Chapter 2
Why Clove Plantations: East African Archaeology, History, and Anthropology

Clove plantations such as Mgoli—the site on Pemba discussed in detail later in this book—were a typical part of the rural landscape of nineteenth-century Zanzibar. During the eighteenth century, Zanzibar, along with much of the rest of the East African coast, had come under the rule of Oman. It was only from the beginning of the nineteenth-century, however, that Zanzibar became a serious colonial outpost of Oman, with significant numbers of Omani immigrants (mostly men) coming to the islands. Omani colonial interests were largely focused on mercantile profits from the caravan trade, but the beginning of the nineteenth-century saw a shift; mercantile profits became increasingly invested into plantations. On Zanzibar, an accident of geography and history meant that clove plantations came to dominate the islands' agrarian economy. By the close of the nineteenth-century, Zanzibar was one of the world's major suppliers of cloves (Martin 1991).

This last fact hints at the scale of transformation in the agrarian sector of Zanzibar during this period. But this was not simply a shift in terms of what was being grown. Clove plantations are interesting as they were also a root cause of social transformations across much of the islands. They were the institutions through which plantation residents came to understand their lives, through which social positions were often structured, and they were the context of the majority of day-to-day practices of Zanzibaris through the nineteenth-century. Slavery was at the heart of these transformations; agricultural and domestic labor was carried out by enslaved men and women from mainland Eastern and East-Central Africa. Enslaved women were also commonly present as concubines in elite households. As I discuss in greater detail in Chap. 4, the scale of slavery was immense; by the close of the nineteenth-century, enslaved or recently manumitted individuals outnumbered indigenous Swahili and other immigrant populations (even if the line between these groups were not always clear-cut). As several historians have discussed, the large immigrant African population, along with continued labor migration from mainland Africa, came to be decisive in the social and political formation of contemporary Zanzibar (Cooper 1980; Fair 2001; Glassman 2010, 2011). Alongside this massive influx of enslaved Africans lived Omani immigrants (often merchants and plantation owners), Indian immigrants, indigenous Zanzibaris (who I refer to for simplicity as Swahili), and other

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immigrants from the Middle East, mostly from the Hadhramaut coast of present-day Yemen (Walker 2008).

While urban Zanzibar was the site for many significant transformations, as has been more commonly explored by historians (e.g., Fair 2001; Prestholdt 2008), plantations were bounded spaces in which large numbers of immigrants came to live with one another under Omani colonial rule, negotiating day-to-day tensions of social difference, slavery, and the development of a new *habitus* for clove plantation residents. I refer here to practice theory and the work of Bourdieu (1977, 1990); *habitus* is the "structuring mechanism" of social actors (Wacquant 1992, p. 18). While *habitus* is a structure of social life—a set of rules (e.g., the obligation to a patron after a gift has been bestowed)—it is learned. Thus, we understand *habitus* to be flexible. It has structure and it has space for creativity. But clove plantations immediately throw up a problematic case for the anthropological study of social structure and small shifts in this brought about by the agency of social actors. There was no established *habitus* for clove plantation residents prior to the nineteenth-century. Omani plantation owners came with a set of rules from their home context, indigenous Swahili residents of Zanzibar had their own established norms, and enslaved Africans would also have come with their own knowledge of diverse social structures.

So what changed for these diverse coastal East African residents during the nineteenth-century? How did new social structures become established, and why did they take particular forms? To understand how existing structures were transformed and how new social norms rapidly became understood by this population, it is important to understand what came before. For archaeologists aware of the importance of the *longue durée,* it is vital to turn first to archaeology so as to understand the cultural context of Zanzibar prior to Omani colonialism. The field of archaeology in the region, particularly as it pertains to the study of the last two millennia, is relatively young, limiting the amount of comparative data available. It is only during the 1950s that the "serious study" of African history and archaeology began (Iliffe 1995, p. 4; Robertshaw 1990). For the study of Swahili archaeology and of Eastern African history, a shift towards postcolonial narratives, beginning in the late 1960s has opened up important directions in the interpretation of the region (Rockel 2006b, p. 231). In archaeological terms, the region has long been focused on the study of "stone towns." These are mostly urban sites, varying in size, with stone architecture. They are found along a relatively narrow East African coastal strip, and on several islands in the Indian Ocean; the region in which these are found is usually glossed as the "Swahili coast," (Fig. 2.1) although recent scholarship has pointed out some of the clear differences between such sites within this region (Fleisher 2010a).

Urbanism

From the earliest European colonial investigations, archaeologists working in Eastern Africa have been fascinated by the ruined stone towns of the coast, easily classifying the Swahili as an urban society. Throughout the twentieth century up until

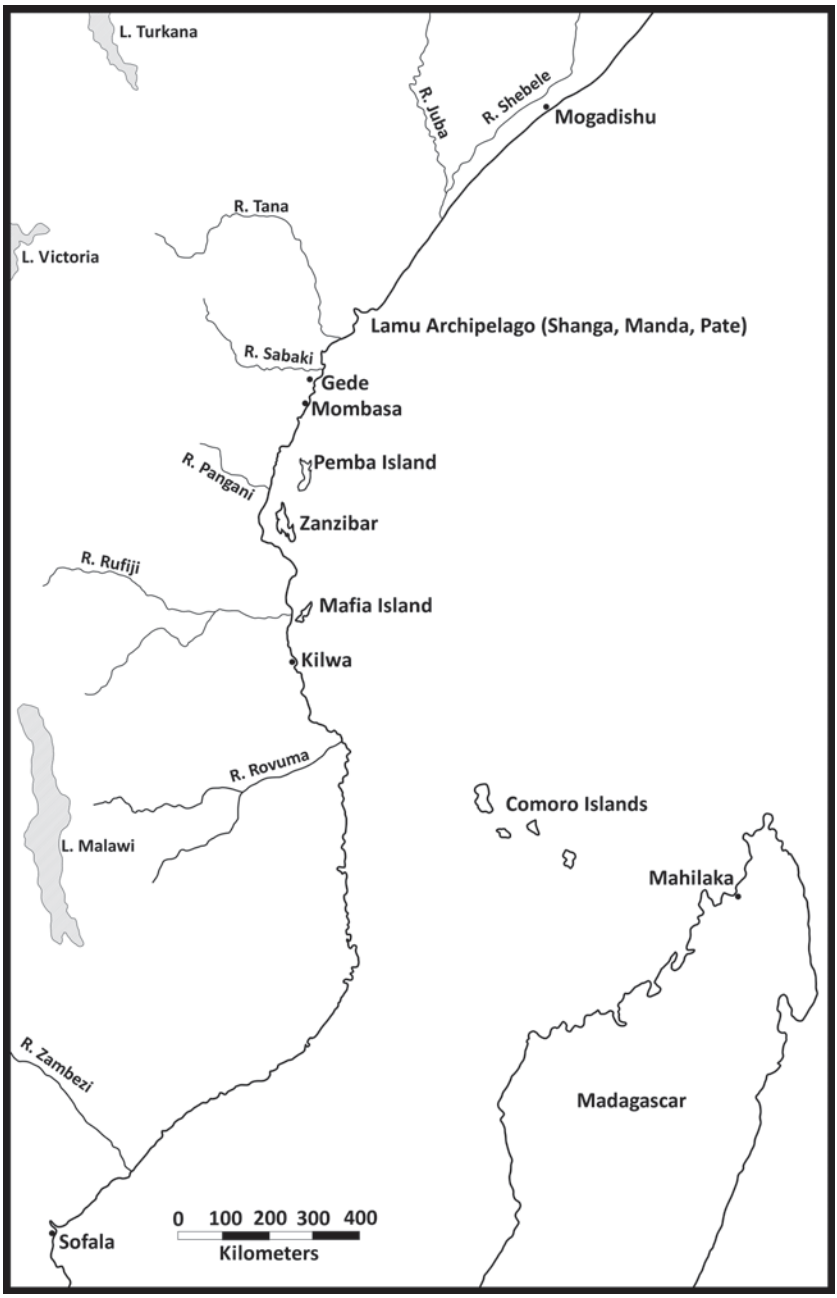

Fig. 2.1 Swahili sites. (After Horton 1996)

the 1980s, archaeological scholarship argued that the urban landscape was a foreign form on the African coast: Arabs, trading in the region, had stayed on the coast and had brought their "civilization" with them. Swahili society in this iteration was fundamentally Arab, often fitting with origin stories of specific Swahili towns and families (Chittick 1974, 1984; Kirkman 1957). During the 1980s, historical, archaeological, and linguistic analysis all shifted in a new direction: Swahili society was argued to have firmly African origins. New scholarship critically examined all historical and material evidence available. Instead of Arab traders arriving and putting down roots on the coast, as had been previously assumed, they now argued that Swahili culture grew out of an African population. Linguistic evidence was a primary tool in this reorientation (Nurse and Spear 1985). The Swahili language was argued to be clearly a Bantu language in structural and lexical form, with extensive loanwords in areas "where Arab influence was strongest (such as jurisprudence, trade, religion, non-indigenous flora, and maritime affairs)" (Spear 2000, p. 259). These linguistic arguments were also carefully weighed up against historical narratives of Swahili towns, which often pointed to origins in the Middle East. These were largely reconciled against a reassessment of the very nature of Swahili society. Allen (1981, p. 330) in an early and important critique of the Arab origins hypothesis presented a convincing argument for scholars to think otherwise of Swahili sites:

> The so-called "stone towns" were mixed stone and mud-and-thatch settlements, which in some cases became quite large towns, founded by indigenous Africans, gradually Islamized with the assistance of immigrants from Asia, but never culturally alienated (in spite of the fact that in many places immigrants managed to install themselves as rulers) before the late eighteenth or nineteenth-centuries.

The interpretation offered by Allen is important. It signals the shift towards understanding Swahili urban (and nonurban) sites as comprising more than just stone buildings. This point, as I discuss below, has framed further research into Swahili sites in important ways. It is also important to highlight that Allen recognized that there was a significant shift during the eighteenth and nineteenth-centuries relating to the way in which Swahili towns constructed their identities vis-à-vis the Middle East. He raises the point that the late eighteenth and nineteenth-centuries—the time during which Omanis ruled significant areas of the coast and during which European colonial powers became increasingly involved in the coast—was a period during which Swahili towns became increasingly "culturally alienated" from Africa. The period of clove plantations, then, was also a period in which indigenous Swahili culture was shifting, with Swahili identities (particularly those of elites) becoming increasingly presented as Arab in nature. Such an interpretation goes against the idea that Swahili patrician culture developed through a long-term symbolic and physical delineation from neighboring African societies (e.g., Donley 1982).

Archaeological evidence was in lockstep with the historical and linguistic reevaluation. Excavations at the site of Shanga, located on the Kenyan coast (Fig. 2.1), allowed for interpretations of the African dimensions of Swahili origins and the process of Islamization through specific evidence. The stone town was shown to have developed from early structures of timber, thatch, and earth in the eighth century

AD to later coral rag and mortar houses, the earliest of which dated to the fourteenth century CE (Horton 1996, pp. 235–242). The building tradition of houses was paralleled by that of the earliest mosque sequence. The earliest settlement layers showed no indication of a mosque structure, although there was a central enclosure which Horton suggested was tied to the settlement forms of neighboring African cultures. This interpretation provides some of the strongest evidence for arguments that Swahili towns were first African, with later Muslim immigrants bringing Islam to East African coastal residents. The first mosque building at Shanga was in the central enclosure and was a small wattle-and-daub building, potentially only for foreign visitors. The use of this wattle-and-daub technique, with the structure placed in a location which may have held ritual importance for the indigenous African founders of Shanga, provides a strong argument for the syncretic nature of Islam on the Swahili coast. The mosque was repeatedly rebuilt in the same location, utilizing stone architecture by the fourteenth century, fitting with an overall shift to stone in domestic architecture (Horton 1991, p. 105).

These earliest phases of coastal settlement are found in association with a locally produced ceramic called Tana tradition or triangular-incised ware, which are dated to between 600 and 1000 AD (Fleisher and Wynne-Jones 2011; Kusimba 1999, p. 35). These ceramics have been another crucial strand in discussing the African cultural basis for Swahili towns. Ever increasing evidence shows the widespread use of Tana wares; they are found on offshore islands and much further inland than the later limits of Swahili settlements (Spear 2000, p. 267). Evidence of iron working is common at Tana sites, and spindle whorls and bead grinders at sites such as Shanga show that a range of nonsubsistence craft production activities were taking place during this early period (Horton 1996). Regular finds of imported ceramics from the Persian Gulf, China, and India are found at Tana sites on the coast, demonstrating the growing importance of trade at these early African town sites (Kusimba 1999, p. 35). Tana forms the final key strand of evidence in arguments for the African origins of Swahili towns. Felix Chami in particular has been vociferous in using these ceramics as the basis for arguing that the later material culture of urban sites developed from African cultural roots (Chami 1998; Chami and Msemwa 1997). It is important to critique ceramics as a singular line of evidence for the ethnic origins of a cultural group (Gosselain 2000). As is discussed in Chap. 7, ceramics on the East African coast have clearly been malleable in terms of their relation to identities. Nevertheless, Tana wares are an important strand in understanding the African roots of Swahili society. While broader sociopolitical shifts encouraged nineteenth-century Swahili elites to demonstrate stronger ties with the Arab world, the first millennium AD saw the emergence of broadly shared roots of Swahili society from African cultural origins.

In the early second millennium AD, urban sites on the coast flourished (Kusimba 1999, p. 38). As mentioned previously, around the fourteenth century AD stone architecture really began to become more common. On the northern Zanzibari island of Pemba (Fig. 2.1), one of the only areas for which systematic survey work has been undertaken, urbanism is really seen to take hold in the period post-dating 1050 AD (Fleisher 2010b, p. 274). We now know that stone towns developed

sequentially from wattle-and-daub structures, but during the second millennium AD, many elegant stone houses and mosques were constructed in towns around the Swahili region (Garlake 1966; Horton 1996). Ceramics shifted from the more broadly shared Tana tradition during this period. Although archaeologists understand diversification to exist across the regions of the Swahili coast (e.g., ceramics in Shanga are not precisely the same as those in Kilwa), it is difficult to understand these changes owing to a lack of comparability between assemblages (Fleisher and Wynne-Jones 2011, p. 248). On the Zanzibari island of Pemba, the eleventh century AD saw the production of "finely crafted large bowls burnished with red hematite … larger than bowls in previous centuries, and fancier in their decoration" (Fleisher 2010a, p. 207). Fleisher argues that these bowls were important in feasting rituals, a vital part of the cementing of power in growing urban centers. In some areas, styles are found to be specific to particular centers, such as Husuni-modeled ware, found at the site of Kilwa between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries (Wynne-Jones 2006, p. 337).

As East African coastal sites became more recognizably the urban society which archaeologists originally found so intriguing, production of goods such as iron, textiles and ceramics continued; sites such as Vumba Kuu on the Kenyan coast show evidence for large-scale production (Wynne-Jones 2010). But imported goods are also a key component of assemblages from this period. Evidence points to the fact that, at least in some areas, imported goods were largely restricted to stone towns (Wynne-Jones 2006). Imported ceramic vessels clearly played an important role in Swahili urban culture, often displayed in wall niches and cemented into the exterior and interior walls of mosques and tombs (Donley-Reid 1990; Garlake 1966). These ceramics may also have been linked to the ritual power of feasting, as urban elites began to develop new structures of power (Fleisher 2010a). This importance of feasting—and the tie between imported ceramics and feasting—may be one thread we can see continuing on in some form into the era of clove plantations.

Despite the increasingly sophisticated understanding of the use of material culture at some Swahili sites, the remnants of wattle-and-daub village sections of towns and villages—the "hidden majority" of Swahili culture—have only recently come under serious investigation (Fleisher and LaViolette 1999). Current understandings of archaeological data suggest rural settlement patterns were not homogenous across the Swahili coastal region. Some areas showed shrinking numbers of rural sites as towns grew more prominent, while villages remained relatively stable in other areas. For instance, village sites seem to be distributed equally through time in the Kilwa region even as the town became one of the most important on the coast (Fleisher 2010b; Wynne-Jones 2006, 2007).

Key points to draw out from this brief depiction of early Eastern African Swahili archaeology and history is that by the dawn of the fifteenth century—the advent of Portuguese incursions on the coast—there was a flourishing urban culture stretching along the Swahili coast. However, this was by no means homogenous; different forms of material culture in use (such as local ceramic types) may signal regionally or town-specific practices, and different settlement patterns in locations such as

Pemba Island and the Kilwa region signify also that this "urban civilization" was differentiated. Archaeological and historical scholarship has tended to put forward a singular narrative for all Swahili sites, but increasingly fine-grained studies show that this conclusion does not hold true (Fleisher 2010b). During the nineteenth-century, the time of clove plantations, European colonial administrators viewed the region as relatively homogenous. Taking up archaeological data, we can see that, going back in time, this gloss of "Swahili" culture actually overlay a more varied set of local practices and potential identities. This is important in considering the way in which the nineteenth-century—even as immigrants flooded to the coast—may have been a period in which larger identities of an imagined community of coastal "Swahili" came into existence. In addition, understanding Swahili origins also matters for understanding the long-term cosmopolitanism of the coast. Early coastal sites were largely populated by Africans, but were also sites where international trade took place. At early sites such as Ras Hafun in Somalia, pre-Islamic imported Partho-Sassanian wares from the Gulf attest to very early trade relations, and these were clearly continued on in the mercantile focus of many towns (Sinclair 1991, p. 181). The archaeology of Swahili urbanism can also be viewed in a metaphor of a mosaic. While coastal sites had clear trajectories of development focused on Indian Ocean trade networks, these sites were also producing goods, consuming produce grown locally, and trading with inland communities. A consideration of the African roots of Swahili culture must take account of its "mosaic quality…in which foragers interacted with agriculturalists, peripatetic herders passed through the courts of kings, and so-called tribal societies formed on the margins of complex polities" (Stahl 2004, p. 147). The archaeology of Swahili urbanism pushes away from seeing the cultural context in which plantations came to exist as that of homogenous Swahili culture running up and down the East African coast, but also reminds us that the kind of international connections and immigration of the nineteenth-century, while clearly intensified, were by no means novel for the region.

Early Colonialism

Moving on from the mid-second millennium AD moves this brief survey of Eastern African coastal history into the period of colonialism. This shift means that I can now talk of the archaeology of Swahili sites fitting neatly with umbrella definitions of historical archaeology which cite European colonialism as a key comparative area for the field (Deetz 1991; Orser 1996). Early Swahili settlement appears in documents such as the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea,* and Swahili archaeology can be argued to be part of historical archaeology inasmuch as it has documents such as the *Periplus* and various town-centered chronicles attesting to early settlements (Fleisher 2004). However, documentary history certainly shifts as one enters the sixteenth century. I do not wish to spend time writing about when precisely the coast might be considered to become comparable with other areas falling under the purview of "historical archaeology of the modern world" (Orser 1996). As I outlined in the introduction, the nineteenth-century sits securely within global comparative

analytical frameworks of historical archaeology. But something important happens in terms of scholarship when one reaches the period of Portuguese connections with Eastern Africa.

A clear break in Swahili history is generally assumed to have occurred with the voyage of Vasco da Gama around the Cape of Good Hope in 1497. This voyage included several brief calls at Swahili towns, including a brief one-day visit to Zanzibar (Gray 1962, p. 30). Contact was more sustained from da Gama's second voyage in 1502. Sailing with a much larger force, Portuguese colonial rule was formally established on the coast. However, it would be wrong to assume that this was a sudden force for change in the lives of most Swahili coastal residents. Few Portuguese lived on the Swahili coast—the main Portuguese area of control was centered south of Cape Delgado where they were interested in the gold trade from inland areas (Alpers 1975, p. 40). At more northerly sites, from Kilwa up to Mogadishu, there were probably never more than a thousand Portuguese, all men, at any one time (Lofchie 1965, p. 28). This small force was concentrated mostly in Kilwa and Mombasa, and their role was limited to "occasional collection of tribute" (Sheriff 1987, p. 16). Hardly a radical break with previous patterns of life, although clearly there were shifts in the main centers of power and realignments of trade during this period.

Mombasa and Kilwa saw the only significant building projects for housing Portuguese garrisons, with Fort Jesus at Mombasa completed in 1593 (Gray 1962, p. 41). Kilwa remained one of the more prominent ports of the coast, frequented by a number of European traders from the sixteenth century onwards, with a thriving slave trade to the French in the eighteenth century (Allen 2008b). Outside of these two main ports there was little activity, although the Portuguese did build a small trading settlement on Zanzibar by 1591 (Bennett 1978, p. 9; Gray 1962, p. 39). A chapel was built at this site sometime between 1590 and 1610, and this was later incorporated into the Omani fort which still stands near the seafront in Zanzibar Stone Town today (Clark and Horton 1985, p. 13).

Due to the increase in commerce, the traditional Ibadi (the austere denomination of Islam followed by most Omanis) rule of Oman through an elected Imamate began to change, with an increase in secular power focused on wealth from customs revenues (Pouwels 1987, p. 125). By 1650, the Portuguese had lost control of their fort at Muscat to Omani forces (Alpers 1975, p. 62; Cunha 2009, p. 214). The then ruling Ya'rubi clan of Oman also held a navy by 1650, causing problems with Portuguese shipping routes and beginning "raids" along the East African coast (Cunha 2009, p. 213; Sheriff 1987, p. 17). In 1696, the Omanis laid siege to Fort Jesus in Mombasa, partly at the request of the town. Their success in removing the Portuguese from this East African stronghold was to result in increased Omani powers across the Swahili region.

This shift set the scene for the growth of Omani power on Zanzibar. These islands eventually became the seat of Omani power on the East African coast. Prior to the eighteenth century, while there had been a small Portuguese trading settlement on Zanzibar, no settlement on these islands matched the scale of cities such as Kilwa. Larger towns such as Chwaka on Pemba did not have the kind of widespread stone architecture and grandeur of some of the more prominent precolonial cities on the coast (LaViolette and Fleisher 2009). Each island was, prior to the

nineteenth-century, under the separate control of local indigenous rulers such as the *Mwinye Mkuu* (this translates literally as "the great ruler") on Zanzibar (Middleton 1992, p. 42). Under indigenous rulers such as the *Mwinyi Mkuu,* Zanzibaris had fluttering alliances with the Portuguese and Omanis throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The attraction of the southern island of Unguja to the Portuguese and Omanis was always its good sheltered ports, whereas Pemba was important as a regional agricultural producer, serving as Mombasa's "bread basket" (Sheriff 1987, pp. 26–27). As political power shifted to the Bu'saidi clan of Oman, Zanzibar became an increasingly strategic port, offering a good harbor between the important cities of Kilwa and Mombasa. An Omani governor of Zanzibar was established alongside the indigenous ruler of Unguja in 1744, and 400 Omani merchants were reported to be present at Zanzibar by 1754 (Alpers 1975, p. 131; Sheriff 1987, p. 26). In 1828 Said bin Sultan made the first visit of a ruler of Oman to the East African coast. His visits to Zanzibar became increasingly frequent, and by the 1840s the port city of Zanzibar had become the main residence of the Omani sultan (Bennett 1978, pp. 21, 44). By contrast, final Omani control of Pemba was established only in 1823 and was always concentrated on the importance of the agrarian potential of the island (Sheriff 1987, p. 30). Politically, Omani power waned in the later nineteenth-century as the British increasingly intervened in Zanzibar's affairs, particularly from the succession dispute in the mid-nineteenth-century which split Oman and Zanzibar once more. The two states were divided politically in 1856, after which time a division of the Omani sultanate continued to rule Zanzibar, and migration continued between the two countries (Middleton 1992, p. 47; Pearson 1998; Sheriff 1987, p. 214).

One of the key impacts of Omani political control was their dual combination of merchant capitalism and austere Ibadi religious values. While their merchant capitalist role, in a world that was rapidly changing to industrialized capitalism, can be viewed as "anachronistic" (Pearson 1998, p. 162), it is also clear that their power was embedded in control of trade for monetary gain and an awareness of their place in global markets. This solidified over the nineteenth-century, a time during which some of the sultan's advisers were sea captains, and he apparently requested translations of newspapers from the U.S. (Pouwels 1987, p. 127). These actions highlight the cosmopolitan and worldly aspects of Omani rule on Zanzibar. Set against this was the manner in which Omani rule increased "traditional" values of Islam, deeply affecting areas such as women's role in society (Askew 1999). Omanis followed the Ibadi denomination of Islam, tied in to a culturally distinct world of the Gulf, differing from the Sunni denomination followed on the East African coast (Potter 2009, p. 5; Pouwels 1987, p. 101). Omani Islam has been argued to be a denomination focused on literate practices, whereas East African coastal Muslims practiced a syncretic form of Sunni Islam, sometimes drawing on "African" practices. These two forms of Islamic practice were joined in the nineteenth-century by competing religious ideologies of Sufi Islam, where participants included women and those of lower social status, and whose worship included dance, drums, and the use of the Swahili language (Fair 2001, p. 19; Glassman 1995, p. 93; Lienhardt 1959; Martin 1969; Prins 1961, p. 114). Social impacts of colonialism were thus embroiled in

tensions between the increasingly secular power of capitalist values and the growth of a range of Islamic traditions, some leaning towards conservatism and largely focused around male-only mosques (especially the for Omani Ibadis) and some more open to local spiritual practices, including incorporating spirit-possession rituals.

Omani colonial rule ostensibly remained in place until the mid-twentieth century, when Britain granted Zanzibar's independence. It has been argued that most of the period of Omani rule in Zanzibar was guided by the politics of Britain, since Oman was increasingly reliant on Britain to protect their shipping interests in the Gulf, beginning of the nineteenth-century, laying the foundations of a subjugative relationship between the states (Sheriff 1987, p. 5). Throughout the nineteenth-century, British political interests grew, and anti-slave trade treaties were signed in 1828, 1873, and 1876. In 1890, Zanzibar formally agreed to become a British protectorate. In 1896, British naval forces directly intervened in the succession of the sultanate; this seemingly signaled the end of Omani rule "proper" and the sultanate was gradually pushed out of having an independent voice in the ruling of the islands (Pouwels 1987, pp. 163, 165). It is a tightly bracketed period, certainly ending by the late nineteenth-century, in which we see the true control of the islands of Zanzibar by Omani colonial rule; even during this period, in some political matters Europeans were increasingly vocal, such as the succession dispute between Majid bin Said and Thuwaini bin Said. It is crucial to bear in mind that, for the majority of Zanzibaris, the nineteenth-century was a period in which they felt the direct impact of Omani rather than British rule. It is these cultural influences that we must pay attention to, while still considering the political hand of Britain in Zanzibari affairs. British interests are important when we consider Zanzibar as a location of global capitalism. But colonialism here was complicated. In terms of the social effects of rule, Omani governance was crucial during the nineteenth-century, but the British push towards such major shifts as the ending of the slave trade and the abolition of slavery were also important in the nature of social relations on plantations.

The Caravan Trade, Arabs Move Inland

Plantations were secondary to the economic importance of the caravan trade in Eastern Africa, with Zanzibar serving as a major entrepôt for the sale of ivory, slaves, and (in smaller quantities) copal and other goods. Wealth generated in the form of tax revenues from the sale of caravan trade goods through Zanzibar was the economic basis upon which the Omani Zanzibar Sultanate was based (Sheriff 1987). During the eighteenth century, Kilwa had continued to be a significant port of trade, with inland caravan routes running from the southwest area towards Lake Nyasa, supplying slaves and ivory (Alpers 1975; Iliffe 1979, p. 40). Demand for enslaved Africans increased with the establishment of French plantations on the Mascarene Islands, fueling trade from East African ports (Allen 2008a). But by the mid-nineteenth-century, trade routes had shifted further north. The central caravan route, which ran through to Ujiji on the shores of Lake Tanganyika (see Fig. 2.2),

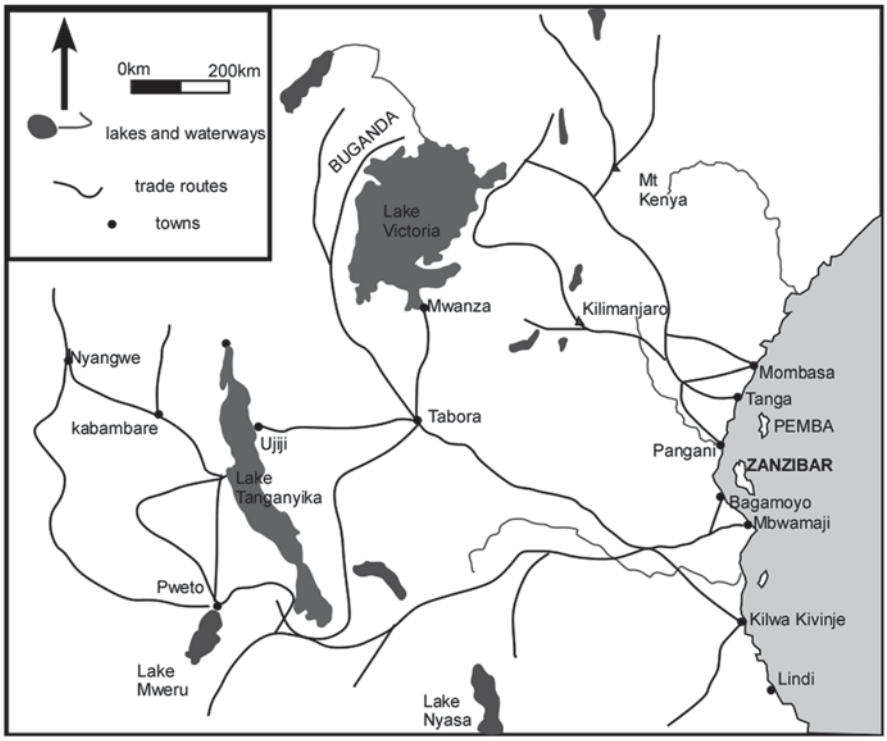

Fig. 2.2 Major caravan trade routes. (After Sheriff 1987)

was well established by the time European explorers such as Speke and Burton traversed these same journeys in the 1850s (Sheriff 1987, p. 183). In part, because of these histories, the majority of in-depth historical studies have focused on these central routes (e.g., Rockel 1995, 2000, 2006b).

Ivory was the primary commodity of interest for merchant vessels calling at Zanzibar. In industrializing nations, ivory was in demand for combs, billiard balls, piano keys, and other trinkets. Gum copal, another commodity on sale at Zanzibar, was manufactured into varnish, increasingly used on railway carriages from the mid-nineteenth-century (Sunseri 2007). While colonialism was dominated by European powers, in trade terms, the U.S. was also of importance, with ships from New England commonly calling at the port of Zanzibar (Prestholdt 2008, p. 72). These trade links between the U.S. and Zanzibar gained official recognition in the first formal agreement between the Omani Sultanate and a Western nation, taking the form of a commercial treaty between the two nations in 1831 (Sheriff 1987, p. 93). These American ships commonly traded *merikani,* a cheap calico cloth manufactured in New England, guns, and beads, as is discussed in greater detail in Chap. 6. But this trade was not just global; Indian Ocean networks and markets continued to be of vital importance. American demand for ivory supplemented a long-standing Indian

market (Alpers 1975, p. 234). As late as 1940, a significant number of dhows were still sailing to Zanzibar from Oman, India, and Somalia. Their cargoes included dates, dried fish, spices, textiles, livestock, and ghee (clarified butter), all staples of Zanzibari culture embedded in Indian Ocean cultural realms (Sheriff 2010, p. 176). Merchant capitalism on Zanzibar in the nineteenth-century was involved in multiple scales of trading which included mass markets of the industrialized world alongside smaller regional markets. In this commerce, Zanzibaris were savvy players; caravan routes were not able to keep up with global demand for ivory, and the resultant rising prices bought a diverse range of goods for East African consumers (Prestholdt 2008; Sheriff 1987, p. 103).

The movement of people along caravan routes, whether through involuntary enslavement or voluntary labor migration, spurred a wide range of new cultural practices, promoting shared ties between previously distinct cultural groups and connecting coastal society culturally with peoples as far inland as the Congo. Ethnic groups such as the Manyema and Nyamwezi have persuasively been argued to, in part, have come into existence through the new social terrain of the caravan trade routes (McCurdy 2006; Rockel 2000, 2006b). Contextualizing the social shifts occurring on clove plantations in this manner reminds us that for those enslaved individuals who were newly arrived on Zanzibar, life back "home" was potentially anything but stable. Forging new identities was a common practice for many in Eastern Africa throughout the nineteenth-century.

Throughout East Africa, with the development of the caravan trade, "Arab" identities also take on an interesting fluid quality. I discuss plantation owners, such as Abdalla bin Jabir, as "Arab." On Zanzibar, this regularly connoted a specific kinship tie to the Middle East, most often Oman. Abdalla bin Jabir, the plantation owner at Mgoli, for instance, is said to have come from Mombasa and to have been a Sunni Muslim (Croucher 2006, p. 407). Local leaders in areas connected to the coast regularly drew on aspects of Arab identities to present themselves as powerful figures (Glassman 1995). Such identities were obvious to European travelers, since they clashed with their expectations of African leaders. Charles New, traveling through the Usambara region in the late nineteenth-century (located to the northwest of Tanga), wrote of meeting a local chief, Samboja. In part, Samboja's authority seemed to have gained authority through his retinue of followers, described as "about 300 of the wildest looking fellows I ever saw; every man armed with a flint musket, and most with a sword of some sort" (New 1875, p. 416). Samboja, however, also utilized visible Arab characteristics, presumably in an attempt to present himself as a powerful man in this local East African context. He was, "in appearance and dress an Arab: with white kanzu, black surtout braided over the shoulder with tinsel, coloured girdle and turban, sword and dagger mounted in silver, an oblong case of silver like a large snuff box, and stuffed with charms at his breast" (New 1875, p. 416). This adoption of Arab style to present oneself as *being* Arab fits with later shifts in the nature of Arab and Swahili identities on Zanzibar (Eastman 1971; Fair 2001, p. 85). Arab identities were not, however, the only route to power. Willis (1992, p. 197) has suggested that during the mid-nineteenth-century, as the Kilindi kingdom (based in Vuga) declined in its ability to protect people,

individuals instead "sought security and protection through membership of smaller, more local groups." As people within the region sought to become members of these local groups, identification in "clans" named after individuals took precedence over ethnic identification. Thus, identities were formed at this local "clan" level, while political power revolved around access to firearms and other symbols of authority gained through trading networks with the Indian Ocean coast.

Understanding Arab identities in nineteenth-century Eastern Africa, including clove plantation areas, is therefore complex. Identity was understood through routinized norms, but was also signified through the semiotic power of material culture to allow people to truly become someone else. Identity was comprised of instrumental and unconscious elements. Eastern Africa identities in the nineteenth-century were in flux. Ethnicities such as Manyema (McCurdy 2006), Nyamwezi (Rockel 2006a, 2009), Arab, and Swahili (Glassman 2000) were mutable. However, this did not mean that they could simply be switched from one day to another, and subjects were constrained in the shifts that they could make. Freed slaves in the twentieth century found that there were limits on the manner in which they could shift their identities (Fair 2001). As I discuss in greater detail later in this book, terms such as "Arab" did not connote a fixed racialized identity based on phenotype, but they were related to the actions, practices, and appearance (through dress), of subjects, which were, in turn, constrained by social position. We must also recognize that these were meaningful identities to those who inhabited them. Identity was surely an active discursive field in a context where so many thousands of forced and voluntary immigrants were moving to new areas, but this does not mean that we should treat the practices of identities undertaken by subjects in a glib manner, or assume that these were not understood as real phenomena by individuals who came to *be* Arab, Manyema, Nyamwezi, and Swahili.

Clove Plantations

How then did clove plantations come about? If mercantilism was the primary economic basis of the rise of Omani colonialism on the islands of Zanzibar, why did plantations come to dominate the agrarian economy? The answer is complex. Plantation agriculture on Zanzibar developed directly out of the elite merchant capitalist society of Omani elites, well aware of the market value of mono-crop agriculture. Originally, the clove tree grew only in the Moluccas, part of present-day Indonesia (Martin 1991, p. 450). Within Indian Ocean and Chinese trading networks, cloves had long been a valued commodity, even known in the Roman Empire, where the spice was imported via Egypt (Crofton 1936, p. 6). The establishment of clove trees on Zanzibar was another result of the fermenting colonial-commercial world of the Indian Ocean. The route of transferring the trees from the Moluccas came via the Mascarene Islands, where they had been transplanted by the French, who had obtained seedlings in 1770 to plant on Mauritius. Following on from this, there were attempts to grow clove trees at other French colonies, and by the British at Penang,

Malaysia (Bennett 1978, p. 24; Martin 1991, p. 450). The income to be gained from the cultivation of this spice, echoing earlier motivations for initial European colonization of the Indian Ocean, was clearly well worth the speculation. A large and expansive global market awaited the introduction of these trees, based in the Indian Ocean, but with sizeable portions outside of the region. By the 1920s, when clove growing was well established on Zanzibar, almost half of the annual crop was exported to India, with the remainder shipped to Britain, other European countries, and the U.S. (Martin 1991, p. 452).

The first clove trees planted on Unguja reflect the cosmopolitan nature of agricultural experimentation in the Indian Ocean during the early nineteenth-century. Saleh bin Haramil al Arabay, an Omani born in 1770, is the key figure in this story. He had visited French colonies in the Indian Ocean as a young man, later becoming an interpreter for the sultan, and utilizing his French connections to obtain the first clove seeds and seedlings which he planted in the 1810s (Sheriff 1987, p. 50). One British visitor to the islands just 50 years after the date Sheriff suggested for al Arabay's introduction of the trees suggested that cloves "were introduced about 30 years ago from Mauritius" (Rigby 1861, p. 22). While not confirming directly the route, this fits broadly with the idea that the trees came via European colonial networks within the Indian Ocean. While European networks helped to propagate the movement of crops, Islamic knowledge of intensive cultivation also promoted other plantation forms around the Indian Ocean, including coffee seedlings grown by the Dutch in Java (Topik and Clarence-Smith 2003, p. 5).

Agriculture in which a single crop was grown by a large enslaved workforce was not a foreign idea to the Omani sultanate, since irrigated date palm plantations had been another strand of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century wealth of Oman (Sheriff 1987, p. 35, 2010, p. 183). Thus, the idea of clove plantations may have been a natural one for Omani immigrants. Al Arabay's plantations were eventually confiscated by the sultan of Zanzibar, cementing their place as an agricultural crop of the highest elite of Zanzibari colonial society (Sheriff 1987, p. 50). These also formed a part of Said's experimentation with other forms of plantation agriculture, including sugar, coffee, and nutmeg (Pouwels 1987, p. 104). Interest in plantations was not only limited to the sultan; many Eastern African residents, Omani and Swahili alike, began to develop plantation schemes. From the 1870s, sugar plantations were established in Tanzania along the River Pangani, requiring a much harsher system of labor than cloves (Glassman 1995, p. 101). Further north, grain plantations were established around Mombasa and Malindi (Cooper 1977). Despite these being pockets of plantation agriculture, it is obvious that the idea of large-scale plantations with enslaved laborers was easily and widely accepted within Swahili colonial coastal culture.

Although not requiring the same backbreaking labor as was the case on sugar plantations, clove trees still required fairly intensive labor, which was carried out almost entirely by enslaved laborers on Zanzibar during the nineteenth-century (slave labor is discussed in greater detail in Chap. 4). In comparison to the Moluccas, where the clove tree originated, the islands of Zanzibar have a slightly lower rainfall. To compensate for this, nineteenth-century plantations relied on labor-intensive

techniques such as watering to care for young trees. Regular weeding and keeping the area between trees clear of other crops was another crucial step in maintaining the trees (Martin 1991, pp. 456–457). Plantations, therefore, required regular labor for tending the trees between harvests, during which time enslaved laborers worked for approximately five days a week to attend to planting and weeding (Middleton and Campbell 1965, p. 33). Harvesting the cloves, which occurred twice a year in August and December, was heavily labor intensive (Bennett 1978, p. 28). Buds had to be picked before they flower, meaning that each tree had to be picked several times to ensure a full harvest, and care had to be taken that delicate branches were not broken, requiring the use of ladders and skilled pickers (Cooper 1980, p. 156; Martin 1991, p. 457). Following their harvest, prior to sale, the fresh buds of the clove tree are laid out to dry, usually on mats, before the desiccated cloves are sent to market. This drying process—laying out the cloves each day and gathering them up again—is another vital element of labor for successful clove growing and harvesting. The requirements of enslaved laborers on clove plantations were not as harsh as those in other plantation regimens. Rest time was allowed, and this included, outside of the picking season, a day free for personal cultivation and another for prayer (Cooper 1977, p. 159). The worth of enslaved labor was also raised by merit of the degree of skill required in the picking season.

Cloves quickly spread across the two islands of Zanzibar, supplanting other crops to such a degree that a "mania" for planting described by one visitor in the 1840s (Sheriff 2001, p. 66). Pemba, although it is the better island of the two for clove growing, did not outstrip Zanzibar in production volume until a hurricane of 1872 wiped out much of the Zanzibar crop and further stimulated plantation growth on Pemba (Sheriff 1987, pp. 51, 64). Documentary history is unclear as to the nature of land acquisition by Omanis as they developed plantations and the precise ethnic makeup of planter society. A sketch can be drawn from a (problematic) 1922 British survey of plantations, by which point 3 million trees had been planted. On Zanzibar, 69 percent of trees were owned by Arabs, 33 percent by Africans, and 8 percent by Indians. Figures were similar for Pemba, where 46 percent of trees were owned by Arabs, 46 percent by Africans, and 8 percent by Indians (Martin 1991, p. 452). Historical scholarship, discussed further below, has demonstrated the problems with British classifications of identities (Glassman 2000). If we assume that plantations owned by Indians consisted of foreclosures, we can figure that at least half of plantations on Pemba were owned by Arabs, and a greater proportion on Zanzibar were owned by the same. Indigenous African plantation owners (likely Swahili elites) appear to have had a more equitable share of landholdings on Pemba, although this is still only equal, at best, to the holdings of those identified as "Arab" (likely Omani immigrants or their immediate descendants). As mentioned above, plantations owned by Indians in the early twentieth century likely reflected foreclosed mortgages, and the emancipation of slaves in the early twentieth century may also have shifted the manner in which trees were owned (Cooper 1977, p. 58). As these data were recorded in 1922, it is safe to assume—due to the high rate of Indians foreclosing on mortgages from the beginning of the twentieth century—that there were higher numbers of Arab and Swahili (indigenous African) plantation owners

on Zanzibar during the nineteenth-century. Historical data also give us glimpses into the scale of these plantations: Despite the fact that plantations tended to be divided between siblings upon inheritance, thus creating ever smaller landholdings, by the late 1940s, there were still some plantations consisting of over 10,000 trees, testifying to the massive scale of some nineteenth-century plantations. Today, with shifts following the 1964 revolution, a smaller pattern of landholding is seen, since many of the larger plantations were redistributed in smaller plots by the revolutionary government (Martin 1991, p. 452).

Slavery

The plantation system, as of those for most capitalist economies in the modern world, existed because of the availability of coerced labor: primarily enslaved Africans from the mainland. Slavery was not novel in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Eastern Africa, although archaeologists and historians have struggled to place any firm date on the origins of slavery in the region (Alexander 2001). The lack of an archaeology of slavery (until very recently) is surprising, given its scale. Many hundreds of thousands of Africans, if not more, were forcibly taken as slaves through East African ports in the past 500 years. Although projects such as that of UNESCO examining slave routes are promoting greater awareness and study of slavery in the region, scholarship of the African diaspora in the Indian Ocean remains an incipient field of scholarship, aptly described as "one of the most neglected aspects of the global diaspora of African peoples" (Alpers 2000, p. 84). I summarize key historical points for understanding Eastern African slavery as an introduction here, but this topic is examined in greater detail and in relation to archaeological evidence in Chap. 4.

Taking persons as slaves, often as social dependents, was a widespread practice within many African societies, with established rules governing the practice for Muslims (Cooper 1979, 1981; Fisher 2001; Fisher and Fisher 1970). Revolts by enslaved Africans in southern Iraq are known from history as early as the eighth century AD, so the nineteenth-century slave trade was certainly building on long established patterns, albeit on a totally different scale. Portuguese traders never seem to have lacked in their ability to buy enslaved Africans from East African settlements. The trade in slaves grew substantially at Kilwa through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries with increasing demands from the French in particular for plantation slaves, and with a smaller proportion of enslaved Africans also being sold southwards to South Africa and into the Atlantic world (Allen 2008a; Alpers 1975, pp. 95, 186). From the seventeenth century, there was an increasing demand for slave labor in the Gulf for domestic labor, dhow sailors, soldiers, pearl divers, and to work on Omani date plantations (Sheriff 1987, p. 35, 1988; 2009, p. 183).

Major studies of slavery within African societies (Campbell 2004; Miers and Kopytoff 1977; Lovejoy 1983) have tended to stress the importance of slaves as an alternative form of wealth; "wealth in people" rather than in land being the route to power (Miers and Kopytoff 1977; cf. Guyer 1993, 2004). Within Omani colonial

society, enslaved followers were certainly important for personal status, with domestic laborers and women enslaved as concubines providing part of the social prestige of elite households (Cooper 1977, 1979; Sheriff 1987). Plantation agriculture, however, was a major impetus for a shift from enslaved Africans forming part of Swahili society as social dependents to them becoming viewed instead as productive labor, albeit in a "mutually reinforcing relationship" with continuing ideas of the importance of personal followers (Cooper 1977, pp. 159, 6). In contrast to models of buying persons as social dependents who would work but could also become an integral part of one's household, persons bought from the clove plantation boom onwards were largely to be a part of an agrarian labor force, or were young girls and women bought as concubines (Cooper 1981). Contestation over the social place of enslaved laborers appears to have been a major disruptive force in nineteenth-century coastal society, with elites attempting to apply their view of persons being seen as analogous to chattel slaves, while also being tied to older obligations of client–patron relations between the enslaved and their owners (Glassman 1995). The changing social role of enslaved Africans on plantations, and the manner in which they were identified and came to identify themselves within Zanzibari society, is a major theme that I primarily return to in Chap. 4, but it is also important for the interpretations presented throughout the remainder of this book.

Outside of social history, major questions also revolve around the volume of the slave trade. Due to a paucity of documentary records, it has proved impossible to produce a fully quantified history of the slave trade in the Indian Ocean, although the picture is certainly clearer for the nineteenth-century than that of earlier periods (Clarence-Smith 1989, p. 1; Sheriff 1987, p. 33). Major studies of the southern trade through Kilwa by Alpers (1975) and the trade through Zanzibar by Sheriff (1987; 1988), along with the careful work of Cooper (1977; 1979; 1981) more broadly on plantation slavery on the coast, have provided the framework for understanding basic facts about the slave trade and plantation slavery. All of these studies show that the trade grew throughout the nineteenth-century, subject to changes in demands which were often charted through the gradual push for anti-slave trading treaties from the British and the cessation of the use of slave labor by other European colonists. In the early nineteenth-century, the annual trade from the East African coast, largely through Kilwa, has been estimated at between 6,000 and 13,000 individuals (Alpers 1975, p. 192; Sheriff 1987, p. 60). Drawing on figures from Zanzibar as the trade shifted northwards, it is thought that these numbers rose to between 14,000 and 15,000 in the 1850s to a peak of 20,000 in the 1860s (Sheriff 1987, p. 60). By the mid-nineteenth-century, many of those bought and sold on the coast were being utilized for plantation labor (Cooper 1977). Customs house records suggest that around 10,000 individuals were being retained annually on Zanzibar and Pemba during the 1840s (Sheriff 1987, p. 61). Other estimates are vague (further discussion is provided in Chap. 4), but suggest that around two-thirds of Zanzibar's total population of about 300,000 were enslaved Africans (Bennett 1978, p. 28). This would not be surprising, given the 10,000 per year figure.

The areas from which persons were enslaved matched closely with the caravan routes running inland (see Fig. 2.2). Prior to the nineteenth-century expansion of

trade, most of those enslaved were bought along southerly routes, and once the central route through Tanzania was established, people were taken from a wide range of societies across East-Central Africa, and ethnic origins included groups in eastern and southern Tanzania, northern Mozambique, Malawi, and as far afield as Zambia and Congo (Sheriff 1988, p. 144). Some direct recollections of Africans freed from Arab vessels by British anti-slavers as early as 1869 record origins as Yao, Nyasa, Ngingo, and Nyamwezi, although these European records of ethnonyms must always be treated with caution (Alpers 2000, p. 88). As the nineteenth-century progressed and guns became more widely available, major upheavals occurred across Eastern Africa. This meant that some individuals were passed through multiple hands before being sold on the coast into a permanent state of enslavement (see narratives in Wright 1993).

From this historical study, the size, diversity, and shifting social relations of enslavement are clear; these are key points for my later archaeological analysis. Within clove plantation areas, enslaved Africans (laborers, domestic workers, and concubines) formed the majority of the population. They were drawn from a variety of communities across Eastern Africa and therefore were unlikely to share a common language or cultural background (Cooper 1977, p. 218). Their position within Zanzibari society was also changing. Many of those in the sultan's household remained in older roles such as soldiers and domestic workers, and enslaved workers in urban centers could also exercise a great degree of autonomy at times (Cooper 1977; Reute 1998/[1886]). Even as plantation regimes pushed enslaved laborers towards a position analogous with chattel slavery, there would still have been a wider awareness of the presence and importance of older models of social dependents, as these were still common within Zanzibari society. These factors immediately alert us to the fact that slavery on Zanzibari plantations was quite different to that on plantations in the Americas and Asia which were run by Europeans on the basis of racialized slavery.

Immigration

It should now be clear from the history of nineteenth-century Zanzibar that the islands were part of a region experiencing major immigration. The majority of this was from the involuntary settlement of tens of thousands of enslaved mainland Africans, but many thousands of other immigrants also swelled the East African population from around the Indian Ocean world. Along with the indigenous Swahili, these all contributed to a diverse and cosmopolitan society. Omani immigrants were drawn to the East African coast initially to trade, settling at the port of Zanzibar and other trading towns, and traveling inland on caravan routes. The possibility of establishing clove plantations acted as further stimuli for this trend in immigration (Sheriff 1987, p. 54). By the 1840s, 5,000 Omanis, mostly men, were estimated to have emigrated to Unguja alone (Burton 1872a, p. 368; Fair 2001, p. 13). When the significance of clove plantations as a draw to Pemba post-1840 is taken into

account, it is safe to assume that Omanis would have formed the largest voluntary immigrant group to the islands. Their presence was most concentrated at plantations and in the city of Zanzibar.

Indian relations with the East African coast have been demonstrated from archaeological evidence to exist since at least the eleventh century CE, and documentary history records an Indian presence on the coast from the sixteenth century (Horton 2004, pp. 66–67). The Indian population of the nineteenth-century was not a new stream of migration therefore, but a continuation and intensification of long-standing relations. Indian immigrants were deeply entrenched in trade, and the roots of their interests in capitalist trade relations date back to an eighteenth-century Indian presence at Mozambique (Alpers 1975, pp. 127, 148). Around 1819, the Indian firm of Jairam Sewji was given control over the customs house of Zanzibar, demonstrating the central role of Indians in the economic sphere. Although by 1840 some Indians owned land outside of the city limits of Zanzibar, mostly they formed part of the merchant society of urban centers along the coast (Sheriff 1987, pp. 86–87). By the 1820s, 3,000 Indians were estimated to have migrated to Zanzibar, with numbers rising slowly but continuously through the nineteenth-century (Fair 2001, p. 13).

A final minority of immigrants came from the Hadhramaut coast of Southern Yemen and from the Comoro Islands. Both groups tended to be fairly poor, and assisted in the transfer of Sufi Islamic ideas to the coast (Pouwels 1987, p. 112). Their numbers were smaller than the Omani and Indian immigrant groups, but they still contributed to the overall diversity of Zanzibari colonial society.

Swahili, Arab, and African Identities

I want to return now to the earlier discussion of archaeological approaches to the East African coast. Here, it seemed that by the fifteenth century there was a clear Swahili culture, shared around a geographic area stretching from Somalia down to Mozambique running along the coast and shared by many residents of offshore islands. To archaeologists, the basic factors of this identity seem clear: widely shared material culture in the form of architecture, ceramics, and means of life (although, as discussed above, the homogeneity of this identity is increasingly critiqued). This is coupled with historical linguistics to provide the basis of an assumed cultural–linguistic unit stretching back well over a thousand years. Archaeologists have rarely troubled themselves with the problems of contemporary issues surrounding Swahili identities, since largely, as I shall discuss below, the colonial period is assumed, on the basis of little evidence, to have provided a break with some of the politics of the past, while still providing a direct link to some cultural continuities of practice.

Recent problems of Swahili identities really begin under European colonial rule. The first Europeans were quick to label coastal residents as Arabs, while recognizing a supposed racial mixture between Arab and African origins on the coast (Mazrui and Shariff 1994, Chap. 1). Archaeologically, we know that Africans provided the foundations for the Swahili communities whom the Portuguese met on the coast.

But Europeans, drawing on Orientalist and racist ideologies, could only view the "civilized" Islamic stone towns as originating from Arab cultural origins. These ideas were strengthened as the British began to increasingly intervene in East Africa, seeking to solidify tribal boundaries in their policy of indirect rule (Vail 1989; Willis 1993).

Being Swahili was a category that proved somewhat perplexing for many European commentators. It was apparent that the self-definition of Swahili (or "Shirazi," another term denoting a coastal identity) was situational (as was discussed in relation to "Arab" identities, above). Those who had been enslaved and bought to the coast from the mainland were commonly defining themselves as Swahili by the early twentieth century (Beech 1916; Fair 2001, p. 29). In so doing, they were drawing on their status as having adopted the Swahili language, Islamic religious practice, and other coastal cultural elements such as dress. These are factors that Cooper (1977, p. 219) cites as key in no "slave subculture" forming on nineteenth-century Zanzibar. Instead, it seemed that there were routes available for ex-slaves to integrate themselves into preexisting coastal frameworks of identity. The other ethnonyms available for the majority of coastal residents by the early twentieth century was those of "Arab" or "African." Arabs were those who could trace their lineage back to Oman, or other regions such as the Comoro Islands or the Hadhramaut. This was not a racial category, but relied on a conception of ancestry along with cultural practices (Glassman 2000, p. 403). Africans were those whose recent ancestry and lack of coastal culture cast them out as uncivilized (*washenzi*) in the eyes of coastal communities.

Studies by linguists (Eastman 1971), historians (Fair 2001; Glassman 2000), and anthropologists (Arens 1975; Caplan 2003) have done nothing if not sketch out the deeply situational nature of Swahili identity. Writing in 1971, Eastman seemed to confuse herself, along with her readers, as she tried to find out just what the categories were for those who carried the Swahili ethnonym. All of those she interviewed seemed to offer multiple definitions, with subtle gradations and variations of residence and parental descent (Eastman 1971, pp. 232–234). During the nineteenth-century, it was certainly possible to change from, say, African to Swahili, or Swahili to Arab, but this was largely achieved through ties of kinship in some manner. Most of these were through the paternal line. Children of relationships between enslaved women taken as concubines and their masters were considered entirely free and equal to those of free wives, and so by birth many children of enslaved mothers were understood to be Arab (Cooper 1977, p. 198). The ability of high-ranking men to marry African women, but their dislike of allowing their daughters to marry African men, became a deep point of contention in the racial politics of Zanzibar in the mid-twentieth century (Glassman 2000, p. 419).

In the performance of identities, material culture was far more important than any somatic feature. Dress, housing, and symbolic items associated with Islam were all used on the coast and inland to signal Arab or Swahili identities by different individuals and groups. Many scholars have stressed such instrumentalist factors when discussing colonial East Africa, suggesting that, particularly on Zanzibar, racial and

clearly divided ethnic identities were of social import *only* under British colonial rule (Fair 2001). But recently, some scholars have attempted to understand the way in which East African communities understood the historicity of identities and manipulated these in new formulations. It has been argued that some recent studies of Swahili and Arab identities in East Africa may have adopted too narrow an instrumentalist view leading, in turn, to "neglecting local agency, [and] overlooking the complex ways that traditions and identities are reconstructed from earlier historical artifacts, and denying the very historicity that gives ethnicity its raw social and political power" (Spear 2000, p. 284). Glassman (2004, p. 426) discusses the racial politics leading up to the 1964 revolution on Zanzibar and qualified the influence of colonial discourse in the development of racial thought on the islands as "but one of many influences, some of which must be traced to pre-[British] colonial cultural and intellectual history: the concept of barbarism and civilization, for example, existed on the coast and in Swahili, before Europeans ever arrived." In a study of Bondei identities in late nineteenth-century Tanzania, not far from Zanzibar, Willis (1992) also highlights the manner in which Africans themselves, not just British rulers, could, and did, manipulate particular group identities which were imbued with specific histories, to suit situational requirements.

Parsing together a history of identities on Zanzibar is shot through with complexity. The indigenous Swahili, while sharing broad cultural practices, may have utilized more localized conceptions of group identity, such as the Wapemba on Pemba, and the Wahadimu and Watumbatu groups on Unguja (Prins 1961, p. 8). Continually swelling their ranks were immigrants with a wide range of identities. Many were Arab, and others could aspire to be so through practice and social ties. Swahili residents of the islands may have made this shift. Others were from Africa, but came to *be* Swahili, later distinguishing themselves from other, more recent, African immigrants. Such a situation clearly requires more dynamic thinking about the relationship between stylistic trends and identities than has, until quite recently, been the case for earlier periods of Swahili archaeology (Croucher and Wynne-Jones 2006). It is also vital to realize that identities were in flux during the nineteenth-century. As colonial rulers (both Omani and British) established power through various routes, the identity one claimed mattered. This was not simply about a label; it was about the ability to signify a place recognized as "civilized" (such as those who used a Swahili ethnonym to demonstrate their full participation in Islamic culture), as other than a recently arrived slave, and to form part of new social networks. These latter were a vital conduit for individuals to develop strong social ties with other immigrants to the islands of Zanzibar. As I discuss in later chapters, while the terms Swahili and Shirazi have been important in studying how people were identifying themselves within colonial regimes, we can also view these shifts through the lens of becoming Zanzibari. That is, becoming tied to social networks on these islands which tied individuals up in the webs of commensality they required to get by on a day-to-day basis. This was not simply about ethnonym; ethnicity related more to the way individuals dressed, the houses they lived in, the religion they followed, and the food they ate.

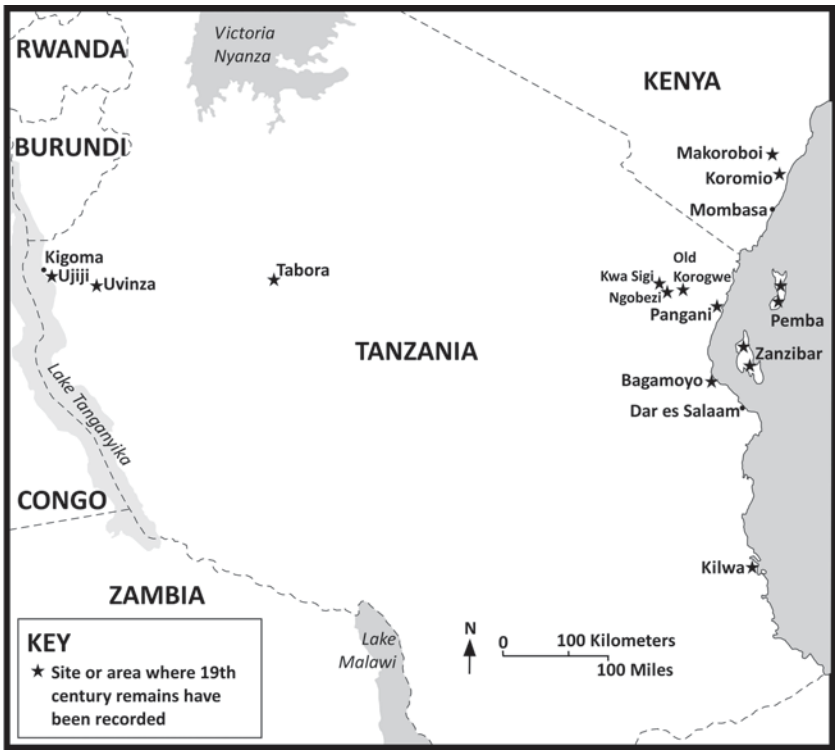

Fig. 2.3 Map showing sites or areas in which archaeological remains from the nineteenth-century AD have been recorded

Historical Archaeology in East Africa

Archaeological investigations have provided a careful analysis of the formation of Swahili culture to the fifteenth century, and continue to produce innovative studies which are enhancing our understandings of the social and economic dynamics of Swahili sites. What then of the periods post-dating the first Portuguese colonial settlers? The answer is, unfortunately, brief: Very little archaeological work has taken place which records later periods on the coast (see Fig. 2.3 for a map of sites investigated which date to later historical periods). But while studies are limited, three new PhD studies have significantly advanced our knowledge of later archaeological periods on the coast. These latter studies have addressed *watoro* (maroon, or self-emancipated slave) settlements near the Kenyan coast (Marshall 2011), sites along the central caravan trade route (Biginagwa 2012a), and multi-period survey and excavation of the Pangani area (Walz 2010). As is discussed in Chaps. 6 and 7, these studies have provided in-depth comparative data through which we can more carefully understand patterns on clove plantations. Each of these studies also engages,

to a greater or lesser extent, the idea of historical archaeology, as is discussed here. Marshall's work is, as with the work I present here, a comparison between international themes of historical archaeology (in her case the archaeology of maroons), and Eastern African examples. These studies each take up quite different material than that of Omani plantation sites, but they all provide an incredible depth of data as to locally produced goods (primarily ceramics), settlement forms, and imported goods, through which it is easier to comprehend the choices made by clove plantation residents. The types of local ceramics manufactured and purchased, and the types and proportional quantities of trade goods at these sites, such as imported mass-produced wares, provide vital comparative data.

Until very recently, the most significant historical archaeological study of later periods on the East African coast were the excavations of the Portuguese-constructed Fort Jesus at Mombasa, built in 1593 and later occupied by Omanis. This site was excavated from the late 1950s to the 1960s. A large descriptive report was produced, although this provided no quantitative details of finds and little interpretation of artifacts beyond their culture and historical setting (Kirkman 1974). Excavations were also undertaken at the nineteenth-century *caravanserai* (an Arab term for a trading inn or halt) in Bagamoyo (Chami et al. 2004). Coastal surveys have taken place at various locales on the Tanzanian coast and on the island of Pemba which all systematically recorded later archaeological sites when these were encountered (Clark and Horton 1985; Croucher and Wynne-Jones 2006; Fleisher 2003; LaViolette et al. 1999; Wynne-Jones 2005). Of particular note was the survey undertaken by Clark and Horton (1985) of sites on Zanzibar for the purposes of producing a government gazetteer. Nineteen sites dating to the nineteenth-century were recorded by this survey, but the information recorded largely related to the standing stone buildings or ruins (stone remains were present at all sites recorded). The only artifacts recorded as part of this work were ceramics dating to the nineteenth-century set into Shumba Mosque, described as "Maastricht Wares" (Clark and Horton 1985, p. 33). Most of the sites, such as palaces and baths at Beit El-Rais, Chuni, Chukwani, Kidichi, Marahubi, Mtoni, and the hunting lodge at Sebleni were built by the sultans of Zanzibar (Clark and Horton 1985, pp. 14–16), with the remainder of sites consisting of an elite stone house at Finga, Dunga Palace, Chake Chake Fort, the Anglican Cathedral, Livingstone's house, and the remains of an abandoned town and well. This survey had an explicitly limited purpose, and it is difficult to extrapolate more than a cursory idea of sites connected with elites in colonial eras from the recorded data. Inland surface recording was undertaken at the Omani-built Tongwe Fort, located along the Pangani River (Lane 1993), surface survey around Tabora and Ujiji, both of which were major halts along the caravan route and developed into urban centers (Wynne-Jones and Croucher 2007), and following this survey work, excavations near Ujiji.[1] Further north, a study of fortified rock shelters in Kenya has demonstrated the impact that slave raiding had even on an area which was peripheral to the main areas of the slave trade (Kusimba 2004).

[1] This latter fieldwork was carried out by the author and is, as yet, unpublished.

The field of later historical archaeology in East Africa began in a similar manner to other regions in sub-Saharan Africa, with work at Fort Jesus intended to further document a physical point in the landscape associated with the history of colonialism (Reid and Lane 2004, p. 11). Beyond this, information has largely built up as a sideline to other studies, providing a patchy recording of later ceramic types, but with little careful analysis of their place within history. It is only since work by Lane (1991; 1992; 1993), Kusimba (2004), Biginagwa (2012a), Marshall (2011), and Chami et al. (2004) that the detailed study of later historical archaeological sites, addressing research questions of relevance to these specific periods, can really be said to begin. Several excavations that have been directed at precolonial periods have also excavated remains that date from the fifteenth century or later, along with the regional surveys mentioned above. From these, we know that there is no sudden bifurcation of Swahili culture; sequences of local styles of ceramics and stone architecture continue unbroken to the present (Chami 2000; Chami et al. 2004; Croucher and Wynne-Jones 2006; Fleisher 2003; LaViolette et al. 1999). Local ceramics are remarkable for their homogeneity throughout the nineteenth-century around the coastal region. Previous work had subsumed these within one long archaeological period, tied to colonialism. Felix Chami, a pioneer of earlier ceramic analysis on the coast, labeled the period of *c.* 1500–1850 CE as "Post Swahili" (PS ; Chami 2000, p. 7). Ending this PS period at 1850 seems rather arbitrary, since there is neither stylistic nor historic justification for a break at this date. In work on Pemba, a longer categorization has been used to cover later historical material. "Period IV," stretching from 1500 to 1950 CE, is described as one which "marks the beginning of a period of colonial incursions into eastern Africa" (Fleisher 2003, p. 131). Three sites recorded by Fleisher fall within this period, and the archaeological signature for these is characterized as "European imports" (Fleisher 2003, p. 125), with a single type of local ceramic (Type 13) given as the common form (Fleisher 2003, p. 258). Other work has taken up ceramic sequences on a rather ad hoc basis. Work on caravan trading sites tied to Zigua communities (Biginagwa 2009, 2012a, b) and Kenyan *watoro* sites (Marshall 2009, 2011) has demonstrated similar long-term continuity of stylistic trends through later historic periods. While Chami's postulation of PS is one of the clearest typological schemas for the sequencing of later historical ceramics, it must also be seen to represent an artificial break and characterization of colonial-era material culture in Eastern Africa.

Directions of Research

Many questions are raised by histories of nineteenth-century Zanzibar that beg to be investigated through archaeological means. Little is understood of the ways in which immigrants integrated themselves into the life of coastal society, although it is clear that they were actively doing so in the twentieth century (Fair 2001). Many questions remain in relation to our knowledge of the period just before the better studied early twentieth century. Did Swahili cultural practice change significantly

because of immigration and colonization, or were cultural norms retained despite, or because, of Omani colonial rule? From the studies discussed above, it seems that this question is a complex one, with instrumental uses of historical practices being made by twentieth-century residents of the coast (Fair 2001; Glassman 2000; Willis 1992, 1993). A final major question relates to the manner in which capitalism impacted the daily lives of East Africans, especially as enslavement shifted towards the commodification of persons and cultivation was increasingly aimed towards global markets. The investigation of the way in which Islam, capitalism, and colonialism were intertwined in nineteenth-century East Africa raises issues which resonate with current global events. Drawing these questions out presents a timely questioning of the idea that Islamic practice somehow lies outside of modernity; as will become increasingly apparent in later chapters, this really was not the case on Zanzibar. Drawing on continuing ideas of tradition and Islam to negotiate aspects of modernity remained central to the cultural life of Zanzibaris.

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