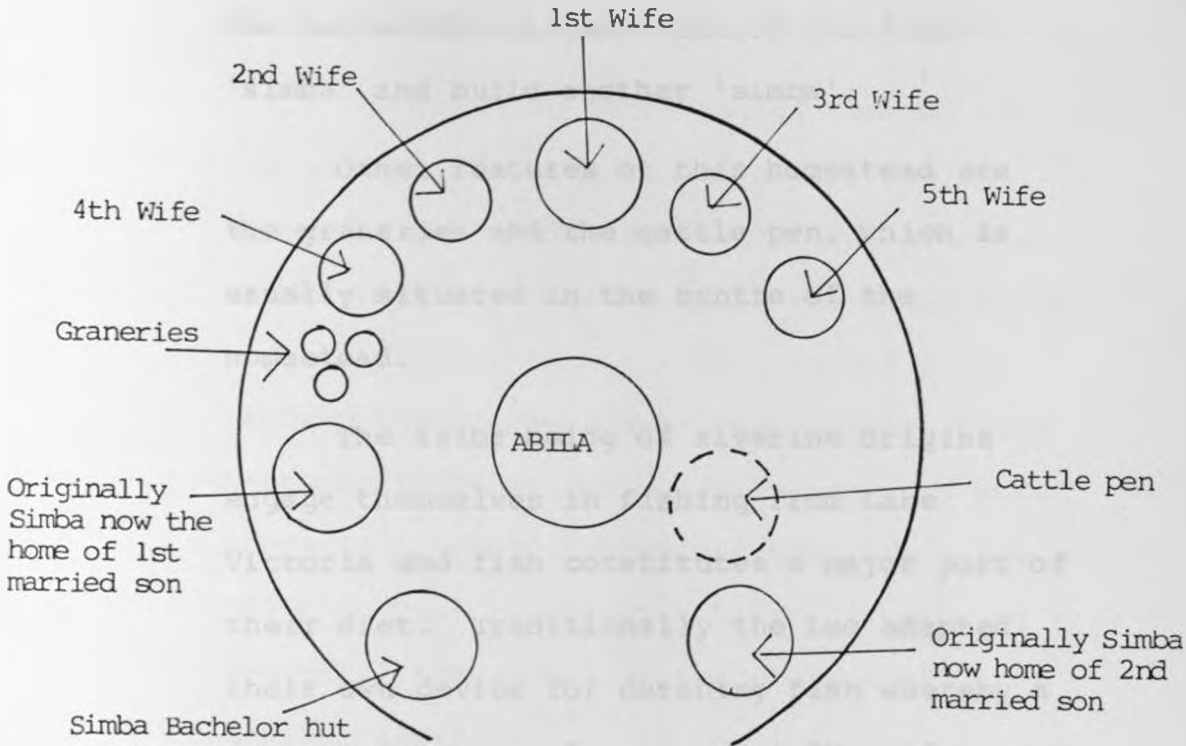


Fig. 10
The plan of a Luo homestead.

in front to the left of the entrance so as to assume a guarding position.

When the first son marries the rest of the bachelors will move out of the first 'simba' and build another 'simba'.

Other features of this homestead are the granaries and the cattle pen, which is usually situated in the centre of the homestead.

The tribe being of riverine origins engage themselves in fishing from Lake Victoria and fish constitutes a major part of their diet. Traditionally the Luo adapted their own device for catching fish whereby a long arrangement of papyrus stalks which were plaited together were attached to raft on which a fisherman stood. He slowly pushed the raft forward in a circular manner until he reached the tail end of the papyrus stalks. He then pulled the whole net like structure ashore hauling in all the fish that got trapped in it.

The Luos have traditionally been very accustomed to smoking tobacco. They did not chew the tobacco as many of the other tribes

did, but mainly smoked it through locally made long pipes. These were made up of a clay bowl attached by hollow reeds from the lake. Even the Luo women enjoyed smoking tobacco.¹³

According to their social customs the Luo elders wore blue colour beads 'Nyaluo', around the rims of their ears. The beads were attached by small brass rings and could be as many as fifteen on one ear. It was first assumed that these beads were ordinary trade beads as found in the other tribes, but were actually 'Jasper' and were picked up in the neighbourhood of Maragoli hills. They were generally washed out of the earth after heavy rainfalls.¹⁴

C.W. Hobbley mentions that the price of such a bead was as high as one cow for one bead.¹⁵

These beads were highly valued being handed down from generation to generation and not being given away or sold. It is assumed that the original wearers of these beads could have been races who mined at Zimbabwe and built their strong holds along the caravan routes from the north.

The Luo speak dholuo language which is a part of the southern Nilotic languages and is closely related to dialects of the Acholi, Lango and Alur tribes.

8 .3 CLOTHING.

Traditionally both men and women went about entirely naked with the exception of a string of beads around their waists.

The men wore clothing in form of small leather aprons only when they went to visit their mothers-in-law. The old men wore a skin fastened by a string from the neck and dropping down in the front covering the body from below the abdomen to the knees. The man who had children generally wore a goatskin and during the wars or hunting the younger men wore a skin hanging from the waist, covering the buttocks with the front being open. ¹⁶

Unmarried girls went about quite naked and usually wore a small leather apron when they were married. ¹⁷

Later in their history, records indicate that a custom for young girls to wear a narrow strip of cloth about nine inches wide

around the waist was spreading fast.

Unlike other tribes records do not indicate cloth featuring as a gift item during ceremonies. Items such as jembes (hoes), wire, beads etc. are frequently mentioned but there is no mention of cloth.¹⁸

Even during the burial ceremony, the deceased man was placed naked in the grave, with all ornaments, brass wire etc. having been previously removed.¹⁹

Both the Luo men and women have been cited as being extremely interested in ornaments. Women wore several strings of beads and coils of wire around their necks, legs and arms. They usually discarded a lot of these ornaments when they got married and usually wore the ones that remained their favourite.²⁰

The Luo men wore ivory and wooden bracelets on their arms and wrists and as seen earlier (social customs) they also wore beads on the outer rims of their ears.

The Luo children generally went about naked. It seems mostly hides were used to serve the purposes of bedding and mats.

The Luo people have also been known to supply hides for beddings and dressing to their neighbouring Gusii.

8.4 TRADE

Economic change in Luoland was first felt after 1900 when a number of different experiments were carried out by the colonial authorities towards growing of cotton and other crops. The other factor which affected the economy was the establishment of long distance trade which provided a regular occupation.

The long distance trade in caravans did create an awareness and interest in the people to exchange commodities which hitherto had only subsistence value. In turn a market was also found for local products such as ivory, cattle, wax, hides etc. outside the local economy.²¹

Items like textiles, beads and wires were the most sought after since they were for personal adornments and were considered items of prestige. The local communities were thus indirectly involved in trading when

in exchange for the goods they obtained, they supplied the caravans with food and other necessary items.

On the local scene, before the penetration of the caravans, trade was carried on by a barter system, by the Luos with their eastern and southern neighbours. The Luos obtained grain, soapstone, animal skins from the Gusii in exchange for livestock. Snake poison was also considered a very profitable item of trade. The most sought after snake was 'Rai Kambe'. To catch this snake the Luo made special clothing from buffalo hide, consisting of trousers, boots, jacket, gloves and a hood with small slits for the eyes.²²

The Luo cattle provided all the necessary hides and skins for bedding, shields, sandals and clothing.

The establishment of the British administration in Nyanza in 1899, and the subsequent hut tax collection in 1906, gave rise to the first steps towards cotton cultivation in this region.

By 1901, the railway from Mombasa to Kisumu was completed and the British

authorities felt that there was a strong need to cultivate a cash crop like cotton in this region to develop the region, collect taxes from the natives and to maintain the railways.

Ainsworth introduced cotton in this region in 1906-1907. In 1910 the British East African Corporation Limited established a first cotton ginnery in Kisumu. The main objective of this was to deal with seed cotton produced in Uganda. Efforts were also made to grow cotton in the Seme, Kisumu and Kano location but proved fruitless and the attempt was given up in 1913.²³

The British authorities considered the Luo to be rather slow in adapting new methods and argued that it took the Luos a great deal of time and instruction until they could accept that cotton was necessary to supplement their incomes for a better livelihood.

Thus the cotton industry took off to a slower start. From 1914 to 1922 cotton growing was almost non existent with small amounts growing at Samia and Wamia.

In 1920, the Uganda Government enacted a legislation prohibiting cotton passing to Kenya, only baling of half processed cotton continued at Kisumu.

In 1923 cotton growing was again encouraged along the Uganda border and a ginnery was established by Captain Gordon Small. Four Ginns were introduced in the Kibos flour mills to process the smaller amounts of cotton from the neighbouring areas. This marked the second phase of cotton growing activity in the Nyanza area.²⁴

Two more sites were granted by the British authorities; one at Nambare to Messers Folkes and Company; the other at Malakasi to Messers British Cotton Growers Association. Both the companies were, however, obliged to close down due to poor crops.

The third phase of cotton growing in this region started in about 1931-32. Vigorous efforts were made to promote the crop and the Luos seem to have responded favourably by increasing the output.²⁵

The various attempts by the authorities to establish cotton growing are

clearly reflected from the number of ginneries which were established in the area. Ginneries were started as follows:- 26

1. Kisumu	1910.
2. Sio	1923.
3. Kibos	1923
4. Asembo	1924
5. Nambare	1925
6. Malakasi	1925
7. Mumias	1925
8. Kendu	1934

The reasons for the ups and downs of the cotton industry can be attributed to several factors. The constant demand for labour supply for the settled areas took away much of the labour force for growing cotton and cotton being a relatively new crop had to fight its way upwards amongst other crops which were also receiving favourable prices. The transport facilities and roads were also not very favourable.

The price factor was another drawback. The price of cotton when it was first planted in the area was 30 cts. per pound of seed cotton. There was a gradual decline in prices

from this time upto 1933 when the cotton prices were recorded as the lowest, being only 8 cents per pound.

Production, however, started increasing from 1931 when One million pounds were sold and in 1934-35, 9.5 million pounds were recorded.²⁷

The main cotton growing areas of this region were:-²⁸

1. Country to the north of Nzoia river - entirely populated by Bantu tribes with a few Luo in Uganda.
2. Country south of Nzoia river mostly inhabited by the Luo.
3. From central Kavirondo boarder to the Tanzania boarder- area mostly inhabited by the Luo and some Bantu tribes.

With the prices falling very low due to the depression in 1934 a drive was made by the authorities to increase production in terms of economic value and Kenya was able to export 21,766 bales of cotton out of which 17,840 bales actually came from the Nyanza

area. From this period the cotton growing industry in Nyanza took up a leading position in the country.

In comparison to other areas of Kenya, this region proved to be a most suitable area for cotton growing where ginning was done at several places and eventually a textile mill being established to provide for the growing demand of textiles in Kenya.

The Luos were thus introduced to a new economy which boosted their life style and occupied them with serious efforts to grow this valuable crop.

8.5. PLATES



PLATE LXI:

Luo head dress 'Gak Ochimbo',
strap under chin decorated with
imported cowrie shells.



PLATE LXII:

Luo elders head dress 'Simuat'
made of cow hide and decorated
with cowrie shells.

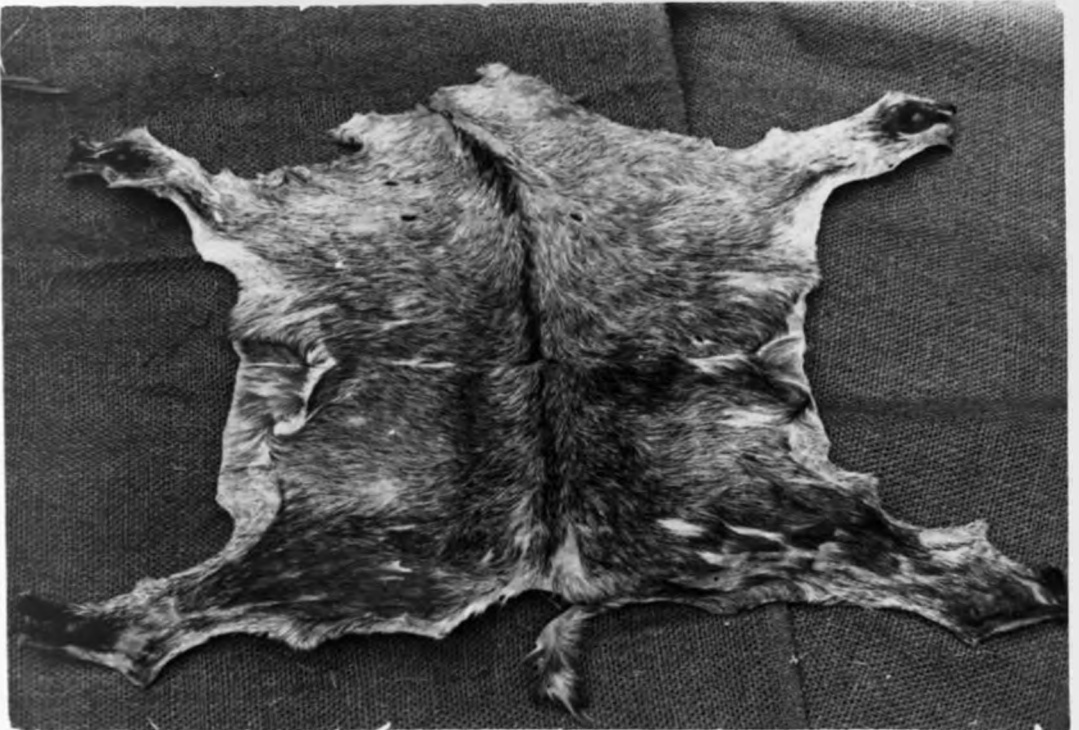


PLATE LXIII:

Luo head dress 'Simuat' worn by men attending funerals made of cow hide with ostrich feathers.

PLATE LXIV:

A skin garment worn by Luo men.



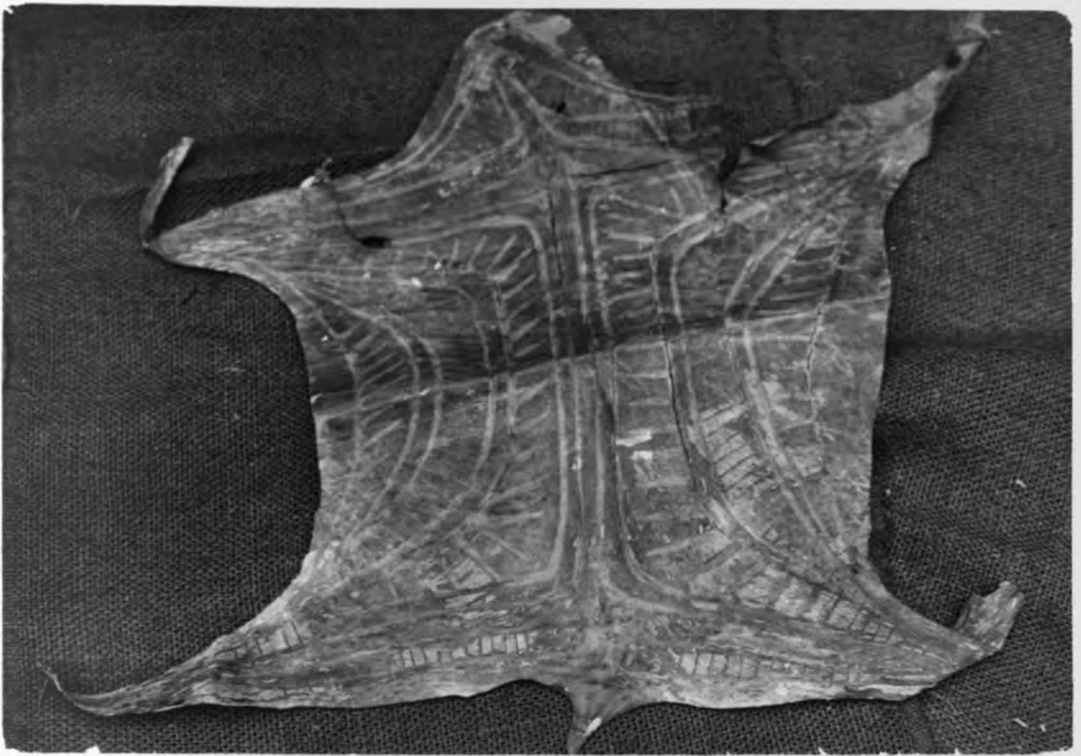


PLATE LXV:

A skin garment with hair
scrapped off and decorative
marks.

PLATE LXVI:

A calf skin apron 'Oruani'
worn by a bridegroom.





PLATE LXVII:

Luo head dress 'kima' prepared from a skin of a catline animal.

PLATE LXVIII:

A cowbell strap with a bell. The strap is of a canvas type material (of recent times).



CHAPTER 8

8.6

FOOTNOTES

1

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CHAPTER 9

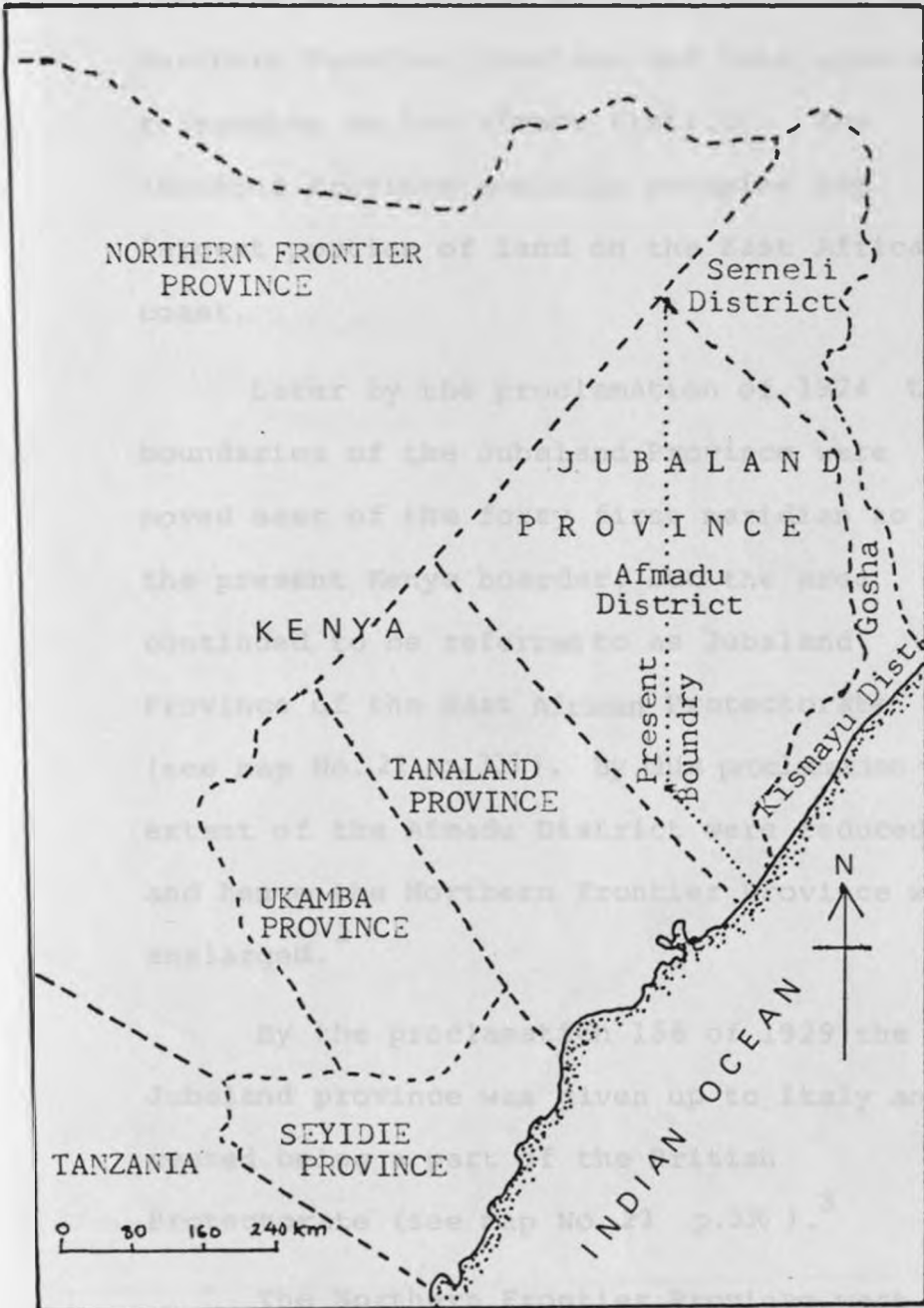
THE SOMALI

The presence of the Somali in Kenya can be attributed to the early settlement of this tribe on the Northern part of the East African coast and to its early history whereby they formed a part of present day Kenya by being included in Kenya as a part of the East African Protectorate.

Being considered a mixture of the Galla and the Arabs from Mecca the Somali are said to have settled around Kismayu area in the early 1800.

During the early British administration, the eastern boundaries of the British East Africa Protectorate, in 1918, included areas west of 41⁰ meridian which covered a considerable part of present day Somalia. This area was known as the Jubaland Province (see map No.21 p. 333) and had four administrative districts namely:-

1. Serenli District.
2. Afmadu District.
3. Kismayu District.
4. Gosha District.



Map No. 21.

British administrative boundary of East Africa Protectorate 1913.

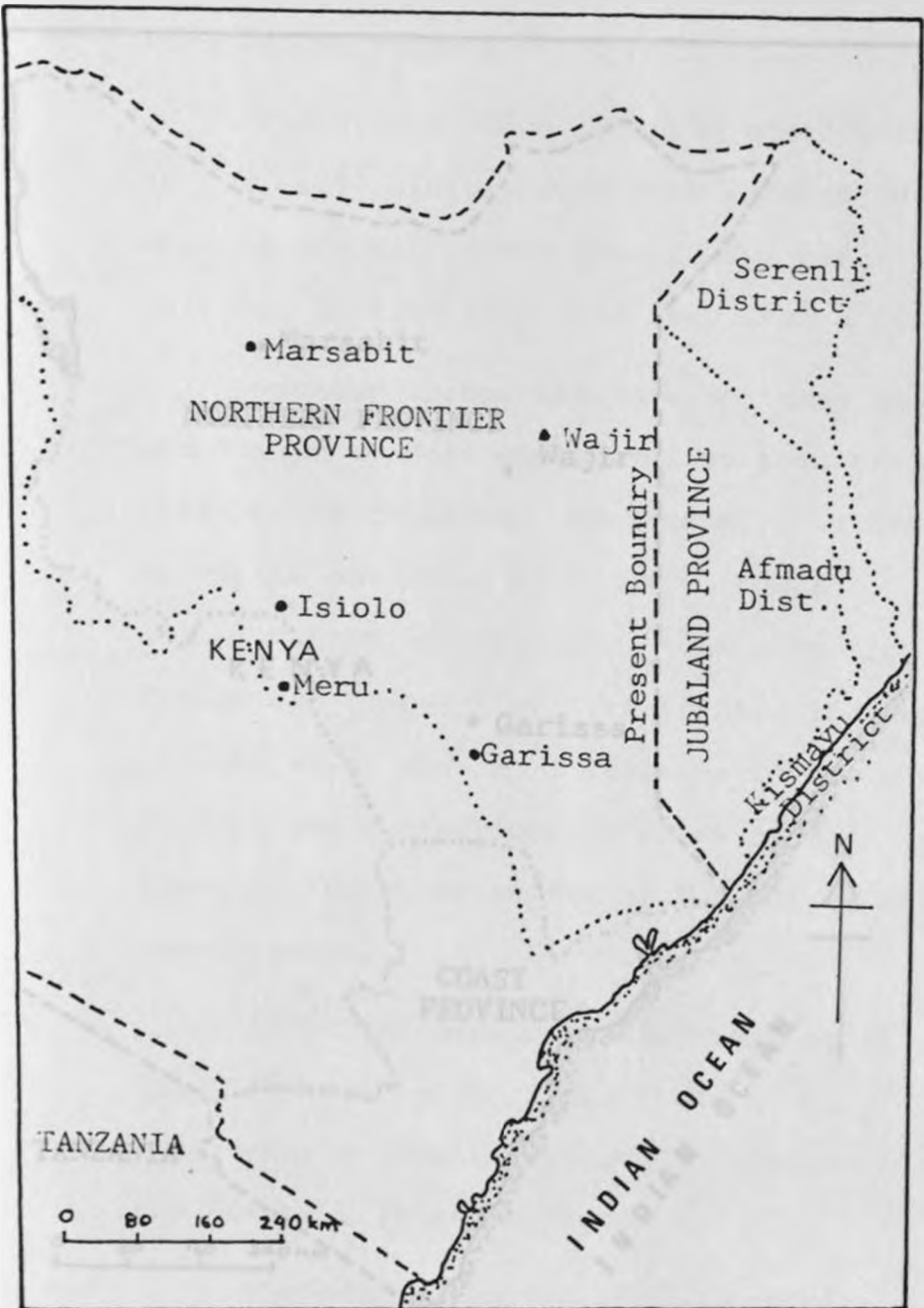
Coastal areas.

At this time a considerable chunk of the Jubaland Province actually occupied the Northern Frontier Province and this area was referred to as the Afmadu District. The Jubaland Province actually occupied the largest portion of land on the East African coast.

Later by the proclamation of 1924 the boundaries of the Jubaland Province were moved east of the forty first meridian to the present Kenya boarder, but the area continued to be referred to as Jubaland Province of the East African Protectorate (see map No. 22 p. 335). By this proclamation the extent of the Afmadu District were reduced and hence the Northern Frontier Province was enalarged.²

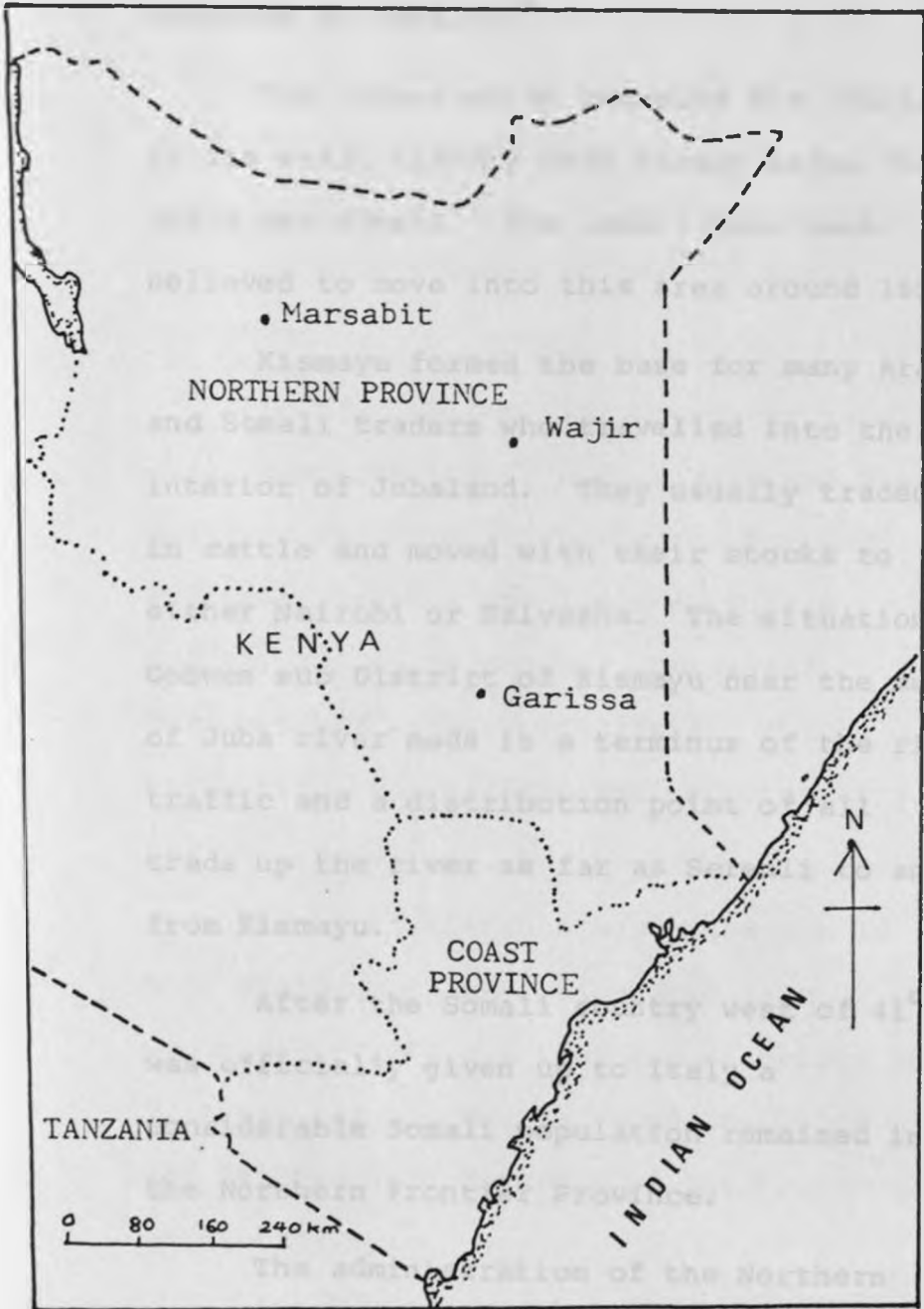
By the proclamation 158 of 1929 the Jubaland province was given up to Italy and ceased being a part of the British Protectorate (see map No. 23 p. 336).³

The Northern Frontier Province west of Somalia continued receiving its Somali influence. - The survey of ethnic groups inhabiting various provinces in 1963 showed



Map No. 22.

Administrative Boundries of Jubaland Province as at 1924.



Map No. 23
Administrative Boundaries (Eastern and North
Eastern) Kenya as at 1961.

that most of the Northern Province was occupied by Somalis.⁴

The tribes which occupied the Jubaland in its early history were mainly Bajun, Wa Gosha and Somali. The Somali have been believed to move into this area around 1850.

Kismayu formed the base for many Arab and Somali traders who travelled into the interior of Jubaland. They usually traded in cattle and moved with their stocks to either Nairobi or Naivasha. The situation of Gobwen sub District of Kismayu near the mouth of Juba river made it a terminus of the river traffic and a distribution point of all trade up the river as far as Serenli to and from Kismayu.

After the Somali country west of 41° was officially given up to Italy a considerable Somali population remained in the Northern Frontier Province.

The administration of the Northern Frontier Province began unofficially in 1909 with stations at Marsabit and Moyale and a police post at Uaso Nyiro later called Archer's Post. The area was referred to as a

district because it came under Naivasha Province. The district was officially established by the British authorities in 1910 with its headquarters at Moyale. In 1919 the headquarters of Northern Frontier District were changed to Meru in Kenia Province.⁵

In 1925 the military gave way to a civil administration in this area and the district was formally titled as Northern Frontier Province and included Moyale, Gurreh, Wajir, Telemugger, Garbatula, Marsabit and Samburu Districts. The provincial headquarters were shifted from Meru to Isiolo.⁶

Provincial status was withdrawn in 1934 although it was reinstated as a province in 1947 and included districts of Turkana, Isiolo, Moyale, Mandera, Wajir, and Garissa with Marsabit as the Provincial headquarters.

In recent times the area was referred to as North Eastern Province.

In the whole of Jubaland there were not many permanent rivers or streams with the

exception of the Tana and the Juba river. The water holes were at Wajir and El-Wak. Mostly the desert conditions prevailed over this area and the Somalis during the drier seasons moved towards Tana, the Lorian, the water holes or the Juba river. Mostly low dense type of scrubland forms the landscape of this region. Agriculture became almost impossible with dry conditions that the region offered and thus livestock was the only wealth owned by the Somalis. They often wandered with their herds in search of water and pastures. They have been physically conditioned by such wanderings and have developed a nomadic way of life.⁷

9.1 HISTORY OF THE SOMALI

The Somalis are of Hamitic origin, Islamic in their faith and are said to be a mixture of the Arabs from the time of Mohammed when some of the Arabs had fled from Mecca and settled elsewhere.

The Arabs who, as we have seen earlier, when they left their own home countries settled down at many points on the East African coast. They intermarried with

some of the local inhabitants and settled down at the Somali coast.

At the beginning of the christian period, the Somali occupied the strip of land along the Gulf of Aden. The Galla occupied the country south west of Aden and the Bantus were placed near Jubaland. The Somalis are said to be a mixture of the great Galla nation and the repeated migration of them from Arabia. ⁸

Burton described the Somali origins as:- ⁹

"The Somali, therefore, by their own traditions and their strongly marked physical peculiarities, their customs and their geographical position may be determined to be a half caste tribe, an offshoot of the great Galla race approximated like the originally Negro Egyptian, to the caucasian type by a steady influx of pure Asiatic blood....."

The Asiatic influence in them is also stressed by, Major H.G.C. Swayne whereby he says, ¹⁰ ".... it is supposed by some form of a resemblance, fancied or real, in the

languages, that the Somalis may be allied to the races of Hindustan."

The two early groups of Somali were named Ishaak and Darud from their ancestors Sheikh Ishaak bin Ahmed and Sheik Jaberti bin Ismail. Darud was the son of Sheikh Jeberti.¹¹

The Habr Awal, Habr Gerhajis and Habr Toljaala tribes were offsprings of the Ishaak group and the Ogaden, Bertiri, Abbasgul, Geri, Dolbahanta, Warsingali, Midjerten, Usbeyan and Marehan were the offsprings of the Darud section.¹²

The Somalis often use collective tribal prefixes such as Rer, Habr, and Ba Habr.¹³

When the Somali moved into the stretch of country which they occupy today, they made the Bantu people who occupied that area to flee into present day Kenya. At this time the country from Barawa to Port Danford was occupied by two tribes known as Tunni and Wardei. These two tribes were driven away by the Somalis after many battles, last of which took place at Gobwen.¹⁴

The Wardei were made to flee towards Lamu and Tana land and the Tunni were driven

off towards Mogadishu.

From this period onwards there was a steady migration of Somali from the north and the towns of Gobwen, Hellatimbo, Magaraad, Hallawalood, Hadjwen and Yonti were settled.

Hadjwen was the principal town where the Ishaak and the Darud built large schools and established their headquarters.

The above settled areas of the Somali later came to be known as Jubaland and southern Italian Somaliland. Soon after this settlement the Somalis sent a delegation to the Sultan Sayid Bargash of Zanzibar, requesting him to establish a trading post at Kismayu.¹⁵

The Sultan granted the Somali request and sent some traders and a small force of soldiers to establish a trading post.

To begin with the Arab-Somali relationship was cordial but this did not last very long. An Arab soldier while drinking water from the river at Hellatimbo was attacked by five Somalis and this provoked the Arabs to fight the Somalis. A war ensued and the Herti and Ogaden Somalis attacked

and fought the Arabs for eight days.

About two years later the Sultan of Zanzibar fearing to loose his hold over this area of East Africa, asked for protection from the Sultan of Turkey. The Sultan of Turkey granted him this protection and advised Sayid Bargash to hoist a flag of Turkey on his domains and also promised that a ship would be sent out of Turkey every six months to enforce this protection. ¹⁶

On his way back from Turkey, the Sultan of Zanzibar stopped at Aden where he met H.M. Commissioner to discuss the political situation in the north coast of East Africa. The Commissioner convinced Sayid Barghash not to fly the Turkish flags on his domains and offered British protection to the Sultan who eventually accepted it. ¹⁷

Three years later the Turks landed on the North coast, occupying Barawa and later Kismayu. Turkish flags were hoisted over this area. The Turks ventured as far as Lamu where they met with armed resistance from the residents who were prepared to meet the Turks.

The Turks led by Ibrahim Pasha returned

to Kismayu and later proceeded to the mouth of Juba river with Turkish soldiers to occupy the area.

Upon hearing of this Turkish invasion of his domains the Sultan of Zanzibar requested the British Consul at Zanzibar for assistance. The British consul agreed to this request on condition that the slave trade in this region should be stopped. The Sultan reluctantly agreed to this condition and the Turks were made to leave the area.

Since the Turks did not offer any resistance to the British while leaving this region it was assumed that the British had actually asked the Turks to land troops so as they could succeed in abolishing the slave trade from this region.

This assumption was later confirmed by the British when the British East Africa Company took over the administration of this area and appointed a Vice Consul at Kismayu.¹⁸

The Gosha area was settled later. This settlement was mainly made up of escaped slaves who ran away from their masters and settled on the banks of the Juba river.

The origins of most of these slaves was from the Italian Somali land although some were from Malindi and Rabai area.

The name Gosha was used because of the tsetse fly which infested this area and the sickness caused by the bite of the fly was known as Gosha by the Somali. When this area was settled by the slaves, other slaves who often escaped sought refuge in Gosha. Later the people here intermarried and settled down to be known as Wa Gosha.¹⁹

9.2 THE PEOPLE

Early description of a Somali by Burton
20
says:-

"..... The head is rather long than round, and generally of the amiable variety, it is gracefully put on the shoulders, belongs equally to Africa and Arabia, and would be exceedingly weak but for the beauty of the brow. As far as the mouth, the face, with the exceptions of high cheek bones is good; the contour of the forehead ennobles it; the eyes are large and well formed and the upper features are frequently handsome and expressive. The jaw, however, is almost

invariably prognathous and African; the broad, turned out lips betray approximation to the Negro....."

Most early references have shown the marked and strong Arab or Asiatic resemblances of the Somali. The Arab influence can be traced to their origins and migration southwards from Aden.

Mostly the Somali are slightly built and tall and have been referred to as being very active due to the hard life which they are exposed to. Several years of wondering into the wilderness, with the main preoccupation of looking for pastures and water have moulded the Somali into a physique which is ideally suited to their way of life.

The female were described by Burton as:-²¹

".... With massive rounded features, large flat craniums, long big eyes, broad brows, heavy chins, rich brown complexions, and round faces, they greatly resemble the stony beauties of Egypt..... One of their peculiar charm is a soft, low and plaintive voice derived from their African progenitors.."

Somalis are mainly Islamic in their

religion and the men often marry as many as four wives in the Islamic traditions. They like to have as many children as possible to increase the power of their particular tribe. The children of each wife are distinguished by a prefix of Ba before the name of the tribe of the wife. The male children are circumcised at the age of seven or eight.

The main names of the Somali men are based on the combination of basic islamic names of Ali, Hassan, Essa, Ismail, Gadid etc. Mostly the children are named after circumstances under which they are born, e.g. 'Gadid' suggests a man born at noon, 'Waberri' suggests a man born in the morning.

Nicknames are more common in the Somalis and they often gave nicknames to Europeans around them. One example of this is the name 'Gadweina'²² meaning big beard.

The social organization of the Somali is based upon the tribe, the subtribe, the clan and the family referred to as 'Jilib'. Thus a man would describe himself as first the tribe, then a sub tribe, then a family and would go ahead to use the prefix Ba before

his mothers name to suggest whose son he is.²³

If a Somali had many sons and a large family he could call himself a separate clan and sometimes the weaker clans had to unite with each other or else they would be looted and absorbed by stronger clans.

Usually the Somali add the names of their fathers to their own, but do not have a surname in the real sense of it.

The Somali village is usually made up of a number of huts which are shaped like bee hives and are called 'Gurgi'. The entire village is usually surrounded by a thorn fence and in the centre are a number of pens where sheep and goats are kept overnight.²⁴

The huts are usually carried from place to place on camel's backs and task of erecting and pulling them down is usually performed by the women. The men are responsible for putting up the fence around the village.

The hut is usually made up of a skeleton of sticks which is covered by skillfully woven mats which are made out of grass and fibre from the smooth inner bark of the

'araru' tree. Sometimes the covering is made out of a bullock hide which is stretched out over the framework. This makes a completely waterproof covering. The interior is usually divided into two compartments. The compartments are created by a hanging mat which acts as a screen.²⁵

The main diet of the tribe is made up of camel milk and mutton which they obtain from their herds. Being quite self sufficient in this manner they do not move about except in search of pastures and water.

The women assume a lower position in the Somali set up. The father of many daughters is considered to be rich because when his daughters marry he receives a price in form of a dowry from the husband to be. Traditionally the dowry consisted of two or three horses and about two hundred sheep. The father often gave this dowry back to the daughter. The women generally work harder than men, Part of their daily work includes tending the sheep and cattle, drawing water and hewing wood.²⁶

The water is usually brought from water

holes or wells by women in water bags referred to as 'hans'. This contains about three to four gallons of water. The Somali women carry the 'hans' on their back like they carry their babies. The 'hans' are made of plaited bark and easily break or leak.²⁷

Another industry that the women folk engage themselves in is plaiting of mats. These mats are made out of the stripped barks of trees which are sometimes chewed or beaten by stones for the fibre which is then twisted into ropes.

While the camp is moving the women folk also march with their men and often help to lead a caravan of the camels. The long marches have been recorded to be at times, about four hundred miles.

When a Somali man commits a murder or kills another Somali, the relatives of the deceased can make claims for blood money. The blood money is usually paid by a number of camels which is sometimes as high as a hundred camels. About half of this number is considered to be enough if the person killed is a woman.²⁸

For the loss of a limb or an eye about fifty camels have to be paid. Cases of this nature were mainly sorted out at local levels with the tribal leaders being judges of how many camels had to be paid.

Each Somali village chose its own chief by an election which was held in a village gathering. The chief having been chosen was usually presented with a white cloth for a turban which was worn during the meeting of the council or for any other ceremonial occasion.²⁹

Of the Somalis represented in the former Jubaland province of Kenya were the Marehan who were the descendants of Ishaak and the Ogaden and Herti Somalis who were the descendants of the Darud (see notes on the history of Somali).

The Marehans were again sub divided into three sections of Hassan, Isak and Galti. This section of the Somali living in Jubaland possessed a quantity of horses and camels but had few cattle. They mostly occupied the northern section of the Jubaland province which was later called Serenli district.

To the south near Kismayu were settled mostly the Herti which were further subdivided into the Dolbahanta Wasengelen and Midjertein.³⁰

The Dolbahanta were settled in the country east of the Juba river. Most of the Wasengelen were scattered in the French Somali land and the Midjertein inhabited the country around Gobwein extending to Port Dunford.³¹

The Herti section of the Somali tribe were closely associated to the Arabs who frequently visited the Kismayu area. Their contacts with the Arabs kept them in the coastal region of the Jubaland province where they traded with the Arab settlers. This group of Somali was the first to submit to the British rule in the East African region.

9.3 CLOTHING

The Somali men, traditionally dressed in a long robe in the fashion of an Arab Khanzu. This garment was called 'tobe' by the Somalis. A 'tobe' was made up of a piece of calico of double width, sewn in the middle with a total length being about 8 yards.

The 'tobe' was draped over a Somali in the fashion of a Roman 'Toga. Burton describes it as "... The tobe or Abyssinian 'Quarry' is the general garment of Africa from Zyala to Bornou. 32

The 'tobe' in many instances has resembled closely to the garments worn by the Arabs of North African deserts.

Usually a 'tobe' was made out of a white calico but often looked like a burnt Sienna colour, having being dipped in red clay to give it a bit of colour.

It was a garment of many uses and was worn in a variety of ways. Generally it was thrown over one or both shoulders, a turn was given around the waist and the rest of it allowed to fall to the ankles. During the cold weather, the head was muffled up in it and while sleeping it was used to cover the whole body from head to the feet. In summer time the 'tobe' was allowed to fall below the waist with the part that covered the shoulders being wound many times around the waist. 33
waist.

The part of the 'tobe' which hung loose



Fig. 11
Somali men dressed in 'tobe'.

on the left shoulder sometimes had decorative silk fringes of red and yellow colour.

A variation of the regular 'tobe' was the 'Khaili tobe' which was made of striped coloured cloth in red, white and blue, each colour being in two shades and the garment having a narrow light yellow coloured fringe. Generally the 'khaili tobe' also never varied much.³⁴

A Somali male dress was generally made up of a white 'tobe' or a 'khaili tobe' a shield and a spear and a long dagger called 'bila-wa' which was strapped around the waist.

When the Somali men are travelling or at war they modify their way of dressing. A loin cloth either plain or brightly coloured is worn around the waist, supported by a wide tanned leather belt. This garment is also worn by the Swahili men and is called a 'Kikoi' in swahili. The origins of 'kikoi' are said to be Somali and this became an item of great demand in Lamu archipelago and was usually imported from Kismayu. Initially it must have been imported from Arabia although some records vaguely indicate that it was an item

of textiles which was actually woven in Somalia.

The upper part of the body was then dressed in a piece of calico like a half 'tobe' which was sometimes used to conceal the weapons and at other times used to cover the head from the intense heat of the region.³⁵

On the feet the men wore sandals made out of hides. The sandals were made out of several thicknesses of skin sewn together. The most prized skin in Jubaland was that of a Giraffe and Rhino which were rare and were used for belts, shields, sandals and sometimes water bottles.³⁶

The male dress was made complete by a water bottle and a prayer mat. The water bottle was made out of plaited grass and made watertight by an application of animal fat. The prayer mat was generally of Ogaden origins and was in form of a very thick tanned leather. When not in use it was usually hung on the shoulders to avoid chaffing from the spears.³⁷

Distinction in dress of different tribes was not a very outstanding feature.

The only difference being noticed was that some of the tribes of Ishaak Somali did not wear a 'tobe' and wore only the 'kikoi' type of loin cloth.³⁸ This may have come about as an environmental factor more than being a feature of distinction amongst tribes.

The distinctions in tribes could be drawn from the shape of spear blades on the spears which the Somali carried. Generally there were two varieties of these; one was plain with a fish hook type of blade, used for throwing at a longer distance; the other was a leaf type blade bound by brass wire used for short distances.³⁹

The shields that the Somali carried were generally made out of either bullock or rhinoceros hide, in a circular fashion with a diameter of about eighteen inches.

Traditionally, the man who had killed another man especially an enemy was allowed to wear an ostrich feather as a part of the head dress. The young men admired this very much and were always eager to gain the privilege of wearing the feathered head-dress.

The Somali men wore their hair in many

ways depending on their age. The younger Somali males wore their hair long and kept it anointed with ghee. The older men shaved off their hair and sometimes grew a beard. The children were generally shaved off their hair.

The women traditionally wore a similar garment to the 'tobe' worn by the men, but the style of wearing differed from that of the men. The edge of the garment was knotted over the right shoulder and the garment was generally girdled around the waist. From the waist hung another piece of cloth which was sometimes brought over the head in form of a hood.

Variations in the dressing of the women were again marked by the stripped cloth which was worn in the fashion of the khaili tobe. The women dress sometimes comprised of two pieces of fabrics; one wound around the chest and slightly girdled at the waist; and the other wound around the shoulder and the head.

Young women and girls wore their hair in carefully plaited pig tails while the married women wore it in a chignon enclosed in a indigo dyed cotton which resembled a



Fig. 12

Somali woman in a traditional dress.

dark blue bag and usually hung down to the neck.⁴⁰

The Somali women who lived around the towns preferred to wear clothes worn by the Arab women which was a short sleeved robe extending to the knee and a 'futih' or a loin cloth underneath.

The Somali children generally went about naked.

Several incidents in early Somali life indicate that they were familiar with cloth not only as being used for wearing but as having other uses. For instance the Somali men who cared a lot about their weapons usually kept their shields covered in calico. Cloth also featured as an item in the settlement of marriage of a young girl where amongst sheep and necklaces a piece of cloth was necessary.

From the early history of the tribe there are no incidents which have described the Somali people as going about naked like many of the East African tribes in the interior of the country. Their connections with the Arab, right from the time of their southern migration to the time when they requested the Sultan of

Zanzibar to establish trading post at Kismayu may be an important factor in their exposure to the Arab way of dressing. The Arabs had been trading with the East African coast for many years before the arrival of the Europeans on the scene. One item that prominently featured amongst the trade goods was cloth and the Somali connection with the Arabs always made it possible for them to obtain cloth.

References do however, show that some attempts were made at dying the 'tobe' by red soil. This was done in the primitive fashion by dipping the garment in the wet soil and may have become necessary due to the age of the garment which could have lost its brilliant whiteness after some use.

As far as the colours are concerned, mostly bright colours such as yellows, reds and blues were used. These were reflected in the heavy borders of the kikoi as mentioned in this section of the study.

Records from the early blue books on the imports and exports from the British protectorate protectorate indicated a spinning and weaving

industry in Jubaland but details for the same have proved difficult to trace from the available sources.

9.4 TRADE

Records of trade in the Jubaland province which marked the original inclusion of the Somali tribe in Kenya, have been difficult to trace since the area was formerly given away to the Italians in 1924 and the Somali in Kenya became a part of the Northern Frontier Province.

Trade, however, had been carried out in the Somali settled area from its earliest times. This can be seen when the Somali made a request to the Sultan of Zanzibar to establish trading post at Kismayu. The Arabs and the Indian sailors were, however, frequenting the northern coast before this request was made.

The cattle trade in this area was mainly in the hands of the Somali. The southern Somali tribes often raided cattle from the Gallas and sold the cattle to the people of Lamu. In their early history the Somalis are said to have confronted even the Masai while

raiding the Galla cattle.

As can be seen from the history of the Masai reserve (see the chapter on the Masai) the Somalis featured mainly in the cattle trade of the reserves during the colonial times. The Somalis drove their great herds of cattle to the northern Masai reserves for trade. The British government in 1912 was forced to stop this trade temporarily due to the increasing numbers of cattle on the allocated area of grazing land.

On the local scene the Somalis involved themselves in smaller industries such as tanning the leather and hides for shields, sandals, belts and prayer mats etc. They also made spear blades and spear handles from the woods of the trees around them. The Somali women were involved in plaiting of mats and water bottles.

The slave settlement of the Wa-Gosha was to a smaller scale involved in growing maize, millet, sim sim and groundnuts which were offered for sale in exchange for items of need such as cloth.⁴¹

The items of trade in imported goods

were mainly handled by the Indian and Arab traders. Items such as rice, sugar, salt, spices, ghee, somali butter, sim sim oil, bananas, dates, European flour, tea, native coffee, matches, cloth (native and european), hardware such as pots, pans, knives and paraffin oil featured in the shops at the major trading centres such as Kismayu.

Cloth as elsewhere in Kenya featured prominently in the early barter system of trade throughout this region.

Types of fabrics which were in demand were as calico (bafta), twill (murdufu) American calico (americani), coloured clothes, women's black cloth and silk pieces which were used as head scarves.

There was a great demand for 'bafta', coloured clothes and the women's black cloth. The Somali were not generally prepared to purchase the American and the twill (Murduf some times referred to as Turkey twill because of its red colour. In payment, sometimes, the Somali offered either their cattle or ghee. Later when the coinage of rupees was introduced the Somali paid the following values

for the textile items:- 42

8 yards piece of calico (Bafta) ..	Rs.4.00
8 yards piece of twill (Marduf) ..	Rs.3.25
8 yards piece of American\	Rs.2.75
Coloured cloth (cheap)	Rs.4.00
Coloured cloth (special)	Rs.7.00
Women's black cloth	Rs.0.20
Silk scarves squares	Rs.1.00

Other items of interest besides the cloth, to the Somali women were perfumes.

Somalis being quite self sufficient in their requirements of food did not have to spend much on items like rice but they did prefer some Indian corn which was a sought after item. Their needs of clothing sometimes made them sell their stocks or products like ghee to purchase the cloth from the trading centres. The average price of a cow, after the introduction of the rupee was about 35 rupees and 36 lbs of ghee sold for about 22 rupees. It appears that ghee was very expensive item in Jubaland and did have a considerable purchasing power. 43

CHAPTER 9

9.5 FOOTNOTES

1

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CHAPTER 10

THE IMPETUS OF CHANGE

10.1 INTRODUCTION AND PENETRATION OF TEXTILES
IN KENYA:

As seen from the preceeding chapters all the tribal groups, with the exception of the coastal Swahili and the Somalis from the north coast before being exposed to cloth, were mainly going about naked or used hides and skins to prepare scanty garments which they wore.

As regards to the coastal Swahili; they were very much affected in their way of dressing by their association with the early Arab traders who had settled at the coast in its very early history. Cloth was never considered, as such, an item of novelty because it had featured prominently in the way of dressing all along the coast. The early travellers always mentioned gifts of cloth to the kings or sultans who ruled at various points on the East African coast. References from the narratives of these travellers also cited the kings as being adorned in robes of silk, satins and velvets.

Some references also indicate silk being produced at Pate in its early history¹.

Some form of textile industry was also in progress in Mogadishu which fell in the domains of the sultans who ruled the coast from Zanzibar.²

Although many sources indicate that the economic development of the interior of the country began with the coming of the Europeans, it should be noted from the chapter on the swahili, that the Arabs had already organised a form of trading in the interior before the Europeans set their foot on the East coast.

The Arabs who were finding alternative areas for settlements found the island of Mombasa a suitable place and the town of Mombasa was settled by them in around 8th century A.D.³

The Arab trade with the people of the interior was mainly organised in form of trading caravans which ventured in the interior of the country in search of items such as ivory, gold, rhino horns, tortoise shells, beeswax etc. These items were brought back to the coastal towns from where they were sold off to Indian and Persian

traders who visited the coastal towns periodically with the monsoon winds.

The Arabs in turn obtained items such as textiles, beads and wires from these traders and usually used them as trade goods while trading into the interior of the country.

Cloth became the most commonly exchanged form of trade goods in the barter system of trade in the interior. Cotton textiles and piece goods from India took a leading position in the early exchange system of trade.

The Giryama, who were the immediate neighbours of the coastal swahili were the first amongst the people of the interior to come in contact with any foreign influence. Being of bantu origins and living in the immediate hinterland they sometimes intermarried with the Arabs and settled at the coastal towns and were grouped together with the coastal swahili.

With their very superstitious and suspicious nature this group of people mostly kept to themselves. They chose not to be influenced by their contacts with the

Swahili and the Arabs.

Due to their social systems and ways of life, the Giriyaama hardly ever ventured to work at the coastal towns. They were mostly self sufficient in their needs and were only forced to seek employment during famines when no food was available.⁴

The Giriyaama have been recorded to be wearing some form of clothing from the early history. Barbosa in the early 16th century described them as going naked waist upwards. Various instances have been cited by the early missionaries where the Giriyaama have been mentioned as wearing a piece of cloth around their waist. They have also been recorded as using cloth in their various ceremonies including burials.

Their exposure to cloth could well be attributed to their geographical position whereby they occupied the areas immediately behind the coastal towns from where they controlled the Kamba and the Galia trade with the coastal towns. They mostly acted as middle men in trade between the Kamba and the Swahili.

Being a totally self sufficient people, they only sold their grain to the coastal Swahili in exchange for cloth, knives and palm wine. The cloth they mainly used for wearing purposes. They obtained their ivory from the Gallas by exchanging mostly their grain. They in turn obtained cloth from the Swahili in exchange for the ivory.

In the early 19th century they organised their own trading expeditions to the Kamba country where they obtained cattle and ivory in exchange for cloth, poison and chains.

The greater demand for ivory in the eastern world set the Arab traders to venture further into the interior of the country to obtain this item which they could exchange with trade goods brought to the coast by various merchants. During these trips they came into the Kamba country where they found a group of people which was highly organised in internal form of trading which was also based on the barter system.

The Kamba country offered a great deal of elephants and thus an abundant source of

ivory. They sold the ivory to the coastal traders in exchange for cloth, wire and beads.

This form of trading marked the first phase of long distance ivory trade in the economic history of Kenya. Kitui became the centre of ivory trade and by about 1840 weekly Kamba caravans were recorded as carrying huge amounts of ivory to the coast.

The influx of Arab and Swahili merchants brought about a decline in the Kamba dominance in the local trade of the area. The Arabs offered cloth, beads and copper wire to the people. Cloth became an item highly in demand.

The value of cloth as a form of primitive currency began to be established. Cloth now had a purchasing power which no one single commodity had exhibited hitherto. Cloth could now fetch goats, cattle, food etc.

The Kambas started substituting cloth for the hides which they wore. The first missionaries to set their foot into the Kamba country recorded a few pieces of cloth as being worn by some of the Kamba chiefs.

The Maasai who were the neighbours of the Kamba were mainly pastoralists and were constantly at war with the Kamba. The Maasai were interested in possessing large herds of cattle to which they attributed their prosperity.

The Maasai were considered very fierce and warlike and did not let travellers pass through their country. Thus the long distance caravans found it difficult to pass the Maasai country to venture further into the interior of the country. The Maasai demanded special tributes from the travellers. Those who paid in wires, beads and cloth were allowed to pass through.

The Maasai came into prominence through the development and opening up of the interior. Traditionally the Maasai wore hides and skins which were mostly obtained from their herds of cattle. Their exposure to the commodity of cloth was again through the traders who passed through their country. They also came to appreciate this item and it was sought after from every traveller who passed through their country.

By the end of 19th century cloth had started reaching the Maasai country and many of the warriors were seen wearing garments of cloth. The Maasai also received their share of cloth from the various caravans which they raided. Cloth started gaining popularity over the leather garments and even featured in various ceremonies as banners and body garments.

The Maasai exposure to cloth did not come as a direct involvement of the Maasai in the trading system. Being mainly pastoralists, their main wealth was cattle. They received the cloth as bribes or as loot from their raids.

It was in the latter history of this region, when the Maasai reserves were established, that the actual trading centres were established where the Maasai could purchase cloth and blankets.

Attempts were made by the early travellers to open up short routes to Lake Victoria, thus opening up the Nyanza area for trade and also to establish a link with the regions in Uganda. To find these routes they had to cross the Maasai land.

Around Lake Victoria were settled the Wa-Kavirondo people and one of the group, that we have looked at earlier were the Abaluyia who were referred to by the early visitors to this areas as the bantu of North Kavirondo.

Their easterly neighbours were the Maasai and the Nandi and they are said to have been very much influenced in their way of dressing by their neighbours. They mostly wore very small covering on their bodies with the men wearing skins of goats and calves and the women wore aprons made out of skins. The warm climate of this area did not bring about a severe need for heavy form of dressing.

The imported cloth reached these regions at a much later stage than it did in the central areas of Kenya. Before the penetration of cloth, cowrie shells were used by this group for purchasing various items of need.

The Arab and the Swahili caravans had penetrated these regions at a much earlier stage, but the nature of their trade was quite different from that of the central Kenya regions. The caravans mainly came to this region to obtain slaves and not much of other

trade was carried on.

It was during the building of the Uganda railway and British rule that the first trader arrived in this region in 1901, and by 1903 there were about 65 traders, Indians, Swahili and Arabs, living at Mumias.

Another group inhabiting the Lake Victoria region is the Luo who are Nilotic people originating from the Nile areas.

Traditionally both men and women went about naked with the exception of a string of beads around their waists.

The long distance trade had created an awareness in the people to exchange commodities which hitherto had had only a subsistence value. The caravans had brought items like, cloth beads and wire which were sought after for personal adornment.

Later with the establishment of the British authority and the subsequent opening up of the country by the railways, a great economic change was brought about in this region. Markets and trading centres were established and the first major steps towards cotton growing in the region were taken in

1906. The region later became the largest cotton producing area in Kenya, thus producing enough raw materials for production of cotton textiles for Kenya.

The north eastern part of the Kenya is being inhabited by a mixed group of people majority of whom are the Somali who are of hamitic origins. A big area of present Somaliland fell into the British sphere of influence in the early history of the East Africa protectorate.

Although the Somalis were initially settled on the northern part of the East African coast, they moved into the interior of country to trade as far as the Masai reserves into the central regions of Kenya. Their association with the Arabs is as old as that of the Swahili and the Arabs.

Their use of cloth for dressing can not be considered a novelty because they have dressed in the fashion of the north African Arabs from antiquity. The presence of fabric in their nomadic life cannot be termed as being a result of trading with foreign traders who visited their areas.

Items of trade in imported goods were mainly handled by the Indian and Arab traders who had settled on the north coast in its early history. The demand for cloth was slightly different from the rest of the country. The Somali were not generally prepared to purchase the Americani (American calico) and Murdufu (Red Turkey twill) as was the case throughout the country.

Their needs of clothing sometimes forced the Somali to sell their cattle to purchase the cloth from the trading centres. In the earlier times the Somali offered their cattle or ghee for the purchase of cloth.

As seen from the notes above, the textiles were generally introduced from the coastal based trading towns to the rest of the country. Textiles were adapted very quickly for dressing purposes and often replaced the garments of skins and hides. Cloth assumed a very strong position in the local economies, to the point of becoming a form of primitive currency.

The traditional societies which we have looked at, attached values to the goods

that they were exposed to. These values were in form of prestige and use which were also reflected in the social set ups. These values in turn affected the economies of the traditional societies and such inter-relationship of traditions and economies had its effects in the changes in ways of life of the indigenous people. The introduction of textiles in their economies was clearly reflected in the barter systems of trade, marriage ceremonies, burials, rituals, circumcision and their ways of dressing.

All this goes to show that the traditional ways of life have been quite flexible and open in accepting new innovations. In many cases the new innovations were accepted and modified to suit the traditional ways of life. This was reflected in instances whereby the textiles were actually treated with ochre and oil, in the fashion of the leather garments worn by various groups.

Lack of enough records has made it difficult to intensively trace the historical distribution of a product like textiles which has featured so prominently in the list of

trade goods which were in circulation throughout the country.

The commodity of textiles has been responsible for changing patterns of everyday economic activities in the traditional Kenyan societies and has also helped to establish a significant interaction between different ethnic groups.

Most of the ethnic groups that we have looked at have been dependent on subsistence oriented economies. The penetration of western capitalism into these systems did generate a desire for items such as textiles, but in turn it also formed markets for locally obtained items such as ivory, wax, horns, shells and cattle outside the local economies.

The interest for possessing such items was in some cases responsible for some of the local communities in assuming a role of traders and middlemen. The enthusiasm was not generated because the communities were interested in taking up trading as a profession but was mainly to obtain items of great demand such as textiles, beads, wire etc.

This became an indirect way of trading because the local communities did end up supplying items such as food, ivory, hides etc. to the trading caravans which visited their regions.

10.2 THE COLONIAL ERA

With the growing British interest in the East African regions and the subsequent establishment of the British protectorate in 1895, the existing economies took up a different direction.

Imports of textiles which were mainly from India and Arabia now featured items from England, America, Japan, Germany and other western countries.

Immediately upon the declaration of the protectorate the British sought to introduce British manufactured cloth into Uganda and British East Africa protectorate. Attempts were made by the manufacturers in Manchester to produce a cloth which in every respect would equal the 'Americani' (American calico) which had long gained popularity in the East African regions. The American cloth had long been established in

the region before the British merchants established themselves at Zanzibar.

The cotton goods were chiefly wanted by the British administrators to pay the native troops who were now very much aware of the intrinsic nature and purchasing power of cloth.

Requests were made as early as 1896 by Messrs Gray Dawes & Co. the shippers of the British manufactured cloth, to the British authorities to give preference to the cloth manufactured in Manchester as far as the new markets in East Africa were concerned.⁵

Thus the beginning of the British authority was also marked by the beginning of the British interest in the supplying of the textile needs of the colony.

By 1912 the British manufactured textile goods had started making a headway into the imports of the colony, although the American fabrics in the unbleached cotton piece goods still dominated the imports. The position of imports of textiles into the British colony can be seen from Appendix E.

The construction of the railway in 1901

heralded a new era by providing a foundation for the modern economic development of the region.

Following the building of the railway, the Indian rupee was introduced as a form of currency. This replaced the trade goods which were the only form of currency that was known by the local inhabitants. Many shops sprang up along the route marked by the railways and various items could now be bought by people using coined money. By 1898 an Indian Bazar was opened at Machakos and another one at Nairobi in 1899.⁶

The Indian silver rupee, copper annas and pice was the coinage used at Mombasa and thus the British government introduced the same into the interior of the country.

By February 1901, the price of grain at Machakos was recorded at 98 lbs per rupee. The Indian traders had begun establishing shops and by 1907 there were eighteen such shops at Machakos. The price of 'Americani' in 1908, at Machakos was recorded at 7/50 rupees per Jora (a Jora being 30 yards) and

the German made blankets sold at around 3/75 rupees.⁷

The local population had put up a steady and an increasing demand for blankets and cotton goods.

To meet the cost of administration and to repay the loans for the railways from the British treasury, the colonial administration decided to make the land productive. The method followed was that of the settlers investing capital in production of crops, which were to be transported by the railways to the coast. The imports which were also brought into the country were carried inland by the railways. Thus began the era of exporting raw materials and importing of manufactured goods in Kenya.

To make the land productive the Administrators and settlers had to lure the Africans into becoming wage earners. They compelled the indigenous population to work on plantations partly by force and partly by taxation and also by depriving them of profitable land which they could cultivate to pay off the taxes.⁸

Britain concentrated on its colonies for the supply of cheap raw materials and one such commodity was cotton, Cheap raw cotton was to be secured for the British manufacturers who in turn would supply the colony with manufactured goods. The demands for external markets and cheap sources of raw material had always influenced the British colonial policy. ⁹

By 1906 cotton as a cash crop had been introduced in the western Kenya regions, and the British East Africa Corporation established a first cotton ginnery at Kisumu Various experiments were carried out at Kibos in order to find out the best time for planting and the suitable varieties to plant

A cotton ordinance was first enacted in 1923 and revised in 1937, its powers being to provide the control on variety of cotton seed, the growing of the crop, storage, ginning and the fixation of prices.

The cotton crop expanded steadily until 1924. The price of cotton was recorded at 18 cents per lb, and the production in Nyanza was recorded at 2,300

bales.

Several new ginneries sprang up in cotton growing centres such as Malindi, Kilifi, Taveta, Malakisi, Kibos, Nambare and Samia. The major cotton growing areas of the colony being the Nyanza Province followed by the Coast Province.

With the depression of 1934 the prices fell to about 11 cents per lb for 'A' quality seed cotton. Initiative to improve the situation was taken up by the authorities and alternative areas for cotton growing at Kitui Fort Hall, Embu and Meru, Sagana and Lamu, were sought. Of these only Lamu area continued producing while the central areas of Kenya were found to be unsuitable for the growing.

By 1936/37 season 21766 bales of cotton were exported from Kenya and production reached its highest in 1944 when 22,803 bales were produced. From then on until the Korean war of 1950/52, cotton growing became less attractive because of the competitive prices of maize established under government guarantee.

In 1955 a statutory Cotton Lint and Seed Marketing Board was established to take over the marketing of cotton crop. On its Board were represented the Department of Agriculture the Provincial Administration, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the African and Arab Cotton Growers and the Ginners and Exporters. Funds were made available to undertake specific development projects for the cotton growing districts, whereby roads were improved, bridges built and machinery for maintenance was installed.

The demand for manufactured cotton goods from Britain was fairly reliable upto 1929, but by 1930, during the depression, the British exports were considered more expensive in relation to those of her competitors. Low cost producers in India, Hong Kong and Japan were out to drive Britain out of its own markets and also out of the imperial markets. By 1930 they had eliminated Britain from competing into the cheaper end of the textile market.¹⁰

Thus in 1930 Britain imposed limits upon Japanese exports to most of the colonial empire by introducing a quota policy and

regarded the Japanese competition as threatening Lancashire's principal export.

The Japanese export to Kenya was aimed at the lower end of the market and the consumers were able to buy goods at prices which the British manufacturers had never been able to offer.

The trading patterns of the British and Japanese goods can be seen from the table below:

Table No. (i)

Trading Patterns of British and Japanese Goods.

Source: Brett, Colonialism and Under-development.

Year	Quantity (Mil.Yards)		Distribution %		
	Britain	Japan	Britain	Japan	Others
1929	23.6	32.6	21.6	29.8	48.6
1931	13.0	50.5	14.1	52.4	33.5
1933	11.7	78.2	11.3	75.2	13.5
1935	13.1	110.1	10.1	84.6	5.3
1936	10.5	122.4	7.5	87.3	5.2

The British policy on trading in the East African region was however limited by a series of international agreements whereby the East Africa region fell into areas of Africa covered by the Congo Basin Treaties. These were drawn up during the original partitioning of Africa and revised in 1919 by the participants who were Britain, Belgium, Japan Portugal, Italy and United States of America. This agreement guaranteed equality of access to participants to trade in this region.

The position of the British merchants and manufacturers was, however, advantageous because of their government's commitment to buy only British products which was effectively realised through the British Crown Agents in London.

With the depression and increasing pressure from competition, the British authorities thought of a small protected market rather than a large open one.

This led to the attempts at modification of the Congo Basin treaties in 1932 and it was felt that no advantage would be received by East African regions through the

abrogation of the treaties.¹¹

The East African treaties situation continued to be examined until 1935, in the hope of circumventing the kind of protection they accorded to local consumers but no success was achieved.

On the local scene, raw cotton was being exported to Britain, India, Burmah, Tanzania, Zanzibar, China, France, Germany, Italy, Spain and Japan,. By 1929 India was the biggest consumer of Kenyan raw cotton followed by Britain and Japan with the total export of cotton fetching £3,358,307.¹²

The 1929 import situation reflected a diversity in the origins of various textile products. The main centres from which textiles were imported from were Britain, India, Burmah, Arabia, Austria, Belgium, Czecho-slovakia, France, Germany, Holland, Italy, Japan, Switzerland and U.S.A.

Japan took the leading position in the supply of Grey, unbleached piece goods followed by America. The bleached piece of goods were mainly supplied by Great Britain. Khangas were supplied by Great Britain

followed by Holland. Britain also dominated in the supply of goods dyed in the piece and the market for coloured manufactures was equally shared by India, Holland and Japan.¹³

Other items which were included in the imports of textiles were blankets, thread and yarns.

Kenya served as a centre for distribution of the imported goods to other British possessions and also as an export centre for manufactured goods to Tanzania, Zanzibar, Congo, Italian East Africa and Portugese East Africa.

Tanzania was the main importer of the manufactured goods from Kenya.

The import situation from 1927-1929 shows clearly the rising demand for textiles and related goods in Kenya:

Table No. (ii)

COMPARATIVE IMPORTS OF TEXTILES 1927-1929

Source: Blue Book 1929.

Article	1927	1928	1929
1. Cotton Piece Goods	(Yards)		
i. Grey, unbleached	16,987,045	17,423,143	18,334,550
ii. Bleached	3,175,068	4,148,602	3,194,287
iii. Printed including Khangas	3,400,869	4,774,358	6,102,632
iv. Dyed in the piece	5,221,153	6,574,997	6,121,156
v. Coloured	8,305,865	11,219,798	10,718,414
2. Cotton Blankets	(Number)		
	1,668,688	2,459,862	2,485,606

The above statistics reflect only the goods which were for the consumers in the domestic market and do not include goods which were imported for re-export to the neighbouring states.

The total imports including the re-exports (to the neighbouring countries) for 1929 are recorded as follows:

Table No. (iii)

IMPORTS OF TEXTILES 1929

Source: Blue Book 1929.

Cotton Piece Goods	(Yards)
i. Grey, Unbleached	22,011,586
ii. Bleached	3,377,190
iii. Printed including Khangas	6,312,564
iv. Dyed in the piece	6,633,451
v. Coloured	11,705,472

Compared to the Import statistics of 1912/13, (see Appendix E) the bleached and unbleached items of textile goods show a constant demand while the 'printed' and the 'dyed in the piece' goods show a marked increase in the imports with very little for re-exporting. This is suggestive of the developing tastes in the local markets for the fancy printed cloth.

By about the end of 1920 the consumption

of certain items such as textiles, was wide enough to permit simple import substitution but the colonial government considered industrialization in its colony as having serious limitations. Britain could not provide a free market for the manufactured goods from the colonies to directly compete with its own goods.

To avoid the so called uneconomic competition of manufactured goods the colonial government decided to allow certain types of manufactures provided licences were granted for such manufactures. Amongst the items which were scheduled under these licences were cotton and wool goods.¹⁴

Efforts were made by the colonial authorities to encourage some spinning and weaving to be carried out at a village industry level. The idea was to introduce hand spinning and weaving to the local communities.¹⁵

In 1924, efforts were made by O.F. Watkins who was the commissioner for Native industries to establish a silk industry in Kenya colony. A circular was sent out by him

to all District Commissioners informing them of the varieties of silk and information about how to obtain Mulberry cuttings to be issued to the local residents. It seems there was no follow up on the matter and not much came forth in form of information from the various districts. Thus the silk industry at village level did not take off.¹⁶

In 1943 a hand spinning and weaving committee was set up to introduce the craft to the local communities at a village industry level. The activities were mainly carried out on settlers farms at Nakuru, Kinangop and at Kangundo in Machakos reserve. Mainly the wives of the farmers were involved in teaching the craft to their own labourers.

Not much progress was made in this direction because imported wool was plentiful and cheap.

The idea of being decently clad for those who visited bigger towns like Nairobi, were constantly being emphasised by the colonial authorities. They were however hesitant in being very stringent in that connection because they thought that the supply of labour may be

affected if the local communities decided not to visit the urban centres. ¹⁷

The local communities were on the other hand becoming the main consumers of the commodity of textiles. With cotton growing and ginning being introduced some of the local communities in Lamu district were actually involved in spinning of thread which was principally used for fishing nets. They were also involved in making of white embroidered caps which are worn as a part of the male Swahili dress. ¹⁸

10.3 INDUSTRIALIZATION

In 1954 the colonial authorities set up the Kenya Industrial Development Corporation whose aims were to facilitate the industrial and economic development of the colony by initiation, assistance or expansion in industrial or commercial undertakings.

By 1956, however, there were in existence only three establishments in the spinning, weaving and knitting industry group. Two of the knitting establishments were situated in the Nairobi provincial district and the third which was a blanket

manufacturing factory was situated near Nakuru in the Rift Valley Province.

The knitting establishments were involved in the production of knitted underwears and mutton cloth from imported yarns while the blanket factory produced blankets, and rugs from Art silk waste, wool and shoddy. These industries were small scale and with their total value of production in 1956 being £135,000. This was an increase of 34% over the production value of 1954 which was £107,000. The blanket industry at this stage was experiencing a fairly stiff competition from the imported blankets.¹⁹

The clothing industry on the other hand in 1956, consisted of very small units with only five large establishments which produced 42% of the total value of production. The estimated value of the output of this sector of the industry in 1956 was £113,000 which was an increase of almost 100% over the estimated output value of 1954. The industry was involved in producing nearly the whole range of clothing including men's suits, ladies dresses, uniforms, underwear furrier goods and overalls. The production was aimed at

goods for all income groups in Kenya.²⁰

Jobs were created by the spinning, weaving and knitting industries as well as the clothing manufacturing industries. This became an important contributor in the economic development of the country. In 1956 the spinning weaving and knitting industries had offered employment to 308 persons while the clothing manufacturing industry had employed 1213 persons.

By 1957 there were still only two establishments known as blankets and knitted wear industries. However from 1957 onwards this group of industry was referred to as clothing and textile industries whereby the clothing manufacturing industries were combined with the textile manufacturing industries.²¹

The estimated output value of the industry in 1957 was £1,335,000 as compared to 1956 output at £1,225,000, showed an increase of 11% overall.

The increasing share of the total clothing market taken by the local industry is clearly shown by the following figures:

Table No. (iv)

LOCAL CLOTHING MANUFACTURING AS OPPOSED TO
IMPORTS 1954-1957

Source: Statistical Abstract of Kenya 1955

Year	Local Production	Imports
1954	£ 667,000	£817,000
1956	£ 1,225,000	£765,000
1957	£ 1,335,000	£640,000

The above figures reflect the measure of progress that the industry had started making since 1954.

On the other hand all the materials used by the industry were being imported and no cloth as such was being produced in Kenya as late as 1957.

The imports in textiles especially in cotton goods and rayons continued to be on the increase from 1955 upto 1958 when lower imports were recorded both for cotton piece goods as well as rayon. (See Table No. v.).

Table NO. (v)

IMPORTS OF COTTON AND RAYON GOODS

INTO KENYA 1955-1958.

Source: KENYA TRADE AND SUPPLIES 1955-1958

YEAR	Import	Quantity (yards)	Value £	Average Price per yard (shillings)
1955	Cotton	35,816,284	2,627,243	1.47
	Rayon	13,284,382	1,337,379	2.01
1956	Cotton	41,582,599	2,896,574	1.38
	Rayon	15,453,517	1,337,954	1.73
1957	Cotton	53,769,762	3,730,717	1.39
	Rayon	27,059,716	2,072,826	1.53
1958	Cotton	40,247,229	2,807,585	1.40
	Rayon	20,641,391	1,508,857	1.46

The period beginning from 1958 marked the first step towards industrialization in the textile manufacturing. The industry was envisaged as bound to grow and expand and would create an import saving situation. It was to create a local market as well as establishing new export markets. Production processes such as weaving of cloth locally instead of importing yarns were its important

considerations.

Adaptation to local materials for industrial needs and of industrial techniques to local conditions were being considered as important preliminary stages to serious development of the industry.

A rayon industry which was estimated at £1,500,00 called the Kenya Rayon Mills was established in Mombasa in 1961. £1,000,000 was invested in Rayon and Cotton Mills at Thika by two joint Kenya Japanese combines in 1961. They were scheduled to initially produce 4,000,000 yards annually and the capacity was to double by 1964.²²

In 1962, the control of imports order was provided by an ordinance whereby importation was only allowed in accordance with import licences granted under the provisions of the ordinance.

10.4 THE INDEPENDENT KENYA

Kenya became internally self governing on June 1, 1963, and the textile industry entered its second phase of development. The alien rule had promoted economics development

mainly for the benefit of the European sector.

Within a few years of her independence Kenya brought forward her six year development plan for the period of 1964-1970. Kenya's cotton crop, which was relatively small compared to the other East African countries was to be increased so as to give impetus to the cotton based industries.

The textile industry was almost wholly dependent on imported raw materials such as rayon, nylon and some proportion of the wool. It was hoped that most of the raw materials for this industry would be locally produced and a start was made with local cotton in the Kisumu cotton mills.

Textile industry recorded the greater growth rate from the period 1957-61. In 1957 there were only two establishments and by 1961 the number had increased to eight; production had risen five times from £138,00 to £737,000 and it offered employment to 1,169 persons in 1961 as opposed to 251 persons in 1957.

In 1964, textile processing was centred in four districts of Thika (31.4%).

Mombasa (24.9%), Nakuru (22-8%) and Nairobi (20.9%). In the 1964-65 industrial Research Survey, several textile industries projects were included, which resulted in the establishment of Kenya Toray Mills at Thika, Kisumu Cotton Mills at Kisumu and Woolen Blanket Factory at Limuru.²³

The development of the textile industry in Kenya was fostered by government employing various protective measures towards the local industries. Tariffs were used to raise revenue rather than a measure for protection against imports. Prohibition of imports was used as a powerful measure when a viable local industry could satisfy the local demands. Licencing of imports was permitted when a small industry was just starting and could not satisfy the local demands.

The textile industry expanded continuously; became both labour and capital intensive; becoming a very vital factor for the economy of Kenya.

CHAPTER 10

10.5 FOOTNOTES

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Appendix A.

Source: Kenya National Archives.
(KNA DC/KFI/3/3).

CHRONOLOGY

- 1493 Pedro de Covilha to Ethiopia.
Contact with Portugal.
- 1498 Da Gama off Malindi.
- 1500-1509 Portuguese conquest of the coast.
- 1505 Fifteen hundred African bowmen
support Mombasa vs. Almeida.
- 1528 Mohamed Gran, King of Adal and the
(Moslem) invasion of Ethiopia.
- 1506 Portuguese attack on Barawa. Six
thousand African spearmen and
bowmen vs. Portuguese.
- 1541 Portuguese intervention in
Ethiopia.
- 1550's Galla pressure forces Wesegeju to
leave Shungwaya followed by
elements which later become
Waribe, Waduruma, Warabai and
Wadigo.
- 1571 Wasegeju off Malindi.

- 1589 Defeat of Wazimba outside Malindi by Portuguese and three thousand Segeju.
- 1610-1612 Mozungullos attacking Mombasa. Night raids. Erection of blockhouses round "Macupa". The Mozungullos number not more than three thousand to four thousand. They fight with poisoned arrows.
- 1614 Sheikh (or Sultan) Hassan's murder at Rabai. Reward of two thousand pieces of cloth paid by Portuguese.
- 1631 Rising of Sultan Yusuf of Mombasa. Mozungullos his allies.
- 1635 Portuguese recover their hold on the coast. Inscription over Fort Jesus (1639) "..... imposed a fine on the Mozungullos."
- 1620-1660 Kambe Amwende. Start of Giriyama migration, Kambe also.
- 1630 Last mention of Segeju on the Kenya coast.

- 1660-1700 Kambi Kalalaka.
- 1696-1698 Siege of Fort Jesus. King of Chonyi and three tribes of Mozungullos, allies of the Portuguese.
- 1728-1729 Portuguese reference to "Mozungullos" or "Vanica" (Monhicas).
- 1700-1750 Kambi Mijoga (The Warlike). Name derives from renewed Galla pressure. Time of the founding of Kaya Giriyama. In addition coast tribes appear to have been closely associated with struggles of Arabs of the coast. During the early part of the 18th Century the Wagiryama came south from Mwangea (possibly this occurred as early as 1650-1660). Probably the period in which the Galla sacked Malindi and Mambrui. Gedi must have been abandoned before 1650.
- 1728-1730 Nyika representatives in delegation sent to Oman by

Mombasa "Then they went to Uman to the Iman, and they went among them; Sheikh Ibn Ahmed of Malindi. Mi-ghut-bin King of Kilind. Mishhat bin Dace of Tan Jau and of the people of Mifta, there went one man of each tribe, and of the Vanikat one man from each city among whom were; Manyani of the people of Muta and Mamak of the people of Tiv, and the cities of Vanikat are Ribah (Ribe), Shuni (Chonyi), Kambah (Kambe), Gauma (Kauma), Jibanah (Jibana), Rabayi (Rabai), Jiryamah (Giryama), Darvmah-Mutavei (Duruma), Shibah (Shimba), Dughuh (?), Diyu (Digo). These people went to the Iman".

1730-1740 War of the Kilindini vs. Governor Salih of Mombasa. The Kilindini call in the Wanyika "Now it happened that before this (i.e. the murder of Sheikh Ibn Ahmed)

Sheikh Ibn Ahmed and his son Ahmed bin Sheikh and the Kilindinis with him sent the army of the Vanikat to fight against the people of Mifta, who were in the old town; so they killed them and plundered them, because of their alliance with the Governor Salih" (earlier the Kilindini had fled from Mombasa to the Vanikat).

1746 Ali bin Othman (Mazrui) escapes from the fort to Vanikat "to the seaport of Murairah". Later they marched from Vanikat and entered Mombasa by night. After his success, Ali bin Othman "made an engagement with the people of Mombasa for many privileges that he would grant them and the same with the people of Vanikat".

1746 Mombasa throws off allegiance to Imam.

1750-1800 Kambi Ngunyeii. War between the

Ribe and Giriyama. In the 1780's Galla slowly withdrew from centre, and some of north Giriyama. Clash with Ribe (Kauma) and this is also the period of the struggle of Pate with Mombasa ending with fighting in Pemba, at Lamu, and finally in the struggle for succession in Pate itself. It was in the struggle for domination of the coast that Lamu called in the Sayyiā Said's garrison. The probable origin of the Mombasa-Pate quarrel is shown in the Pate Chronicle which tells of the King of Pate had in encouraging the Portuguese in their attack on Mombasa in 1728.

1750's Attack by the Imam on Pate. War, Lamu vs. Pate.

1750's War, Mombasa vs. Zanzibar (Pate involved). Murder of Ali Bin

- Othman in Zanzibar.
Struggle in Pemba also 1750's
Pate vs. Barawa.
- 1784 Zanzibar fully under Imam's
control.
- 1800-1840 Kambi Kaumba (The creative).
- 1806 Mazrui army in Pemba. Nyika
present. Sayyid Said
succeeded to throne.
- 1807 Pate succession dispute (one
of many), Mombasa takes
sides.
- 1812 Battle of Shella Island. Lamu
defeats the invasion of
Mombasa and its supporters
in Pate.
- 1813 Lamu accept garrison from Sayyid
Said.
- 1818 Pate a vassel of Sultan Said.
- 1820's Siu under rule of Pate, after a
war.
- 1821 Outbreak of cholera on the coast.
- 1822 Mazrui expelled from Pemba by Said.

- 1823 (December 3rd) to 1826. Owen's protectorate.
- 1824 Emery, Reitz's successor in Mombasa. He describes the customs of the "Whaneekas". His contemporary, Boteler, mentions what is probably first signs of Masai raiding. Another "Wanekah" tribe who raid their kin from the inland called the Quavas". (Wakuavi, in the early days seldom distinguished from their kin, the Masai).
- 1828 Sayyid Said's first occupation of Mombasa.
- 1833 The Sultan's abortive assault on Mombasa.
- 1836 Cholera.
- 1836 Wakamba settlement in Mariakani due to famine (note Emery in the 1820's was also in contact with the Kamba called by him Merremen gow's).

- 1837 Final submission of Mombasa to
the Sultan.
- 1832-1838 The Sultan often in Zanzibar.
1840 transfers his Court there.
- 1840-1880 Kambi Akwavi. This is the period
of the Masai raids. It is the
period of Mzee Fungo. It sees
the retreat of the Galla who
as time passes are under
attack from the Masai and the
Somali.
- 1840 Ogaden and Marahan cross head
headwaters of Juba. War with
Galla.
- 1840's War, Ribe; Kambe; Kauma vs.
Jibana; Chonyi; Rabai.
- 1843 Krapf visits Takaungu. He
records proximity of Kauma.
He also found some Galla
nearby.
- 1843-1844- Successful rising of Fate vs.
1846 (?) Sayyid.
- 1846 Krapf's station at Rabai.
Rebmann arrives 10th June, 1846.

- 1848 Somali "love feast" (?)
- 1848 Masai across the route to Chagga.
- 1848 Gabiri of Mombasa cuts ship
timbers at Rabai.
- 1850's Wadigo vs. Wasegeju war.
- 1850's Arab traders reach Kampala from
Tabora.
- 1850's Famine amongst the Duruma. They
are alleged to have moved
from the Rabai area into Kwale.
Kingo, the old Duruma Kaya, is
said to be near mile 14 of
the railway. Prior to 1860
the Masai had raided the
Wakamba, Galla, Chagga and
Wanyika.
- 1853 Malindi and Mambrui resettled.
Settlers from Lamu and
Zanzibar.
- 1856 Cholera.
- 1857 Masai raid Rabai.
- 1858 Masai raiding the coast, eight
hundred Masai involved.

- Rebmann forced to shelter in Zanzibar.
- 1858 Cholera - Mombasa area.
- 1857 A new "unyaro" initiated amongst the Nyika. Burton implies that this is the initiation of a new age grade.
- 1857-1858 Masai raid the Galla and are defeated, but Galla Chief Dado Boneat killed.
- 1859 Cholera at Zanzibar.
- 1859 Masai raid, Vanga.
- 1862 Ribe Mission founded.
- 1865 War - Giryama vs. Galla.
- 1860's (?) Somali "love feast". Massacre of Galla.
- 1860's War - Giryama vs. Rabai (ended 1871).
- 1860's Expulsion of the Nabhans from Pate. Flight to Ozi and Witu.
- 1865 Masai raid Galla.
- 1866 Further Masai raid on Galla.

- 1866 War - Witu vs. Lamu.
- 1867 (January) Masai raid Galla.
- 1869 Cholera, Mombasa and Zanzibar.
- 1869 Suez Canal opened.
- 1868 Somali from Gaudafui found
Kismayu.
- 1870 Somali coast from Mogadisco to
Barava under Ahmed Yusuf,
Sheikh of Geledi.
- 1870 Masai raid Waduruma. Defeated.
- 1870 Mbaruk of Gazi makes his first
attempt on Takaungu.
- 1870's Mzee Fungo defeats the Masai.
- 1871 Masai vs. Duruma.
- 1872 & 1873 Mbaruk of Gazi in open rebellion.
- 1873 Ban on sea trading in slaves.
As a result land trade grew
up. Exports from Kilwa by
land. October 1873 to
October 1874 (N.B. mainly, but
not entirely Kilwa) 1,000
slaves to Mombasa; 5,000 to
Takaungu; 1,200 to Lamu and

Kipini; 1,000 to Malindi;

1,000 to Bajun country.

Report of Consul Holmwood

"As far as Malindi the new
land route is admitted by all
to be a paying ventures."

Also reports at Takaungu and
Malindi of new land being
cleared.

- 1874 Kaya Giriyama becoming overcrowded
and Giriyama migrate north to
Godoma.
- 1876 (August) Masai raid on Rabai.
- 1877 Masai raid Giriyama.
- 1880's - 1920's Kambi Kavuta. (The Poor).
- 1879 Electric telegraph reaches
Zanzibar.
- 1881 Combined Galla Somali raid on
Giriyama. Defeated.
- 1882 Masai raid Ribe and others.
- 1882 Mbaruk of Mazrui in rebellion.
(Wakefield p.188)
- 1882 Smallpox - Mombasa.

- 1883 (August) Masai raid Giriyama and Saadani town.
- 1883-1885 Famine among the Nyika. (Famine of Mwakasengi).
- 1884 Mwangea Hill reoccupied by Wagiryama. Note also Digo settlements in the area below Mwangea and above Kilifi creek.
- 1884 Smallpox - Witu.
- 1884 Letter from Kirk to Glanville.
"There was a transient revival of slave-selling in the Malindi district in 1884 when owing to drought and famine the Giriyama people began to sell their slaves and their children."
- 1885 War - Wateita (Wasagalla (?)) vs. Kamba.
- 1885 Masai raid Wateita.
- 1886 Masai raids (a) March - Wagalla.
(b) May 3rd - Wagalla. Houghton

- murders at Golbanti.
- 1886 Mbaruk in rebellion again.
- 1888 Caravan from Taveta attacked
by Masai.
- 1888 IBEA formed.
- 1889-1890 Famine of Mkufu.
- 1889-1890 Rinderpest outbreak among
Giryama.
- 1890 Proclamation No. 1 "It has been
reported that the Wanika and
Giryama tribes have been
making war upon each other
and selling their captives
into slavery the
following tribes Wanika,
WaGibania (sic) Wasenia,
WaRabai, the Shimba, the
WaDigo, WaTaita and the
WaPokomo are all under the
protection of the Company."
- 1890 Giryama vs. Wakauma war near
Mtanganiko.
- 1890 Jilore Mission founded.
- 189? Wakauma vs. Mazrui of Takaungu.

- 1890-1892 Witu Expeditions.
- 1891 Smallpox outbreak.
- 1893 Masai raid as far as Mazeras.
- 1895 Takaungu succession dispute.
Rising (last) of Mazrui
of Takaungu and Gazi.
- 1895 East Africa Protectorate
proclaimed.
- 1898-1900 Famine among the Nyika tribe.
Hardinge mentions selling of
children for grain.
Champion and McDougall report
partial migration of Giriyama
to Pokomo due to famine.
(Miss Bodger says the famine
was called "Magunia").
Giriyama had reached Galana
by 1890.
- 1899 Somali raid on Galla at Port
Durnford and Amola. Latter
rescued by s.s. "Juba".

APPENDIX B

ANNUAL IMPORTS FOR MALINDI 1915/1918

Cotton Piece Goods (YARDS)	1915/16		1916/17		1917/18	
	Quantity	Value	Quantity	Value	Quantity	Value
Cotton Piece Goods (bleached)	257	Rs.Cts. 67/43	52	Rs.Cts. 19/00	20	Rs. Cts. 13/70
Cotton Piece Goods (unbleached)	644	194/05-	68	22/50	4	2/00
Cotton Piece Goods (printed)	370	114/05	50	9/00	16	8/00
Cotton Piece Goods (dyed)	2578	779/00	112	56/00	26	21/50
Silk (manufactured)	-	18/75	-	36/00	-	-

Source: Kenya National Archives.

Annual Reports for Malindi District. 1910-1926.

(KNA DC/MAL/1/1).

APPENDIX C

The Masai Raids on their Eastern neighbours.

Source: Kenya National Archives.

An administrative and political
history of the Masai Reserve.

G.R. Sanford.

- 1859 - Masai raided Vanga.
- 1865 - In Galla country near Mtanganyiko.
- 1867 - At Tana River at Witu.
- 1876 - At Ribe (all natives fled to Mombasa)
- 1882 - At Ribe again (visited the Mission
and killed two native converts).
- 1883 - Raided Saadani.
- 1886 - Two raids on the Mission at Golbanti
 - (a) Two native christians killed.
 - (b) Two missionaries Mr. & Mrs.
Houghton killed.
- 1889 - Raided in close proximity of Mombasa
(All inhabitants driven from exposed
areas of the coast; Giriyaama prevented
from keeping large heard of cattle;
Galla settlement on southern Tana
totally disappeared.

APPENDIX D

THE SOMALI

List of ethnic groups according to provinces and districts before 1963.

Source: Programme of Eastern Africa Studies.
Syracuse University.
Kenya National Archives collection.

PROVINCE	DISTRICT	ETHNIC GROUP
Northern	Wajir	Hawiyah Somali.
		Ogaden Somali
		Ajuran Somali.
	Turkana	Turkana.
	Samburu	Samburu.
	Garissa	Fokomo (Riverine).
		Boni/Sanje.
		Orma (Boran).
		Abdwak Somali.
		Aulihan Somali.
	Abdullah Somali.	
Mandera	Gurreh Somali	
	Marehan Somali.	
	Hawiyah Somali.	
	Degodia Somali.	

PROVINCE DISTRICT ETHNIC GROUP

Murille
 Shebelle.
 Gabbawein.

Marsabit

Leisan.
 Rendille.
 Boran.
 Gabbra.
 El Molo.
 Boran
 Sakuye.
 Ajuran Somali.
 Degodia Somali.
 Gurreh Somali.
 Murille.
 Gabra.
 Gurre Murre.

Moyale

Shabaile.

Ashraf.

Northern Isiolo

Leisan.
 Boran.
 Sakuye.
 Turkana
 Alien Somali.
 (Ishaak and Herti).

APPENDIX E

GENERAL IMPORTS INTO THE COLONY OF THE
EAST AFRICA PROTECTORATE IN 1912-1913

Articles	Countries where imported	Total Quantities	Value of Imports in sterling
	(Yards)		
Cotton piece goods, bleached	United Kingdom	2,740,095	43,246
	India & Burmah	104,183	1,776
	Austria-Hungary	5,192	167
	Belgium	26,049	802
	France	30,149	816
	Germany	43,994	1,134
	Holland	383,901	5,208
	Italy	12,180	264
	Japan	1,292	42
	Switzerland	230,410	6,403
	United States of America	80,660	1,357
	Total ..	<u><u>3,658,105</u></u>	<u><u>61,215</u></u>
Cotton piece goods, unbleached	United Kingdom	517,139	7,079
	India & Burmah	4,811,417	60,836
	Arabia	1,167	49
	Belgium	7,672	240
	Germany	38,958	894
	Holland	436,489	7,088
	Italian East Africa	4,747	263

Source: BLUE BOOK 1912/1913.

No. 2

GENERAL IMPORTS (CTD)

Articles	Countries where imported	Total Quantities	Value of Imports in sterling
	Brought forward .		
Cotton piece goods, unbleached (ctd..)	Italy	3,627,393	43,597
	Switzerland	400,553	10,163
	Miscellaneous ports of Asia	1,110	46
	United States of America	12,553,779	138,681
	Total..	22,400,424	268,936
Cotton piece goods, printed.	United Kingdom	834,144	13,620
	India & Burmah	293,144	4,750
	Arabia	192	6
	Austria-Hungary	2,333	32
	France	3,000	33
	Germany	288,182	5,675
	Holland	917,661	17,498
	Italy
	Japan	1,640	45
	Switzerland	8,251	135
	Total ..	2,348,813	41,794

No. 3

GENERAL IMPORTS (CTD)

Articles	Countries where imported (yards)	Total Quantities	Value of Imports in sterling
Cotton piece goods, dyed (plain shades).	United Kingdom	1,524,853	39,449
	India & Burmah	286,351	4,213
	Arabia	8,300	277
	Austria-Hungary	10,681	208
	France	1,478	47
	Germany	401,944	8,882
	Holland	465,074	12,285
	Italian East Africa	45,431	1,365
	Italy	33,626	750
	Japan	7,200	51
	Switzerland	170,813	1,782
United States America	12,000	170	
	Total ..	2,967,751	69,474
Cotton blankets		Numbers	
	United Kingdom	46,199	4,289
	India & Burmah	10,400	789
	Austria-Hungary	5,710	361
	Belgium	24,444	2,142
	France	29,146	2,970
	Germany	566,254	30,335
	Holland	743,633	39,341
Italy	10,950	685	
	Total ...	<u>1,436,736</u>	<u>80,912</u>

Source: Kenya Blue Book 1912/13

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