

The growth of Islam among the Mijikenda
of the Kenya coast, 1826-1933

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ABSTRACT

The Mijikenda peoples of the Kenya coast have been in contact with Muslims at least since the 17th century. The first Mijikenda conversions to Islam occurred in the 18th century through the influence of neighbouring Swahili peoples. Early Mijikenda converts migrated to Swahili towns, thereby establishing a pattern of urban islamization that kept Islam from spreading among the Mijikenda.

Beginning in the 1830s, the East African economy expanded, and Muslim commercial activity in the coastal hinterland increased. The migration of Muslims to settle near Mijikenda villages led to closer relations between Muslims and Mijikenda. By the middle of the 19th century, the cultural influence of Islam was evident among the Mijikenda, but few Mijikenda had become Muslim. This was due as much to an absence of proselytising by Muslims as to the strength and integrity of Mijikenda society.

Differing Mijikenda settlement patterns north and south of Mombasa influenced the way Islam spread. North of Mombasa, Mijikenda Muslim converts continued to immigrate to towns and or to separate Mijikenda Muslim villages. South of Mombasa, beginning in the 1850s, Digo Mijikenda converts remained resident in their home villages, while centring their social and religious life as Muslims in town. Under the continuing influence of Swahili and other Muslims, including immigrants to Digo villages, Islam slowly gathered strength among the Digo. By the end of the 19th century, the Digo had already built several mosques, and educated Digo Muslims were teaching and actively proselytising among their fellow Digo.

Colonial rule brought changes that affected the growth of Islam among the Mijikenda. Legal rulings in favour of Islamic law strengthened Islam, which eventually emerged as the majority religion among the Digo south of Mombasa. The economic decline of Muslim towns and villages weakened Islam north of Mombasa, where only a minority of Mijikenda became Muslim.

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PREFACE

The help of many people and institutions has made this study possible. It is first and foremost the work of countless Mijikenda men and women who have generously welcomed me and shared their history with me. Where appropriate I have acknowledged their help, and the help of others who provided information, in the footnotes.

I am particularly indebted to the Office of the President of the Republic of Kenya for granting me research clearance, and to the Chief Archivist of the Kenya National Archives and his assistants, for providing me with many essential documents. In Mombasa, the officers of the Provincial Land Office, and the Librarians of the Law Court and Fort Jesus Library made their material readily available and offered me every assistance, for which I am grateful.

In the course of my field work I came to meet the District Officers of Kwale, Mombasa and Kilifi Districts, and the Chiefs and Assistant Chiefs of various locations of these Districts. I am most thankful for their support. In spite of their numerous commitments, they invariably went out of their way to help me, and several of them took a personal interest in my work.

A number of Kenya secondary schools (Kwale, Shimo la Tewa, Matuga, Allidina Visram, Coast Girls and Mariakiani) were most helpful in arranging for staff and senior students to work as research assistants in carrying out a mosque survey. I thank the Heads and staff of these schools and the students, who carried out their work with enthusiasm and diligence. I wish as well to thank Peter Muchangi who worked carefully and patiently to produce the maps.

The study would not have been possible without the help of various overseas institutions, including the University of Birmingham Library (Special Collections), the Public Record Office (London), the Royal Geographical Society (London), the John Rylands Library (University of Manchester), Rhodes House (Oxford) and the Peabody Museum of Salem (Massachusetts). I am grateful to the archivists and librarians of these institutions, and to the library staff of the Library of the School of Oriental and African Studies (University of London).

My work has had the benefit of the earlier research of many scholars, whose works are mentioned in the Bibliography. In addition I wish to express my gratitude to those who have helped me in a more direct way: Terence Ranger for his initial counsel and inspiration, Isaria Kimambo for his personal help, Ahmed Idha Salim for his useful suggestions, Humphrey Fisher for his constructive criticism, and especially Andrew Roberts, my supervisor, for his untiring guidance and invaluable advice.

INTRODUCTION

My interest in the history of Islam among the Mijikenda began in 1967 when I was a teacher in Nairobi. The Mijikenda live along the Kenya coast to the north and south of Mombasa. During a visit to the coast, I was struck by the presence of numerous small mosques and by the thoroughly Muslim character of village life south of Mombasa. In contrast, the rural areas north of Mombasa had fewer visible signs of Islam, and many villages no signs at all.

These external impressions aroused my curiosity, and I read the studies of such writers as Champion, Prins and Trimingham,¹ in an attempt to learn about the Mijikenda and the influence of Islam among them. I read that most of the pre-19th century links of Mombasa, the main centre of Islam along the southern Kenya coast, were with coastal settlements to the north. This seemed inconsistent with the predominance of Muslim influence that I had observed south of Mombasa, and I began to grapple in my mind with this discrepancy.

A turning-point came later that year when I visited the Chiefs Office at Likoni (I had never been to a Chiefs Office before), and was received by Assistant Chief Babu Mbwana, a Digo (I had never met a Digo before). I hardly knew what to expect. It was my good fortune that Babu Mbwana was the one who received me that day. I remember our meeting with gratitude: he listened patiently as I explained my interest in the history of Islam among the Digo. "Why just the history of Islam?" he asked. "Why not the whole history of the Digo from the beginning?" From that moment on, he took my interest as his own. He introduced me to some of the old men and Muslim leaders of Likoni and Mtongwe, and I would come to speak with them from time to time, whenever I could, during College holidays.

During the 1970s, my chances to visit the coast were few. My teaching responsibilities kept me in Nairobi most of the time, but occasionally I would go to the coast and visit a Digo village south of Mombasa. Babu Mbwana had broadened my vision. My early conversations with the old men of Digoland were about their history "from the beginning". From them I first heard of Shungwaya, and came to know of the original Digo settlements at Kwale and Kinondo, and of the migration and expansion of the Digo throughout Kwale District and south into the mainland of Tanzania. My interest in how the Digo had become Muslim continued, too, and we would talk about early Digo Islam.

¹ Arthur Champion, *The Agiryama of Kenya* (edited by John Middleton), London, 1967; A.H.J. Prins, *The Coastal Tribes of the Nonh-Eastern Bantu*, London, 1952, and *The Swahili-Speaking Peoples of Zanzibar and the East African Coast*, London, 1967; J.S. Trimingham, *Islam in East Africa*, Oxford, 1964.

² Likoni, on the mainland just south of Mombasa island, is in Mijikenda country. The area used to be inhabited exclusively by the Digo, one of the nine Mijikenda peoples, but is now a suburban residential area of Mombasa and has a mixed population.

The Digo are a decentralized people, and the difficulty of building up a comprehensive picture of their past soon became evident. A village or clan elder would know many details about the history of his own village or clan, but usually had only a smattering of knowledge about neighbouring villages or other clans. The Digo have no appointed guardians of the past: some elders know a vast amount, others hardly anything, and the only way to discover a knowledgeable elder is by trial and error. As with peoples all over the world, the trial often lies in getting them to speak in proportion to what they know. The fragmented nature of the oral evidence presented difficulties of interpretation, but had at least one advantage: overlap of details between one village and another was often sufficient to allow correlation of material and to provide a cross-check on accuracy and consistency.

Though I was very much a part-time amateur field worker, my early conversations with Digo elders proved to be invaluable. I did not realize it at the time, but I was in contact with the last living members of the last generation born in the 19th century. A number of them had learned at the knees of their grandfathers; and many of them had witnessed the rise of Islam, for their fathers had been among the first Digo Muslim converts.

During the 1970s, much valuable research was done on the southern Kenya coast. Spear collected the oral traditions of the Mijikenda, and published an account of their history.³ Others, such as Berg, Brantley, McKay, Morton and Koffsky, studied various specific topics,⁴ and Salim published his history of the Swahili-speaking peoples.⁵ Towards the end of the 1970s, Cooper did extensive research on the plantation economy and agricultural labour.⁶ These studies vastly increased our knowledge of the political and economic history of the region, but none of the studies focused on the history of Islam, or explained how Islam had spread from the urban centres to the Mijikenda peoples of the hinterland.

As I came to know more about early Islam among the Digo, I was intrigued by references to their contacts with other Mijikenda Muslims north of Mombasa, and the fact that some of the first Digo Muslims had been converted to Islam

³ Spear collected some Digo traditions, but most of his research was done among the other Mijikenda peoples north of Mombasa. His doctoral dissertation (Spear, Thomas, 'The Kaya Complex: a History of the Mijikenda Peoples of the Kenya Coast to 1900', Ph.D. thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1974) was later published as a book under the same title (Spear, Thomas, *The Kaya Complex: A History of the Mijikenda Peoples of the Kenya Coast to 1900*, Nairobi, 1978).

⁴ F.J. Berg, 'Mombasa under the Busaidi Sultanate: the City and its Hinterlands in the Nineteenth Century', Ph.D. thesis, - University of Wisconsin, 1971; Cynthia Brantley Smith, 'The Giriama Rising, 1914: Focus for Political Development in the Kenya Hinterland, 1850-1914', Ph.D. thesis, University of California (Los Angeles), 1973 (later published as Cynthia Brantley, *The Giriama and Colonial Resistance in Kenya, 1800-1920*, Los Angeles, 1981); William F. McKay, 'A Precolonial History of the Southern Kenya Coast', Ph.D. thesis, Boston University, 1975; Rodger Frederic Morton, 'Slaves, Fugitives, and Freedmen on the Kenya Coast, 1873-1907', Ph.D. thesis, Syracuse University, 1976; Peter L. Koffsky, 'History of Takaungu, East Africa, 1830-1896', Ph.D. thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1977.

⁵ Ahmed I. Salim, *The Swahili-Speaking Peoples of Kenya's Coast, 1895-1965*, Nairobi, 1973.

⁶ Cooper, Frederick, *Plantation Slavery on the East Coast of Africa*, New Haven, 1977; and *From Slaves to Squatters, Plantation Labor and Agriculture in Zanzibar and Coastal Kenya, 1890-1925*, New Haven, 1980.

through these northern contacts. In 1979, I made my first visit to Takaungu, a town north of Mombasa that had often been mentioned to me by Digo Muslims. But after that visit, I was unable to follow up with further visits. The early 1980s were busy years for me professionally; months went by without a chance to visit the coast. Some of the old men I had first spoken with had died, and I had little time to develop new contacts.

Many unanswered questions remained in my mind. I had an idea of how Islam had begun among the Digo, but this did not resolve the question of the unequal spread of Islam north and south of Mombasa. And I had no oral evidence about early Islam among the Mijikenda north of Mombasa. It was clear that only by broadening my study would it be possible to understand why influences emanating from Mombasa and other urban centres had affected the Mijikenda north and south of Mombasa in different ways.

There were even more basic questions: how had Islam penetrated into the rural areas? Were the agents of Islam a uniform group? Were traditional relations between the Mijikenda and Swahili peoples important for the spread of Islam? What role did the early Mijikenda converts play in propagating Islam? How did they reconcile Islam with Mijikenda religious beliefs and practices? How were the first converts received by their own people? How had they transferred Islam to succeeding generations? And there was the question, too, of studying the effects of early Christian missionary activity, and of colonial rule: had these favoured or impeded the growth of Islam in any way?

My work so far gave me a good foundation for further research into these questions. The first Mijikenda converts, the first Muslim teachers, the building of the first Mijikenda mosques, these were all part of the recent past, and there were still a few old people alive who had seen or heard of these people and events first-hand. A unique opportunity existed to gather the kind of details about the early spread of Islam that have proved difficult to recover in other parts of Africa,⁷ but time was running out. As well as collecting oral information, I needed to examine the archival evidence, colonial as well as pre-colonial. Few of the published accounts of early missionaries, explorers or colonial officers, referred to Islam in the rural areas. But was there perhaps more information in some of the original documents? Part-time research was clearly insufficient to make progress along these lines, and in 1984 I decided to undertake full-time research into the history of Islam among the Mijikenda peoples. Ideally, I should have incorporated the Digo of the Tanga Region of Tanzania, but I was already faced with the problem of gathering oral

⁷ In writing about the arrival of the first foreign Muslims in Hausaland, Hiskett has written: "The fact is we simply do not know when these movements of people really occurred, nor where the strangers come from." Mervyn Hiskett, *The Development of Islam in West Africa*, (London 1984):70.

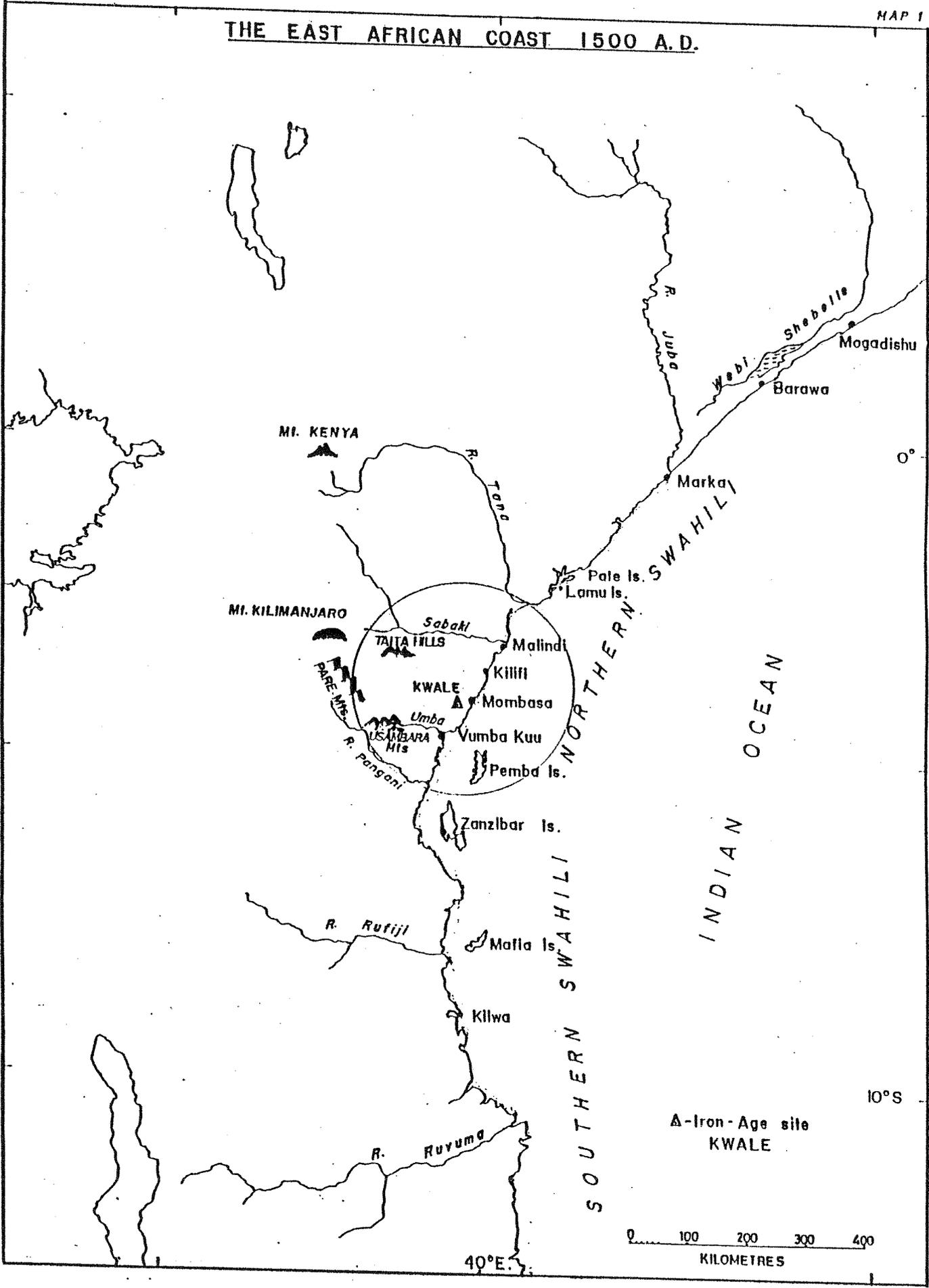
information over an area of several hundred square miles in Kenya. I kept the possibility open of extending my study to Tanzania, but in the end to include Tanga Region would have required at least a further three or four months of work, and I reluctantly gave up the idea.

The starting point of the study was fixed: the background and circumstances of the earliest Mijikenda conversions to Islam. I left the end-date open, to be decided later. As I progressed in my field work, I realized that to explain the establishment of Islam among the Mijikenda, the study had to be brought up to at least 1910. But this date would have excluded consideration of internal tensions in Mijikenda society after the establishment of Islam, and of important effects of the first decades of colonial rule. With this in mind, I decided to bring the study up to the early 1930s.

My main objective was to understand what I came to call 'rural islamization': how Islam spreads from town to countryside -or at least how it had done so among the Mijikenda- and once in the countryside, how Islam consolidates itself. This sounded simple enough, but in choosing what aspects of Islam to consider I faced the dilemma of all historians of Islam.⁸ Was my approach to be 'Islamic' (working through Islamic concepts, and studying Muslim practices and institutions) or 'phenomenological' (simply recording what Muslims and non-Muslims did, and how they related to each other) or 'sociological' (considering the social and cultural aspects of Islam)? Or 'religious' (looking especially at religious phenomena) or 'secular' (studying the political and economic forces that affected the spread of Islam)? As I gathered information, none of the approaches seemed adequate in itself. I found myself adopting a comprehensive approach, trying to consider all aspects of the growth of Islam as inseparable parts of a whole. In theory, a comprehensive approach should be ideal (doing away with the deficiency and distortion inherent in any single approach), but in practice it may be asking the impossible of an individual historian. My study has tried to include a bit of everything, and specialists in the above fields will no doubt find it inadequate. In spite of those inadequacies, it is my hope that it will shed some light on the history of Islam in Africa.

⁸ This dilemma came out clearly in the Boston University Conference (1973) on 'The Maintenance and Transmission of Islamic Culture in Tropical Africa.' See Louis Brenner's review of the Conference in *African Religious Research*, 3, 2 (November 1973):5-12.

THE EAST AFRICAN COAST 1500 A.D.



Chapter I. Historical Background

The earliest peoples of the coastal region

Our story begins in the coastal region of southern Kenya, between the Sabaki and the Uмба rivers (Map 1). Here the land rises gradually from a narrow coastal plain (two to five miles wide) to an area of gently sloping hills and valleys. Some ten to twelve miles from the shore one ascends more steeply to a range of hills which reach a height of 1028 feet (Jibana) in the north and 1453 feet (Kwale) in the south (Map 2). The hills dominate the hinterland of Mombasa, but are less prominent north of Kilifi creek and south of the Ramisi river. In the past the coastal plain and the hills were covered in lowland rain forest; now only patches of forest remain, and scattered-tree grasslands and high grass-bush predominate.¹

The southeast and northeast monsoons bring abundant annual rainfall (usually well over 30 inches) to the coastal region, mostly during the months of April-June (long rains) and November-December (short rains). Rainfall and moisture decrease as one moves inland; fifteen miles from the coast begins an area known as the Nyika,² where drier conditions prevail and semi-desert vegetation appears.

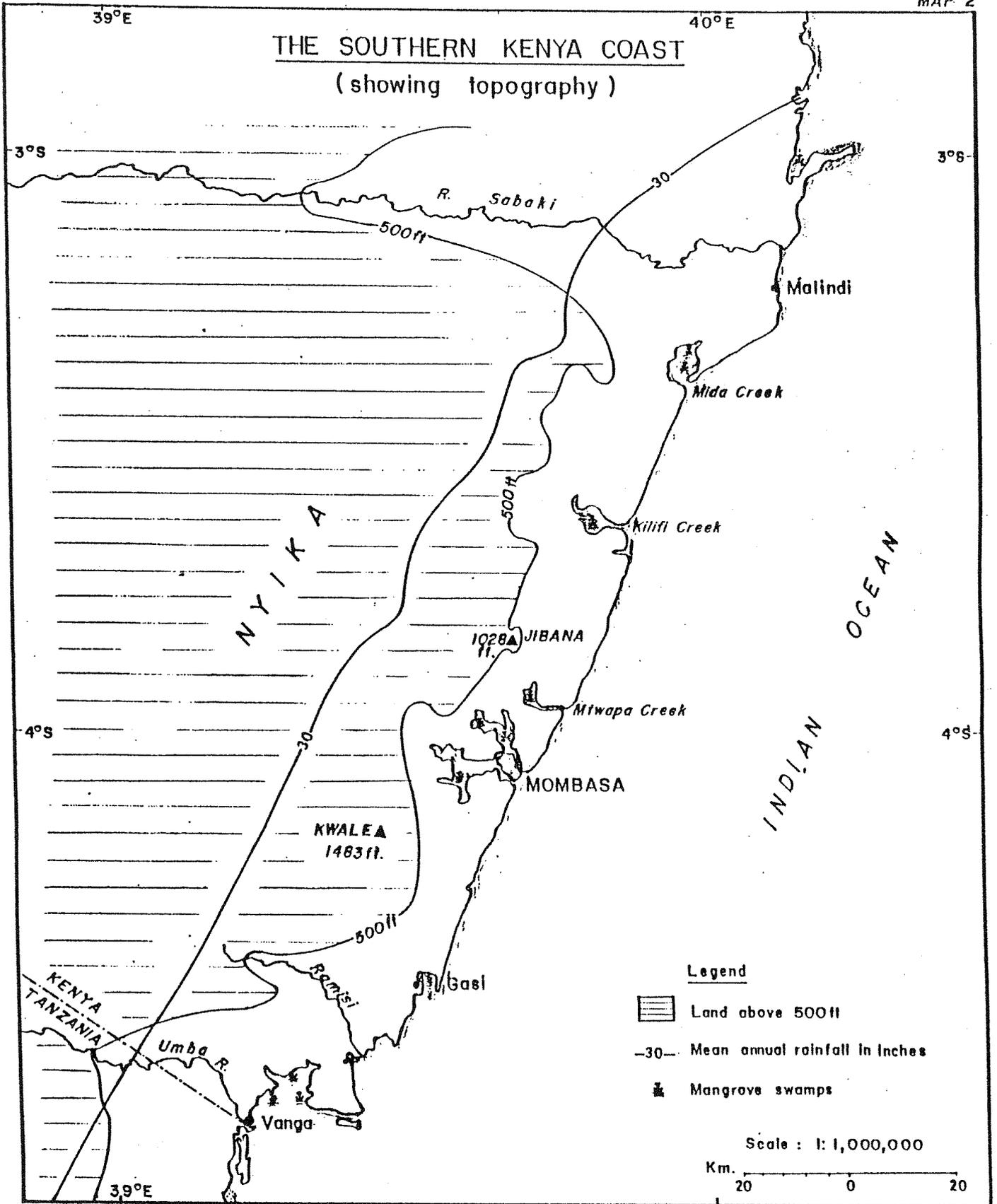
This region is now the homeland of the Mijikenda people;³ they have been here at least since the beginning of the 17th century. Here too live the descendants of Muslims who arrived in centuries past, beginning perhaps as early as the first or second century of the Muslim era. To understand how Muslims and the Mijikenda came to populate the region, we must go back to the beginning of the first millennium. Archaeological excavations and historical-linguistic studies give some clues about the early inhabitants of Kenya. Initially there were Cushitic-speaking cultivators, herdsman, and hunters. During the early centuries of the first millennium there was an influx of Bantu peoples. The earliest evidence pointing to a Bantu presence on the Kenya coast comes from a 2nd century (A.D.) site near Kwale (southwest of Mombasa).⁴ The incoming Bantu were interspersed among the

¹ Geographical data are taken from F.F.Ojany and R.B. Ogendo, *Kenya: A Study in Physical and Human Geography* (Nairobi 1982), 43, 5 2. 77-78, 103-104.

² Nyika is the Swahili word for a desolate wilderness.

³ Mijikenda is a 20th century name. In the 18th and 19th centuries, the Mijikenda were known as the Nyika or Wanyika (=people of the Nyika), though most of them lived east of the Nyika proper. On the origin of the name Mijikenda, see page 29, footnote 81.

⁴ R.C. Soper, "Kwale: An Early Iron Age Site in South-Eastern Kenya," *Azania*, II (1967): 1-17. Other Iron Age (presumably Bantu) sites have been discovered farther north, notably Wenje. Cf. D.W. Phillipson, "Some Iron Age sites in the tower Tana Valley," *Azania*, 14 (1979): 155-160.



Cushitic peoples, and gradually came to be the more numerous.⁵

On linguistic grounds Nurse and Spear identify the early homeland of peoples speaking Northeast Coastal Bantu languages as the area bounded by Mombasa, the Usambara and Pare mountains, and the Taita hills.⁶ Expansion north and south subsequently split these peoples into three groups: 1) Ruvu speakers (who went south); 2) Seuta speakers (who settled in the Usambara-Bondei-Zigua area); and 3) Sabaki speakers (who went north).⁷ Of interest to us are the Sabaki speakers, for they were forerunners of the Mijikenda and the Swahili, the main protagonists of our story.

Some time before the 6th century, Sabaki speakers migrated north into their new homeland, the region between the Tana river and the Webi Shebelle of southern Somalia, and settled in predominantly agricultural areas. Linguistic evidence indicates that the economy of Sabaki speakers was based primarily on subsistence farming, but that it also included iron-working, pottery, hunting, fishing and cattle-keeping.⁸

Approximately at 500 A.D. there began a period of social and economic differentiation between: 1) Sabaki speakers who lived inland; and 2) Sabaki speakers who settled on the coast and at least partly adopted a maritime way of life. In time the Sabaki speakers living inland came to speak differently from those living on the coast, and various languages -including Mijikenda inland and Swahili on the coast- emerged to reflect this difference.⁹

In the last centuries of the first millennium and the early centuries of the second millennium, Swahili speakers spread along the entire East African coast.¹⁰

⁵ J.E.G. Sutton, "The Settlement of East Africa," in J. Kieran and B.A. Ogot (eds.), *Zamani* (Nairobi 1973), 85-86. Phillipson postulates that the Bantu entered Kenya from the Urewe region by means of a flanking movement around the southern margin of the Rift Valley highlands where the stone-tool-using pastoralists held sway." D.W. Phillipson, *1711! Later Prehistory of Eastern and Southern Africa*, (London 1977), 110.

⁶ Derek Nurse and Thomas Spear, *The Swahili, Reconstructing the History and Language of an African Society, 800-1500* (Philadelphia 1985), 43.

⁷ Thomas Hinnebusch, Derek Nurse and Martin Mould, *Studies in the Classification of Eastern Bantu Languages* (Hamburg 1981), 21-30.

⁸ Nurse and Spear, *The Swahili*, 47-51.

⁹ The five Sabaki languages are: Swahili, Mijikenda, Comorian, Pokomo and Elwana. Three of the Sabaki-speaking peoples lie outside our study: 1) the Comorians (of the Comoro islands); and 2) the Elwana and Pokomo, who live in the Tana river area. Linguistic evidence shows, for example, that the Pokomo and the Mijikenda (who both lived inland) continued in close contact after separating from the Swahili (who lived on the coast); some common linguistic features of Pokomo and Mijikenda are not shared by Swahili. Hinnebusch, Nurse and Mould, *Studies*, 113-116.

¹⁰ For historical purposes a definition of the Swahili peoples seems best based on language: the Swahili are the peoples who speak some form of the Swahili language and who have spoken no other language as their mother tongue for as long as can be remembered. Linked to our definition is the concept of Swahiland, the land where the Swahili live. Rather than being a single place, Swahiland encompasses many towns, scattered along the coast of East Africa, from southern Somalia to Mozambique, wherever there is a community of Swahili people. Defining the Swahili peoples of the 20th century has proved progressively more complex. Converts to Islam who adopt Swahili manners are popularly considered Swahili in that they have become detribalized, but under our definition, they are not true Swahili. With more and more persons (including non-Muslims) speaking Swahili and adopting a Swahili life-style, modern concepts of Swahili identity have been influenced by social change. See, for example, Carol M. Eastman, "Who are the Waswahili?", *Africa*, 41 (1971): 228-35, and A.I. Salim, "The Elusive 'Mswahili'- Some Reflections on his Identity and Culture," in J. Maw and D. Parkin, *Swahili Language and Society* (Vienna 1984), 215-227.

Some remained on the coast and the islands north of the Tana river, particularly the islands of the Lamu archipelago; some moved to the southern Kenya coast. Others went still farther south, to the Tanzanian coast, the islands of Pemba and Zanzibar, and the Comoro islands, thus bringing about a broad division between northern and southern Swahili peoples and dialects. The dividing line between northern and southern Swahili dialects is considered to be approximately at the southern boundary of Kenya.¹¹

Mijikenda speakers continued to live in their homeland north of the Tana river until the middle of the second millennium. Some may have begun migrating south of the Tana as early as the 14th century, but the evidence is uncertain.

Islam and the early towns of the coast

Towns existed along the coast of East Africa long before the coming of Islam. The earliest documentary evidence of such towns comes from Graeco-Roman sources in Egypt dating back to the first and second centuries; some towns may then already have been several centuries old. Some of these early towns, notably Rhapta, developed into commercial entrepôts which traded both in local products (either locally produced or derived from the interior) and in overseas goods.¹³

When and where the first Muslims arrived on the East African coast, and where they came from, is not certain. A tradition from the Kilwa Chronicle, recorded by de Barros, relates that the first Muslims to migrate to East Africa were Zaidiya refugees, presumably fleeing after the failure of their rising in Kufa (ca. 740

¹¹ Sacleux was the first to consider Swahili dialects systematically, and to make a broad distinction between northern and southern dialects. He identifies KiGunya (that is, the dialect spoken by the Gunya Swahili), KiSiu, KiPate, KiAmu and KiMvita (the dialect spoken the Mvita Swahili in the Mombasa area) as the main northern dialects, and KiUnguja, KiMrima, KiMgao, KiHadimu, KiPemba and KiVumba as the main southern dialects. See Charles Sacleux, *Grammaire des Dialectes Swahilis* (Paris 1909), viii-x, and *Dictionnaire Swahili-français* (Paris 1939), Vol. I, 7-14. Lambert, Whiteley, Chiraghdin and Mnyampala, and others, have expanded on Sacleux's work: H.E. Lambert, *Ki-Vumba: A Dialect of the Southern Kenya Coast* (Kampala 1957) and *Chi-lomvu and Ki-Ngare* (Kampala 1958); W.H. Whiteley, "Kimvita" in *Journal of the East African Swahili Committee*, 25 (1955):10-39, and *The Dialects and Verse of Pemba* (Kampala 1958); S.Chiraghdin and M.Mnyampala, *Historia ya Kiswahili* (Nairobi 1977); M.H. Abdulaziz, "The Dialects of Swahili," Ph.D. dissertation (University of London 1978); Thomas Hinnebusch and Derek Nurse, "Comorian: External Linguistic Affiliations," Paper at the African Studies Association Conference in New Orleans, October 1985.

¹² The *Periplus Maris Erythraei* (anonymous) and *Geographia Ptolemaei*. Extracts from these documents are in G.S.P. Freeman-Grenville, *The East African Coast: Select Documents from the first to the earlier nineteenth century*, (2nd edition, London 1975), 1-4. The full documents can be found in J.W. McCrindle, *Periplus Maris Erythraei* (London 1879), G.W.B.Huntingford (trans and ed), *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*, (Hakluyt Society, London 1980), and Edward L. Stevenson, *Geography of Claudius Ptolemy* (New York 1932). For a study of the dating of the Periplus, see Gervase Mathew, "The Dating and Significance of the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*," in H. Neville Chittick and Robert I. Rotberg (eds), *East Africa and the Orient* (London 1975). As far as we know, none of the pre-Islamic East African coastal towns mentioned in these documents has yet been found.

¹³ L.P. Kirwan, "Rhapta, Metropolis of Azania," *inAzania*, 21(1986): 99-104.

A.D.).¹⁴ Judging from the earliest imported Islamic ware,¹⁵ archaeologists have concluded that early Muslim immigrants were most likely from the Persian Gulf area, but trade routes and migration need not coincide, and in this case there is no firm evidence that they did.

More recently, an oral tradition has emerged (among the Swahili) which indicates that the first Muslims to reach the East African coast may have come overland, via Ethiopia¹⁶ and Somalia, rather than across the sea.¹⁷ This tradition (unrecorded in early written documents) deserves attention, and adds to the complexity of the evidence about the beginnings of Islam on the East African coast.¹⁸

Muslim immigrants settled in or near towns. In some instances, the towns may already have been in existence; the town of Shanga, for example, was a pre-Islamic settlement which later became Muslim.¹⁹ In other instances, Muslims may have founded their own settlements; extensive excavations at the site of the ninth-century Muslim town of Manda have uncovered no trace of pre-Islamic settlement.²⁰ Whatever their settlement pattern, Muslims would soon have come into contact with the indigenous Swahili-speaking peoples of the coast. The beginnings of the islamization of the Swahili can be dated from these first contacts.

The mingling of Muslim and pagan peoples, which began with the arrival of the first Muslims, constitutes a recurring theme in early descriptions of the East African coast. Early Arab geographers refer to towns which were not Muslim, or where Muslims and non-Muslims lived side by side. Al-Mas'udi, in the 10th century,

¹⁴ Joao de Barros, *Da Asia*, in George M. Thea!, *Records of South-Eastern Africa* (London 1900), Vol. VI, 80-81 (Portuguese text), 233 (English translation). A translation of the text of the Kilwa Chronicle is in G.S.P. Freeman-Grenville, *The East African Coast*, 34-49. For a discussion of the Chronicle, see G.S.P. Freeman-Grenville, *The Medieval History of the Coast of Tanganyika* (London 1962), 45-55. The date of the Zaidiya rising is given by H.A.R. Gibb and J.H. Kramers (eds), *The Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Leiden 1974), 634.

¹⁵ Much of the early ware, which Chittick terms Sassanian-Islamic, may have come from the port of Siraf on the eastern shores of the Persian Gulf. Cf. Neville Chittick, 'Discoveries in the Lamu Archipelago,' *Azania*, 2 (1967): 374-77.

¹⁶ The beginnings of Islam in Ethiopia are said to date back to 614-15 A.D. when the Companions of the Prophet took refuge there. See Sir William Muir, *The Life of Mahomet* (London 1894), 67, 78.

For summaries of pre-Islamic relations between Arabia and Ethiopia (then called Abyssinia), see Philip K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs* (London 1964), 1054J, and Edward Ullendorff, *The Ethiopians: An Introduction to Country and People* (London 1965), 48-53. Ullendorff also discusses the penetration of Islam, and points out that some of the Djabarti living in the Ethiopian highlands claim descent from the first Muslim refugees sent to Ethiopia by the Prophet. See pp594J2, 113--114.

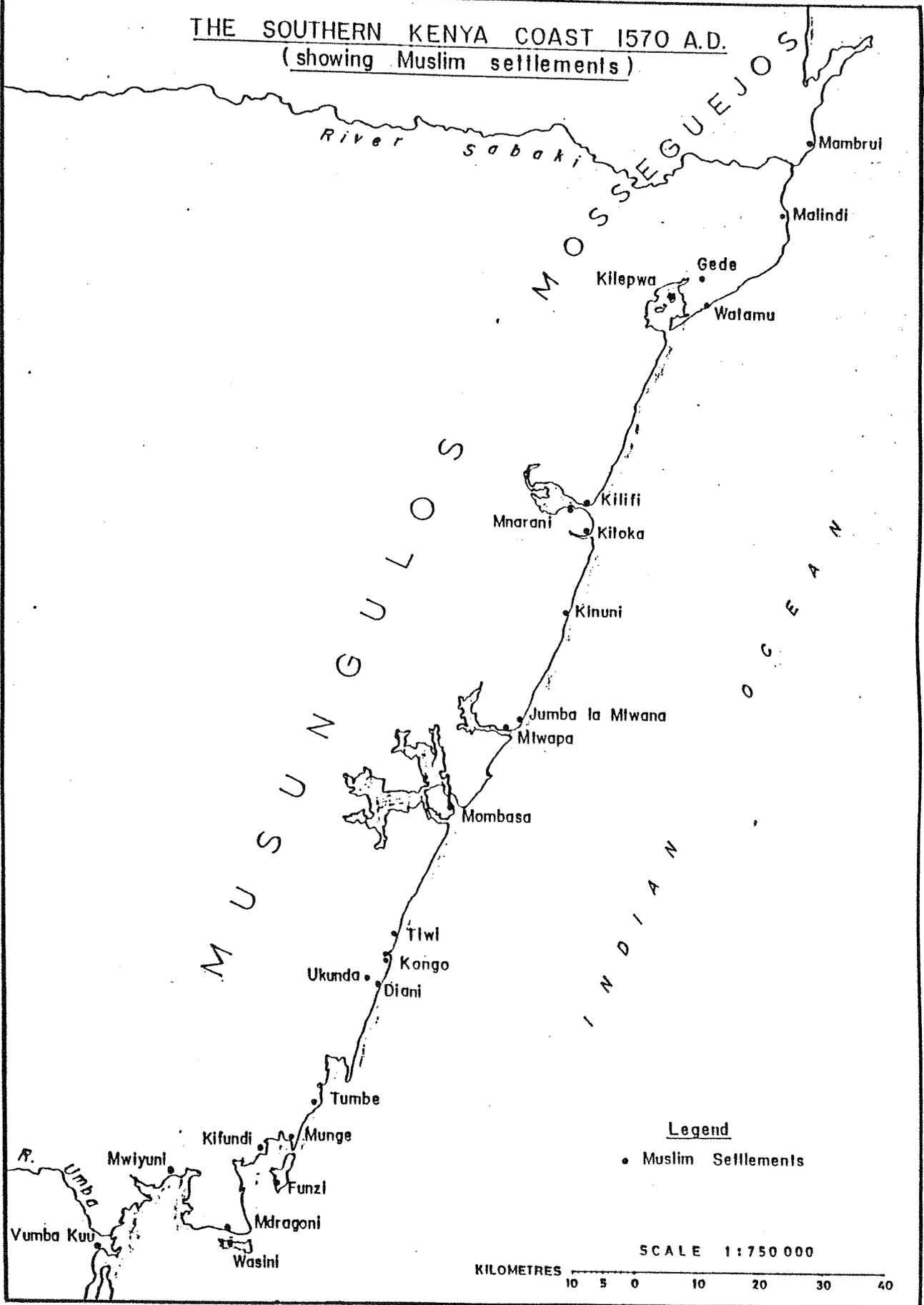
¹⁷ Oral information, Ahmad Sheikh Nabhany, Mombasa, 16/11/86. Nabhany raised this point at a recent conference held in Lamu; see Richard Wilding (ed), "The Shanga Panel" (being a record of proceedings of a meeting, hosted by the Lamu Museum, National Museums of Kenya, to discuss archaeological findings at Shanga), *Coast Museums Studies, Occasional Paper No. 1*, Mombasa (March 1987), 7.

¹⁸ The 'Ethiopian origin' tradition implies -though it does not explicitly state- that the first Muslims to reach the East African coast were not themselves refugees from Arabia, but were indigenous Africans. In a personal communication of 15th August 1988, Humphrey Fisher has suggested that the emergence of the tradition at this time is part of a general tendency to seek origins within rather than outside Africa. This, of course, does not in any way reflect on the possible validity of the tradition.

¹⁹ M.C. Horton, "Early Muslim Trading Settlements on the East African Coast: New Evidence from Shanga," *The Antiquaries Journal*, 2 (1987): 290-323.

²⁰ Neville Chittick, *Manda: Excavations at an Island Port on the Coast of Kenya* (Nairobi 1984), 217-220.

THE SOUTHERN KENYA COAST 1570 A.D. (showing Muslim settlements)



comments that the island of Kanbalu²¹ was inhabited by a mixed population of Muslims and idolatrous Zanj.²² Al-Idrisi, in the 12th century, says that Mogadishu, Marka and Barawa were Muslim towns, but that the other towns of the Berbera coast were pagan (as were the Zanj²³ people), excepting the island of Unguja (Zanzibar), which had a mixed, predominantly Muslim population.²⁴ In a 14th century account Ibn Battuta stresses the Muslim character of the towns he visited (Mogadishu, Mombasa and Kilwa), though he notes that the inhabitants of Kilwa were in a state of *jihad* with neighbouring pagan peoples.²⁵

Many of the towns were small, and some could have been little more than villages with mostly mud-and-thatch dwellings and very few stone structures. At some time or other, many coastal towns seem to have had at least a few Muslim inhabitants, as shown by the existence of stone mosques. The evidence may be incomplete and misleading, however, for only stone structures endure tropical conditions, and coastal settlements without visible stone remains may have escaped detection. A comparable bias may exist in historical documents, since Muslim chronicles, which stress the influence and civic role of Muslims, are the main source of information about the early coastal towns.

The number of towns grew steadily, especially after the 13th century, when immigration from the Arabian peninsula increased.²⁶ By the 16th century, towns existed along the entire East African coast. Along the southern Kenya coast alone there were more than twenty Muslim towns, all either on islands or on the shore, or within five miles of the shore (Map 3). Portuguese documents describe Malindi and Mombasa, but give scanty information about other towns.²⁷ Consequently most of our information about the towns of the southern Kenya coast at that time comes

²¹ Kanbalu (also spelled Qanbalu or Kambalu) has long been identified with the island of Pemba. Some writers have suggested that Kanbalu was in the Comoro islands (James Kirkman, *Men and Monuments on the East African Coast*, (London 1964), 203; Gill Shepherd, "The Making of the Swahili," *Paideuma*, 28 (1982): 129-47) or the Lamu archipelago (M.C.Horton, "Early Muslim Trading Settlements," 318-19).

²² C. Pella(ed), *Les Prairies d'or* (Paris 1962), 84, 93.

²³ The word Zanj (sometimes Zinj), derived from the Arabic word *zanj* (pl. *zunuj* or *zanuj*) meaning "a black person", was commonly used by the Arabs of mediaeval times to refer to the black peoples of East Africa. Gibb notes that it was a term "ultimately derived from Persian or Sanskrit, probably in the language of the seamen of the Persian Gulf." (Gibb, *Ibn Battuta*, II, 373, footnote 45).

²⁴ J.S.Trimingham, "The Arab Geographers and the East African Coast," in H.N. Chittick and R.I. Rotberg (eds), *East Africa and the Orient* (New York 1975), 115-146. A short extract from Al-Idrisi is in Freeman-Grenville, *The East African Coast*, 19-20.

²⁵ H.A.R. Gibb (trans), *The Travels of Ibn Battuta, A.D. 1325-1354* (Cambridge 1962), Vol II, 377-380. Gibb concludes that the "*jihad* against the heathen tribes is obviously slave-raiding." (p.380, footnote 63.) Relevant passages (in translation) of Ibn Battuta's account of his visits to Mogadishu, Mombasa and Kilwa, can also be found in Said Hamdun and Noel King, *Ibn Battuta in Black Africa*, (London 1975), 15-20.

²⁶ J. de V. Allen, "Settlement Patterns on the East African Coast, AD 800-1900," paper presented to the VIIIth Pan-African Congress for Pre-history and Quarternary Studies, Nairobi 1971, Table I, and "Some Aspects of Swahili Economic History," Department of History, University of Nairobi, Staff Seminar Paper No. 6, December 1976, p5.

²⁷ The Roteiro, thought to be the only surviving eyewitness account of Vasco da Gama's voyage, mentions Benapa, Toea and Nuguoquioniete as three places between Mombasa and Malindi, but gives no details. E.G. Ravenstein (trans and ed), *A Journal of the First Voyage of Vasco da Gama* (London 1898), 40.

from archaeological findings. In some areas (Gede, Kilifi, Diani) towns formed distinct clusters; Kirkman has referred to the towns of Kilifi as a "city-state".²⁸

The main religious inspiration for the Islam of the coastal Swahili towns seems to have come from southern Arabia. In the early 14th century, Ibn Battuta observed that the inhabitants of Mombasa were Sunni Muslims: "They are Shafi'ites in rite, pious, honourable and upright."²⁹ New Muslim settlements in the 14th and 15th centuries, and an increase in the number of mosques built in stone, point to the growing strength and prosperity of Islam. And the creation of a local style of religious architecture indicates that Islam was evolving in a distinctly indigenous way.³⁰ *Sharifs* who settled on the Kenya coast beginning perhaps in the 15th or early 16th century played an important role in shaping local Muslim culture.³¹ At the same time, towns such as Malindi and Mombasa were linked to the larger cosmopolitan Muslim world through regular overseas trading contacts. In the early 16th century, the Portuguese found "merchants from Cambay" residing at Malindi, and Muslims "wearing Turkish coats and caps" in Mombasa.³²

It is unlikely that any towns were populated solely by Muslims; many towns may have continued to be inhabited entirely or mainly by pagan peoples. But gradually and in varying degrees, some towns became centres of Muslim influence. Migration of non-Muslims from rural areas into the towns must have occurred, and in many places would have been greater than immigration from overseas. With the passing of time, Muslim settlers and their descendants became indigenized. The indigenous peoples of the coast were no doubt influenced in turn, but evidence available allows only general conclusions about islamization (that is, the assimilation or conversion of non-Muslims to Islam) in this period, for we know few details about the non-Muslim peoples of the region. There is no record of their relations with Muslims, and we have almost no information about the effect of Islam on African culture during these early centuries.

In towns where Muslims and non-Muslims resided together, non-Muslims (including slaves) were undoubtedly converted to Islam, but how many were

²⁸ James Kirkman, "Mnarani of Kilifi: The Mosques and Tombs," *Ars Orientalis*, III (1959): 95-112.

²⁹ Gibb, *Ibn Battuta*, II, 379. Ibn Battuta's statement is the first documentary evidence that the Swahili were Sunni at that time. There is evidence of earlier Shi'ite influences on the Swahili coast: cf. G.S.P. Freeman-Grenville, "Shi'i rulers of Kilwa," *The Numismatic Chronicle*, 138 (1978): 187-198; Randall L. Pouwels, "Tenth century settlement of the East African coast: the case for Qarmatian/Isma'ili Connections," *Azania*, IX (1974): 65-74.

³⁰ See P. Garlake, *The Early Islamic Architecture of the East African Coast* (Nairobi 1966).

³¹ B.G. Martin, "Arab Migration to East Africa in Medieval Times," *IJAHS*, VII, 3 (1974): 367-390. In the 14th century, Ibn Battuta saw *sharifs* at Mogadishu and "a group of the *sharifs* of Hijaz" at Kilwa; he commented that *sharifs* visited Kilwa "from Iraq and Hijaz and other places", but makes no mention of *sharifs* at Mombasa. Hamdun and King, *Ibn Battuta*, 16-17, 20. It is not certain when the first *sharifs* settled on the Kenya coast.

³² A. Da Silva Rego and T.W. Baxter (eds), *Documentos sobre os Portugueses em Mocambique e na Africa Central* (Lisbon 1962), Vol I (1497-1506), 533, 535.

converted is a matter of conjecture. We can assume that quite a bit of assimilation of non-Muslims to Islam took place, particularly through the marriage of non-Muslim women to Muslim men. Such cultural mixing would have contributed to the steady growth of Islam among the Swahili peoples.³³ There is no evidence of Muslim influence in the interior, or even in the immediate rural hinterland. Non-Muslims who became Muslim were assimilated into town life or had already been residing in towns before their conversion. Islam remained an urban religion.

The hinterland and town peoples of the early 16th century

Our knowledge about the peoples of the southern coastal hinterland at the beginning of the 16th century comes from oral traditions, archaeological findings, and Portuguese documents. The evidence is slight, but seems sufficient to suggest some broad conclusions about these peoples.

Portuguese documents refer to the inhabitants of the region as Musungulos, probably the Portuguese rendering of a name used by the people of Mombasa and Malindi.³⁴ The people whose name today most closely resembles the name Musungulos are the Walangulo (also known as the Sanye); they are Cushitic-speaking hunters.³⁵ Gray equates the Musungulos with the Walangulo thus: "Mozungulos is clearly a Portuguese corruption of the Kiswahili word Walangulo. The tribe in question is evidently the Wa-Sania, who now live on the banks of the Tana River."³⁶

Oral traditions of the Giriama support this conclusion; the Giriama consider the hunting people whom they found in the hinterland of Mombasa in the 16th century to have been the ancestors of the Walangulo.³⁷ And an early Portuguese

³³ Many historians have written about the Swahili peoples. Pouwels has recently published a cultural-religious study, and Nurse and Spear a historical-linguistic study, of the origin and development of Swahili culture and civilization; and Nicholls and Salim have written extensively about the history of the Swahili in the 19th and 20th centuries. C.S. Nicholls, *The Swahili Coast* (London 1971); A.I. Salim, *The Swahili-Speaking Peoples of Kenya's Coast, 1895-1965* (Nairobi 1973); Derek Nurse and Thomas Spear, *The Swahili: Reconstructing the History and Language of an African Society, 800-1500* (Philadelphia 1985); Randall L. Pouwels, *Islam and Crescent: Traditional Society and Cultural Change, 800-1900* (Cambridge 1987).

³⁴ Portuguese accounts also mention the Galla, as well as the Mosseguejos, a pastoral people who appear in the vicinity of Malindi in 1571: Strandes, 141-143. The Mosseguejos may be ancestral to the Segeju who now live mainly in northeastern Tanzania, but debate about this continues. See "Notes on the Wasegeju of Vanga District," KNA, DC/KWL/3/5; A.C. Hollis, "The Wasegeju," Rhodes House, MSS.Afr. s.1272 a,b; E.C. Baker, "Notes on the History of the Wasegeju," *INR*, 27 (1949): 16-41; Derek Nurse, "Segeju and Daisu: A Case Study of Evidence from Oral Tradition and Comparative Linguistics," *History in Africa*, 9 (1982): 175-208.

³⁵ Arthur M. Champion, "Some Notes on the Wasanye," *JEAUNHS*, 17 (1922): 21-24; Daniel Stiles, "Hunters of the Northern East African Coast: Origins and Historical Processes," *Africa*, 51 (1981): 848-62.

³⁶ Sir John Gray, "Rezende's Description of East Africa in 1634," *TNR*, 23 (June 1947): 22. Until recently, the Sanye were present farther south, in eastern Tsavo and in the Malindi area, near Arabuko and Gede, but they are now disappearing from that region.

³⁷ Thomas T. Spear, *The Kaya Complex: A History of the Mijikenda Peoples of the Kenya Coast to 1900* (Nairobi 1978), 30-31.

reference suggests the presence of hunters: Duarte Barbosa, writing in c.1514, described the people of the mainland as trading with Mombasa in "honey, wax and ivory," trade items of a hunting people.³⁸ From this evidence we can infer that there were Cushitic-speaking people in the coastal hinterland in the early 16th century, and that they were most likely the people (or some of the people) referred to by the Portuguese as Musungulos.

Archaeological evidence that Bantu people were also present in the region has been cited by Kirkman. On the basis of pottery found at Gede, he concluded that the Musungulos were Bantu who had been present since the beginning of the 15th century or earlier.³⁹ He identified them as "...either an advance party of fugitives [from Shungwaya] or a branch of eastern Bantu who had never been settled at Shungwaya."⁴⁰

Early Bantu people most likely practised hunting as well as agriculture.⁴¹ For this reason the difference between Bantu and Cushitic hunting peoples would have been obscure to visiting foreigners, and it is not surprising that the Portuguese (whose knowledge of the peoples of the region was sketchy) used one name to refer to different peoples of the hinterland.

Settlement in the rural areas seems to have been sparse. By the 16th century, the Bantu may have been more numerous than the Cushitic peoples, but evidence is inconclusive, and there is no firm basis for estimating Bantu and Cushitic populations. Nor, with a few exceptions, can we tell the size of towns. Some towns were relatively large. Martin has estimated that the population of Malindi was 5,500 at the beginning of the 16th century;⁴² in 1506, Mombasa was described as "a very big city" with a population of "10,000 souls of whom some 3,700 are fighting men."⁴³ The original town of Gede (Gedi) covered an area of some 45 acres, and had seven mosques and many stone houses; Kirkman concluded, from the quantity of porcelain found there, that the town must have had a "large and prosperous population."⁴⁴

³⁸ Duarte Barbosa, *A Description of the Coasts of East Africa and Malabar* (translation and preface by Henry EJ. Stanley), (Hakluyt Society reprint, London 1970), 12; Mansell L. Dames (ed and trans), *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, (Hakluyt Society, London 1918), Vol I, 21.

³⁹ Notes by J. Kirkman, appended to the "Notes on the History of the Wa-nyika" (1914) by Kenneth Macdougall in KNA, DC/KFI/3/3, Political Record Book, 1911-1921; see also Kirkman's discussion of locally-made "finger-nail indented" pottery, in *Men and Monuments on the East African Coast* (London 1964), 33, and *The Arab City of Gedi: Excavations at the Great Mosque* (London 1954), 74-75.

⁴⁰ Justus Strandes, *The Portuguese Period in East Africa* (translated by Jean F. Wallwork and edited by J.S. Kirkman), (Nairobi 1971), 305 (originally published as *Die Portugiesenzeit von Deutsch- und Englisch-Ostafrika*, Berlin 1899).

⁴¹ Even after adopting a predominantly agricultural economy, the Mijikenda continued to be keen hunters. In 1845, Krapf wrote: "The Wanika [Mijikenda]...are always out on hunting excursions and kill with their arrows every animal." Krapf's Journal, entry for 30 January 1845. CMS, CAS/016/168.

⁴² Esmond Bradley Martin, *The History of Malindi* (Nairobi 1973), 19-20, 28.

⁴³ "Account of the Voyage of D. Francisco de Almeida, Viceroy of India, along the East Coast of Africa," 22 May 1506, in Rego and Baxter, *Documentos*, Vol I, 531, 537.

⁴⁴ James Kirkman, *Gedi* (Nairobi 1970), 7, 8-9, 15-16. Gede is a Galla word; the original name of the town is not known. Though Kirkman points out that the name is more properly spelled Gede, he continues to use the popular spelling Gedi.

We know that in some places the inhabitants of the hinterland constituted a semi-urban population, being settled in the environs of towns.⁴⁵ Massive town walls, sometimes as much as nine feet high in the case of towns such as Gede, Mtwapa, and Vumba Kuu,⁴⁶ suggest that relations between town and country, and between towns, could be hostile, but in comparison with what the next two centuries were to bring, the beginning of the 16th century must be considered a time of peace.

Disruption and change: the migration from Shungwaya, the abandonment of mainland towns, and the Portuguese intrusion

Events of the 16th and 17th centuries brought far-reaching changes along the Kenya coast. By the 16th century the Mijikenda (and other peoples) were moving into the southern coastal region; according to tradition they dispersed from a place called Shungwaya (Singwaya),⁴⁷ which was somewhere north of the Tana river.⁴⁸ Their migration resulted from conflict with their northern neighbours the Oromo (sometimes referred to as the Galla), who were themselves moving south under pressure from the Somali.⁴⁹ The 16th century also saw the Portuguese settling on the Kenya coast, first at Malindi, where a trading factory was established in 1509, and later, in 1593, at Mombasa.⁵⁰

By the 17th century the Oromo had reached the hinterland of Malindi and Kilifi, rendering unsafe large stretches of the coastal plain north of Mombasa. As a consequence most of the mainland towns north of Mombasa were abandoned during the late 16th and early 17th century. The aggressive southward advance of the Oromo is usually considered the main cause of the abandonment of mainland towns, but other factors, such as shortage of water, inter-town warfare, and raiding by the Mosseguejos,⁵¹ Zimba⁵² and Portuguese, most likely contributed as well.

⁴⁵ At times, some two thousand persons may have been living outside the town walls of Malindi. Martin, *Malindi*, 28.

⁴⁶ Thomas H. Wilson, *The Monumental Architecture and Archaeology of the Central and Southern Kenya Coast* (Nairobi 1980), 1, 52, 101. Most walls seem to have been constructed to defend against attack by land.

⁴⁷ Singwaya is the spelling used by those who prefer the Mijikenda version of the name.

⁴⁸ V.L. Grottanelli, "A Lost African Metropolis," *Afrikanistische Studien*, 26 (1955): 231-242; H.N. Chittick, "The Book of Zenj and the Mijikenda," *JJAH*, 9 (1976): 68-73; T.T. Spear, "Traditional Myths and Historians' Myths: Variations on the Singwaya Theme of Mijikenda Origins," *History in Africa*, 1 (1974): 67-84.

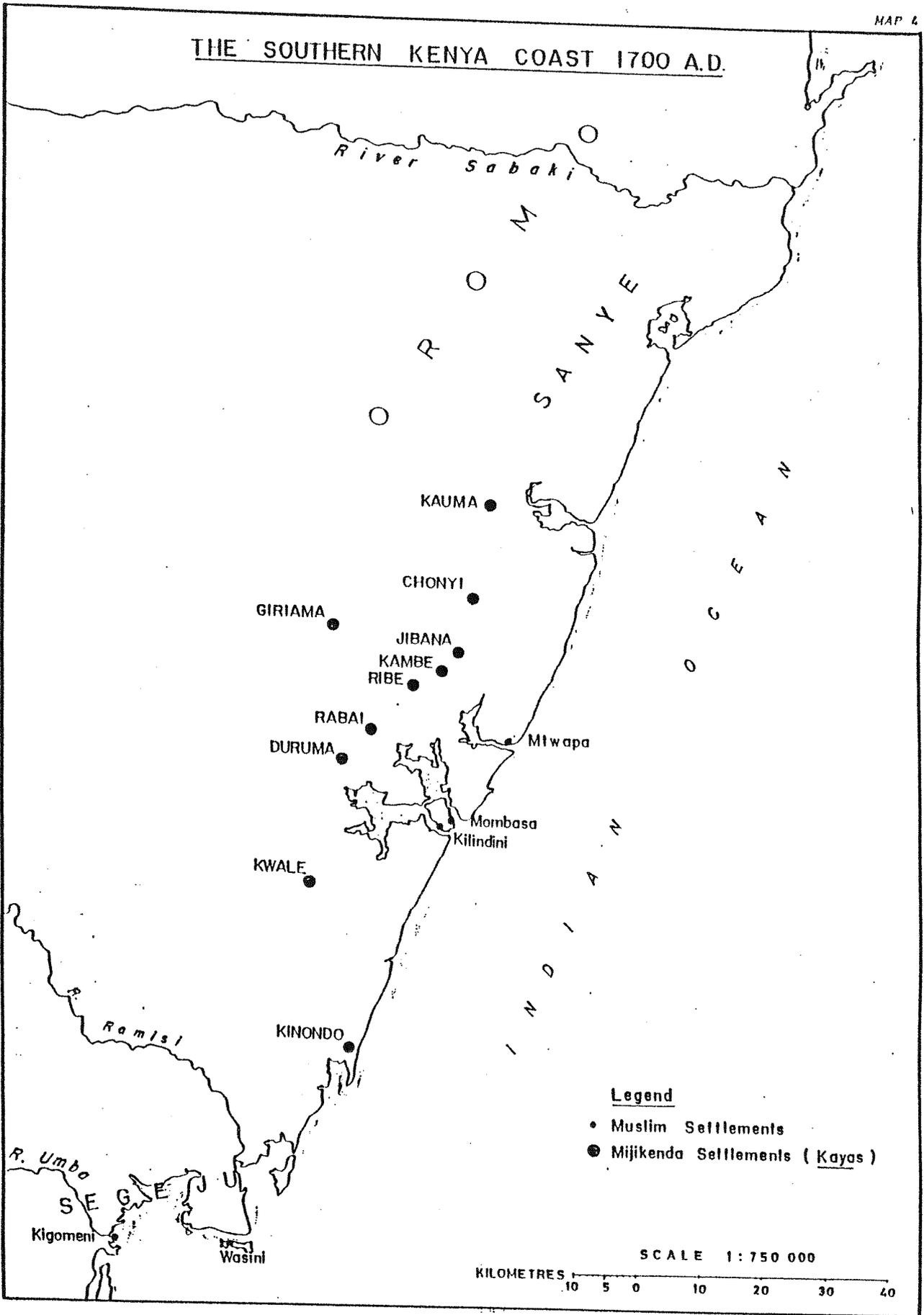
⁴⁹ L.V. Cassanelli, "The Benaadir Past: Essays in Southern Somali History," Ph.D. dissertation (University of Wisconsin 1973), 21-29, 43-54, and *The Shaping of Somali Society* (Philadelphia 1982); I.M. Lewis, "The Somali Conquest of the Horn of Africa," *JAB*, I, 1 (1960): 213-239; E.R. Turton, "Bantu, Galla and Somali Migration in the Horn of Africa: A Reassessment of the Juba/fana Area," *JAH*, XVI, 4 (1975): 519-537.

⁵⁰ Standes, 115, 140-141. The hostility of the people of Mombasa prevented the Portuguese from settling there earlier. By 1593, Mombasa had been weakened by successive Portuguese attacks and "by devastations wrought by the Zimba" (Standes, 161). See footnote 52 below.

⁵¹ See p.20, footnote 34.

⁵² The Zimba, who are mentioned by eye-witness Portuguese accounts, were a "war-like tribe" from "south on the Zambesi" who ravaged the Kenya coast in 1589. Standes, 154-161.

THE SOUTHERN KENYA COAST 1700 A.D.



Legend

- Muslim Settlements
- Mijikenda Settlements (Kayas)

SCALE 1:750 000

KILOMETRES 10 5 0 10 20 30 40

Some towns, like Gede, were abandoned and then temporarily reoccupied; other towns, such as Kilifi and Mnarani, evidently were burned; an unnamed settlement near Malindi suffered attack and destruction at the hands of the Portuguese.⁵³

Whatever the causes, the period between 1550 and 1650, when most of the population movements seem to have occurred, was one of turmoil and change. The settlement pattern of town and country, of Muslims and non-Muslims alike, was severely disrupted. What took place seems to have been not a loss of population, but a regrouping for the sake of protection. Muslims from the mainland towns north of Mombasa sought refuge in safer island towns; many moved to Mombasa island. Some may have moved to towns farther south, and some to Pemba island. Others may have moved north to towns of the Lamu archipelago. The last of the northern mainland towns to be abandoned was Mtwapa, which was inhabited at least until the early 18th century (Map 4).⁵⁴ For a short period the Oromo may have raided south of Mombasa, but the raiding was not sustained.⁵⁵

South of Mombasa, conflict between two Swahili peoples, the Vumba and the Shirazi,⁵⁶ precipitated similar kinds of change. The Vumba and the Shirazi had both been in the region since the 14th or the early 15th century:⁵⁷ the Vumba at

⁵³ J. Kirkman, "Historical Archaeology in Kenya," *The Antiquaries Journal*, 31, 1-2 (1957): 16-28; *Gedthe Palace* (The Hague 1963); and *Men and Monuments*, 96-91. Boteler mentions that the town of Kilili "was attacked, sacked, and burnt by the Galla." Captain Thomas Boteler, *Narrative of a Voyage of Discovery to Africa and Arabia* (London 1835), Vol II, 2. The Portuguese attack is mentioned in a letter from Joao de Sepulveda, Mozambique, 10 August 1542 to the King of Portugal, in which he writes: "The King of Malindi asked me to destroy some neighbouring place with whom he had been at war for many years, which I did." in Rego and Baxter, *Documentos*, Vol VII (1540-1560), Lisbon 1971, p.133; the place is not named.

⁵⁴ I am indebted to Dr. Richard Wilding, the Coast Archaeologist of the National Museums of Kenya, for taking me around the site of Mtwapa and for information about his current excavations there. Though many inhabitants of Mtwapa left, it is not certain that the town was ever fully abandoned. According to Mtwapa traditions the Oromo did not attack the town, and a few Mtwapa families continued to reside there throughout the 18th century. (Kobana Salim, Mtwapa, 22/10/87.) Evidence about exact dates is scanty. Taylor, writing in the 1880s, mentioned the existence of Mtwapa "100 years ago", which would mean it was occupied in the late 18th century (Taylor Papers, Vol IV, Section F, SOAS Manuscript Collection, MS 47755).

Occupation during the 17th and 18th centuries could have been seasonal, with a good deal of movement back and forth from Mombasa. Some Mtwapa may have been persons of dual residence: integrated and accepted as residents of Mombasa, at the same time as they regularly visited their home town of Mtwapa.

⁵⁵ A.C.Hollis, "Notes on the History of Vumba, East Africa," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, XXX (1900): 281; Juma Zani, Kundutsi, 19/12/67.

⁵⁶ The Shirazi are said to have been among the first settlers on the East African coast, but details of early Shirazi settlement on the southern Kenya coast are unknown. After trying unsuccessfully to get information about the Shirazi in that area, Thompson wrote: "No satisfactory account could be obtained of their origin, and they were quite unable to give any account of themselves." File Memo "Persian immigration from Shiraz", signed by Thompson, Acting District Commissioner, Vanga District, 17 July 1917, KNA, DC/KWL/3/5. For a general discussion of Shirazi settlement in East Africa, see Arthur E.Robinson, "The Shirazi Colonizations of East Africa," *TNR*, 3 (April 1937): 40-53.

⁵⁷ When the Vumba first arrived in the region, they were probably not Muslim. According to Vumba traditions, the first five rulers of Vumba Kuu were not Muslim; the beginning of Islam dates to the reign of the sixth ruler, Mwana Chambi Niomvi, in the late 15th century. The country was suffering from drought and famine (according to other versions, there was sickness, or the ruler's daughter was sick), and Mwana Chambi Niomvi invited Sharif Hasan of Zanzibar, well-known for his supernatural powers, to come to Vumba Kuu to pray for rain. After successfully ending the drought, Sharif Hasan stayed, married the daughter of Mwana Chambi Niomvi, and converted him and other members of the ruling clan to Islam. Oral information from Saggaf Ba-Alawi, Mombasa, 28/8/87; the same tradition is recorded by Robinson, as related by Omari bin Stambul, when he was chief Qadhi of Tanga. A.F. Robinson, "The Shirazi Colonization of East Africa: Vumba," *TNR*, 7 (1939): 93.

Vumba Kuu,⁵⁸ and the Shirazi at Mwiuni, Mdragoni, Kifundi and Munge (and possibly Tumbe), all now ruined settlements (Map 2).⁵⁹ Early in the 17th century,⁶⁰ the Vumba fought and conquered the Shirazi "by the help of the friendly Wadigo".⁶¹ The old Shirazi towns were for the most part abandoned, and only a few scattered Shirazi remained in the area.⁶² The war, and subsequent Shirazi migration, left the Vumba undisputed rulers of the southern Kenya coast. Later in the same century, insecurity and possibly internal rivalry led to the abandonment of Vumba Kuu,⁶³ the Vumba moved first to Kigomeni and later to Wasin island (Map 4).⁶⁴ By the 18th century, the Muslim settlements at Diani, Tiwi and Ukunda had also been abandoned, but it is not certain who the inhabitants were or where they went.⁶⁵

By the early 18th century, most Muslims had moved to island towns; Muslim control over the mainland coast between the Sabaki and the Uмба rivers had all but ceased. After several centuries of prosperity and expansion, Islam had been forced to retreat and was now confined to the islands of Mombasa and Wasin.

⁵⁸ According to traditions recorded by Hollis, Vumba Kuu (the main town of the Vumba) was founded at the beginning of the 13th century. The genealogies of the Vumba rulers do not support such an early foundation, nor do preliminary archaeological findings corroborate this date, which seems too early by at least a century. (A.C. Hollis, "Notes on the History of Vumba, East Africa" in *JRAI*, 30 (1900): 275-297; Wilson, *Monumental Architecture*, 2-3.) Robinson considers that Vumba Kuu was a settlement founded by Shirazi "said to have come from Shungwaya." (Robinson, "The Shirazi Colonizations," 49.) If Robinson is correct, then the Vumba may have settled in the region at approximately the same time as other Shirazi groups, and only later come to prominence as the Vumba. cursory archaeological surveys have been done at Vumba Kuu; there are no plans for a more comprehensive excavation of the site, and it is unlikely there will be new evidence about the origins of the town in the near future.

⁵⁹ T.A. Dickson, Mombasa, 9 October 1925, to Acting Chief Native Commissioner, "Ruins and Inscriptions," KNA, CP/47/1165; Wilson, *Monumental Architecture*, 23-39.

⁶⁰ The Vumba-Shirazi war is said to have taken place when Mwana Chambi Chandi Ivor was the ruler of Vumba Kuu, that is, in c.1615 (Hollis, 281-2).

⁶¹ The Birini clan of the Digo are remembered as having helped the Ba-Amiri Vumba, the ruling Vumba family at the time (Hollis, 280-2), but the special ties that developed thereafter between the Digo and the Vumba were limited in scope. The Wakamathi clan of the Segeju are also said to have helped the Ba-Amiri Vumba against the Shirazi (Testimony of the Segeju elders of Moa, 10/10/48, E.C. Baker, "Wanyika and Wadigo notebook," pp.79-80, Rhodes House, Oxford, MSSAfr.r.84). Some Segeju traditions do not admit that the Digo helped the Vumba against the Shirazi (Interview with Sondo wa Vurizi and Rashid bin Muhammad Lamnunyi, Manza, 29/9/48, E.C. Baker, "Wanyika and Wadigo notebook," Rhodes House, MSSAfr.r.84), but in this case the traditions collected by Hollis seem more consistent and more reliable.

⁶² After the war, many Shirazi migrated south to escape the humiliating terms of surrender to which they were subjected, and settled along the northern Tanzanian coast, where they still live today. Other Shirazi migrated north and settled at Mombasa and Jomvu (Uthman Mwinyiusi, Mkomani, 20/9/87). Others may have settled around Galu, Diani and Tiwi, and in the area south of Gasi, where they are said to have stayed until the second half of the 19th century. See Chapter V, p.144.

⁶³ McKay states that Vumba Kuu was abandoned because of Galla raids (William Francis McKay, "A Pre-Colonial History of the Southern Kenya Coast," Ph.D. dissertation (Boston University 1975): 46), but there is no evidence of sustained Galla raiding south of Mombasa. It has also been suggested that the town was abandoned at a later date, when "...about 1700 A.D. the whole territory was over-run by a horde of cannibals the Wadoe who came from near Dares Salaam." (File Memo "Visit to Vanga," no date, KNA, DC/KWL/5/2). According to Hollis, however, when the Wadoe overran the country in the 17th century, they did not harm the Vumba; Hollis says the Vumba moved to Wasin because they feared attack from Mombasa (Hollis, 281-82). Rather than attribute the abandonment of Vumba Kuu to raiding by one specific group, it may be more correct to postulate a general decline of security in the region in the 17th century.

⁶⁴ Kigomeni and Wasin became the seats of rival Vumba groups. The site of the old town of Kigomeni (abandoned in 1822) lies in Tanzania south of the Uмба river. (McKay, 55-56,75-89.) From the beginning, Wasin was the main residence of the Sharifs (descendants of the Prophet Muhammad) of the Ba-Alawi family. (File Memo, "Wassin", KNA, DC/KWL/3/1.)

⁶⁵ See Appendix III.

The pattern of Mijikenda settlement

Traditions of the Mijikenda about their migration from Shungwaya (Singwaya) have been documented and interpreted by Spear.⁶⁶ The traditions have been dubbed fabrications,⁶⁷ but their overwhelming consistency (collected over a wide area and time) would seem to confirm them as genuine.⁶⁸ Efforts have been made to relate Mijikenda traditions to the traditions of other peoples who claim Shungwaya origin (the Segeju, the Kilindini, the Pokomo, and the Gunya).⁶⁹ From the whole corpus of these traditions, it has been argued that Shungwaya comprised a large, multi-ethnic community (including Cushitic-speaking and Bantu-speaking peoples), spread over a wide region, with Muslim as well as non-Muslim inhabitants.⁷⁰

On the basis of age-sets, starting with the *Amwendo* age-set of the Giriama, Spear estimates that the Mijikenda arrived in south-eastern Kenya in the second half of the 16th century. There is evidence that their migration was not a mass movement of large numbers but rather a continuing flow of small fragmented groups, some of which had probably arrived no later than the early 16th century. Still under threat of Oromo attack, they established palisaded villages (known as *kayas*⁷¹) in the forests of the inland ridge of hills which runs from Kilifi creek south to the Ramisi river;⁷² hunters of the area, with whom they established friendly relations, showed them hidden and inaccessible sites.⁷³

The first Mijikenda migrants to arrive from Shungwaya most likely found

⁶⁶ Thomas T. Spear, *The Kaya Complex*, 16-43, and *Traditions of Origin and their Interpretation: The Mijikenda of Kenya* (Athens, Ohio 1982).

⁶⁷ R.F. Morton, "The Shungwaya Myth of Miji Kenda Origins: A Problem of Late Nineteenth Century Kenya Coastal History," *JAHS*, V, 3 (1972): 397-423, and "New Evidence Regarding the Shungwaya Myth of Miji Kenda Origins," *IJAHS*, X, 4 (1977): 628-643.

⁶⁸ Thomas T. Spear, *The Kaya Complex*, 21, and "Traditional Myths and Linguistic Analysis: Singwaya Revisited," *History in Africa*, 4 (1977): 230-245.

⁶⁹ A.H.J. Prins, "The Shungwaya Problem: Traditional History and Cultural Likeness," *Anthropos*, 61 (1972): 9-35; James de V. Allen, "Shungwaya, the Mijikenda, and the Traditions" (review article), *IJAHS*, 16, 3 (1983): 455-484. For traditions of other Shungwaya peoples see: A. Wemer, "Some Notes on the Wa-Pokomo of the Tana Valley," *Journal of the Africa Society*, XII (1912/13): 359-384; R.G. Darroch, "Some Notes on the Early History of the Tribes Living on the Lower Tana, collected by Mikael Samson and Others," *JEAUNHS*, 17 (1943/44): 244-54; E.C. Baker, "History of the Wasegeju," *TNR*, 27 (1949): 16-41; H.E. Lambert, *Chi-chiftmudi* (Kampala 1958).

⁷⁰ A.H.J. Prins, *The Coastal Tribes of the North-Eastern Bantu* (London 1952), 43; James de Vere Allen, "Shungwaya, the Segeju and Somali History," *Archaeology and History*, Vol II (proceedings of the Second International Congress of Somali Studies, held at the University of Hamburg, August 1983), 35-72; Randall L. Pouwels, *Hom and Crescent*, 10-16.

⁷¹ See Appendix I.

⁷² The pastoralist Oromo, perhaps unaccustomed to hilly forested terrain, seem to have concentrated their marauding and main attacks to the coastal plain.

⁷³ Spear, *The Kaya Complex*, 1,50. Hunters are said to have settled in *kaya* Giriama at the time, giving rise to several Giriama sub-clans.

other Bantu peoples in the area, and either absorbed them or pushed them south.⁷⁴ As more Mijikenda arrived, particularly from the second half of the 16th century to the early 17th century, they came to be the dominant people.⁷⁵ In time, the traditions of earlier Bantu peoples were lost, and the Mijikenda migration from Shungwaya became the starting point for the history of settlement in the area.⁷⁶

Two broad groups emerged according as the Mijikenda settled north or south of Mombasa; this early settlement pattern had important long-term consequences for future expansion and relations with neighbouring Muslim peoples. The southern Mijikenda, now known as the Digo, are generally regarded as the first to have migrated from Shungwaya (which corresponds with their southernmost position); linguistic analysis confirms that they separated from the northern Mijikenda before the latter split into constituent groups.⁷⁷

The northern Mijikenda (the Kauma, Chonyi, Jibana, Kambe, Rabai, Ribe, Duruma and Giriama) founded *kayas* to the north and northwest of Mombasa (Map 4). With the Oromo still threatening them, their primary concern was security. As a result, they continued to reside within the stockades of their original *kaya* settlements. Although local expansion took place to establish subsidiary *kayas*, these were few and invariably near the original *kayas* (Map 5).⁷⁸ The northern Mijikenda remained restricted in their area of residence until the Oromo threat subsided in the second quarter of the 19th century.

Though the northern Mijikenda had a common system of generation-sets and age-sets (Miji. *rika*), political and religious leadership came to be centred in individual *kayas*, which were governed by the senior elders sitting together in council (Miji. *kambi*).⁷⁹ The elders of different *kayas* would consult regarding matters of common interest; and major events, such as the initiation of a new age-set, were decided by a

⁷⁴ G.W.B. Huntingford, "The Peopling of the Interior of East Africa by its Modern Inhabitants," in R. Oliver and G. Mathew (eds), *History of East Africa* (London 1963), Vol I, 91. See also pp. 6-7 above. According to the traditions of the Bondi of northern Tanzania, they were displaced by the Digo from the coastal plain south of Mombasa. Saidi Pimwe, Dar es Salaam, July 1948, (interviewed by E.C. Baker), Rhodes House, MSSAfr.r.84, E.C. Baker, "Wanyika and Wadigo Notebook," p.43; H.M.T. Kayamba, "Notes on the Wadigo," *TNR*, 23, (1947):80-81.

⁷⁵ Spear, *The Kaya Complex*, 4, 14, 16, 27-33, 64.

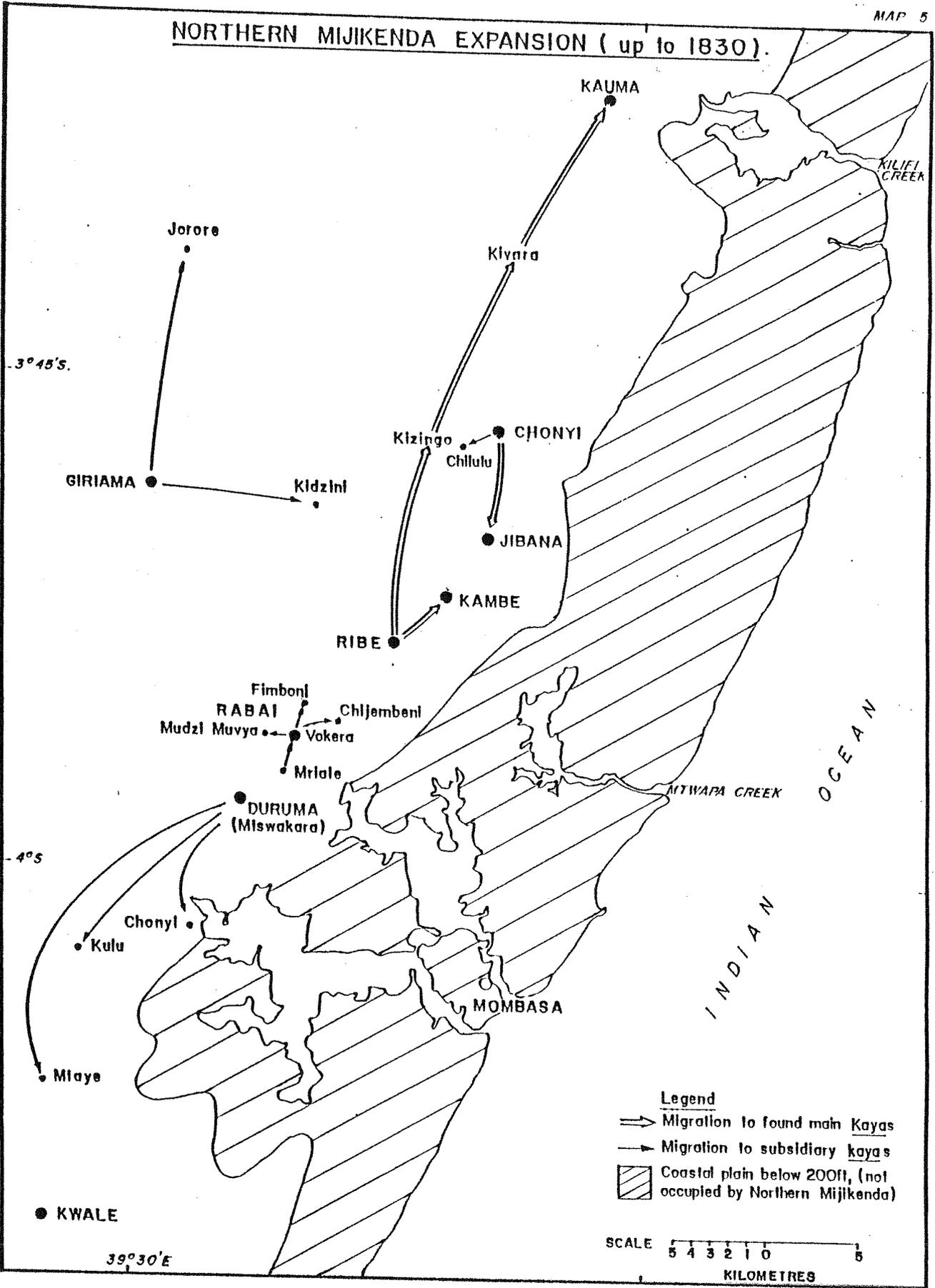
⁷⁶ With the exception of some of the Rabai who trace their origin to Rombo, in Chagga country near Mount Kilimanjaro, and claim to have settled at Rabai before the arrival of the Mijikenda; the Rabai subsequently adopted Mijikenda culture and language, and are now considered Mijikenda. Cf. Spear, *The Kaya Complex*, 33-34, and "Note on the origin of the Warabai" in the Quarterly Report for Rabai sub-district for the Quarter ending 31st December 1911, KNA, CP/MP/11.

⁷⁷ P.A.S. Sedlak, "Sociocultural Determinants of Language Maintenance and Language Shift in a Rural Kenyan Coastal Community," Ph.D. thesis (Stanford University 1975), 141.

⁷⁸ MapS is based on information from the following sources: Alice Werner, "Bantu Coast Tribes of the East Africa Protectorate," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, XLV (July-December 1915): 327-29, 344; Spear, *The Kaya Complex*, 30-32; S.A. Robertson, "Preliminary Floristic Survey of Kaya Forests of Coastal Kenya," Malindi 1987; Henry W. Mutoro, "The Spatial Distribution of the Mijikenda Kaya Settlements on the Hinterland Kenya Coast," *Transafrican Journal of History*, 14 (1985):78-100.

⁷⁹ Cynthia Brantley, *The Giriama and Colonial Resistance in Kenya, 1800-1920*, (Los Angeles 1981), 14; Spear, *The Kaya Complex*, 58-63.

NORTHERN MIJIKENDA EXPANSION (up to 1830).



joint meeting of the elders of all *kayas*. Some intermarriage and migration between *kayas* took place.

Despite these common social bonds and cultural affinities, each of the *kayas* developed its own character, and individual northern Mijikenda peoples were identified primarily with their individual *kayas*.⁸⁰ They were Giriama, Ribe, Chonyi, etc., long before they came to think of themselves as Mijikenda.⁸¹

The southern Mijikenda (Digo) founded *kayas* south of Mombasa, at Kwale and at Kinondo (Map 4). Being a safe distance from the Oromo, and in an area with abundant fertile land, they soon spread out, in some cases long distances, to establish independent secondary *kayas*. This pattern of expansion continued for two centuries; by the second quarter of the 19th century, in contrast with the northern Mijikenda who were still living in or near their original *kaya* villages, the southern Mijikenda had spread throughout the coastal plain south of Mombasa (Map 6).⁸²

There is evidence that when the southern Mijikenda first arrived south of Mombasa, they comprised several groups, and only later came to think of themselves collectively as Digo. The *Kitab al Zanj* mentions the "Digo, Shimba, Longo, and Sifi" as the first four groups to migrate from Shungwaya;⁸³ and the *Mombasa Chronicle*⁸⁴ lists the "Tiv, Darumah-Mutavi, Shibah, Lughuh, and Diyu" among the

⁸⁰ Spear, *The Kaya Complex*, 46-49, 58-62.

⁸¹ Krapf and Rebmann observed the individual character of the *kayas* when visiting them in 1844 and 1848. CMS, CAS/016/28, letter of Krapf to the Lay Secretary, 25/9/1844, and CA5/024/52A, Journal of RevJ. Rebmann, entries for 9-12/1/1848.

The name Mijikenda, meaning "nine towns" (nine = Swa. *kenda*; towns = Swa. *miji*) seems to have been first used in 1924 by the Digo of the nine villages immediately south of Mombasa, who adopted the name (in its Mijikenda form *Midzichenda*) to describe their newly-established Central Council. (Cf. Digo District, Station Diary, entry for 5th April 1924. KNA, DC/KWL/5/1.) The name was taken up by all the Mijikenda in the 1940s when the nine Mijikenda peoples came together to form the Mijikenda Union. Saidi Sulayman Mwagogo, Kilifi, 11/6/86.

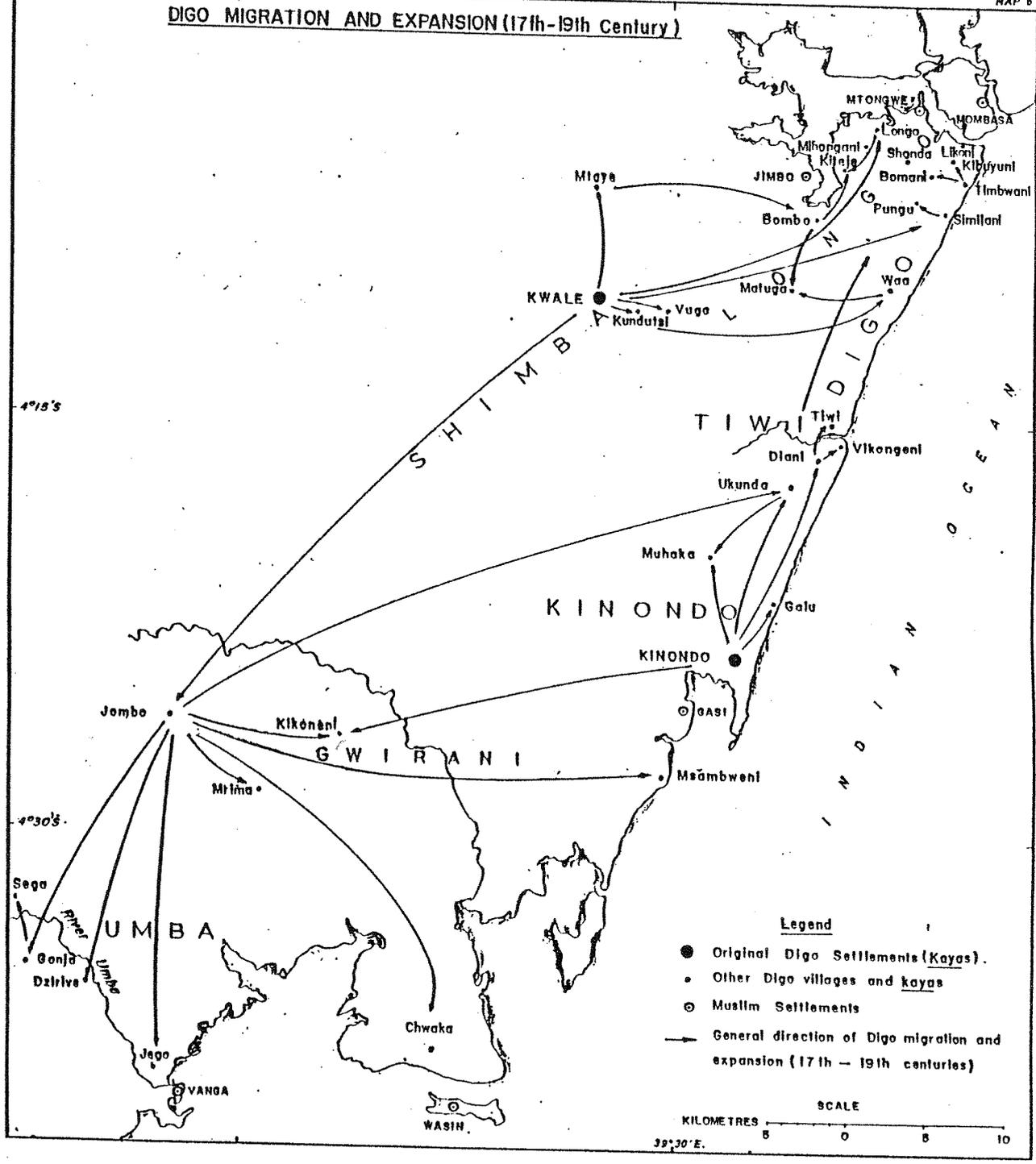
⁸² Map 6 is based on information given by the following: Hamisi Mwatuwano, Waa, 16/12/67; Muhammad bin Matano Mwakutanga, Mtongwe, 20/8/69; Juma Zani, Kundutsi, 27/4/70; Abdallah Mwatari, Diani, 14/1/75; Omari Muhammad Masemo, Kikoneni, 31/1/75; Ngumi bin Shaykh Mwinyi, Msambweni, 24/8/85; Juma Nyevu, Makwenyeni, 25/7/87; Mwabaka Kombo, Jego, 21/10/87; Swalehe Pembe, Chwaka, 23/10/87.

⁸³ E. Cerulli, *Somalia, Scritti vari Editi ed /nediti* (Rome 1957), Vol I, 234, 256; pages 233-251 of this book contain the Arabic text of the *Kitab al Zanj* (Book of the Zanj), and pages 253-292 an Italian translation. The Digo, Shimba and Longo are mentioned in Digo traditions and are clearly Digo groups. It is tempting to assume an orthographic error and to equate the Sifi of the *Kitab al Zanj* with the T!wi (the TIV of the *Mombasa Chronicle*), another group mentioned in Digo traditions; otherwise the Sifi must remain unidentified. In the light of our present knowledge about the Digo, the transliteration from Arabic by Cerulli, showing Shamba and Lungo (identified by him as tribes in Tanzania, ref. footnote 1, p.256) should be revised to Shimba and Longo, the names of Digo groups.

⁸⁴ The *Mombasa Chronicle* relates the history of Mombasa from Portuguese times up to the early 19th century. The original manuscript of the *Chronicle* is presumably lost, and only two copies of the text are known to survive. One was published (in Arabic with an English translation) by Capt. W.F. Owen in his book *Narrative of Voyages to explore the shores of Africa, Arabia and Madagascar* (London 1833), Vol I, pp.414-422; from a letter we know that LtJ.B. Emery obtained the manuscript of the *Chronicle* in Mombasa sometime during the years 1824-26: "I saw two or three small manuscripts written in the Sohilie language and Arabic character, but of rather modern date; one of them, relating to the history of Mombasa, I had translated into Arabic, and presented it to Captain Owen on my arrival in England; it is published in his voyage." (Letter of J.B. Emery, St. Heliers, Jersey, 5th February 1834, to W.D. Cooley, Esq., RGS, Emery MS File.) The other known copy of the text is a French translation published by M. Guillaumin (who obtained it during his visit to Mombasa in 1848) in his book *Documents sur l'Histoire, la Géographie et le Commerce de l'Afrique Orientale* (Paris 1856), Vol I, 614-622.

DIGO MIGRATION AND EXPANSION (17th-19th Century)

MAP 6



"cities of the Vanikat"⁸⁵ which sent representatives to Oman in 1729.⁸⁶ These southern Mijikenda groups corresponded to geographical areas: the Shimba, Mtaye, and Longo were inland to the west; the Digo and Tiwi were along the shore to the east. As the southern Mijikenda expanded farther south, other broad groups emerged: Kinondo, Gwirani, and Umba (Map 6).⁸⁷

Krapf mentions visiting in 1848 a village of the "Lungo [Longo] tribe, a branch of the Wadigo tribes of the Wanika" just south of Mombasa;⁸⁸ by that time, evidently, the name Digo was already in use as a general term for the southern Mijikenda. The various Digo groups gradually coalesced, until by the early 20th century they came to consider themselves one people, and the separate group names fell into disuse.⁸⁹

Each Digo *kaya* was governed by a council (*ngambi*) of elders who took precedence following the order in which their matrilineal clans had settled in the *kaya*; the senior elder (*mwanatsi*; pl. *anatsi*) of the *kaya* was almost always chosen from among members (by matrilineal descent) of the founding clan.⁹⁰

As Digo migrated to new areas, the number of clans increased. The founding of a new *kaya* often marked the founding of several new clans. Initially clans were territorial, but intermarriage between clans and migration from one *kaya* to another (which was far more prevalent than among the northern Mijikenda) brought about an extensive network of kinship links between persons residing in different *kayas*.

If a woman married a man from another *kaya*, she would leave her home *kaya* to go to live in the *kaya* of her husband. Links with her home *kaya* were maintained, however; for, in accordance with the prevailing matrilineal system, an elder son would return to the *kaya* of his mother to inherit his maternal uncle's property. At times he might even inherit the leadership of his uncle's clan or of the

⁸⁵ That is, the towns or villages of Nyikaland, the country of the Wanyika. See p.12, footnote 3.

⁸⁶ The *Mombasa Chronicle* in Owen, *Narrative*, 418. In Guillain's translation of the *Chronicle*, thirteen "Wanika towns" are listed, five of which are clearly Digo: M'taoue [Mtaye], Tihoui [fiwi], M'taoue Chimba [Mtaye Shimba], Lounggo [Longo], and Debgo (Digo). (Guillain, *Documents*, Vol I, 620.) The Darumah-Mutavi are evidently the inhabitants of *kaya* Mtaye (an early offshoot of *kaya* Kwale), which had a mixed population of Digo and Duruma. *Kaya* Mtaye, originally founded by Shimba Digo from Kwale, was gradually occupied by neighbouring Duruma who intermarried with the Digo. This information was given to H.B. Sharpe, the D.C., by the Rev.J.B.Griffiths (who had been initiated as a Duruma elder) in 1924. See the District Station Diary of Shimoni-Vanga District, entry for 1st May 1924, KNA, DC/KWL/5/1.

⁸⁷ By 1925 the areas of these groups had been superseded by the administrative divisions set up by the colonial Government. KNA, DC/KWL/3/5, "Description of the old Wadigo districts," H.B.Sharpe, the District Commissioner of Digo District, 1st October 1925.

⁸⁸ Krapf, *Travels, Researches and Missionary Labours during an Eighteen Years' Residence in Eastern Africa* (London 1860), 267.

⁸⁹ As often happens in such situations, much of Digo awareness of their identity came about because others saw them as one people. In 1924 the name of Vanga District was changed to Digo District. KNA, DC/KWL/1/10, Digo District Annual Report 1924.

⁹⁰ In following matrilineal custom the Digo differed from the northern Mijikenda who were patrilineal. Werner collected oral evidence which indicates that the northern Mijikenda may have been matrilineal at some time in the past. Werner, "Bantu Coast Tribes," 338-40.

whole *kaya*. A daughter would continue to live in her father's *kaya* until marriage, when she might move to a *kaya* different from that of either her father or her mother. Thus, within one generation a Digo could come to have close relatives in several different *kayas*. Over many generations this created what Gerlach has called a multilinear (as opposed to patrilineal or matrilineal) set of kinship links, "a complex, intertwined network of relationships, much like a spider's web" throughout the whole of Digo country.⁹¹ Though widely dispersed, the Digo had close relations with persons of other *kayas*. In practice this meant (and means to this day) that a Digo could choose out of many possible kinship relationships those which best suited different circumstances. By the end of the 19th century, this network of relations made it easy, and sometimes even necessary, for Muslims (Digo as well as non-Digo) to move from one Digo *kaya* to another. In this way, in some instances, a strong Muslim influence was brought into areas which were not Muslim.⁹²

The Mijikenda and the Swahili

Soon after the Mijikenda reached the coastal hinterland of southern Kenya, possibly in the 16th and certainly by the early 17th century, they came into contact with neighbouring Swahili. The main Swahili peoples in the area were:

- 1) the *Kilifi*, the *Mtwapa*, and the *Jomvu*, on the mainland north of Mombasa; Kilifi, Mtwapa and Jomvu were also resident in Mombasa town by that time;
- 2) the *Mvita* and the *Malindi* (many of whom had moved from Malindi to Mombasa at the end of the 16th century), in Mombasa town;⁹³
- 3) the *Kilindini*, *Tangana*, and *Changamwe*, on the mainland south and west of Mombasa;⁹⁴
- 4) the *Vumba* and the *Shirazi*, some fifty miles south of Mombasa.⁹⁵

The Swahili of Mombasa formed, or were in the process of forming, two distinct confederations (which exist to this day), known as the Nine Tribes (Swa.*Miji*

⁹¹ Luther P. Gerlach, "The Social Organization of the Digo of Kenya," Ph.D. thesis (University of London 1960), 103,147.

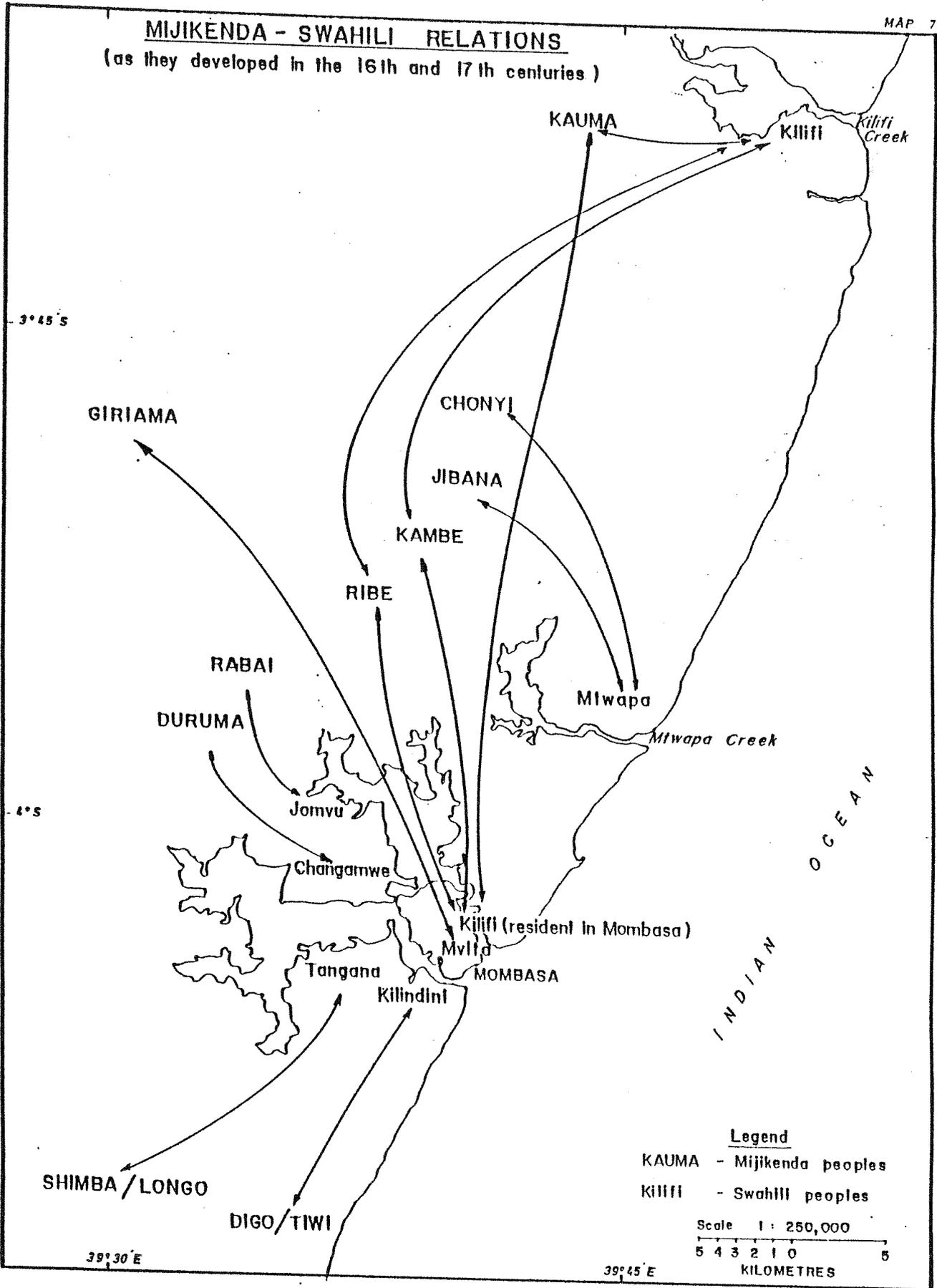
⁹² See, for example, Chapter IV, pp.114,120.

⁹³ The names given are the ones normally used in Swahili, but one can also find people using more Arabicized names such as Mtwafii for Mtwapa, Mambasii for Mvita, Kilifii for Kilifi, Jaufii for Jomvu, etc.

⁹⁴ Other Swahili groups were also present in the area: 1) the Junda, Ng'ombeni, and Nyali, on the mainland north of Mombasa (in the areas now called Kisauni and Nyali); and 2) some immigrant northern Swahili (the Shaka, Ozi, Pate, Faza, Katwa, Siu and Gunya) in Mombasa. With the exception of the Gunya, these groups figure less prominently than the main Swahili groups in the history of Mijikenda-Swahili relations.

⁹⁵ See pp.24-25.

MIJIKENDA - SWAHILI RELATIONS (as they developed in the 16th and 17th centuries)



Tisia) and the Three Tribes (Swa. *Miji Mitatu*).⁹⁶ The Mvita (the earliest inhabitants of Mombasa),⁹⁷ and the Jomvu, Mtwapa, and Kilifi (their close allies), are considered the four senior members of the Nine Tribes. There is consensus that four other groups, immigrant from northern Swahili towns, are members: the Shaka, Faza, Gunya, and Pate. There is less agreement about the ninth member of the Nine Tribes, and about the Swahili peoples that should be included by virtue of being sub-groups of the Nine Tribes.⁹⁸

The Kilindini, the Tangana, and the Changamwe resisted assimilation into the Nine Tribes; instead, they founded a second town on Mombasa island, the town of Kilindini, some time in the early 17th century, and formed their own confederation, the Three Tribes.⁹⁹

Over a period of time, close relations developed between the Mijikenda and seven of the Swahili peoples of Mombasa, as follows:

<i>Mijikenda</i>	<i>Swahili</i>	
1) Giriama	Mvita	
2) Rabai	Jomvu	
3) Jibana Chonyi	Mtwapa	Nine Tribes (senior members)
4) Ribe Kambe Kauma	Kilifi	
5) Duruma	Changamwe	
6) Shimba/Longo (Digo) --	Tangana	Three Tribes
7) Digo/Tiwi (Digo) -----	Kilindini	

With the exception of the Ribe/Kambe and the Kilifi, and the Giriama and the Mvita, relations developed between the Mijikenda and Swahili groups living nearest each other (Map 7).¹⁰⁰ Traditions say little about how these relations

⁹⁶ FJ.Berg, "The Swahili Community of Mombasa, 1500-1900," *JAH*, IX, 1 (1968): 35-56. The Nine Tribes are also referred to in Swahili as *Tisa Taifa* and the Three Tribes as *Thalatha Taifa*.

⁹⁷ The word Mvita is also an old name for the town of Mombasa.

⁹⁸ See Appendix II.

⁹⁹ FJ.Berg, "Mombasa under the Busaidi Sultanate: the City and its Hinterlands in the Nineteenth Century," Ph.D. thesis (University of Wisconsin 1971), 32,40-42. According to tradition, the Kilindini, Tangana, and Changamwe are refugees from the northern Kenya coast who came together on the mainland south of Mombasa. The joint foundation of Kilindini town on Mombasa island is customarily taken as the beginning of their confederation. They are sometimes referred to collectively as the Kilindini. See "Hadithi ya Wachangamwe" (Story of the Changamwe) in H.E.Lambert, *Chi-lomvu and Ki-Ngare*, 89-103; and Guillaing, *Documents*, Vol II, 240-43.

¹⁰⁰ See Appendix II.

evolved, but they are known to have existed for centuries; it is likely that they developed while the Kilifi were still resident on the northern mainland at Kilifi, and while the Changamwe, Tangana, and Kilindini, were on the southern mainland, near the Mijikenda groups with which they affiliated.¹⁰¹

Both Krapf (1845) and Guillain (1848) noted these relations. Guillain gave a partial list of the Mijikenda groups, over which, he was told, the Swahili had suzerainty:

Here is how suzerainty is divided out among the Swahili chiefs: the Giriama have recourse to the shaykh of the Mvita; the Chonyi, to that of the Mtwapa; the Kauma, Kambe, Ribe, to that of the Kilifi; the Rabai, to that of the Jomvu or the Malindi; all the others depend on the Kilindini shaykhs.¹⁰²

Krapf did not mention specific pairings of Mijikenda and Swahili groups; he did, however, record details about what their relations entailed:

When one...is chosen a Sheikh or protector of the Wanika he has to pay the sum of 600 dollars which is divided amongst the fellow chiefs and the Wanikas. He gains little more than the honour of being a chief and perhaps some show of authority or a few commercial advantages in Wanika land. When he visits them, they must give him food, but they expect the giving of a present on his part; when they visit him at Mombas he must provide them with food and lodging.¹⁰³

The Wanika tribes are nominally dependent upon Mombaz, and are governed by four Suahili sheikhs who live in Mombaz; but the connection between the town and these tribes is extremely loose and undefined...¹⁰⁴

The earliest Muslim influence among the Mijikenda came from their Swahili affiliates. Mijikenda-Swahili relations were especially important for the spread of Islam among the Mijikenda in the 19th century, and in some cases these relations have continued to promote the spread of Islam to the present day.

¹⁰¹ Kobana Salim, Mtwapa, 1S/5/86; Samuel Ndune, Mnarani, 23/8/86; Saidi Sulayman Mwangogo, Kilifi, 11/8/86; Muhammad Ahmad Matano, Kuze, 15/10/87. For the Kilindini and the Digo, see Appendix III.

¹⁰² "Voici comment la suzerainete en est repartie entre les chefs souaheli: Gueriana ressort du cheikh des Oua-M'vita; Tchiogni, de celui des Oua-M'touapa; Kaouma, Kambe, Ribe, de celui des Oua-Kilifi; Rabaye, de celui des Oua-Djonvou ou des Melinde; tous les autres dependent des cheikhs oua-kilindini." M. Guillain, *Documents*, Vol II, 244. Guillain omits the Jibana, and suggests that the Malindi had special relations with the Rabai. The Rabai have no tradition of special relations with the Malindi, but perhaps such relations did exist for a period. Otherwise Guillain's description agrees with present traditions of the Mijikenda about their relations with the Swahili. Guillain uses the general term Kilindini to refer to the Three Tribes. By "all the others depend on the Kilindini shaykhs", he evidently means the Duruma and the various Digo groups, and their relations with the Changamwe, Tangana and Kilindini.

¹⁰³ Krapf's Journal, entry for 25th March 1845, CMS, CAS/016/37. In the same Journal entry, Krapf states that there are twelve "Muhamedan protectors" in Mombasa. At that time, Krapf may have thought that each of the leaders of the Nine Tribes and Three Tribes had some special relationship with the Mijikenda. When he wrote his book in the late 1850s, he referred, more correctly as regards the northern Mijikenda, to only four such "protectors". See footnote 104.

Boteler also observed that Mijikenda visitors to Mombasa were provided for: "Wannekahs, who visited Mombas on public business, were subsisted by the Shekh.." Boteler, *Narrative*, Vol II, 207.

¹⁰⁴ Krapf, *Travels*, 119-120. The "four sheikhs" referred to would have been the leaders of the four senior members of the Nine Tribes (the Mvita, Mtwapa, Jomvu, and Kilifi).

In using the name "Wanika" (Wanyika), Krapf was following Mombasa practice of the time. Some time in the 18th century, the Mombasans began to refer to the Mijikenda peoples (who up until then had been called Musungulos) as the Wanyika, that is, the people of the Nyika, though in fact only the Giriama lived in the Nyika proper, and the other Mijikenda were living in more fertile areas nearer the coast (see Chapter I, p.12, footnotes 2 and 3).

Relations between the Mijikenda and the towns, early 17th to early 19th century

Our knowledge of the southern Kenya coastal region in this period is based mainly on three written sources: Portuguese documents (for the years up to 1729), the *Mombasa Chronicle* (for the years up to 1824), and the *History of the Mazmi* (for the years 1698-1835).¹⁰⁵ In addition, traditions collected by Hollis give some information for the area of Vumba and Wasin, which is scarcely mentioned in the written sources.¹⁰⁶ Altogether a general picture emerges of trade, politics, and war during this period.

Before the early 18th century, with few exceptions, the Mijikenda are referred to by the group name Musungulos; consequently, it is only possible to generalize about them and their relations with the towns. It is unlikely that all Musungulos were Mijikenda,¹⁰⁷ but Mijikenda peoples clearly constituted a good part of the Musungulos population. Portuguese documents of the 17th century mention only two Musungulos peoples, the Rabai and the Chonyi, both identifiable as Mijikenda. The earliest documentary evidence for other Mijikenda is a 1728 Portuguese report listing fifteen "Reis Cafres" said to have been subject to Portuguese jurisdiction in Mombasa. Ten of the fifteen were in the Mombasa hinterland, and seven of the ten are identifiable as Mijikenda.¹⁰⁸

By the early 17th century, if not before, the Mijikenda most likely dominated the mainland north and south of Mombasa. At that time relations between the Mijikenda and the towns were unsettled: the Mijikenda regularly raided Mombasa island, at times against the Portuguese or against the Swahili, and on other occasions, it would seem, simply for gain.¹⁰⁹ One Swahili ruler is known to have taken refuge among the Mijikenda: in 1611 Hasan bin Ahmad, fearing a Portuguese move against him, went to "Arabaja" (Rabai), where nonetheless he was killed for a Portuguese payment of 2000 pieces of cloth.¹¹⁰

By the 1630s relations may have been more settled: the Mijikenda were being given payments of cloth as an inducement to refrain from raiding,¹¹¹ and they

¹⁰⁵ Shaykh Al-Amin bin Ali Al-Mazru'i, "The History of the Mazrui Dynasty of Mombasa" (English translation by James M. Ritchie), undated mimeo, Fort Jesus Library, Mombasa.

¹⁰⁶ Hollis, "History of Vumba," 278, 282-92.

¹⁰⁷ See pp.20-21.

¹⁰⁸ Livro das Moncoes #94-B, folha 618r.&v., anonymous, no date, enclosed in Viceroy of India to Crown, Goa, 10 January 1728 (folha 615r.), Historical Archive of Goa, Panaji, Goa, India. I am indebted to Dr. Edward Alpers for sending me a copy of this report, which he found in the Archives in Goa.

¹⁰⁹ Raids are recorded for the years 1610, 1611, 1612, 1614 and 1625. Strandes, 168-169; Gray, "Rezende's Description", 10, footnote 22.

¹¹⁰ Strandes, 170.

¹¹¹ Rezende wrote: "...in the countries in the interior, such as that of the Mozungulos, fifty score of linen cloth are paid." Gray, "Rezende's Description," 10.

were supplying tobacco, ivory, and grain to the island. But life in Mombasa was still insecure. In spite of the construction of three Portuguese forts "to prevent the Mozungullos from crossing from the mainland to the island," raids continued:

The Mozungullos Caffres on some dark nights...pass between the forts. They do not come in large numbers, but they inflict great loss.¹¹²

The people who live in the interior on the mainland in the vicinity of Mombasa are Caffres called Mozungullos, who have neither law nor king nor any other interest in life except theft, robbery and murder. So far as can be seen, they do not exceed three or four thousand in number. They are remarkably timid and fight with poisoned arrows... There always exists in Mombasa a continual fear of the Mozungullos crossing to the island. They are rarely seen and cause much mischief. These Mozungullos Caffres were regarded as the vassals of the King of Mombasa, Dom Jeronimo. But their submission was mainly obtained by giving them cloths. They were in reality quite different from vassals.^{U³}

From Alley's account, we know that raids took place later in the 17th century:

...a small fort called the Macoopan which guards the inormost part of the Island from the incurtions of the Musungoolos, the inhabitants of the mainland contenant who now and then (none the less) are so bold to venture over and sack the towne, while the Portuguese are forced for their safety into the Fort as happened about 6 months hence.¹¹⁴

Trade was sporadic, and supplies of grain uncertain. In the middle of the 17th century, Portuguese settlers on Zanzibar and Pemba were sending maize to the Portuguese garrison at Mombasa, which had difficulty obtaining supplies from the mainland.¹¹⁵

There was open rivalry between the Swahili and the Portuguese, and the Mijikenda were enmeshed in the conflict between the two. During the Rising of 1631, and again in 1632 when the Portuguese tried to recapture Mombasa, the Mijikenda supported the Swahili.¹¹⁶ Later that year Pedro Rodrigues Botelho, the Portuguese Captain of Mombasa, claimed that he had: "...won over the Musungulos ...by sending them presents of cotton goods."¹¹⁷

During the siege of Fort Jesus (1696-98) by the Omani Arabs, the Mijikenda for the most part helped the Portuguese, though some are said to have taken the Arab side.¹¹⁸ When the Portuguese retook the Fort in 1728, the Omanis offered, as part of the armistice terms, to dismiss the 1500 Mijikenda who were fighting for

¹¹² Ibid., 9.

¹¹³ Ibid., 11-12.

¹¹⁴ William Alley, "Account of Mombasa in 1667-68" (extracts from the Original Manuscript Log-Book of the Mombaz Frigott, of which Alley was in command), Rhodes House, Manuscript Collection, MSSAfr.s.6.

¹¹⁵ Marvin P. Miracle, *Maize in Tropical Africa* (London 1966), 96, and A.C.A. Wright, "Maize Names as Indicators of Economic Contacts," *Uganda Journal* (March 1949): 64.

¹¹⁶ G.S.P. Freeman-Grenville, *The Mombasa Rising against the Portuguese, 1631* (Oxford 1981), xxvi-xxvii, 13-15; Gray, "Rezende's Description," 11, footnote 33a.

¹¹⁷ Strandes, 182.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 217, 229, 235.

them.¹¹⁹ The following year the Mijikenda united with the Swahili against the Portuguese, because among other reasons, according to one chronicle, the Portuguese had not given the Mijikenda as many presents of cloth as had been promised.¹²⁰ What appear to have been changing or divided Mijikenda loyalties may have been the alliance of some Mijikenda with the Portuguese, and of some with the Swahili or the Omanis; other Mijikenda perhaps were not averse to playing the opposing sides off against each other.

Portuguese accounts of these years make no mention of Islam, apart from noting that the inhabitants of the towns were Muslim; and there is no evidence to suggest that Islam had an influence on rural pagan peoples. Towns were then so few and so isolated that their effect as centres of Muslim culture was negligible; and the most important town, Mombasa, was occupied by the Christian Portuguese for most of the 17th century. At the same time, the rise of the Mijikenda, coupled with the decline of Muslim authority, changed the relations of Mombasa with the hinterland: the strong presence of Christianity and paganism clearly weakened the influence of Islam.¹²¹

After the Portuguese withdrawal from Mombasa in 1729, Swahili and Mijikenda leaders travelled together to Oman:

Then the people of Mumbasat [Mombasa] seized the keys of the fort, and every tribe placed a man of their own in it, that nothing of what was in it should be lost. Then they went to Uman to the Imam..And of the people of Mifta [Mvita, that is, Mombasa], there went one man of each tribe: and of Vanikat, one man from each city..And the cities of Vanikat are Ribah [Ribe], Shuni (Chonyi), Kambah [Kambe], Gauma [Kauma], Jibanah [Jibana], Rabayi [Rabai], Jiryamah [Giriama], Darumah-Mutavi [Duruma-Mtaye], Shimbah [Shimba], Lughuh [Longo], Diju [Digo]. These people went to Uman to the Imam Saif-ibn Sultan, and told him their situation with regard to the Portuguese, and the wars that had been between them. So the Imam..sent Muhammad ibn Said of Maamar as Governor of Mumbasat; and he granted to the rople of Mumbasat all that was in the fort, except the gunpowder, the lead (or tin), and the copper.U

This episode is the first major instance of Mijikenda-Swahili cooperation attested to by documentary evidence. We can only speculate about the reasons why the Swahili of Mombasa took the Mijikenda leaders (who were almost certainly pagan at the time) with them to Oman: possibly as a reward to those who had been loyal during the years of struggle against the Portuguese, and to ensure future support. The Swahili may also have felt the need to convince the Imam of Oman that they had the backing of the peoples of the hinterland; it is unlikely the Imam

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 247.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 98 (footnote referring to *Noticias da India*), 253.

¹²¹ The work of the Augustinian Mission (established in 1597) may have deterred the spread of Islam among pagan Africans in the town of Mombasa. According to Mission records, in 1600 the Christian population of Mombasa included "an African chief"; their 1626 report for Mombasa states that there were 668 baptisms that year. Freeman-Grenville, *The Mombasa Rising*, xxxii.

¹²² *The Mombasa Chronicle*, in Owen, *Narrative*, 417-18; the visit to Oman is also mentioned by Shaykh Al-Amin, 15-16.

would have agreed to commit himself unless assured that the people of the countryside surrounding Mombasa were peaceably disposed. Whatever the reasons, the journey seems to have marked the beginning of even closer ties between the Swahili and the Mijikenda.

Some time in the 1730s Muhammad bin 'Uthman al-Mazrui was appointed Liwali (Governor) of Mombasa; the next hundred years of the history of Mombasa is the story of Mazrui rule.¹²³ Much of the *History of the Mazrui* deals with the intrigues of Mombasa politics and Mazrui efforts to maintain peace between the two Swahili confederations. The Swahili sometimes took refuge with their Mijikenda allies; during the Liwaliship of Mas'ud bin Nasur (1754-1779) some Kilifi fled from Mombasa to Ribe, and "...since there was friendship and agreement between the people of Ribe and the people of Kilifi, they refused to deliver them up [to Ma'sud bin Nasur]."¹²⁴

Occasionally, during their own internal feuds, Mazrui turned to the Mijikenda, the classic example being that of Ali bin Uthman who took refuge among the Duruma and later, as Liwali of Mombasa, rewarded the "people of Vanikat" for granting him aid and asylum in their country.¹²⁵ And on occasion the Mazrui asked the Mijikenda for military help, as happened, for example, when they attacked Zanzibar in 1753.¹²⁶

By the end of the 18th century strife between the Mijikenda and the people of Mombasa had declined. The town was no longer an alien bastion threatened by hostile pagans of the rural hinterland:¹²⁷ hostility had given way to cooperation. But the *History of the Mazrui*, a political and military history, does not allow us to assess what this cooperation meant to the Mijikenda, for it mentions only one individual Mijikenda by name,¹²⁸ and gives no details of personal relations between the Mijikenda and the Muslims of Mombasa; and from it we learn nothing about the culture or religion of the Mijikenda, or about the influence of Islam on the Mijikenda during this period.

¹²³ The emigration of the Mazrui to the Kenya coast began after the Omani capture of Mombasa in 1698, when Omani ruler Sayf bin Sultan appointed Nasur bin Abdallah ai-Mazrui the first Liwali (Governor) of Mombasa. In the early 1740s Muhammad bin 'Uthman ai-Mazrui declared himself independent from Oman, after which the Mazrui continued to rule Mombasa until it was conquered by Sayyid Said bin Sultan in 1837. Shaykh AI-Amin, 6,18,22.

The accepted English transliteration of the Arabic is Mazru'i, and of the Arabic plural, Mazari' (sometimes Mazari'a). For convenience, the conventional English spelling of the name, Mazrui, is used for both the singular and the plural.

¹²⁴ Shaykh AI-Amin, 27. In 1887, Taylor recorded details of the same incident. SOAS, Taylor Papers, MS 4n51, 17.

¹²⁵ Shaykh AI-Amin, 20; the Mombasa Chronicle, in Owen, *Narrative*, 420-421. Friendship with the Duruma, and this incident in particular, are still remembered in Mazrui traditions. Muhammad Abdallah Mazrui, Takaungu, 18/9/87.

¹²⁶ Shaykh AI-Amin, 23.

¹²⁷ The contrast between the hinterland Mijikenda and town Muslims was less pointed than the words 'rural' and 'urban' imply: the Swahili of the 18th and 19th centuries depended on agriculture, and fit Weber's description of 'the semi-peasant urbanite' who had a parcel of land that fed him; Swahili settlements of that time would be better described as 'semi-rural' towns. Cf. Max Weber, *The City*, (New York 1966), 70-71.

¹²⁸ The Mijikenda mentioned by name is the Digo leader Kubo Mwakikonga. Shaykh AI-Amin, 41-43.

The Evidence from Emery's Journal

We might never have known in what ways or how closely the Mijikenda and the people of Mombasa were cooperating, had it not been for Acting Lieutenant James Emery of the British Navy, who arrived in Mombasa at the end of August 1824 and resided there for the next twenty-three months.¹²⁹

Emery's Journal gives a first-hand account of life in Mombasa during those months:¹³⁰ the Mijikenda would capture runaway slaves and be paid to return them; when disputes arose among the Mijikenda, the Swahili went to the mainland to mediate; the Mazrui Liwali consulted with Mijikenda chiefs, and Mijikenda elders were called to Mombasa to be informed that the Liwali no longer had authority, since the town had been handed over to the British; the Mijikenda would be given cloth as presents, or be paid their annual payment; and the Mijikenda regularly brought their produce into town to trade.¹³¹ Relations between the Swahili and the Mijikenda involved a whole range of ordinary and extraordinary contacts, and were characterized by respectful interdependence. Emery records only one instance, clearly exceptional, of personal violence between them.¹³² In a general assessment of these relations, Emery speaks of the Swahili as being united with the Mijikenda "in closest alliance."¹³³

By the 19th century the total Mijikenda population was considerably larger than the population of Mombasa town. Emery estimated the population of Mombasa at between 5,000 and 6,000, but gave no estimate of the total Mijikenda population.¹³⁴ Twenty years later (in 1844) Krapf's estimates were 8,000 to 10,000

¹²⁹ For nearly two years, Emery was the head of what he called the British Establishment of Mombasa. The circumstances surrounding the Establishment are summarized in Freeman-Grenville, "The Coast, 1498-1840," 159-160. The reasons for withdrawing the Establishment are explained in the letter of J.B.Emery, St.Heliers, Jersey, 19th May 1835, to W.D.Cooley, Esq., RGS, Emery MS File.

¹³⁰ "A Journal of the British Establishment of Mombasa 1824-26" by Lt. J.B. Emery is in the Admiralty Records of the Public Record Office, 52/3940; extracts from the Journal are published in Sir John Gray, *The British in Mombasa 1824-1826* (London 1957).

Emery's Journal, the first extensive eyewitness account of Mombasa since the 17th century, is an invaluable primary source. Boteler (who visited Mombasa three times, in December 1823, October-December 1824 and January-February 1825) and Owen (who spent six days in Mombasa in February 1824) both left a record of their visits to Mombasa, but Emery's Journal gives details of everyday life not found in the other accounts. See Owen, *Narrative*, Vol I, 367-369, 403-412; and Boteler, *Narrative*, Vol II, 2-22, 174-214, 235-6. The next contemporary witness of Mombasa (and the southern Kenya coast) was Krapf, who arrived in 1844 (See Chapter II, p.46). Like the Mombasans of the early 19th century, Emery refers to the Mijikenda as the "Whanekas" [Wanyika].

¹³¹ Emery's Journal, entries for 3 November 1824, 25 February 1825, 12 July 1825, 31 July 1825, 6 September 1825, 10 October 1825, and 21 February 1826.

¹³² "The old man who called people to prayers was killed last evening on his return home from his *shamba* on the main[land] by a Whaneka...• Emery's Journal, entry for 22 July 1825.

¹³³ Lieutenant Emery, R.N., "Short Account of Mombas and the Neighbouring Coast of Africa," *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, III (1833): 280-283.

¹³⁴ Letter of J.B. Emery to W.D.Cooley, 19 May 1835, RGS, Emery MS File. On 2nd December 1833, W.D. Cooley (of the Royal Geographical Society) wrote to Emery asking for details about the East African coast; the letters of reply written by Emery give valuable supplementary information not found in his Journal.

for the town of Mombasa and 50,000 for the Mijikenda.¹³⁵

In military terms the greater size of the rural population may have been offset by town possession of firearms, but the town was by no means secure in case of attack. During the only dispute between the Swahili and the Mijikenda which Emery recorded, he told the Swahili how unwise it would be to provoke fighting with the Mijikenda. He observed that no fighting took place because "both parties were afraid."

A month later Emery reminded the Swahili to keep friends with the Mijikenda since they "are the whole support of the island."¹³⁶ He was well aware that Mombasa depended for its sustenance on trade with the Mijikenda. Innumerable entries in his Journal refer to the Mijikenda bringing goods into town: "a great many Whanekas came into town with fruit and vegetables," "the Whanekas are daily coming into town with articles of trade," "inhabitants [of Mombasa] occupied collecting ivory and gum [copal] from the Whaneka who are daily coming in and out of the town."¹³⁷ The Mijikenda supplied Mombasa with their own produce (ivory, gum copal, grain, cassava, fruit, and vegetables) and with goods (ivory, rhinoceros horn and skins) which they obtained from the Kamba, and to a lesser extent from the Galla, in the interior.

At this time the Mijikenda still controlled most of the trade between the interior and the coast: direct contacts between Muslim traders and peoples in the interior were infrequent.¹³⁸ In this respect the situation in Kenya was different from that of the Tanzania coast south of Tanga, where Muslim traders had penetrated inland and established trading relations with peoples of the interior by the end of the 18th or early in the 19th century.¹³⁹

The Swahili and Mazrui obtained goods from the Mijikenda in three ways: 1) the Mijikenda brought the goods into the town of Mombasa; 2) the Swahili and Mazrui went to the mainland villages to look for the goods; 3) the Swahili and Mazrui met the Mijikenda at a market town such as Jomvu. We cannot be absolutely certain which of these three ways produced the largest volume of trade, but Emery's account indicates that the carrying of goods into Mombasa by the

¹³⁵ Krapf, *Travels*, 118, 159.

¹³⁶ Emery's Journal, entries for 11 July 1825, 12 July 1825, 13 July 1825, and 16 August 1825.

¹³⁷ Emery's Journal, entries for 3 November 1824, 21 February 1825, and 10 December 1825. Emery only refers to the "Whanekas" in general, so it is not possible to know which of the Mijikenda peoples had more regular trade with Mombasa or what were the specific articles each was trading in at that time.

¹³⁸ Emery wrote: "Many of the Whaneekas are acquainted with the Merremengow [Kamba] language; therefore through them...merchants trade with that inland tribe." Letter of J.B. Emery, St. Helier's, Jersey, 20 December 1833, to W.D. Cooley, RGS, Emery MS File. See J.Lamphear, "The Kamba and the Northern Mrima Coast," in R. Gray and D. Birmingham (eds), *Pre-Colonial African Trade* (London 1970), 75-101; see 83,86-87.

¹³⁹ Abdul Sheriff, *Slaves, Spices & Ivory in Zanzibar* (London 1987), 159-162; EA. Alpers, *Ivory and Slaves in East Central Africa* (London 1975), 161.

Mijikenda was the more regular way of supply.¹⁴⁰ The other two ways are mentioned by Emery as exceptions.

The Swahili and Mazrui seem to have ventured into Mijikenda country infrequently, when called to mediate or when not enough goods were being brought to town. Only once did Emery mention the townspeople going to look for ivory, and this was at a time of the year (September) when dhows were about to sail north and did not have enough cargo.¹⁴¹ Since it seems unlikely that Emery would have failed to report the existence of important mainland markets, we can assume that, with the exception of Jomvu, no regular markets which might attract Muslim traders existed on the mainland at this time. The market at the Swahili village of Jomvu has sometimes been described as an "annual market," but we cannot be sure of its frequency or the extent of trade carried on there.¹⁴² The townspeople of Mombasa would have known of the existence of mainland Mijikenda markets, but since those markets traded in perishables, which could be obtained more cheaply in Mombasa, there was no reason to frequent them.

Emery noted that Mombasa was "wholly Mohammedan".¹⁴³ There were eight mosques in the town, six of which had been built by the Swahili and two by the Arab community, and a ninth mosque in the nearby Swahili village of Kilindini, which was "in a ruinous state and thinly inhabited".¹⁴⁴ Emery went north to Mtwapa, a "village of 18 huts"; and he also visited the village of Jomvu but gave no details about it.¹⁴⁵

Mombasa attracted a constant flow of Mijikenda visitors. Some may have become urbanized and remained in town, but the number who did so seems to have been small, with the exception of Mijikenda women married to Swahili. Emery noted that there was "constant intermarriage" between the Swahili and the Mijikenda.¹⁴⁶ Observing the difference in complexion between old and young

¹⁴⁰ Though much reduced by motor transport, the carrying trade continues. Every day early in the morning one finds Mijikenda women taking rural produce and wares to the markets of such towns as Mombasa, Mtwapa and Kilifi. There is no reason to assume that things were any different in Emery's time, or indeed during times of peace in preceding centuries.

¹⁴¹ Emery wrote: "...a great part of the inhabitants are in the Whaneka country collecting ivory." Emery's Journal, entry for 6 September 1825.

¹⁴² Entry to the market at Jomvu was restricted by order of the Liwali. "No merchant was allowed to enter the village of Jovu [sic] to purchase ivory until the Sultan of Mombasa had secured the quantity he wished. Access was then given to others." J.B. Emery to W.D. Cooley, 18 December 1835. RGS, Emery MS file.

¹⁴³ Letter of J.B. Emery to W.D. Cooley, 20 December 1833, RGS, Emery MS File.

¹⁴⁴ Letter of J.B. Emery, 5 February 1834, to W.D. Cooley, RGS, Emery MS File. For further details about the mosques of Mombasa and Kilindini, see F.J. Berg and B.S. Walter, "Mosques, Population and Urban Development in Mombasa," in B.A. Ogot (ed), *Hadith 1* (Nairobi 1968), 46-100; and J. Kirkman, *The lumaa of the Three Tribes at Mombasa* (Malindi 1957).

¹⁴⁵ Emery's Journal, entries for 14-15 October 1824 and 25 October 1825.

¹⁴⁶ Letter of J.B. Emery, St. Heliers, Jersey, 20 December 1833, to W.D. Cooley, RGS, Emery MS File. The term 'intermarriage' as used by Emery is imprecise, because it implies an equality of exchange: Swahili women were only infrequently given in marriage to Mijikenda men, and then only to Mijikenda Muslims. What appears as racial discrimination was rooted in cultural and religious differences: a Swahili Muslim family would hardly consider allowing their daughter to be married to a pagan.

Swahili, he concluded that intermarriage had become more frequent in the last generation or so.¹⁴⁷ Though his conclusion is based on tenuous evidence, he may have been correct. According to events related in the *History of the Mazrui*, the Swahili and the Mijikenda drew steadily closer to each other during the fifty or sixty years before Emery's arrival; increased intermarriage would naturally have played a part in this growing rapport.¹⁴⁸

Emery makes no mention of converts to Islam, but some Mijikenda were undoubtedly already Muslim by the end of the 18th century.¹⁴⁹ Mijikenda women married to Swahili would have been converted, and in addition there must have been Mijikenda men who had become urbanized, and adopted Islam, while abandoning their previous way of life. Some of the Swahili whom Emery regarded as "nearly black" may have been immigrant Mijikenda converts.

Within Mijikenda society, however, there were almost no converts to Islam, and there is no evidence that Muslims propagated Islam in any way.¹⁵⁰ The nature of Mijikenda-Muslim relations gave little scope for the penetration of Islam into the rural hinterland, where the Mijikenda continued to follow their own religious beliefs and practices.

Emery would have agreed with the assessment made by Krapf twenty years later: "The secular interests of the Wonikas [Wanyika] are intimately connected with those of the people of Mombas. Both live in peace with each other, except that the latter look on the Wonikas as infidels."¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁷ "Their [the Swahilis] complexion formerly was similar to that of the Arabs, which can plainly be inferred by the sallow appearance of many of the old men; but the present generation are nearly black, owing to intermarriage with the inland tribes called Whaneekas." Emery, "Short Account of Mombas," 280.

¹⁴⁸ Shaykh Al-Amin, 25-46.

¹⁴⁹ And many of the slaves of the Swahili would have been or become Muslim too.

¹⁵⁰ In 1845 among the Giriama, Krapf found one such convert "who many years ago had turned Mohamedan and who lives since among his clansmen, not with a view to bringing them over to the Mohamedan persuasion for the latter sits very loosely upon him." Krapf's Journal, entry for 19 August 1845. CMS, CAS/MI/676.

¹⁵¹ Rev. J. L. Krapf to W. K. Fitcher, 15 September 1844. CMS, CAS/MI/491.

Chapter II. Muslim Influence in the Rural Hinterland, 1826-1865

In the 18th century, Muslim influence on the southern Kenya coast hardly extended inland. The Mijikenda brought trade goods to the island towns, and Muslims had little reason to settle on the mainland, where life was hazardous. Early in the 19th century, the pattern of trade began to change. The southern Kenya coast was gradually incorporated into the East African commercial empire of the Busaidi Arabs at Zanzibar. At the same time the East African economy was expanding under more intense international pressures,¹ and external economic forces created an unprecedented demand for ivory, gum copal, and grain² on the Kenya coast. The quantity of these goods reaching the towns was insufficient to meet regional and international demand. As a result, Muslims expanded trade and increased agricultural production, in a virtual economic invasion of the mainland.

The entry of the United States and the countries of western Europe into the East African ivory market in the 1820s led to such an increase in demand that the supply was unable to respond. The price of ivory continued to rise spectacularly during the remainder of the century.³ As the level of potential profit made it worthwhile to incur extra risk and cost, Muslim traders ventured inland in search of ivory. By the 1840s caravans were travelling regularly into the interior.

Demand for gum copal (a kind of resin used to make varnish) also increased. By the 1830s, American ships were loading copal at Zanzibar; the British were also buying copal at that time.⁴ To meet this demand, Muslims gathered copal in the hinterland forests north of Mombasa.⁵

In the early part of the 19th century, much of Mombasa's grain came from the island of Pemba.⁶ Some of the grain was used in Mombasa, and the rest was trans-shipped across the Indian Ocean or to the south. Emery once noted the departure of three dhows with grain for Kutch and Bombay; on another occasion he

¹ The expansion of the East African economy in the 19th century is discussed in Sheriff, *Slaves, Spices & Ivory*, 87-110, and in Nicholls, *The Swahili Coast*, 324-375.

² And for slaves, but the Kenya coast was importing (from Zanzibar and Kilwa) not exporting slaves during this period. Cf. Abdul Sheriff, *Slaves, Spices & Ivory in Zanzibar* (London 1987): 70-71

³ Norman Bennett, *Studies in East African History* (Boston 1963): 89, and "Americans in Zanzibar, 1825-1845," *TNR*, 56 (1961): 93-108; Nicholls, 326-42.

⁴ Log of the Barque *Eliza*, ref. M656, Log 1841/2E (and the Logs of many other American ships). Essex Institute Collection, in the James Duncan Phillips Library, Peabody Museum, Salem, Massachusetts. Sheriff, %, 129. Details of the volume of copal exported from Zanzibar for the years 1845/6 and 1848/9 are in Nicholls, 359-60.

⁵ Krapf described gum copal as "a very valuable article of trade," and noted that "the Mohamedans of Mombas have monopolised it in the Wonica country." Krapf to the Lay Secretary, 13 August 1844, CMS, CAS/016/26; Krapf to Richard P. Waters, Consul of the United States, Zanzibar, 2 September 1844, Fort Jesus Archives, ref. 920KRA; Krapf to the Lay Secretary, 15 September 1844, CMS, CA5/M1/492.

⁶ Emery noted the frequent arrival of dhows bringing grain from Pemba. Emery's Journal, entries for 4 and 27 October 1824, 5, 17 and 25 November 1824, 7 and 12 December 1824, and numerous other entries.

mentioned how "most vessels bound southward are in want of that item [grain]."⁷ As clove plantations developed on Zanzibar and Pemba in the 1830s and 1840s, the export of grain from Pemba to Mombasa declined, and eventually stopped; and Pemba as well as Zanzibar began to import grain because the large numbers of slaves working on the clove plantations produced no food but had to be fed.⁸ Muslims responded to the increased demand for grain by extending plantation agriculture on the mainland,⁹ and by purchasing more grain from Mijikenda farmers.

Emigration from Wasin and Mombasa added to the Muslim presence on the mainland. At the beginning of the 19th century, Vumba from Wasin settled at Vanga. In 1837, after the capture of Mombasa by the Busaidi Arabs,¹⁰ the Mazrui left and founded towns at Takaungu and Gasi. The new towns took time to coalesce, but as the century progressed they brought appreciable Muslim influences to the Mijikenda living near by. Foreign Muslim immigrants, including Busaidi officials, Baluchi and Hadhrami mercenaries, and Khoja and Bohora traders, also settled in the coastal towns of southern Kenya (Takaungu, Mombasa, Gasi, Wasin and Vanga), thereby contributing to the growing Muslim presence. Some of the new immigrants developed close ties with individual Mijikenda.

Thus Muslim influence penetrated into rural areas in several ways: the development of plantation agriculture, greater initiative on the part of Muslim traders, and the emigration of Muslims from island towns to found mainland settlements. Similar but less energetic moves had occurred in the past: townspeople had cultivated small mainland farms, and had occasionally gone into the hinterland in search of goods (particularly ivory). Now, however, the strength and permanency of urban initiative changed urban-rural relations. Expanding slowly at first, Muslim influence gathered momentum and, by the third quarter of the century, assumed vigorous proportions.

⁷ Emery's Journal, entries for 9 October 1824 and 22 September 1825.

⁸ Sheriff, 54-55. Also see E.B. Martin and T.C.I. Ryan, "A Quantitative Assessment of the Arab Slave Trade of East Africa, 1770-1896," *Kenya Historical Review*, V, 1, (1977): 71-91. Ref. p.82, Table 6. The authors argue (with an estimated 15% margin of error) that the resident slave population of Zanzibar and Pemba more than tripled, from 59,000 at the beginning of 1830 to 183,000 in 1876. Even allowing for a larger margin of error than 15%, these statistics give a general idea of the increase in slaves taking place.

For a recent quantification of the slave trade, see Ralph A. Austen, "The Nineteenth Century Islamic Slave Trade from East Africa (Swahili and Red Sea Coasts): an Intermediate Census," paper presented at the Workshop on Long-Distance Trade in Slaves across the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea in the 19th Century, SOAS, London, December 1987. Austen, however, does not estimate the resident slave population of Zanzibar and Pemba.

⁹ The word plantation is used here, and throughout this study, for any piece of land that is farmed by slaves. Plantations near Mombasa tended to be small, and were often worked by only a few slaves. The Swahili would sometimes work in the fields side-by-side with their slaves. For a study of plantation agriculture in the Mombasa area, see Frederick Cooper, *Plantation Slavery on the East Coast of Africa* (New Haven 1977): 98-103.

¹⁰ Thus ended almost a century of independent Mazrui rule over Mombasa. See Chapter I, p.39, footnote 123. The Busaidi Sultans of Zanzibar then ruled Mombasa until it became a part of the East Africa Protectorate declared by the British in 1895.

The arrival of the first Christian missionaries on the Kenya coast was a sign of rising international interest in the region, and a portent of future Christian-Muslim confrontation. Johann Ludwig Krapf, a minister of the Church Missionary Society, reached Mombasa in 1844; two years later, he established a mission station at Rabai. From 1844 until 1853 (when he returned to Europe), Krapf had continual dealings with Muslims. Concerned about the influence of Islam among the Mijikenda, he carefully observed the activities of Muslims whenever he came across them. A missionary bias is evident in his letters and Journals; nonetheless they give us valuable information about the Muslim presence in the Mombasa hinterland at that time.¹¹

The Vumba expansion

Early in the 19th century, the Vumba of Wasin established farms on the Shimoni peninsula (opposite Wasin island) and around Vanga. Land was plentiful on the peninsula, and the Segeju are said to have allowed the Vumba to come into the area.¹² Most Vumba continued to reside on Wasin island and farmed on the mainland seasonally; some settled in Segeju villages, took Segeju wives, and became permanent mainland residents. Eventually the whole Shimoni area came to be regarded as joint Vumba-Segeju land.¹³

The Vumba who settled among the Segeju introduced Islam in a direct way. The children of Vumba-Segeju marriages were brought up as Muslims, and other Segeju were converted to Islam. In 1854, Erhardt reported that the Segeju "have become mostly Mahomedans."¹⁴ The islamizing role of the Vumba is corroborated by Segeju traditions, which state that the coastal Segeju (as distinguished from the Segeju settled inland at Bwiti and Daluni in Tanzania) were converted to Islam by the Vumba.¹⁵ The first Segeju mosques, in such villages as Kibiga Kirau (Kidimu)

¹¹ Though less informative, the correspondence and Journals of two other C.M.S. missionaries, John Rebmann (who arrived in Mombasa in 1846) and John James Erhardt (who arrived in 1849), also contain information about Muslims and Islam among the Mijikenda. In 1857 the Rabai Mission was abandoned (because of Maasai raids) for some two years. When Rebmann returned to Rabai in 1859, he (and other missionaries who joined him later) became preoccupied with administering the Mission, with the question of runaway slaves, and various material problems. From then on, correspondence of the Rabai mission deals mainly with these matters, and only occasionally gives useful information about Islam among the Mijikenda.

In 1862, Thomas Wakefield (soon joined by Charles New) started a Methodist mission station at Ribe. The early writings of Wakefield and New also give valuable information about the Mijikenda and the presence of Muslims in the hinterland during this period.

¹² The Segeju, who like the Digo trace their origin back to Shungwaya, had lived in the Shimoni peninsula area since the early 16th century (Map 4). See Chapter I, p.20, footnote 34.

¹³ McKay, 154-157.

¹⁴ RevJohn James Erhardt to Rev.H. Venn, 27 October 1854, CMS, CAS/09/14.

¹⁵ E.C.Baker, "Wanyika and Wadigo notebook", interview with Sondo wa Vurizi and Rashid bin Muhammad at Manza, 29 September 1948, and interview with the Segeju elders at Moa, 28 September 1948, Rhodes House, MSSAfr.r.84, p51, 57.

and Hormuz (Ormuz), were built in the third quarter of the 19th century.¹⁶ Later in the 19th century, Segeju teachers contributed to the spread of Islam among the Mijikenda.

The Vumba of Wasin were also in contact with the Digo of Jombo and Chwaka. The Vumba Diwan, Sayyid Ahmed bin Alawi, was described as the "spiritual head" of the Digo. He was said to have reconciled the Digo of Jombo and the Mazrui by convincing the Digo leader Kubo Mwakikonga to pay blood money to the Mazrui in compensation for the murder of the Liwali of Mtangata^P

About 1825, Vumba from Wasin settled at Vanga, where they developed rice cultivation using water from the Umba river for irrigation.¹⁸ By 1840, if not earlier, Vanga was being drawn into the Zanzibar commercial network. By 1860, large quantities of grain were being exported from Vanga (mainly to Pemba and Zanzibar), and the town was emerging, in place of Wasin,¹⁹ as the principal Muslim town of the southern Kenya coast. Thornton gives us an early description of Vanga:

The town looked pretty well. Some of the streets were wide, and the houses large and high, with makuti [palm-thatch] roofs and wooden walls. There were perhaps from 150 to 200 good houses. Inhabitants= half cast Arabs, Swahilis and slaves. The houses on the whole seemed better than those at Mombasa. The only stone building is an old mosque, a ruin, but the inhabitants were collecting stone and lime to build a new mosque. They were also going to build a wall around the town to defend it from the Massai [Maasai]. We only saw one Banian, Laddak's son, and no Hindoos. The chief of the town is the great uganga man who makes the flags for the caravans.²⁰

The Vumba at Vanga grew grain for export, and also frequented nearby Digo markets (Digo. *chete*, pl. *ryete*) in search of grain and ivory.²¹ In 1861, on the outskirts of Vanga, Thornton came across what he described as "a market place of the Wadigos for the Wanga people."²² By that time the Digo were important suppliers of grain. Erhardt described them as "the cultivators of the land...they are the rich..Almost all the semsem [sesame] and guinea corn imported at Zanzibar comes

¹⁶ Muhammad Mwinyi Makame, Kidimu, 16/1/85.

¹⁷ Shaykh Al-Amin, 41-43. The Liwali (Governor) of Mtangata was Said bin Abdallah ai-Buhri. It is not possible to date this incident precisely: accordingly to the History of the Mazrui, it took place during the Liwaliship of Abdallah bin Ahmad, that is, between 1814 and 1822; but according to Hollis, Sayyid Ahmad bin Alawi was not enthroned as the Vumba Diwan of Wasin until 1824. Hollis, "History of Vumba," 290-91. The incident may have occurred before Sayyid Ahmed became Diwan.

¹⁸ Vanga was first settled by Vumba from Wasin Island in the middle of the 18th century, as a seasonal agricultural village. Low-lying land near the mouth of the Umba river makes the area particularly suitable for irrigation. McKay, 154.

¹⁹ Describing Wasin island in 1857, Burton wrote: "No Banyans make this place their home. A young Cutch Bohrah [Bohora] manages the custom-house, and we found a small trader of the same caste purchasing cowries." (Richard F. Burton, "A Coasting Voyage from Mombas to the Pangany River," January 1857, RGS, Burton MS file.) At that time, the presence of Banyan (Indian Hindu) traders was a sign of commercial prosperity.

²⁰ Richard Thornton, Journal of a Journey to Kilimanjaro, entry for 6 October 1861, RGS, Thornton MS file. In addition to the Banyan mentioned in the quotation, Thornton met three Banyans who "arrived on foot from Mombasa, bound for Zanzibar." The chief mentioned by Thornton as "the great uganga man" was the Vumba ruler Diwan Pinda. In using the word 'uganga' Thornton refers to the supernatural powers for which Diwan Pinda was renowned. The Vumba themselves would have referred to Diwan Pinda as a *tabibu* or *mwalimu*, not a *mganga*. See Appendix IV.

²¹ McKay, 158-161, 173-175.

²² Richard Thornton, Journal of a Journey to Kilimanjaro, entry for 6 October 1861, RGS, Thornton MS file.

from them...If the Wadigo do not choose to bring their productions to the market, the Islams have nothing to eat."²³

But by the middle of the 19th century, Islam had made little impact among the southern Digo:

As to their (Digo) customs and rites they watch over them as jealously as any other Wanika and this is doubtless the reason why Mahomedanism has had less success among them than among the Wasegeju...²⁴

The growth of inland trade

Short-distance trade (in the hinterland) and long-distance trade (into the interior) brought Muslims into contact with the Mijikenda in different ways. Muslim traders in the hinterland settled near Mijikenda *kayas*.²⁵ Krapf and Rebmann left descriptions of two of these trading settlements: Magombani (below *kaya* Jibana) and Kigombani (northeast of *kaya* Kambe):

I insisted on being conducted to Djibana, at the foot of which Magombani has been erected...The tract of country where the hamlet Magombani has been built by some Mahomedan speculators of Mombas is egregiously well chosen, since it is but 4-5 miles from the bay, and as they are able on this spot to secure to themselves the advantageous monopoly of copal which the forest of Djibana produces; besides they cultivate much rice and maize, and make use of the fine timber, which the forest presents, for boards used by the Arabic [sic] boat-builders.²⁶

After walking two miles [from Kambe] we reached the Mohamedan settlement of Kigombani...the situation well chosen by the gain-seeking Swahilis, who carry on some trade here and do some work of carpenters and smiths for the Wanika, while they but little cultivate the soil.²⁷

Smaller Muslim settlements were established in the countryside near the *kayas*: there were "a few Mohamedan hamlets on the road" in between Jibana and Chonyi, and a "Mohamedan settlement on a small plateau" between Ribe and Rabai.²⁸ Trade seems to have taken place mainly in Muslim settlements, and for a while at least at *kaya* Chonyi, which was large enough to attract Muslim traders.²⁹

²³ Erhardt to Venn, 27 October 1854, CMS, CAS/09/14.

²⁴ Letter of Rev. John James Erhardt, Kisuludini, 27/10/1854 to Rev.H.Venn, Kornthal, CMS Archives, CAS/09/14.

²⁵ No Muslims lived in the *la:lyas*. In 1844, Krapf described Ribe, Kambe, Jibana and Chonyi as "exclusively inhabited by Wonica pagans." Krapf to Lay Secretary, 13 August 1844, CMS, CAS/016/026. The next month after visiting Ribe, he wrote: "There are no Mohamedans living in Ribe, nor are they found in any of the larger villages of this range of mountains." Krapf to Lay Secretary, 25 September 1844, CMS, CAS/016/28. By "larger villages" Krapf evidently meant the Mijikenda *la:lyas*.

²⁶ Krapf to the Lay Secretary, 25 September 1844, CMS, CAS/016/28.

²⁷ Rebmann's Journal, entry for 8 February 1848, CMS, CA5f024f52A.

²⁸ Krapf to the Lay Secretary, 25 September 1844, CMS, CAS/016/28, and Rebmann's Journal, entry for 12 February 1848, CMS, CA5f024/52A. These small settlements, and the settlements of Magombani and Kigombani, have long since disappeared, and it has not been possible to trace descendants of the inhabitants.

²⁹ Rebmann found Muslims trading at Chonyi in 1848: "Djogni was the only Wanika town in which we saw a small market, kept up by Mohamedans." He described Chonyi as a village of "about 1500 inhabitants in the midst of a forest." Rebmann's Journal, entry for 11 February 1848, CMS, CA5/024/52A. Krapf described *la:lyas* Chonyi as "by far the largest village I have seen in Wonica-land." Krapf to Lay Secretary, 25 September 1844, CMS, CAS/016/28.

And Muslims worked among the Mijikenda as itinerant healers and diviners; Krapf writes of Muslims "turned out of Mombasa for having committed great crimes, or [who] are in debts, who traverse as sorcerers the Wanika-land and offer their black arts to the deluded heathen for an enormous price."³⁰

Other Muslim traders moved farther inland in search of ivory, into an area called "Keriana" (after the Giriama there), some twelve miles west of Ribe and Rabai. When visiting the village of Mikomani, the "largest of Keriana," Krapf came across the "Mohamedan Sheikh of Keriana" who had erected "a cottage in which he resides on his trading tours ..all the Muhamedan passengers [passers-by] spend a night in that house." On the same visit, Krapf noted how trade fostered personal links between Muslims and Mijikenda: "The Mohamedan guide..will introduce you to that Wanika with whose interests those of his own are connected."³¹ In 1861, Thornton found a Muslim trader residing inland beyond Kwale "at a large village of Wakambas."³²

By the middle of the 19th century, the secular interests of Muslims and the Mijikenda were more united than ever. Krapf noted "the constant intercourse which exists between the island and mainland," and commented on how:

The Wanika and all other tribes of the Interior are entirely relying on the Mahomedan coasts {people of the coast} for obtaining their supply of clothes, beads, copper, salt, hatchets, melted iron, ornaments, whilst the Muhamedans receive their rice, maize, butter, cattle, copal, ivory, horns of the rhinoceros, slaves, etc. from the mainland and the interior.³³

Some traders began regular journeys deeper into the interior, where supplies of ivory were known to be abundant. Caravans were travelling inland from Vanga by 1820.³⁴ Caravans from Mombasa may have begun before 1830; in 1844 Krapf mentioned a trading expedition of fifteen years earlier:

Some 15 years ago an armed band of Mombas merchants near 1000 strong went into the interior ...(to) the country of Djagga [Chagga]. The inhabitants [of Chagga]..collected a large force, attacked and defeated them..only 150 survivors reached the seashore. Since then the intercourse between Mombasa and the interior is impaired but is now beginning again to be on the increase.³⁵

³⁰ Krapf's Journal, entry for 26 March 1845, CMS, CA5/M1/575.

³¹ Krapf's Journal, entry for 17 February 1845, CAS/016/168; Krapf to the Lay Secretary, 26 August 1845, CMS, CAS/016/44.

³² Thornton's Journal, entry for 30 June 1861. RGS, Thornton MS file. Von der Decken described the same Muslim trader as "Nasoro, a Swahili and caravan leader." C.C. Von der Decken, *Reisen in Ost-Afrika* (Leipzig 1869), 235.

³³ Krapf's Journal, entries for 3 and 5 January 1844, CMS, CAS/016/164; Krapf's Journal, entry for 30 January 1845, CMS, CAS/016/168.

³⁴ McKay, 174-76.

³⁵ Krapf's Journal, entry for 15 March 1844, CMS, CAS/016/165. In another reference to this incident, Krapf says that it took place "some ten years ago" because Mombasans were "not content with..ordinary and peaceable trade." Krapf to Lay Secretary, 22 January 1845, CMS, CAS/016/31. The *History of the Mazrui* describes the same incident more as a military than commercial expedition, in retaliation for Chagga raids on villages near Tanga; it is said to have taken place during the Liwaliship of Salim bin Ahmad (1825-35). Shaykh Al-Amin, 69-70.

From this account it can be inferred that Mombasans were trading in the interior by 1830 (and that they resumed this trade in the late 1830s or early 1840s); but there is no evidence of precisely when such trade began, or of the frequency or destination of early caravans. At first, caravans from Mombasa were small (the one mentioned by Krapf is clearly an exception), and caravan traffic supplemented the usual sources of ivory. By the 1860s, Swahili caravans dominated the trade, and ivory no longer made its way to markets at the coast.³⁶

Muslims caravan traders recruited Mijikenda as porters. In 1857 Burton and Speke observed Segeju and Digo porters: "...the Wadigo...with their southern neighbours, the Wasegeju, are porters of the inland traffic. Trading parties, sometimes a hundred in number each, slaves included, set out at the beginning of the rainy season, March or April, from Wanga [Vanga]."³⁷ Charles New noted that many young men "engage themselves as porters, upon the Kisuahili caravans, which go into the interior in search of ivory."³⁸ When New visited *kaya* Ribe in 1864, he found that many of the men were away, "having left to go as bearers to Kambani [Kamba country] and to the Masai."³⁹

Mijikenda caravan porters became part of a miniature Muslim society. The leader of a caravan was usually a renowned Muslim *mwaliimu* (diviner and healer)⁴⁰ who carried "a banner containing a protective charm for the protection of the caravan...he leads the whole caravan, he orders the time for resting and for starting."⁴¹ Referring to the leader of an 1861 expedition from Mombasa to Chagga, Thornton told how "the sorcerer comes in and sprinkles the tents, etc..."⁴² Mijikenda porters observed daily Muslim routine, perhaps even more closely than if they had been living in town. They heard Muslim prayers, witnessed Muslim rituals (ablutions, slaughtering of animals, etc.) and teaching (young Muslim boys accompanying caravans were given religious instruction), and sensed the efficacy of Muslim

³⁶ For a study of the development of the Swahili caravan trade, see Lamphear, "The Kamba and the Northern Mrima Coast," 92-101, and F.J. Berg, "Mombasa under the Busaidi Sultanate: the City and its Hinterlands in the Nineteenth Century," Ph.D. thesis (University of Wisconsin 1971): 225-35. In 1857 Burton remarked on the absence of ivory at a Digo market outside Tanga: "Formerly a large quantity of ivory found its way to the *golio* (market); now it is purchased in the interior by trading parties." Captains Richard F. Burton and J.H. Speke, "A Coasting Voyage from Mombasa to the Pangani River," *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, XXVIII (1858): 197.

³⁷ Burton and Speke, "A Coasting Voyage," 197.

³⁸ New, 115.

³⁹ Letter from Charles New, Ribe, 25/6/1864, *UMFCM*, Vol VII (November 1864): 750.

⁴⁰ See Appendix IV.

⁴¹ Rev. James Erhardt, "Reports respecting Central Africa, as given by Caravan leaders and traders from the Coast and by Native Representatives of various inland tribes, 1855," RGS, Erhardt MS file. It is unlikely that the *mwaliimu* was in charge of organising the material details of the caravan. By "leading", Erhardt may have meant that the *mwaliimu* walked at the head of the caravan to protect it, and indicated the propitious times and places for stopping.

⁴² Notebook of Richard Thornton, Rhodes House, MSS Afr.s.27, A102.

divination and charms guiding a caravan safely through countless dangers.⁴³

Some porters were converted to Islam or at least strongly influenced by Muslim culture; in 1847 Rebmann mentioned a Rabai caravan leader, "a poor heathen who had become half a Mohammedan."⁴⁴ In 1855 Erhardt recorded the conversion of two Nyamwezi who after working as porters for some time, became "disgusted with their countrymen's mode of living" and "preferred returning to the coast than staying among them." Though the Nyamwezi are not Mijikenda, this example is quoted since it is the earliest known case in which a caravan porter's motives for conversion are documented.⁴⁵

Expansion north of Mombasa

During the agricultural seasons of 1824-26, Emery noted how the "inhabitants" (as he called the townspeople of Mombasa) were "busy in their *shambas* [=agricultural plots] cultivating the land" or were "in the country to the north gathering the corn in." Various entries in his Journal mention "slaves cultivating the *shambas*."⁴⁶ The mainland immediately north of Mombasa was easily accessible; people would go to their farms in the early morning and return to the island in the evening, just as they do today.

Some Muslims were also farming north of Mtwapa creek, though that area was less accessible and not yet entirely safe; Emery once found the dhow of the Mazrui Liwali, Rashid bin Abdallah, at the port of Mtwapa, and noted that Rashid's brother, Said, had gone to "his estate a few miles off."⁴⁷ In order to safeguard crops, a fee was paid "on all grain grown to the northward, which fee goes to the Gallas to

⁴³ Many of these details about caravan life are taken from the life story of Ma'allim Ahmad Matano as told to me by his son Ma'allim Muhammad Ahmad Matano at Kuze on 15/10/87. As a young boy, in the 1880s, Ahmad Matano accompanied his maternal uncle, Mwinyijaka, on caravan trips upcountry as far as Uganda. Though the 1880s is slightly later than the period under discussion, many of the internal features of caravan life would have remained unchanged from earlier years. I am grateful to Muhammad Ahmad Matano for his patience in the face of my persistent requests to know about his father's life, and in this case grateful to Ahmad Matano too. At first Muhammad Ahmad Matano was understandably reticent to give personal details about his father to a stranger. Then one day I arrived at his house when he was resting. Just at the moment of my arrival, his father appeared to him in a dream and told him, "Get up! Get up! Get up!" The coincidence of my arrival and the dream convinced Muhammad that my desire to know about his father's life was reciprocated by his father's desire to be known. Thereafter we spend several hours together, and Ma'allim Muhammad was quite insistent that I write down everything he told me.

As a senior elder of the Kilindini Swahili, Ahmad Matano gave testimony in the Tangana Land Case of 1912. At that time he stated that he was "about 40 years old." "Testimony of Mohamed bin Matano Mkilindini", Tangana Land Case, Application Cause No.15 of 1912, Provincial Land Office Archives, Provincial Headquarters, Mombasa.

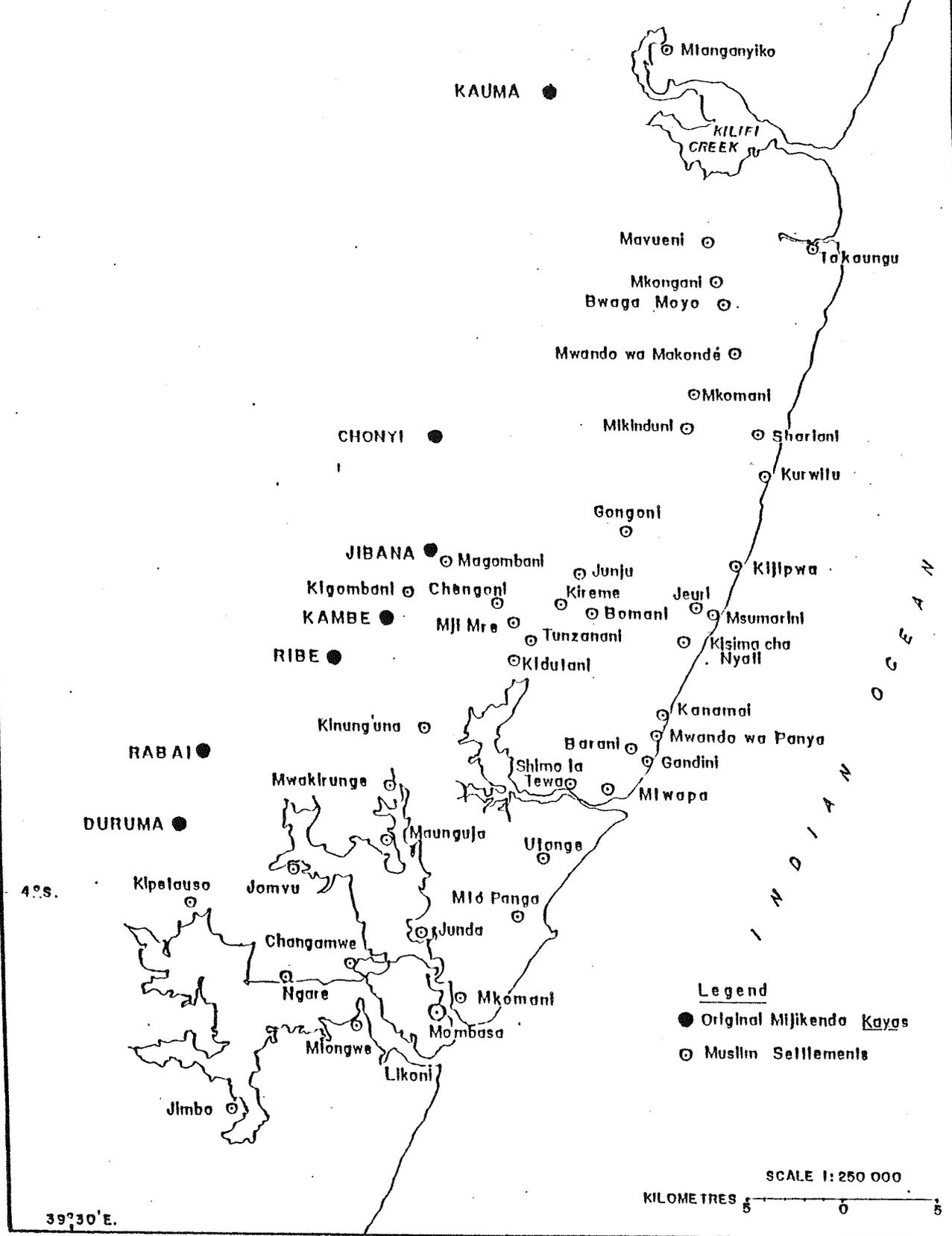
⁴⁴ Rebmann to the Secretaries, 27 October 1847, CMS, CAS/024/51.

⁴⁵ Erhardt, "Reports," RGS, Erhardt MS file.

⁴⁶ Emery's Journal, entries for 14 September 1824, 7 March 1825, 31 May 1825, 28 April 1826, 20 June 1826.

⁴⁷ Emery's Journal, entry for 14 October 1824.

MUSLIM EXPANSION AND SETTLEMENT NORTH OF MOMBASA 1825-1870



keep them from making war and from plundering.⁴⁸ But such payments did not guarantee security: on one occasion armed slaves were sent to Kurwitu to repel Galla "who were plundering *shambas* of the inhabitants of Mombasa."⁴⁹

Maize from farms on the northern mainland was transported to Mombasa by sea. Emery mentions the arrival of "canoes from the north with grain belonging to the inhabitants of Mombasa."⁵⁰ He distinguishes between canoes, used for local traffic, and dhows, used for long-distance transport. By "canoes" he must have meant the small dug-outs (Swa. *ngalawa*), which can be poled through shallow water, or wind-driven in open water by use of a small sail.

As the 19th century progressed, the Oromo were pacified and, under pressure from the Kamba, Masai and Somali, began to withdraw northwards; as a result, land north of Mtwapa creek became safe for settlement.⁵¹ In 1826 Emery had mentioned only two villages north of Mombasa, both on the shore: Mtwapa and Kurwitu. Twenty years later Krapf and Guillain (between them) mention sixteen other villages, many of them inland, and twelve of the sixteen north of Mtwapa creek: Kipetauso, Maunguja, Mwakirunge, Kinung'una, Magombani, Kigombani, Gandini, Mtopanga, Kidutani, Mji Mre, Mwando wa Panya, Shimo la Tewa, Kanamai, Kinuni, Kijipwa, and Takaungu (Map 8).⁵² And other villages had already been founded, or were founded later in the 19th century: Mkomani (near Mombasa), Utange, Barani, Kisima cha Nyati, Msumarini, Jeuri, Tunzanani, Bomani, Kireme, Chengoni, Junju, Gongoni, Mikinduni, Shariani, Mkomani (north of Mikinduni), Mwando wa Makonde, Bwaga Moyo, Mkongani, Mavueni, Mtanganyiko.⁵³

Muslims moved into the northern coastal plain from various places and for diverse reasons. Magombani and Kigombani were Muslim trading villages, but they no longer exist, and it is not certain who founded them. Bomani was founded by Barawa Muslims who had intermarried with Mtwapa Swahili; Kireme, Chengoni

⁴⁸ Emery to Cooley, 20 December 1833, RGS, Emery MS.File. In the same letter Emery describes the Oromo as "restless, predatory" people; he added: "During my residence on that coast depredations were openly committed by them against the Sohilies belonging to the territory of Mombas; so much so that it required all our caution and perseverance to guard against them." The aggressiveness of the Galla is proverbial among older Swahili people in Mombasa. Thus, an old woman might say to small children who are fighting: "What are you, a bunch of Galla?" Ma'allim Yahya Ali Omar, Mombasa, 11/9/86.

⁴⁹ Emery's Journal, entry for 20 June 1826.

⁵⁰ Emery's Journal, entries for 30 September 1824, 2, 5, 13 October 1824, 6, 20 November 1824, and numerous other entries.

⁵¹ For a summary of the decline of the Oromo in this area, see Cynthia Brantley, *The Giriama and Colonial Resistance in Kenya, 1800-1920* (Los Angeles 1981): 14-16. In 1845 Krapf wrote: "The road from Korooitoo [Kurwitu] to Takaungu is now as safe as any road in Europe." Krapf's Journal, entry for 23 June 1845, CMS, CA5/M1/632.

⁵² Guillain, II, 239; Krapf to the Lay Secretary, 13 August 1844, CMS, CAS/016/26; Kijipwa, Gandini, Mwando wa Panya, and Mtopanga, are mentioned in Krapf's Journal, entry for 5 July 1845, CAS/016/168.

⁵³ Information about villages north of Mombasa was obtained from interviews with Ali Abdallah Tsori, Mavueni, 18/10/85 and 17/12/85; Ali Muhammad Chibungu, Kidutani, 10/8/86; Uthman bin Mwinyiusi, Mkomani, 26/7/87 and 28/8/87; Muhammad Abdallah Mazrui, Takaungu, 4/3/87; Saidi Mwagogo, Kilifi, 18/9/87; Mzee Baluna and Kombo wa Musa, Mtwapa, 17/10/87; Kobana Salim, Mtwapa, 22/10/87; Ali wa Haji, Barani, 25/10/87.

and Junju were agricultural villages founded by Mtwapa;⁵⁴ Mji Mre and Tunzanani were founded by Jibana Muslim converts; Kidutani was founded by Jibana Muslims and Gunya Swahili; Mtopanga, Mwando wa Panya and Mkomani (near Mombasa), by Digo migrants from south of Mombasa;⁵⁵ Mkomani (north of Mikinduni) by Digo from Mkomani (near Mombasa); Gongoni, by Chonyi Muslims and Pemba; Takaungu, by Mazrui from Mombasa; Bwaga Moyo, Mavueni, Mkongani and Mtanganyiko, by Mijikenda Muslims from Mombasa; Mwando wa Makonde was a Mazrui slave village. Krapf described how the agricultural villages developed:

The Sawahili commence again to settle on the ruins and in the jungles of their forefathers. They begin with a lonely plantation containing 2-3 houses inhabited by slaves. The plantation rises into a hamlet and village after some time. Indeed all the lower land is again in Mahomedan hands to an extent of 12-15 miles in a straight line from the coast.⁵⁶

Agriculture prospered in the 1850s and 1860s, and more slaves were needed; as Krapf put it: "The more plantations the Mohamedans erect here, the more do they want slaves."⁵⁷ According to Guillain, who visited Mombasa in 1848, the population on the island of Mombasa was between 2,500 and 3,000, and the population of the "dependencies" of Mombasa (by which he means the mainland agricultural villages) was 6,000, of whom some 4,500 were slaves.⁵⁸ Soon after reaching Mombasa in 1863, New estimated: "The population of Mombasa cannot be less than 15,000. It has greatly increased of late years, chiefly, however, through the importation of slaves."⁵⁹

Agriculture was so important to the Swahili that New described it as "one of their chief pursuits." He noted: "Every man of any position has his shamba, or plantation, whence he derives his chief support. The labour is done by slaves..."⁶⁰ As a result, Mombasa was surrounded by plantations:

The land on all sides is very fertile, and is largely cultivated. Kisauni to the north, Chagamwe to the north-west, Mtongue and Lakone to the south are all covered with thriving plantations. The produce they send to the town adds largely to its wealth and importance. They are the market-gardening districts of Mombasa. All kinds of fruits, vegetables, pulse and cereals, grow in abundance..Sesamum is cultivated largely, and is an important article of commerce. These districts are backed by the Wanika-land, which supplies rice, Indian corn, and millet to an almost unlimited extent.⁶¹

⁵⁴ Other Swahili peoples resided in these villages: Hamis Kombo, the leader of the Mtwapa is said to have told Ali bin Omar, an emigrant from Lamu: "You're a poor man; here, take these slaves and go to Junju to farm." Uthman Mwinyiusi, Mkomani, 26/7/87.

⁵⁵ Krapf described Mtopanga as "a hamlet of Wonica who long ago emigrated from the land of the Wadigo." Krapf's Journal, entry for 5 July 1845, CMS, CAS/016/168.

⁵⁶ Krapf's Journal, entry for 23 June 1845, CMS, CAS/MI/631.

⁵⁷ Krapf to the Lay Secretary, 25 September 1844, CMS, CAS/016/1B.

⁵⁸ Guillain, 235, 239.

⁵⁹ Charles New, *Ufe, Wanderings and Labours in Eastern Africa* (London 1873): 54. New worked as a Methodist missionary at Ribe from 1863 until his death in 1875.

⁶⁰ New, 62.

⁶¹ New, 54-55.

At approximately the time Muslims were moving off Mombasa island towards the north, the northern Mijikenda began to disperse from their *kayas*, moving towards the coastal plain into areas they had previously used only for cultivation. Except for the Giriama who migrated north, and the Duruma who migrated south, along the inland plateau, the dispersion of the northern Mijikenda was a local residential expansion into scattered homesteads around their *kayas*.⁶² The Rabai seem to have been the first to disperse; when Krapf visited Rabai in 1844, he found that the Rabai had "abandoned the village" and were "living on their *shambas*."⁶³ When New travelled from Ribe to Kauma in 1865, he found *kaya* Jibana "forsaken by its people who prefer to live on their plantations" and *kaya* Chonyi was: "...a large township, containing several hundreds of huts, and all in good repair. But it was empty... They informed us that the people were all living in their plantations, and that they only visited the *kaya* on special occasions."⁶⁴

In earlier times agriculture had hardly been an occasion for mixing between Mijikenda and Muslims. Now, as they brought new land under cultivation, they drew closer to each other. In some areas the farms of Mijikenda and Muslims came to be interspersed. Krapf noted both Mijikenda and Muslims settling empty land north of Mombasa: "A large population might find its maintenance on the vast tract of land which lies fallow. You may settle at any place you choose, and the Wonica do, and the Mohamedans too."⁶⁵

Some Mijikenda living in homesteads outside the *kayas* were attracted to settle in or near Muslim agricultural villages, where they came under Muslim influence. Krapf observed this influence when he was received by Sheikh Ibrahim, a Muslim at Mwakirunge, who had "flourishing plantations of rice, cassava, maize, etc." and was "much respected by the few pagan families which have fixed their huts around him":

It is surprising how systematically the Mahomedans encroach upon the Wonica land in this direction. They are erecting small hamlets along the range of the mountain, people them with their slaves, and secure the good will of the Wonicas by trifling presents which they give them...In the course of time new settlers arrive carrying with them a Sheikh who superintends the religious wants and ensnares the infidels whenever he can. This is the mode of their missionary work which goes hand in hand with mercantile speculations.⁶⁶

By the early 1860s Mwakirunge was a "large native village" with well-cultivated fields "containing cocoanuts, mangoes, guavas, lemons, manioc, beans,

⁶² Spear, *The Kaya Complex*, 109-111.

⁶³ Krapf to the Lay Secretaty, 13 August 1844, CMS, CAS/016/26.

⁶⁴ New, 78.

⁶⁵ Krapf to the Lay Secretaty, 25 September 1844, CMS, CAS/016/28.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

etc."⁶⁷ and the Swahili were still increasing agricultural production there: "The Wasuahili are encroaching year by year on this portion of Unika [Mijikenda country]. They pay the Wanika a small fee, and are then allowed to settle where they please."⁶⁸

Mji Mre, KidutanTakaungu, Bwaga Moyo, and Mtanganyiko

Several new settlements deserve special mention, since they arose out of unusual circumstances, and became important centres of Muslim influence later in the 19th century: Mji Mre and Kidutani were settled by Jibana Muslim converts; Takaungu, by Mazrui from Mombasa; and Mkongani, Bwaga Moyo and Mtanganyiko, by Ribe, Kauma and Digo Muslims closely associated with the Mazrui.

The Jibana and the Mtwapa were in contact with each other by the beginning of the 17th century.⁶⁹ One of the Jibana clans, the Remere, developed especially close relations with the Mtwapa.⁷⁰ Towards the end of the 18th century, following a dispute with another Jibana clan, the Vumbi, some Remere moved from *kaya* Jibana to Mji Mre, where they built a stockaded village; the dispute seems to have arisen because the Remere had handed over some Vumbi to the Mtwapa.⁷¹

Whether any Remere had been converted to Islam before leaving *kaya* Jibana is not certain, but soon after settling at Mji Mre at least one Remere had become a Muslim, namely, Haji Kitungule, who is regarded as the founder of the village and the first Jibana to be converted to Islam. Haji Kitungule is said to have been converted by the Mtwapa. Other Jibana at Mji Mre also became Muslim, and "out of weakness" the village of Mji Mre came under Mtwapa protection.⁷² Ostracized and threatened, the Remere needed to belong to some larger social unit. An alliance with the Mtwapa was clearly to their advantage; at the same time it strengthened their ties with Islam.

The dispute between the Jibana at Mji Mre and the Jibana of the *kaya*

⁶⁷ Journal of Richard Thornton, entry for 10 June 1861, Rhodes House, MSSAfr.s.27, A103.

⁶⁸ New, 75-76.

⁶⁹ See Chapter I, pp.32-35.

⁷⁰ For a summary of Jibana (and other northern Mijikenda) clans, see Spear, *The Kaya Complex*, 52-53.

⁷¹ The date of settlement is estimated from genealogies of descendants (now in their seventh generation) of the original settlers. Ali Muhammad Chibungu, Kidutani, 10/8/86; Uthman Mwinyiusi, Mkomani, 26/7/87.

According to tradition the Jibana had lived at Mji Mre during their migration from Shungwaya to *kaya* Jibana; the Remere were returning to an earlier, abandoned site. See the English translations of interviews with Ronald Mwavita on 23 March 1971 and James Sanga Mwavita on 24 March 1971 in Thomas Spear, "Mijikenda Historical Traditions," Department of History, LaTrobe University, Australia, 1978, 156-57, 163-64.

⁷² Uthman Mwinyiusi, Mkomani, 23/7/87.

continued, and led to bloodshed. The circumstances of Haji Kitungule's death are recalled by his Muslim descendants: "The Jibana met together, and the order went out that Haji should be shot down [lit. 'arrowed down']; the order went out from the *kaya*, and so Haji was killed by his own people."⁷³

Contrary to Jibana custom, his body was not taken back to the *kaya* for burial, but was buried at Mji Mre.⁷⁴ Though perhaps an exaggeration to declare Haji Kitungule a Muslim martyr, his burial at Mji Mre violated Jibana ritual, and had religious as well as social overtones. Islam among the Jibana arose, it would seem, in an atmosphere of strife which discouraged members of the break-away Muslim community from returning to the *kaya*. Relations between *kaya* Jibana and Mji Mre were later restored, and non-Muslim Jibana were attracted by their Muslim relatives to settle at Mji Mre, but no Muslim Jibana resided in *kaya* Jibana.

The number of converts at Mji Mre increased, albeit slowly, through the continuing influence of the Mtwapa, and through the influence of Muslim Jibana on their non-Muslim relatives and friends. In time Jibana Muslims founded another village, Tunzanani, near by. Jibana from Mji Mre visited and in some cases settled in Mtwapa and Mombasa, and Jibana Muslim women were married to Mtwapa and to other Muslims of Mombasa. The Mtwapa would occasionally visit Mji Mre, but no Mtwapa settled there.⁷⁵

Early in the 19th century, the first foreign Muslim, Kaskazi, settled at Mji Mre. He was a Gunya trader living in Mombasa, who had married Mwanaamani wa Mwinyimji, a Jibana Muslim woman from Mji Mre.⁷⁶ Whether he had been to Mji Mre before marrying Mwanaamani is not certain, but as a trader in mangrove poles, he had most likely been to Mtwapa creek. One can imagine Kaskazi's favourable impressions when he first travelled up the creek by boat: after passing the village of Shimo la Tewa, the creek turns towards the north, and widens into a vast expanse of mangrove swamps, in places more than a mile wide, extending for some four miles to the head of the creek (from which it is a half-hour walk to Mji Mre). Kaskazi decided to settle at Mji Mre, where he was welcomed by his wife's brother, Haji wa Nyambu.

Kaskazi's arrival strengthened the Muslim community, which is said to have numbered some twenty persons at the time. Kaskazi not only helped Haji wa Nyambu build the Mji Mre Mosque, but also became the first Imam of the mosque. As far as we know, this is the first mosque to be built by Mijikenda. Though difficult

⁷³ Ali Muhammad Chibungu, Abdallah bin Awadh, Haji bin Muhammad and Mzee Ahmad, Kidutani, 10/7/86.

⁷⁴ Ali Muhammad Chibungu and others, Kidutani, 10/7/86.

⁷⁵ Kobana Salim, Mtwapa, 18/8/86 and 22/10/87; Uthman Mwinyiusi, Mkomani, 26/7/87.

⁷⁶ Uthman Mwinyiusi, Mkomani, 26/7/87.

to date, the Mosque was almost certainly built before the founding of Kidutani, which occurred in the 1840s. The ruins of the mosque are still visible in thick bush near a baobab tree at the site of the abandoned village of Mji Mre. Some twenty metres from the mosque, side by side in tall grass, are the gravestones (in disrepair) of Haji wa Nyambu and his brother-in-law, Kaskazi.⁷⁷

As the population of Mji Mre and Tunzanani increased, the villages expanded southwards towards the Mtwapa creek, into areas previously used for farming. Eventually a new village, Kidutani, was built not far from where the Mtomkuu river enters the head of the creek. Mijikenda and Muslims joined together to found the new settlement; the occasion was witnessed by Krapf when he visited the area in 1844:

The Wonica and Muhamedans have commenced to build a village at the termination of the bay of Emtuapa [Mtwapa], where there is a rivulet running into the bay. About 15 houses have already been erected.⁷⁸

A few pagan families have settled there around the Muhamedans..⁷⁹

The new village of Kidutani was more accessible than Mji Mre to Mtwapa creek, and better sited for the export of timber, gum copal and grain from the surrounding hinterland; the village grew steadily, and eventually replaced Mji Mre as the main centre for Jibana Muslims.

In 1837 the Mazrui left Mombasa, under the leadership of Rashid bin Salim, and went north to Takaungu, a small village the Mazrui had founded some three years earlier.⁸⁰ At Mombasa, the Mazrui had married Swahili and Mijikenda women,⁸¹ and had been especially friendly with the Kilindini, the Digo and the Duruma.⁸² Some of the Mijikenda Muslims who were close to the Mazrui in Mombasa migrated to Takaungu with them.⁸³ Whereas other Muslim villages north

⁷⁷ Ali Muhammad Chibungu and others, Kidutani, 10/7/86; I am grateful to Ali Muhammad Chibungu for taking me to visit the site of Mji Mre on 24th August 1986.

⁷⁸ Kiapf to Lay Secretary, 27 September 1845, CMS, CAS/016/47.

⁷⁹ Kiapf to Lay Secretary, 25 September 1844, CMS, CAS/016/28.

⁸⁰ That is, those Mazrui who were not taken prisoner during the Busaidi capture of Mombasa (See p.45). For details of the founding of Takaungu, see Peter L. Koffsky, "History of Takaungu, East Africa, 1830-18%", Ph.D. dissertation (University of Wisconsin 1977): 12-14. The first Mazrui settlement, Mkonga, was south of Takaungu in an area called Kasidi, near Shariani. Muhammad Abdallah Mazrui, Takaungu, 4 March 1987.

⁸¹ When the first Mazrui Liwali of Mombasa, Nasur Abdallah Muhammad, wanted to marry, "the notables of the town offered him their sisters, and he chose the sister of Shaykh bin Ahmad Al Kabir, one of the descendants of the former kings of Malindi." (Shaykh Al-Amin, 15.) The first four Mazrui Liwalis of Mombasa were born in Oman. The fifth Liwali, Abdallah bin Muhammad bin 'Uthman (who took power in 1779), was the first Mazrui Liwali "to be born on the Swahili coast." (Shaykh Al-Amin, 29.) The Mazrui were gradually indigenized and Swahili-ized. Eventually they became Sunni, and came to use Swahili instead of Arabic as their mother tongue.

⁸² That is, with the Three Tribes, and with the Mijikenda affiliates of the Three Tribes (see Chapter I, pp.32-35). The Mazrui were less friendly with the Nine Tribes; in 1829, they imprisoned the Mtwapa leader of the Nine Tribes, Kombo bin Khamis. Shaykh Al-Amin, 38-39,43,56,58-59,64-65,70.

⁸³ Ali Abdallah Tsori and Saidi Sulayman Mwangogo, Mavueni, 16/10/85.

of Mombasa generally remained small, Takaungu became a sizable town; Guillain estimated that some 1,500 persons (including slaves) took part in the Mazrui exodus from Mombasa.⁸⁴

At Takaungu the Mazrui were less in touch with their Swahili and Mijikenda friends in Mombasa. On the other hand, they found themselves close to the Kauma (who had previously been the Mijikenda people farthest away from them and were now their nearest Mijikenda neighbours). *Kaya* Kauma was only 12 miles away, and the Kauma were cultivating land around Mavueni, even closer to Takaungu.⁸⁵

As refugees, being threatened by the Busaidi Arabs (who controlled Mombasa) and by the Oromo, the Mazrui had several reasons to seek the friendship of the Kauma.⁸⁶ Until the Mazrui were able to harvest sufficient crops, they depended on the Kauma for food; and the Kauma, known to be on good terms with the Oromo, could help shield them from Oromo aggression.⁸⁷ And Mazrui traders, who had been exporting goods at Mombasa, required local supplies of grain, copal, and ivory in order to develop trade at Takaungu.⁸⁸

The Kauma elders and the Mazrui took an oath of blood-brotherhood (*Swakula chafe*), and the Kauma became the local protectors of the Mazrui: 'They [the Mazrui] couldn't move around alone; we went everywhere with them, we were the ones who showed them the surrounding country.'⁸⁹ The Mazrui would go to *kaya* Kauma to buy grain, and Kauma began frequenting Takaungu.⁹⁰ And, in what is remembered as a symbol of their alliance, the Mazrui rebuilt the gates of the *kaya*.⁹¹

⁸⁴ Guillain, II, 236. In 1845, Krapf estimated that there were 40-50 heads of families in Takaungu and 3,000-4,000 slaves. Krapf, *Travels*, 259. Not all of the heads of family would have been Mazrui. In 1912, Muhammad bin Husayn Shirazi testified: "My father went to Takaungu, took all his slaves when he went. When Rashid bin Salim went to Takaungu, my father followed him." Testimony of Muhammad bin Husayn Shirazi, Tangana Land Case, Application Cause No. 15 of 1912, Provincial Headquarters, Mombasa, Land Office Records.

⁸⁵ The Mazrui at Takaungu were also closer than before to the Chonyi; there may have been political reasons why the Mazrui did not develop close relations with the Chonyi: when Krapf visited *kaya* Chonyi in 1844, he noted: "The headman...is a great friend of the Imam (Sultan of Zanzibar) whom he assisted in capturing Mombasa." Krapf to the Lay Secretary, 25 September 1844, CMS, CAS/016/28.

⁸⁶ When Krapf visited Takaungu at the end of 1843, he described it as "a threatened refuge settlement." Krapf, *Travels*, 115-116.

⁸⁷ "Many people of Kauma speak Galla; and the latter are on friendly terms with them." Krapf to Eckett, 12 February 1862, *CAI*, V, (1862):402.

⁸⁸ When Wakefield and New visited *kaya* Kauma in March 1865, they were told that "the country has been purchased by the Men of Takaungu" and that the Kauma and the "Takaungu Men are just now at enmity, having a few days ago had a quarrel about the importation of ivory from Ugalani (the Gala country)." Wakefield commented that "the governor of Takaungu holds the monopoly of the ivory trade with certain districts of the Gala territory." Wakefield's Journal, entry for 17 March 1865, *UttfCAI*, IX (December 1866):853.

⁸⁹ Information about early Mazrui-Kauma relations was obtained from interviews with Ali Abdallah Tsori and Saidi Sulayman Mwagogo, Mavueni, 16/10/85, 18/10/85 and 1/4/86, and Muhammad Abdallah Mazrui, Takaungu, 4/3/87.

⁹⁰ At Takaungu in 1843, Krapf was told about the "heathen Wanika" and "saw several belonging to the Kauma tribe." Krapf, *Travels*, 116.

⁹¹ Saidi Sulayman Mwagogo and Ali Abdallah Tsori, Mavueni, 16/10/85. When Rebmann visited *kaya* Kauma in 1848, he remarked on its "well-preserved gates", but he does not seem to have known why they were in such good repair; at that time he estimated the population of Kauma at "about 1000 souls." Rebmann's Journal, entry for 10 February 1848, CMS, CAS/024/52A.

The Mazrui also reached an agreement with the Oromo, which allowed them to develop plantations in the Takaungu hinterland without fear of Oromo attack. On a visit to Takaungu in 1845, Krapf noticed land being brought under cultivation:

Now that the Mohamedans at Takaungo have formed a league with their inveterate Galla foe on the Sabaki river, the afflux of Mohamedan planters to the district of Takaungo will be rapid...the thick forest begins to be made clear in several directions.⁹²

The Mijikenda Muslims who emigrated from Mombasa with the Mazrui settled at Mkongani and Bwaga Moyo. Those at Mkongani are said to have been Digo Muslims who were "following their Mazrui in-laws."⁹³ The founder of Bwaga Moyo was Swalehe Lenga, a Ribe Muslim who had been living in Mombasa for a number of years. Though originally from Ribe, Swalehe married a Kauma woman, and came to have such close ties with the Kauma that in later life he was regarded more as a Kauma than a Ribe. Swalehe also had close ties with the Mazrui, and is said to have married a Mazrui woman, who gave birth to his first daughter, Mwana Amani. He would occasionally visit Mombasa (his daughter was married there), and he sent one of his sons, Nagi, to Mombasa to study. Swalehe is said to have travelled to Kilwa and brought slaves to work for him at Bwaga Moyo.

Swalehe's relatives from *kaya* Kauma would visit him at Bwaga Moyo; one of his nephews, Miriro wa Tsori, is known to have left the *kaya* to join Swalehe, and other Kauma were attracted to settle at Bwaga Moyo. When Miriro wanted to become a Muslim, Swalehe sent him to Takaungu, where he was converted by Khamis bin Rashid bin Salim.⁹⁴ Miriro took the Muslim name Ali. But instead of taking the name of the person converting him as a second Muslim name (as was the custom) and calling himself Ali bin Khamis, Miriro showed a certain spirit of independence: he declared, "I have my own [Kauma] name," and insisted on being called Ali wa Tsori.⁹⁵

⁹² Krapf's Journal, entry for 23 June 1845, CMS, CAS/016/168. Elsewhere Krapf noted: "Both chieftains met each other at Ganda, where they made a strong covenant by slaughtering a goat and by eating a chosen part of its entrails. These are the historical facts of the friendship which subsists between Takaungo and the Galla..." Krapf's Journal, entry for 6 March 1846, CMS, CAS/016/169. Evidently the agreement between the Mazrui and the Galla had already been concluded by 1843; in that year, Krapf saw "a few Gallas" at Takaungu, and was told that the "agent who transacts business between the Gallas and Takaungo" was "a Galla himself who turned Mohammedan." Krapf's Journal, entry for 29 December 1843, CMS, CAS/016/164.

⁹³ Information about the settlements at Bwaga Moyo and Mkongani is from interviews with Ali Abdallah Tsori and Saidi Sulayman Mwangi, Mavueni, 16/10/85 and 18/10/85, Ali Abdallah Tsori, Mavueni, 17/12/85, Uthman Mwanzo, Takaungu, 26/11/86, and Uthman Mwinyiusi, Mkomani, 15/10/87.

⁹⁴ Khamis bin Rashid bin Salim was the eldest son of Rashid bin Salim, the founder of Takaungu. He took over from his father as leader at Takaungu sometime in 1847; when Krapf went to Takaungu in December 1847, he met the "new Governor Khamis bin Rashid who treated us civilly and hospitably." Krapf to Venn, 9 December 1847, CMS, CA5/M2/94.

In theory a convert to Islam can validly declare his profession of faith (Arabic. *shahada*: "There is no God but God; Muhammad is the Prophet of God") before any Muslim; in practice, early Mijikenda converts would go, or be sent, to a learned Muslim (a teacher, judge, or other person of rank) who would question them, and also instruct them on what their conversion entailed.

⁹⁵ For details of the life of Swalehe Lenga and of the conversion of Miriro, I am indebted to the late Ali Abdallah Tsori, who is the grandson of Miriro and the great-grandson of Swalehe Lenga.

Though trading independently of the Mazrui, Swalehe continued in close contact with them. From Bwaga Moyo to Takaungu was hardly an hour's walk; Swalehe would often go there, and the Mazrui would visit him at Bwaga Moyo. At that time the Mazrui Mosque at Takaungu was the only mosque in the area, and on Fridays Swalehe would pray together with the Mazrui at Takaungu.⁹⁶

After a number of years, Swalehe had a disagreement with the Mazrui, and decided to leave Bwaga Moyo. Some Mazrui are said to have been "jealous" of Swalehe's prosperity and wealth: as the Mazrui extended their plantations towards Bwaga Moyo and Mavueni, disputes may have arisen over land; and Swalehe may have been too successful a trading competitor. Some time in the late 1850s or early 1860s, he founded the village of Mtanganyiko at the head of Kilifi creek; other Kauma Muslims who moved with Swalehe to Mtanganyiko were Salim Dule, Ali wa Tsori, Saidi Kiringi, Muhammad Mrera and Ali Kondokaya. Soon after settling at Mtanganyiko, they built their own Friday mosque (also known as the Kauma Mosque).⁹⁷ This was the second mosque to be built by Mijikenda Muslims.

In spite of the move from Bwaga Moyo, relations between the Mazrui and the Kauma Muslim community continued; within a few years some Mazrui had moved to settle at Kisamba, near Mtanganyiko. Kauma from *kaya* Kauma also frequented the new village of Mtanganyiko, and some were attracted to settle there.

Certain comparisons can be made between the Kauma Muslims at Mtanganyiko and the Jibana Muslims at Mji Mre and Kidutani. Each of these rural Mijikenda Muslim communities retained its ethnic identity, since each was near its *kaya* of origin, and continued in contact with non-Muslims there. Furthermore, the new communities were well situated to monopolize export trade via the Mtwapa and Kilifi creeks. The origin and development, however, of the two Muslim communities was different: Jibana Islam had developed in a rural setting; Kauma Islam, after having developed in a town, had migrated to a rural home. So far as we know, by the 1860s no Jibana Muslims had studied at a Qur'an school; Swalehe Lenga had sent his son Nagi to Mombasa to learn, and by that time other Kauma Muslims were studying as well. The Jibana had built their mosque at Mji Mre in close association with the Gunya; the Kauma, displaying a singular spirit of initiative and independence, had built their mosque at Mtanganyiko without such help.

⁹⁶ The first mosque at Takaungu, which is still the Friday mosque of the town, was built by Rashid bin Salim, who also dug the well in front of the mosque; the mosque occupies a magnificent site on a bluff overlooking Takaungu creek. According to tradition, the mosque was first built of wooden poles and mud, and then later rebuilt of stone. (Muhammad Abdallah Mazrui, Takaungu, 4 March 1987.) The mosque seems to have been built in stone some time after 1845; in that year Krapf visited Takaungu and described meeting "the aged Governor, Rashid, on the outside of a miserable mosque." Krapf's Journal, entry for 24 June 1845, CAS/016/168.

⁹⁷ Ali Abdallah Tsori, Mavueni, 20/10/85.

South of Mombasa. Mtongwe, Likoni, limbo, and Gasi

Muslim expansion south of Mombasa was restricted by the presence of numerous Digo villages.⁹⁸ The Tangana and the Kilindini developed plantations in the immediate hinterland of Mombasa, at Mtongwe and Likoni, and a small Muslim settlement grew up at Jimbo farther inland on the Kilindini creek (Map 8). The only other settlement founded by Muslims south of Mombasa was the Mazrui refugee town of Gasi.

The Tangana, one of the "Three Tribes" of Mombasa, were closely allied with the Digo, especially the Shimba and Longo Digo.⁹⁹ Though resident on Mombasa island since the 17th century, the Tangana continued in contact with the Digo throughout the 18th century. The Tangana would visit Digo villages, and Digo elders would be received by the Tangana in Mombasa town. Some Tangana took Digo wives, and Digo migrants to Mombasa lived among the Tangana, and worked for them. Relations between the two groups continued to be close at the beginning of the 19th century.

In 1822, the Busaidi captured Pemba island from the Mazrui; as a result, many Tangana who had settled at Pemba returned to Mombasa. Soon thereafter, some Tangana emigrants from Pemba decided to settle at Mtongwe on the southern mainland. The settlers at Mtongwe comprised members of two families, some forty persons in all. One family, headed by Mwalimu Mwamwinyimkuu, settled in the Mkunguni area. The other family, headed by Jaka wa Fumbwe, settled one mile to the east of Mkunguni on the shore overlooking Kilindini creek.¹⁰⁰ According to oral tradition, the village of Mtongwe was founded on an earlier abandoned site. Rezende's map of 1634 shows a village with stone buildings in this area, most probably inhabited by Tangana at that time. Thus, it seems that in founding Mtongwe, the Tangana were returning to a site they had inhabited two centuries earlier.

That the Tangana were able to settle at Mtongwe is testimony to their continuing close relations with the Shimba and the Longo Digo. The Tangana most likely sought the approval of the elders of nearby Digo villages beforehand. The Digo say they themselves were already in the area and drew back peacefully when the Tangana came to live there.¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ See Chapter I, pp.29-31.

⁹⁹ See Chapter I, pp.32-35.

¹⁰⁰ A copy of Rezende's map is published in C.R. Boxer and C. De Avezedo, *Fort Jesus and the Portuguese in Mombasa, 1593-1729* (London 1960).

¹⁰¹ The history of the Tangana settlement at Mtongwe, including details of their relations with the Digo and the spread of Islam, is based on information from the following: Muhammad bin Matano Mwakutanga, Mtongwe, ?II/4/68 and 9/5/69; Ali Koka, Mtongwe, 23/2/71; Muhammad Mbarak and Kibwana bin Bakari, Mtongwe, 12/7/76; Abdurrahman Ndanda, Mtongwe, 24/1/87; Shakombo Ali, Mtongwe, 22/9/87.

The village of Mtongwe established itself quickly: Jaka wa Fumbwe came with "a large number of livestock"; some settlers began fishing; others planted coconut trees and began to cultivate the land. In 1845 when Krapf crossed from Mombasa island to the southern mainland, he noted: "The banks of the bay are chiefly inhabited by Muhamedan planters, though now and then a Wanika cottage has been erected."¹⁰² Jaka wa Fumbwe and Muhammad Mwijaa, who had also come to Mtongwe from Pemba, travelled up-country, and "to the south in sailing ships", and brought slaves to work on their plantations. Agriculture flourished: Von der Decken's map shows two settlements in the Mtongwe area, "Mkugoni" and "Kwa Djaka", with cultivated fields lying to the west; the two settlements correspond to the original areas occupied by the two family groups which founded the village.¹⁰³ In 1863, New observed the "thriving plantations" of "Mtongwe and Lakone".¹⁰⁴

For several years, the Tangana of Mtongwe attended Friday prayers in Mombasa, but eventually they decided to have a mosque of their own at Mtongwe. The Mkunguni Mosque, built by Mwalimu Mwamwinyimkuu sometime in the 1840s, was the first mosque to be built in the 19th century on the mainland south of Mombasa. According to tradition, the mosque was built on the foundations of an old stone mosque which Mwalimu Mwamwinyimkuu found in the area. In the 1850s, Jaka wa Fumbwe, helped by his son Mwalimu wa Jaka, built a second mosque, the Girandi Mosque (also known as Jaka's Mosque), and dug a well beside the mosque.

The Tangana of Mtongwe collaborated with the Digo in many ways: Tangana elders met regularly with the elders of nearby Digo villages; the Tangana married Digo women; some Digo undertook to work for the Tangana, and others began to trade with them. The Tangana of Mtongwe also had contacts with the Shimba Digo of Kwale, some of whom found it more convenient to direct their trade to Mtongwe than to Mombasa.

Through these regular contacts a number of Digo were converted to Islam; the first conversions cannot be dated precisely, but had probably taken place before 1848. By that time Mwalimu had been succeeded by his son, Mwinyimkuu (though it is not certain whether Mwalimu had already died).¹⁰⁵ Among the first converts were: Mbaruku Mwajamvua, the senior elder (Digo. *mwanatsi*) of *kaya* Kiteje, and Juma Liganza, both of whom were converted by Mwalimu Mwamwinyimkuu;

¹⁰² Krapf's Journal, entry for 13 March 1845, CMS, CAS/MI/542.

¹⁰³ The map, based on Von der Decken's 1862 visit, is published in Von der Decken, *Reisen*.

¹⁰⁴ New, 54.

¹⁰⁵ When planning a trip south of Mombasa in 1848, Krapf wrote: "Muigni Emku [sic], the Muhamedan go-between of Mombasa and Shimba, was ready to let me pass." Krapf's Journal, entry for 12 July 1848, CMS, CAS/016/173. In 1861 Mwinyimkuu was still alive, as we know from Thornton's account of passing through Mtongwe: "...where we were introduced to Munimuku [sic], a yellow Swahili who is the shaik of the Wanikas be on [beyond] to the Shimba..he gave a lot of coconuts to the carriers." Journal of Richard Thornton, entry for 28th June 1861, Rhodes House, MSSAfr.s.27, A103, Volume 3.

Mwakukusa and "four or five others", converted by Jaka wa Fumbwe; and Ngongo, converted by Muhammad Mwijaa. After Mwinyimkuu became the Tangana leader, he and Mwajamvua had regular dealings with each other, and they used to go to Mombasa together. The wives of the early converts also became Muslim, and their children were raised as Muslims.

The early Digo converts continued to live in their villages. In the beginning, the converts went to the Mkunguni mosque for Friday prayers. After the Girandi Mosque was built, some prayed there, together with the Tangana and the slaves of the Tangana. Mwalimu wa Jaka, the son of Jaka, had a Qur'an school at the Girandi Mosque, but there is no record that any of the early Digo converts or their children studied there. Digo from Kwale who were in contact with the Tangana of Mtongwe were not converted until later in the 19th century.¹⁰⁶

Jimbo, settled by Muslims sometime before 1845, was a staging point for caravans from Mombasa. It is possible that Digo porters were recruited there, and some of the neighbouring Digo may have been converted to Islam, but details of this are not known. When Krapf visited Jimbo, he commented on the strict residential division between Mijikenda and Muslims: "The hamlet [Jimbo] has been divided between the Muhamedan and pagan party. Each lives separately, the frontier being well marked out, lest quarrels arise..."¹⁰⁷

In contrast to the Tangana at Mtongwe, the Kilindini Swahili developed plantations and carried on trade at Likoni (also shown on Von der Decken's map), but they did not take up residence there. Krapf described Likoni as a village "inhabited by pagans." On a visit he once made to Likoni, he found: "...a great number of Wanika women engaged in buying cow's meat which a Muhamedan had slaughtered...They bought the meat with maize, cassada [cassava], rice..."¹⁰⁸ The Kilindini seem to have exerted little direct Muslim influence on the Digo of Likoni (who were at *kayas* Puma, Kibuyuni, Timbwani, and Shonda) until later in the century. There is no record of Digo converts at Likoni until after 1865, and the first Likoni mosque was built at the end of the 19th century.¹⁰⁹

By 1845 there was some Muslim activity in the near hinterland. In that year Krapf found a Muslim healer a few miles south of Likoni:

¹⁰⁶ Juma Zani, Kundutsi, 12/9/68.

¹⁰⁷ Krapf's Journal, entry for 13 March 1845, CMS, CA5/M1/542. The original inhabitants have now left Jimbo, and little information is available about its history.

¹⁰⁸ Krapf's Journal, entry for 15 March 1844, CMS, CAS/016/165, and Krapf's Journal, entry for 17 March 1845, CMS, CA5/M1/547.

¹⁰⁹ Saidi bin Khalfan Mwabundu, Likoni, 15/5/87; Muhammad Ahmad Matano, Kuze, 15/10/87. See Chapter IV, p.106.

I did not stop long at the place [Likoni], but proceeded inland to a hamlet, the name of which I have forgotten. I found a great part of the population singing and dancing around a Muhamedan, who was beating a drum and wished to work uganga [healing]...¹⁰

By the 1850s, Baluchi traders were in contact with the elders of *kaya* Pungu and were selling cloth at a large Digo market known as Ngare's market (Digo. *chete cha Ngare*) near Pungu.¹¹¹ As the Baluchi penetrated farther south and intensified their trade, they were instrumental in spreading Muslim influence.

The town of Gasi, thirty miles south of Mombasa, was founded in 1837 by Mazrui refugees from Mombasa. Little is known about its early history. In 1845 Krapf refers to it as a refuge point for runaway slaves.¹¹² When Guillain visited Mombasa in 1848, he was told that Gasi was inhabited by 800 persons, of whom 500 were slaves, and that the people "cultivate a little grain and cassava, for their subsistence. They have friendly relations with the Digo..."¹¹³ Burton left a description of Gasi when he passed by on his way from Mombasa to Pangani in 1857:

Concealed by a screen of mangroves, and betrayed by cocos, sure indicators of man's presence in East Africa, lies the settlement (of Gasi), a large village of mud huts. It is surrounded by plantations, and the inhabitants, unmolested by the Wadigo savages to whom the land belongs, live in comparative comfort.¹¹⁴

Gasi became a centre for the spread of Muslim influence among the Digo in the Kinondo area, particularly after Mbaruk bin Rashid made the town his headquarters in 1865.

The nature of Muslim influence, and the attitude of the Mijikenda to Islam

Until the third quarter of the 19th century, conversion to Islam was closely related to urbanization. Mijikenda visitors or migrants to town came under the influence of Islam (one of many urban influences), and some were converted. Muslim converts resided in town, though they would go to visit relatives and friends

¹¹⁰ Krapf's Journal, entry for 17 March 1845, CMS, CAS/MI/547; Krapf, *Travels*, 146.

¹¹¹ Uthman bin Shaykh Mwinyi, Pungu, 14/4/87; Saidi bin Khalfan Mwabundu, Bomani, 15/5/87. The Digo word *chete* means a market as well as the day of the week on which the market takes place, normally the fourth day of a four-day week.

¹¹² Krapf to Lay Secretary, 22 October 1845, CMS, CAS/016/48. This is the earliest known documentary reference to Gasi.

¹¹³ "Ils y sont au nombre de trois cents, avec cinq cents esclaves, et ils cultivent un peu de grain et de manioc pour leur subsistance. Ils entretiennent des relations amicales avec les Oua-Digo..." Guillain noted that the town was a "secure refuge" for runaway slaves from Mombasa. Guillain, II, 264. For a summary of the early history of Gasi, see McKay, 188-190.

Friendly relations with the Digo of *kaya* Kinondo may already have existed in Mombasa before the Mazrui took refuge at Gasi. Yusuf Ali Muhambwe, Mwabungu, 25/8/87.

¹¹⁴ Burton and Speke, "A Coasting Voyage," 196.

in the countryside.¹¹⁵ The process of "urban islamization" was detribalizing, similar to what Trimingham calls islamization "by assimilation."¹¹⁶ Through urban islamization the number of Muslims increased (and the number of Mijikenda resident in the *kayas* decreased), but the fact that converts settled in town helped to keep Islam from spreading into the rural areas. New observed the link between islamization and migration: "Wahaji¹¹⁷ are converts to Islam, who have left their infidel relations and taken up their abode with the faithful. They are treated kindly, and sometimes with a good deal of consideration."¹¹⁸

During the years 1826-65, urban islamization continued and probably increased, if for no other reason because the new towns of Takaungu, Gasi, and Vanga began to attract Mijikenda immigrants. But migration to town, and conversion, were uncommon during this period. Krapf, Rebmann and Erhardt make no mention of Mijikenda migration to town, and only occasionally refer to the conversion of Mijikenda: a Giriama "who many years ago had turned Mohamedan," a Rabai "who embraced Mohamedanism at Mombas about 18 years ago," and a Swahili carpenter at Mombasa with a number of workmen who were "islamised Wanika."¹¹⁹ New is more explicit about the infrequency of conversion: "Now and then a man quarrels with his friends or tribes folk, goes to the coast, and asks to be admitted to the company of the faithful, but the great body of the people remain unaffected by Muhammadanism."¹²⁰ Times of famine, as occurred in the late 1830s, were an exception. Then, Mijikenda are said to have gone to Mombasa and become Muslim: "In time of famine, which occurs sometimes, many a Wonica is glad to turn Mohamedan to save his life from starvation, but he frequently throws off the compulsory yoke when the time of affluence has returned."¹²¹ A Mijikenda servant hired by Krapf in Mombasa had "turned Muhamedan during a famine."¹²²

¹¹⁵ Because it was difficult, if not impossible, to practice Islam in the rural areas, a Mijikenda Muslim convert who went back to reside in his rural home was considered a virtual apostate. A quotation by Krapf illustrates the feeling of Swahili Muslims about such cases (referring specifically to Duruma converts): "Waduruma wana ila, wakisilimu hurudi kuao (kwao)." ("The Duruma have a defect, those who become Muslim end up going back home [and so, giving up the practise of their faith].") Rev. Dr. L.Krapf, *A Dictionary of the Suaheli Language* (London 1882), 103.

¹¹⁶ J.S.Trimingham, *Islam in East Africa* (Oxford 1964), 53-55.

¹¹⁷ The Swahili word *wahaji* (more commonly and correctly, *mahaji*; sing. *haji*) is derived from the Arabic word *hajj*, meaning "one who has performed the pilgrimage to Mecca." The term was applied in a figurative sense to Mijikenda converts by those who converted them, the analogy being the washing away of all past wrongs, just as happens on the pilgrimage. Ma'allim Yahya Ali Omar, Mombasa, 28/7/87. Pagan Mijikenda then adopted the term (see page 71, footnote 153).

¹¹⁸ New, 57.

¹¹⁹ Erhardt to Venn, 22 September 1852, CMS, CAS/09/9. Krapf to the Lay Secretary, 26 August 1845, CMS, CAS/016/44; Krapfs Journal, entry for 15 April 1846, CMS, CAS/016/170. It is difficult to get oral information about early Mijikenda migration to towns; pagan rural origins -forgotten or conveniently not spoken of- are difficult to trace among Muslim townspeople, especially in a society in which status is based on Muslim ancestry.

¹²⁰ New, 102.

¹²¹ Krapf to the Lay Secretary, 25 September 1844, CMS, CAS/016/28.

¹²² Krapf to the Lay Secretary, 9 April 1846, CMS, CAS/016/57, and Krapfs Journal, entry for 11 May 1847, CMS, CAS/016/171.

As early as the 1840s, the urban culture of Swahili Islam was influencing the Mijikenda in various ways. At *kaya Kambe*, Rebmann found that:

Mohamedanism appeared to have exercised greater influence upon manners and customs than at other towns...the elders of Kambe wore turbans on their heads and resembled in their whole outward appearance the Mohamedan Suaheli on the coast. They also were in possession of a large number of Suaheli chairs.¹²³

Krapf mentioned how "the pagan infidel catches a few terms of Muhammedan phraseology."¹²⁴ And in 1861, in a village near Vanga, von der Decken found Digo "building rectangular houses" like those of the Swahili, instead of their usual beehive-shaped huts.¹²⁵

The presence of Muslim healers and diviners (Swa. *tabibu*, plur. *matabibu*) exerted a particularly strong influence among the Mijikenda.¹²⁶ The Swahili and the Mijikenda shared a belief in the power of spirits (Swa. *pepo*) to inflict illness and calamity, and had common methods, such as exorcism (Swa. *kupunga pepo*),¹²⁷ and offerings and sacrifices (Swa. *sadaka*), for dealing with spirits. In general, Krapf did not distinguish between Muslim and Mijikenda healing practices: "Muhamedans and heathens would fain remove all sickness and every other evil by charms."¹²⁸ Krapf considered that the Swahili believed in "evil spirits" even more strongly than the Mijikenda did; as he put it: "The Muhamedans of Mombasa outdo the Wanica in superstitious views and practices."¹²⁹ Erhardt noticed that "medicine is sought for avidly," and that Swahili "physicians" were "well paid" for treating Mijikenda.¹³⁰ New too noted how the Mijikenda "often resort to the incantations of the Waganga in

¹²³ Rebmann's Journal, entry for 8 February 1848, CMS, CA5/024/52A. A penchant for Swahili dress was also noted by New, who described how "a few Wadigo and Waduruma have partially adopted the Kisuaheli dress..• New, p.102.

Almost one hundred and fifty years later, the attraction of Muslim dress continues, though perhaps to a lesser degree. When first visiting the Chiers office at Kauma in September 1985, I found an old man wearing a Muslim hat seated on the veranda outside. After a brief discussion about Islam among the Kauma (a topic he knew little about), he admitted to me that he was not Muslim, but that he "liked wearing a Muslim hat."

¹²⁴ Krapf to the Lay Secretary, 26 August 1845, CMS, CAS/016/44.

¹²⁵ Von der Decken, *Reisen*, I, 318.

¹²⁶ See Appendix IV.

¹²⁷ For a study of spirit possession in the Mombasa area, including a detailed description of an exorcism ("pungwa") ceremony, see Farouk Topan, "Oral literature in a ritual setting: the role of spirit songs in a spirit-mediumship cult of Mombasa, Kenya," Ph.D. dissertation (University of London 1971). A more comprehensive assessment of spirit possession on the Swahili coast can be found in Linda L.Giles, 'Possession Cults on the Swahili Coast: A Re-examination of Theories of Marginality,' *Africa*, 57, 2 (1987): 234-258. The ceremonial treatment of illness caused by spirit possession continued into the 20th century. The colonial government tried to control the practice by requiring permits for such ceremonies. For example, 25 permits were issued for *ngoma ya pepo* (lit., "spirit dances") in Mombasa between 10th March and 10th April, 1908. District Commissioner, Mombasa, to Assistant Superintendent of Police, 11th April 1908, KNA, CP/84/105. For a study of the wider inter-cultural dimension of spirit dances, see R. Skene, "Arab and Swahili Dances and Ceremonies," *!RAJ*, XLVII (1917): 413-434.

¹²⁸ Rebmann's Journal, entry for 21 April 1850, CMS, CAS/024/50.

¹²⁹ Krapf to the Lay Secretary, 13 August 1844, CMS, CAS/016/026, and Krapf's Journal, entry for 26 March 1845, CMS, CAS/MI/574.

¹³⁰ Erhardt to Lay Secretary, 24 September 1850, CMS, CA5/09/3.

order to expel the evil spirit."¹³¹ The Mijikenda were so vexed with problems of sickness that Rebmann advised the Church Missionary Society that "the new missionary ought to be a medical man or possessing a good knowledge of medicine."¹³² Several years later, New expressed the same feeling: "I wish we had a medical missionary. I never was so besieged for medicines. A man has arrived today all the way from Kauma..suffering from a pulmonary complaint, covered from head to foot in charms. He says he has spent all his substance on the *waganga* (sorcerers) to no purpose."¹³³

Muslim healers took part in Mijikenda ceremonies. At Rabai, Rebmann witnessed an offering of "two fowls...slaughtered by some Mahomedans, who are generally the leading persons in the performance of such ceremonies of the Wanika."¹³⁴ And Mijikenda healers seem to have borrowed Muslim techniques, such as the use of written charms. Krapf mentioned how a Mijikenda man once came to him wanting paper, "to make a talisman to be used as a medicine against the devil and the headache of his wife."¹³⁵

Exposure to Muslim influence constituted "a considerable barrier to the introduction of Christianity," not because the Mijikenda had become Muslim but because they showed no interest in Christianity, regarding it as another form of Islam.¹³⁶ Thus, pagan Mijikenda living closer to Mombasa were less attracted to Christian teaching than those living farther away.¹³⁷ Nonetheless, early missionaries were struck by the fact that the Mijikenda had generally resisted Islam:

It is remarkable that Mohamedanism has not made more progress.¹³⁸

They [the Mijikenda] are pure heathen. It is a remarkable fact that though they have been associating with the Muhammadans of the coast for centuries, Islamism has made scarcely any impression upon them.¹³⁹

¹³¹ New to Barton, 24 November 1864, *UMFCM*, VII (1864): 339-40.

¹³² Rebmann to Venn, 15 December 1858, CMS, CAS/024/34.

¹³³ Letter of New, undated (probably July-August 1869), *UMFCM*, XIII (January 1870): 68. It is not clear from New's statement whether the persons treating this man were Muslim or not. European missionaries and explorers often used the word *mganga* (pl. *waganga*) loosely to refer both to Mijikenda and Swahili healers. (See p.47, footnote 20.)

¹³⁴ Rebmann's Journal, entry for 10 January 1848, CMS, CA5/024/52A. The Muslims referred to by Rebmann were probably Jomvu; because Rabai was so close to Jomvu, this kind of Muslim influence at Jomvu may have been stronger than at other Mijikenda *kayas*.

¹³⁵ Krapf's Journal, entry for 19 April 1846, CMS, CA%016/170. The strong mystique attached to writing undoubtedly arose because of the use of written charms by Muslim healers. On another occasion Krapf commented that the Mijikenda "are naturally afraid of books and writing." (Krapf to Lay Secretary, 20 November 1846, CMS, CAS/016/64.) From the context of Krapf's remarks about the request for paper, it is not clear whether the paper was to be taken to a Muslim healer to make the talisman, or whether the Mijikenda man was going to make the talisman himself. Possibly the latter; Krapf once observed that the Muslims "make the poor pagans believe that every piece of paper contains..charms." (Krapf's Journal, entry for 22 April 1847, CMS, CAS/016/171.)

¹³⁶ Rebmann to the Secretaries, 27 October 1847, CMS, CAS/024/51.

¹³⁷ "Those Wanikas who have much intercourse with the Muhamedans at Mombas are less arrestable to the Gospel than those Wanikas who live at a greater distance from Mombas." Rebmann to Venn, 27 June 1846, CMS, CAS/024/2.

¹³⁸ Rebmann's Journal, entry for 9 February 1848, CMS, CA5/024/52A.

¹³⁹ New, 102. On another occasion, New observed that the Mijikenda "cling tenaciously to their heathen customs." New to Barton, 24 November 1864, *UMFCM*, VII (1864): 339.

To Krapfs mind, the Mijikenda had resisted Islam because of their pre-occupation with the material world: "Their chief aversion to religion arises from their worldly mindedness."¹⁴⁰ "I can now better understand why these tribes did not fall prey to Mohammedanism. Every thought on things that are above is nonsense in their eyes."¹⁴¹ The Mijikenda saw immortality as lived out on earth: departed spirits (Swa. *kama*), like men, were tied to this world; thus, the same strong belief in spirits that allowed a Muslim influence in the field of healing prevented the Mijikenda from grasping ideas of a higher being:

The Wanica...have scarcely any idea of a Supreme Being and the future state of man.¹⁴²

They have a faint idea of man's immortality since they believe that the departed father or mother or relative lives somewhere in the sky, or in the grave, or in a grove, or in their former plantations and that he must be appeased with food.¹⁴³

Their notions of the Supreme Being are so exceedingly crude...you have to use a term *Mulungu*, in speaking to them of God, which conveys to them ideas which are altogether opposed to the Divine Being; indeed it is a question whether they do not often mean, by this term, nothing more than the material heavens or thunder...they do not think *Mulungu* more than equal, if not inferior to, the "koma"- the spirits of the departed.¹⁴⁴

The world of Mijikenda spirits was not so much a spiritual world as an extension of the material world, which was controlled by the spirits and in which the spirits, though invisible, were as vividly present as the material things of the earth; more specifically, the social life of departed spirits, like that of their living relatives, was bound to the *kaya*:

The capital town or village (*kaya*) is thought especially to be the place where the *koma* resides - hence the natives bury their dead usually in the vicinity of the *kaya* by the wayside. The Wanica will carry a dead man from a great distance of 3 or 4 days to bury him near the capital. Many go to a still greater distance after a lapse of 8 to 10 years and dig out some parts of the remains of the dead relative, and bury these on the grave-yard of the capital. In burying them there, they offer a *sadaka*. Such a proceeding is observed as soon as the dreaming woman, or any other visionary person declares that the *koma* has demanded in a dream that the relative who died and was buried at such and such a place must be fetched and buried near the capital...they believe there to be more happiness for the *koma* in the vicinity of the capital than elsewhere. This belief binds them to the capital, the centre of their union which they deem necessary lest they lose all patriotic feeling by their being scattered abroad on their lonely plantations. All their festivities...all their consultations, everything is transacted in the *kaya* where the *koma* are. We may not wonder why they consider their dead people still attached to this place... where there is always some eating and drinking and other merriments. There is the heaven of the Wanika, at which their mind grasps.⁴⁵

¹⁴⁰ Krapfs Journal, entry for 19 September 1847, CMS, CAS/016/172.

¹⁴¹ Krapf to Lay Secretary, 20 January 1848, CMS, CAS/016/71. On an earlier occasion, Krapf wrote: "Materialism and worldly propensities find a powerful ally in this aversion to Muhamedanism." Krapfs Journal, entry for 19 March 1845, CMS, CA5/M1/547.

¹⁴² Krapf to Waters, 2 September 1844, Fort Jesus Archives, ref. 920KRA.

¹⁴³ Krapfs Journal, entry for 17 January 1847, CMS, CAS/016/171.

¹⁴⁴ New to Barton, 23 April 1864, *UMFCM*, VII (1864): 612.

¹⁴⁵ Krapfs Journal, entry for 4 August 1847, CMS, CAS/016/172.

As averse as the Mijikenda were to individual tenets of Islam,¹⁴⁶ resistance to Islam clearly stemmed from a deeper internal strength: Mijikenda notions about life, spirits, and life after death -what we may call Mijikenda cosmology- and the religious customs and practices derived from those notions. Within the Mijikenda cosmos, life and life-after-death both centred on the *kaya*. There, in the *kaya*, were buried the powerful charms that protected all members of society; there, too, were buried the ancestors whose pleasure or displeasure (benevolence or malevolence) determined the course of events.

The Mijikenda seem to have perceived a range of greater and lesser spirits: from the all-important spirits of founding ancestors¹⁴⁷ to weaker minor spirits (including less important ancestors, relatives, foreigners, etc.) that caused distress, personal inconvenience, and such sicknesses as headaches and ulcers, but could not afflict society as a whole. Only at prescribed times of national importance (or crisis) would ceremonies be held to offer sacrifice to the main ancestral spirits of the *kaya*. But prayers and sacrifices were regularly offered by individuals and families to placate minor spirits, lest they cause accidents or misfortunes, small and large, such as falling from a coconut tree or a barren wife. The offering of sacrifice was so frequent that Krapf called it "the chief sacrament of these heathen which binds them together."¹⁴⁸ Muslim healers were active, and evidently considered efficacious, in dealing with lesser spirits, but had no apparent power over the ancestral spirits of the *kaya*, nor is there any evidence that Muslims took part in major *kaya* rituals.¹⁴⁹

All members of society were expected to take part in family and communal sacrifices; for failure to propitiate the ancestors harmed not only the offenders, but the entire family or the whole of society. There existed a real communion of the Kambe, communion of the Jibana, communion of the Ribe, etc., binding together the dead and the living. This bond was their defense against Islam: "...if the Wanika as a community were not so bound together how could it be explained that Islamism has made so little impression on them as a body."¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁶ Krapf noted that the Mijikenda "relish the meat of pore and monkeys" and that they were "particularly averse to the Mohamedan fasting and forbiddance of pore." Krapf to the Lay Secretary, 25 September 1844, CMS, CAS/016/ZS and Krapfs Journal, entry for 30 January 1845, CMS, CAS/016/168.

¹⁴⁷ That is, those ancestors described by Durkheim as "named figures of authority." Emile Durkheim, *Les Formes Elementaires de la Vie Religieuse*, (4th edition, Paris 1960), 405-408.

¹⁴⁸ Krapfs Journal, entry for 29 April 1847, CMS, CAS/016/171.

¹⁴⁹ For various interpretations of the roles played by dead ancestors in African societies, see the series or related articles: I. Kopytoff, "Ancestors as Elders in Africa," *Africa*, 41, 2 (1971): 129-141; James Brain, "Ancestors as Elders in Africa: Further Thoughts," *Africa*, 43, 2 (1973): 122-133; and Patrick Pender-Cudlip, "Dead Elders or Ancestral Spirits?", paper presented at the Limuru (Kenya) Conference on the Historical Study of East African Religions, July 1974.

¹⁵⁰ Erhardt to Venn, 22 September 1852, CMS, CA5/09f9.

There is evidence that the few converts to Islam living in the rural areas were under strong social pressure to take part in Mijikenda ceremonies, and that converts who refused to take part were not tolerated. In 1863, one of the first Giriama Christian converts, Abengoa, was forced to leave Giriama, because "his kinsmen" were "offended with the strange conduct of this new 'Mzomba'¹⁵¹ who would not, as other 'Wazomba' had always done, still join the Wanika in the observance of their ancient customs!"¹⁵² Commenting on this attitude of intolerance among the Mijikenda, Rebmann noted that "only recently a man labouring under the same accusation as Abe Ngowa, was killed by the Wadigo to the south of Mombasa, though he had turned a Muhammedan."¹⁵³ In the light of such incidents, we can better understand why most converts to Islam moved away from the *kayas*.

By 1865, the pattern of emigration and islamization among the Mijikenda had begun to diversify. Jibana converts had established rural Muslim communities near *kaya* Jibana; and Ribe, Kauma and Digo Muslims had emigrated from Mombasa and founded Mijikenda Muslim villages near Takaungu. No *kaya* elders north of Mombasa had become Muslim, as far as we know; but south of Mombasa at least one Digo senior elder (at *kaya* Kiteje) had become a Muslim, and remained among his people as an elder. These developments had given Mijikenda Islam a new rural character, and presaged further change.

¹⁵¹ *Mzomba*, or more correctly *mdzomba* (plur. *adzomba*) is the Mijikenda word for "maternal uncle" or "maternal nephew." The term was applied by pagan Mijikenda to Mijikenda Muslim converts, presumably referring to the close ties of maternal kinship between the converts and Swahili Muslims. Mijikenda Muslims often gave their sisters or daughters in marriage to Swahili Muslims, and so came to be literally the "adzornba" of the children of Swahili Muslims. Because of the ambiguity of the term, its historical origin is not certain; it is possible that the use of the word originated among the Swahili, who also used it in its Swahili form (sing. *mjomba*, plur. *wajomba*) to refer to Mijikenda Muslims.

¹⁵² Rebmann to Venn, 2 May 1863, CMS, CAS/024/42.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.* Oral information confirms that hostility existed towards early converts. The term 'haji', referring to converts to Islam, was originally used at Mtongwe as a term of contempt. Muhammad bin Matano Mwakutanga, Mtongwe, 9/5/69. See page 66, footnote 117.

Chapter III. Islamization North of Mombasa, 1865-1933

The history of Muslim penetration into the coastal region north of Mombasa between 1865 and 1933 can be divided into almost equal periods of growth and decline.

During the years 1865-95, the economy of the region expanded steadily. Much of its prosperity was based on the export of grain to Zanzibar, Pemba, Somalia, southern Arabia and the Persian Gulf.¹ The growth of plantation agriculture that had begun in the 1840s² continued until the 1890s, by which time plantations of millet, sesame, sorghum and maize extended over much of the coastal plain between Mombasa and Mamburu. The Muslim plantation owners and traders who benefitted from the flourishing economy were a varied group, and included Swahili peoples, Busaidi and Hadhrami Arabs, and the Mazrui. Indian merchants (non-Muslim as well as Muslim) settled in coastal towns (Takaungu, Mtanganyiko, Malindi and Mamburi), and were responsible for financing much of the export trade.

By 1870, five spheres of Muslim influence were discernible north of Mombasa: 1) the northwestern mainland,⁴ dominated by the Changamwe and the Jomvu; 2) the immediate northern mainland as far as Mtwapa creek, under the influence of the Swahili (and other Muslims) of Mombasa; 3) the area from Mtwapa creek⁵ north to Kurwitu, dominated by the Mtwapa;⁶ 4) the area from Takaungu to Arabuko and Msabaha, dominated by the Mazrui;⁷ and 5) the Sabaki river area, dominated by the Busaidi and the Gunya. Though all these areas were nominally under the Sultan of Zanzibar, Muslim leaders such as the Shaykh of Jomvu, the Mtwapa elder Hamis Kombo and the Mazrui Liwali of Takaungu exercised strong local authority.

Most northern Mijikenda continued to reside inland during this period. The special relations that had developed between them and the Swahili in earlier centuries⁸ continued, with varying intensity. At the same time, the movement of peoples (Mijikenda as well as Muslim) introduced changes and new relationships. The Rabai and the Jomvu remained as close as ever, but many Duruma migrated south, and their

¹ In 1889, Mackenzie described Kilifi as a "large and important grain-growing" district. (Letter of George S. Mackenzie, Mombasa, 7th January 1889, to The Secretary, IBEA Company. SOAS, IBEA Co. File IA, Mackinnon Papers.) For a summary of the export trade in grain, see Frederick Cooper, *Plantation Slavery on the East Coast of Africa* (New Haven 1977): 100-102, 135.

² See Chapter II, pp53-54.

³ For details of the years of prosperity, see Cooper, *Plantation Slavery*, 85-92.

⁴ This corresponds to the present location of Changamwe. See Map 16, p.220.

⁵ Traditionally, Mtwapa creek marked the northern limit of Mombasa's mainland territory. Fugitives from Mombasa who made their way north of the creek came under the Mtwapa, and Mombasans would have to ask the Mtwapa for their return. Kobana Salim, Mtwapa, 22/10/87.

⁶ See Map 8, p52.

⁷ See Map 9, *p.n.*

⁸ See Chapter I, pp.32-35, and Appendix H.

regular dealings with the Changamwe declined. Relations between the Jibana and the Mtwapa remained strong, whereas relations between the Chonyi and the Mtwapa grew weaker. As the Giriama expanded northwards, their long-standing relations with the Mvita were eclipsed by a strengthening of ties between the Giriama and the Mazrui.

In the early 19th century, most northern Mijikenda contacts with Muslims had centred on Mombasa. By the last quarter of the century, the northern Mijikenda found a host of different Muslim peoples (including Mijikenda Muslims) living near them. Though this meant that as a group the northern Mijikenda had a broader range of Muslim contacts than in the past, individual Mijikenda peoples tended to deal with the Muslims living nearest them. Thus, the Ribe and Kambe came under the influence of the Swahili and other Muslims of Mombasa⁹; the Jibana and Chonyi under the influence of Muslims resident in the Mtwapa area¹⁰; and the Kauma and the Giriama under the influence of the Mazrui. The Busaidi at Malindi and Mambrui, on the other hand, had negligible influence on the northern Mijikenda, with whom they had little contact until the end of the 19th century.

The first Mijikenda conversions to Christianity, in the 1860s, introduced a new element into Mijikenda affairs, and into Mijikenda-Muslim relations. In the 1870s, the Christian mission at Ribe expanded its work to other Mijikenda peoples, and even succeeded in converting a leading Swahili Muslim¹¹ from Islam to Christianity. Though generally the Mijikenda resisted Christianity, the presence of Christian missionaries among them countered what might otherwise have been a more incisive growth of Muslim influence.

Despite constant contacts between the northern Mijikenda and Muslims during the last decades of the 19th century, the expansion of Islam took place on the periphery of Mijikenda society. The number of Mijikenda converts was small, and conversions took place slowly (though possibly at a slightly higher rate than before). Conversion to Islam continued to be a process of assimilation, and Mijikenda Muslims migrated away from the *kayas* to settle among Muslims. Indeed, the emigration of Mijikenda converts probably removed elements that would otherwise have initiated religious (and other) change. As a result, Islam failed to penetrate into northern Mijikenda society. Mijikenda Muslims had regular contacts with *kaya* elders, and on occasion even influenced *kaya* affairs, but were increasingly marginal to the mainstream of Mijikenda life. Mombasa retained its importance as a centre of Swahili Islam, but was replaced as

⁹ In an early estimate of the population of Mombasa, F.D.Talati, Superintendent of the Conservancy Department, calculated that there were 9000 Swahilis, 2000 Baluchis, 600 Hindus, 600 Goans, 600 Indian Bohoras, 600 Indian Khojas and 500 Arabs, out of a total population of 14,000 persons. Letter of F.D.Talati to Sub-Commissioner, Mombasa, 25 September 1899. KNA, CP/92/159.

¹⁰ See Chapter II, pp53-54.

¹¹ See p.80, footnote 45.

¹² See Chapter II, pp.65-66.

the exclusive centre for Mijikenda Islam by numerous smaller rural centres, each of which came to have resident Mijikenda groups: Maunguja (Rabai, Ribe), Mwakirunge (Ribe, Kambe), Gongoni (Chonyi), Junju (Jibana, Chonyi), Kidutani (Jibana), Mkomani (Digo), and Mtanganyiko (Digo, Ribe, Kauma, Giriama).

In spite of the distribution of Muslim villages over an area of several hundred square miles, Muslim institutions did not develop uniformly in the region. Most Mazrui villages had mosques and Qur'an schools, but many other Muslim villages had no such institutions. In general, northern Mijikenda Muslims failed to develop their own Muslim institutions, and were either dependent on other Muslims for such institutions, or did without them. The adverse consequences of this emerged when the plantation economy began to collapse, and Muslim prosperity to decrease, at the end of the century. The Mijikenda Muslim communities of Mtanganyiko were a notable exception to dependency: they built their own mosque, promoted a Qur'an school, intermarried among themselves, and evolved a common Mijikenda Muslim identity.

In July 1895, the British government proclaimed the East Africa Protectorate, and the coastal region from the Tana river south to the border with German East Africa became the Seyyidieh Province of the Protectorate.¹³ In the same year, the Rising¹⁴ of Shaykh Mbaruk bin Rashid al-Mazrui (and the British retaliation provoked by the Rising) displaced large numbers of people, and severely disrupted agricultural production, and there began a period of economic decline. The inherent weakness of slave-dependent agriculture became evident after the Rising, when a shortage of labour made it impossible to re-establish the plantation economy.¹⁵ The region rebuilt itself in a patchwork fashion, but many plantations were abandoned, and villages dwindled or disappeared altogether. The appointment of Muslims to administrative posts in the colonial government gave Muslims a modicum of influence in the region for a time,¹⁶ but the authority of Muslim officials did not effectively extend to the

¹³ In 1887, The Sultan of Zanzibar had granted a concession to the British East Africa Association, which gave the Association authority to administer the coastal strip; the following year, the Association (under the name of the Imperial British East Africa Company) was granted a Royal Charter. In 1889, the Sultan and the British Government entered an Agreement regulating the concession to the Company, and in 1890 the Sultan placed his Dominions under British protection. When the Company went into liquidation in 1895, administration of the coastal strip was assumed by the British Government as a part of the East Africa Protectorate. (Foreign Office to the Law Officers of the Crown, 20 September 1897, KNA, Coast Province, MP/90/154.) For a general description of the Political and Administrative Divisions of the Protectorate, see "Report on the Condition and Progress of the East Africa Protectorate." For a summary of the background to the declaration of the Protectorate, see John Flint, "The Wider Background to Partition and Colonial Occupation," in Roland Oliver and Gervase Mathew (eds), *History of East Africa*, Vol I (Oxford 1963): 352-90, particularly 387-89.

¹⁴ Brantley (*The Giriama and Colonial Resistance in Kenya, 1800-1920*, Los Angeles 1981) refers to the Rising as the Anglo-Mazrui War, but the term seems less appropriate, considering that many Mazrui supported the British and many of those opposing the British were not Mazrui.

¹⁵ The plantation economy had probably reached its peak before the Rising. Cf. Cooper, *Plantation Slavery*, 135. In 1891, Fitzgerald found "land going out of cultivation" in the Mambri hinterland because of a shortage of slaves. W.W.A. Fitzgerald, *Travels in the Coastlands of British East Africa* (London 1898): 22.

¹⁶ Among Muslim officials appointed by the colonial government were the Liwali of Malindi, Liwali of Takaungu, Assistant Liwali of Mambri, Mudir of Arabuko, Mudir of Roka, Mudir of Mtanganyiko, and Mudir of Mtwapa.

Mijikenda hinterland, and such appointments hardly compensated for the loss of commercial influence Muslims had previously enjoyed.

During the early decades of the 20th century, the coast was of marginal interest to the colonial government, whose main objective was to promote the settler economy in the interior. Mombasa was developed as a port to serve that objective, but the rest of the coastal region remained isolated from developments taking place at Mombasa.¹⁷ The growth of Mombasa may even have accelerated the decline of the northern hinterland: exports through smaller ports such as Kidutani, Takaungu, and Mtanganyiko, decreased and eventually stopped, and migration from the northern villages to Mombasa increased. Already marginalized from their own society, Mijikenda Muslims found themselves members of a failing economy. Apart from farming, or migration to town, few opportunities were open to them. After the Rising, the village of Mtanganyiko revived temporarily, but its subsequent decline was particularly enervating to northern Mijikenda Muslim society. As Mijikenda Muslims moved to the larger towns (Mombasa, Takaungu and Kilifi), the number of Mijikenda Muslims in rural villages decreased, and only scattered pockets of Mijikenda Islam survived.

PROSPERITY AND GROWTH, 1865-95

Migration south and north: the Dwuma and the Giriama

In the 1860s, New observed that a few Duruma had been converted to Islam.¹⁸ By that time, however, the special relations between the Duruma and the Changamwe may have begun to weaken, for the Duruma had begun to move south along the inland plateau away from Mombasa. During the Mwakisenge famine of 1884-5, some Duruma migrated farther south towards Mwena.¹⁹ From Mwena, they moved east towards Mwele,²⁰ and south towards Lungalunga. By the 1890s the Duruma were dispersed over a wide area, and had begun to lose cohesion as a people. Influential Duruma

¹⁷ For a study of this, see PA.Memon and Esmond B.Martin, "The Kenya Coast: An Anomaly in the Development of an 'Ideal Type' Colonial Spatial System," *Kenya Historical Review*, IV, 2 (1976): 187-206; and Brantley, *The Giriama*, 64.

¹⁸ New wrote: "A few Wadigo and Waduruma have partially adopted the Kisuaheli dress and proudly call themselves Islam..." New, 102. At that time, Duruma conversions almost certainly took place under Changamwe influence.

¹⁹ Details of Duruma migrations are found in "Notes on Wa-Duruma in Vanga District" (1914), KNA, DC/KWL/3/5. See Map 14, p.218.

²⁰ Mwele, an inland village founded by Shaykh Mbaruk bin Rashid, became a refuge point for runaway slaves from Malindi, Mombasa, and Takaungu, and for slaves who had run away from the Mijikenda. (Swahili Manuscripts, Vol IX, SOAS, Taylor Papers, MS 4n59, p.85.) Hobley camped at Mwele in 1893, and "sent out askaris (soldiers) to Duruma villages to buy food." (Charles Hobley, *Kenya Diaries*, Volume V, entry for 16th January 1893, Rhodes House, MSSAfr.r. 143-148. On Hollis's first visit to Mwele in 1899, he met with the Duruma chiefs of the area. ("Report of tour to Mwele, March 1899," KNA, Vanga Inward, 1899-1900, Coast Province, MP/67/16.) See Chapter III, p.94.

chiefs emerged among the southern Duruma,²¹ and the authority of the *kaya* elders declined.²² The Duruma who remained near *kaya* Duruma continued to be influenced by the Changamwe, their nearest Muslim neighbours. By the 1870s, the Duruma had also begun to come under the influence of the Christian missionaries at Ribe.²³ By the 1880s, a small chapel had been built near *kaya* Duruma, and Mazera, one of the first Duruma converts, was put in charge.²⁴ The influence of Christianity grew steadily, though the number who were converted during this period, either to Islam or Christianity, was small.

The Duruma who migrated south and west moved away from Muslim (and urban) influence. Their migration took them into marginal agricultural areas, where their mixed economy was often more pastoral than agricultural. They had sporadic contact with Muslim traders who came into the area in search of cattle and skins.²⁵ And some Muslim influence reached the southern Duruma from the Mazrui at Gasi and at Mwele, and from neighbouring Digo at Kikoneni and Msambweni. Digo would take Duruma wives, and during the Mwakisenge famine (1884-85) Duruma moved to Gasi and Msambweni.²⁶ But for the most part the southern Duruma remained pagan.²⁷

²¹ Notable among these chiefs was Mwamkono, chief of Mwena, who helped the British against Mbaruk bin Rashid of Gasi. Report by FAinsworth Dickson, Acting District Commissioner, Vanga District, 1/8/1914, KNA, DC/KWL/3/5. In 1902, Mwamkono was referred to as the "principal chief" of the Duruma in Vanga District. Quarterly Report of 29 November 1902. KNA, CP/72/35.

²² For various reasons, the initiation of Duruma elders was delayed over a period of years, and eventually failed altogether. There are constant references in colonial documents to the breakdown of government among the Duruma. By 1913, though the Duruma elders were still meeting every year, the crisis of leadership (and unity) was acute. As the Assistant District Commissioner put it: "We are faced with the undisputed fact that a population of nearly 15,000 possess no tribal authority except ten tottering old men and their twenty half-fledged colleagues." Letter of Asst.D.C., Rabai, to P.C., Mombasa, 28 July 1913. KNA, Coast Province, MP/22/323. By 1922, there had been no elections of *kaya* elders for almost fifty years: "Among the Duruma no elections have taken place since the Mwakisenge famine (about 1884)." KNA, DC/KWL/2/1, Handing-over Report of 21/1/1922. In 1923 the District Officer, Vanga District, described the authority of the Duruma council of elders (Duruma. *kambi*) as "almost nil." KNA, Coast Province, MP/19/77, Handing-over Report of 14 November 1923.

²³ Wakefield described making his second visit to Duruma in October 1873: "150 attended...■ preached for an hour; afterwards, they welcomed me to come to their country." Letter of Wakefield, 25 October 1873, *UMFCM*, XVII (April 1874):250. In the same letter there is a reference to a •new convert, Mazera, a native of Duruma." Soon thereafter Mazera began work at the Methodist mission station at Ganjoni near *kaya* Duruma. Hardinge described the settlement of Ganjoni (which had already begun to be called Mazeras) in 1895: "Mazera's (or as the natives call it Ganjoni), a village of about 500 hundred inhabitants, about 13-14 miles from Mombasa, usually the first stage for caravans proceeding to the interior, is at the same time a station of the Free Methodist Mission for which Mazera, the native Headman, acts as catechist, and which possesses there a stone church and small parsonage house." A.Hardinge, Mombasa, 13 November 1895, to the Marquess of Salisbury, *Accounts and Papers (Parliamentary Papers)*, Vol LIX (1896):47.

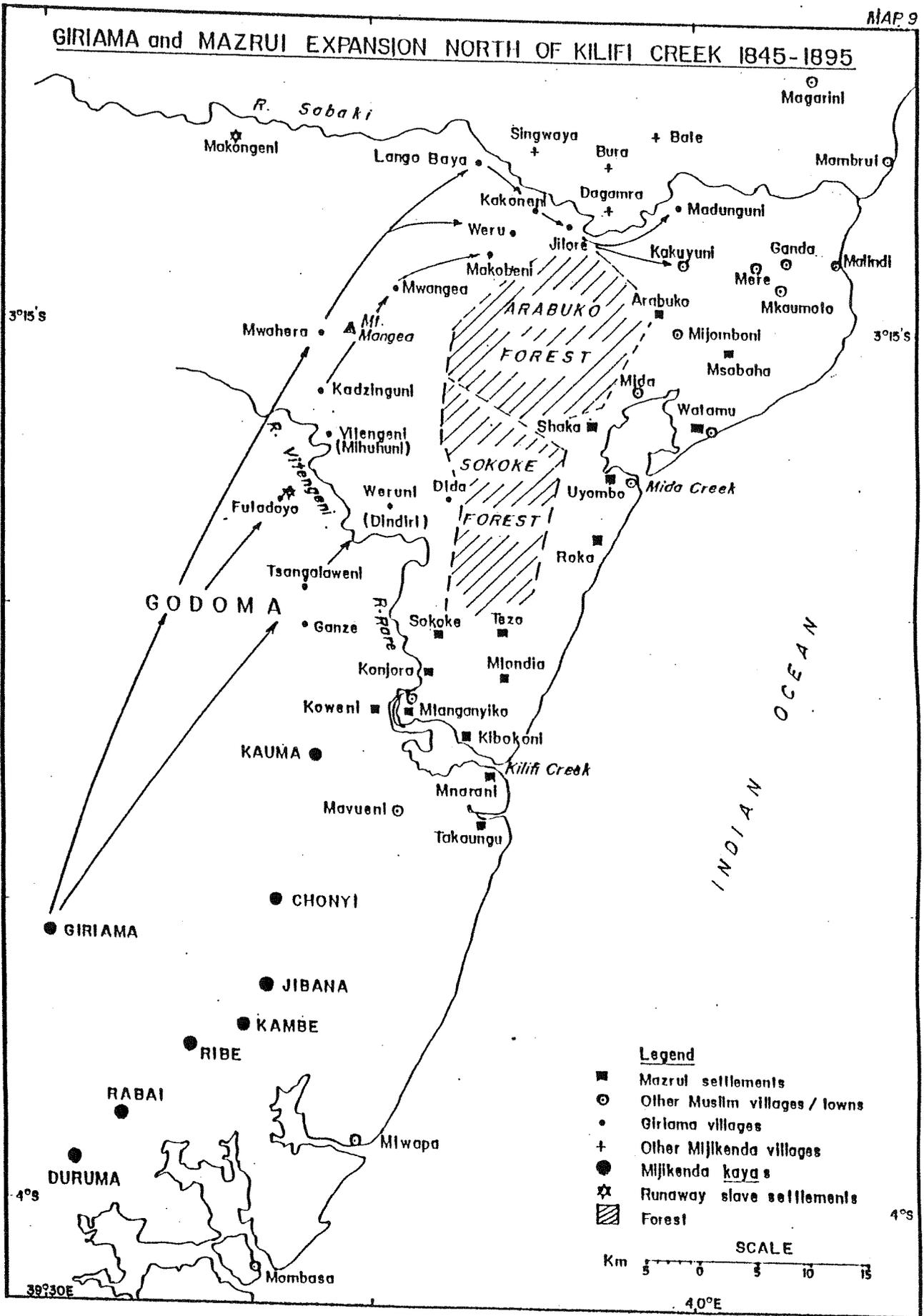
²⁴ The chapel, destroyed in the raid of July 1882 (see p.62, footnote 72), had been rebuilt by October 1885. At that time Wakefield wrote that there was a •small chapel 20' x 30" and that the station was "in charge of Thomas Mazera" a Duruma who "knows the heathenism of Duruma from its shell to its core...once, I believe, a 'medicine-man' amongst the natives." Letter of Wakefield, 26 October 1885, *UMFCM*, 29 (January 1886): 60.

²⁵ See Chapter IV, p.106.

²⁶ Though the movement of Duruma during the Mwakisenge famine is not documented, similar later moves are. For example, during the famine of 1918-19, "the Kikoneni elders reported considerable shortage of food in Duruma country, particularly Ndavaya, and many Duruma coming to Gwirani (the area between Kikoneni and Msambweni] for food." Tour Diary of H.B. Sharpe, District Commissioner, Vanga District, entry for 28 April 1919. KNA, Coast Province, MP/47/1156.

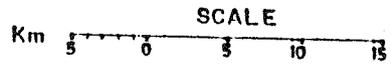
²⁷ Though they seem to have been familiar with at least some of the precepts of Islam: "We Duruma are the Islam [Muslims] of the 'bara' [interior] and always bury our dead," a pagan Duruma once said, when complaining to a touring District Commissioner about the unsanitary Kamba custom of not burying their dead. Tour Diary, April 1924, H.E. Lambert, District Commissioner, Digo District, KNA, Coast Province, MP/47/1156.

GIRIAMA and MAZRUI EXPANSION NORTH OF KILIFI CREEK 1845-1895



Legend

- Mazrui settlements
- ⊙ Other Muslim villages / towns
- Giriama villages
- + Other Mijikenda villages
- Mijikenda kaya
- ☆ Runaway slave settlements
- ▨ Forest



Muslim influence began to penetrate into southern Duruma country only in the late 1930s, and has spread slowly since then.²⁸ The Duruma who migrated westwards towards Mariakani also moved away from Muslim (and Christian) influence, and only came into regular close contact with Muslims again when Mariakani became an important trading centre after the First World War.²⁹

In a movement that roughly mirrored the Duruma migration south, the Giriama expanded along the inland plateau to the north (Map 9). By 1850 some Giriama had already settled in the Godoma area north of their original *kaya* and west of Kilifi creek. From Godoma they continued to migrate northwards. By the late 1860s they were west of Mida creek,³⁰ by the 1880s they had reached the Sabaki river, and begun to move eastwards towards Jilore.³¹ Though the Giriama established contact with Muslims resident in Malindi and Mambui at that time, these two towns were then at the height of their plantation prosperity, and had no tradition of hinterland trade.³² Such trade increased marginally during the 1890s but did not really develop until after 1900.³³ In about 1896 the Giriama crossed north of the Sabaki river.

The Giriama migrated north in far greater numbers than did other northern Mijikenda, and so came to dominate the hinterland north of Kilifi creek. Migration shifted the centre of Giriama society northwards, and brought about significant changes in their economy.³⁴ The Giriama who lived around the *kaya* were mainly pastoral. The majority of the Giriama migrated north, abandoned pastoralism (and their role as middlemen trading in ivory and cattle) and turned to farming.³⁵ The Giriama of Weruni and Tsangalaweni were especially well placed to develop contacts and trade with the inhabitants of the Mazrui villages north of Kilifi creek.³⁶

The southern Giriama (near *kaya* Giriama) had some contact with early Christian missionaries, but in general resisted Christian as strongly as they did Muslim influence. As the century progressed, the southern Giriama were less exposed to Islam.

²⁸ In his Annual Report for 1934, the District Commissioner of Digo District wrote: "The tribe [Duruma] has shown itself amazingly resistant, not only to economic development, but to the teaching of missionaries - both Christian and Moslem." KNA, DC/KWL/1/20. In 1947, the Duruma of Digo District (now Kwale District) were described as "mostly pagan." KNA, DC/KWL/2/1. Handing-over Report, Digo District. The Digo have been, and continue to be, the main Muslim proselytisers among the southern Duruma. Muhammad Matezo, Ndavaya, 6/12/86.

²⁹ See p.100.

³⁰ In 1865, Wakefield walked north from Ribe beyond Godoma. He camped at the foot of Mount Mangesa, which he described as being "in Walungulo country." Letter from Wakefield, 25 November 1865, *UMFCM*, IX (June 1866): 426.

³¹ Jilore, near the Sabaki river, should not be confused with Jorore, a subsidiary *kaya* north of *kaya* Giriama. From Godoma north to the Sabaki river, the Arabuko-Sokoke forest formed a natural barrier to Giriama migration eastwards.

³² Few Giriama were resident in the hinterland of Malindi and Mambui, which consisted rather of plantations and slave villages. Fitzgerald, who lived near Mambui in the early 1890s, left detailed descriptions of his excursions through the area. Cf. Fitzgerald, *Travels*, 18-48.

³³ Berg, 254; Cooper, *Plantation Slavery*, 145; Spear, *Kaya Complex*, 88-92, 138.

³⁴ Brantley, *The Giriama*, 8-16.

³⁵ Brantley, *The Giriama*, 40.

³⁶ See pp.89-90 below.

Muslim traders gained direct access to ivory and other trade goods of the interior, and the Giriama lost their favoured position that had allowed them to control the supply of these goods to Mombasa. Moreover, *kaya* Giriama was no longer on the direct trade route into the interior. Muslim traders frequented Giriama country less, and Muslim influence among the Giriama dwindled,³⁷ though Giriama who were not Muslim took Muslim names, of visitors or friends.³⁸ The decrease in contacts between Giriama elders and the Swahili of Mombasa had other consequences: at the end of the 19th century Giriama elders were known to speak excellent Swahili, but the standard of their Swahili later declined.³⁹

The Rabai and the Jomvu

The Swahili village of Jomvu was only some six miles away from *kaya* Rabai. When Krapf went to live at Rabai in 1846,⁴⁰ the Rabai had already been associating with the Muslim Jomvu for many decades, if not centuries.⁴¹ Many of Krapf's comments on Muslim influence among the Mijikenda are based on his observations of the influence of Jomvu Muslims among the Rabai. There was intermarriage between Jomvu men and Rabai women, and the Rabai would give their children Jomvu names.⁴² The Rabai acted as porters for Jomvu involved in the caravan trade.⁴³ The Jomvu and Rabai were continually trading with each other. Among other items, the Jomvu would buy grain, coconuts, honey and palm thatching from the Rabai, in exchange for mangoes, oranges, shark meat, and clay pots. A number of the early Rabai

³⁷ In 1865, Swahili traders were still frequenting Giriama country. In August that year, Wakefield noted: "The Wali [Liwali] of Mombasa has sent to call away the Sawahilis resident in the Giriama (Giriama) country. No further details are given by Wakefield, and it is not known whether Swahili traders later returned. The Liwali's order may have been prompted by a wish to monopolize the ivory trade himself. Wakefield's Journal, entry for 10 August 1865, *UMFCM*, IX (January 1866): 69.

³⁸ Uthman Mwinyisi, Mkomani, 15/10/87. Because of this custom, which was also prevalent among other Mijikenda at that time, it is impossible to know from written records whether a person with a Muslim name is a Muslim. For example, colonial records show that in 1922, the Headman at Kaya Fungo [kaya Giriama] was called Abdallah bin Nguwa. (Tour Diary of Asst. District Commissioner, Malindi, 17/12/22-10/1/23. KNA, CP/47/1121.) But to confirm that Abdallah bin Nguwa was a Muslim, one would need to do further investigation.

³⁹ Ma'allim Yahya Ali Omar, Mombasa, 8/9/86.

⁴⁰ Krapf first reached Mombasa in March 1844. In June 1846, he wrote of "meeting with the chiefs of Rabbay Empia [new Rabai] who have agreed to our settling down among them." He and Rebmann took up residence at Rabai in August 1846. Krapf's Journal, entry for 13 March 1844, and Letter of Krapf, 27 June 1846. CMS, CAS/016/165 and CAS/016/61.

⁴¹ See Chapter I, p.32-34.

⁴² To this day Rabai, even those who are Christian, give their children Jomvu names. Samuel Ndune, Ngamani, 23/8/86.

⁴³ In 1890 between Voi and Kitui, Hobley met Rabai who had gone inland with a Swahili caravan. Charles Hobley, Kenya Diaries, Volume III, entry for 20 November 1890. Rhodes House, MSSAfr.r.143-148.

Some Rabai are also known to have been caravan traders in their own right. See Thomas J. Herlehy, "Ties That Bind: Palm Wine and Blood Brotherhood at the Kenya Coast during the 19th century," *1/AHS*, 17 (1984): 285-308. The reference is on p.296. There is no evidence that the five Rabai caravan traders about whom Herlehy gives details (based on oral information) might be Muslim -none of them is given a Muslim name- but this could be the bias of Herlehy's informants, most of whom were pagan or Christian.

converts to Islam are said to have been converted because of sickness, told by their own *waganga* to do so in order to be cured.⁴⁴

Among the Mijikenda, the Rabai are exceptional because of their early, continuous exposure to Christianity.⁴⁵ Initial resistance was strong,⁴⁶ and several years passed before the first Rabai became Christians.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, the presence of Christian missionaries may have kept Muslim influence at Rabai from increasing, and may have had an intangible ripple effect on other Mijikenda *kayas* during this early period.⁴⁸ Krapf continually argued against Muslims, and publicly denounced their beliefs and practices. He would burn Muslim (and Rabai) charms, and openly defy local taboos. The establishment of a mission in the village of Jomvu is strong evidence for the penetration of Christian influence. Through a Jomvu elder by the name of Mwidani,⁴⁹ contacts with the Christian missionaries at Rabai and Ribe led to the opening of a Christian mission at Jomvu in 1877. The fact that missionaries gained access to Jomvu, and were given land⁵⁰ by the Muslim elders of the village, illustrates the extent of Christian influence (and of Mwidani's influence at Jomvu⁵¹). Though few Jomvu Muslims were converted to Christianity,⁵² Mwidani's open support for

⁴⁴ Ali Said Pingu, Shikadabu, 15/12/86.

⁴⁵ For a period of some two years, from 1857-59, the Rabai mission was evacuated because of the threat of Kwavi raids. Otherwise, Christian missionaries were resident there from 1846 onwards. Letter of Rebmann, Mombasa, 16 September 1859. CMS, CAS/024/35.

⁴⁶ For example, the Rabai accused Abe Ngoa, the first Giriama Christian convert, of witchcraft ("seizing the rain"); he was driven away by a "tumultuous crowd" and "pelted with tufts of grass and earth" (Letter of Rebmann, 17 September 1862, CMS, CAS/024/41). Ngoa took refuge in Kauma, but eventually returned to Giriama, from where he was driven back to Rabai (Letter of Rebmann, 2 May 1863, CMS, CAS/024/42). In 1863, the Rabai told Rebmann to send Abe Ngoa away, and he was sent to guard the Mission House in Mombasa (Swahili Manuscripts, Vol IX, SOAS, Taylor Papers, MS 47759, p.110). See Chapter II, p.71.

⁴⁷ Except for a death-bed baptism in 1851, the first Rabai were baptised in the early 1860s. By the time Rebmann wrote his last letter from Rabai, in 1868, there were 21 "native Christians", of whom 7 were Bombay Africans. Letter of Krapf, 10 April 1851, CMS, CA5/M2/374; letter of Rebmann, 24 November 1868, CMS, CAS/024/55.

⁴⁸ When Krapf met the elders of *kaya* Kauma in 1862 to discuss the opening of a mission, they told him: "The country is yours! You can come and teach the people whatever you like, we shall welcome you! You may build houses and do whatever you like among us, we know that Mr.Rebmann at Rabai has done much good to the Wanika of that tribe, and we know that you intend to do the same among us." Letter of Krapf, 12 February 1862, *UMFCM*, V (1862):402.

⁴⁹ Mwidani's first contact with Christian missionaries was with Krapf at Rabai, whom he helped in Swahili translations. Mwidani later helped Wakefield at Ribe "in compiling a small vocabulary of kiSwahili" and "in translating the Scriptures." In 1871 Wakefield received a letter from Mwidani saying that he and several other Muslims at Jomvu wanted to become Christian. In May 1871, they came to Ribe as a group to discuss the matter with Wakefield. He described them as "the first Mohammedans I have seen bow the knee in a Christian place of worship." In 1876, Mwidani (who had publicly professed Christianity by then) arranged for Wakefield to meet the elders of Jomvu, who agreed that he could "open a mission for teaching and preaching." The Jomvu Mission started in April 1877. Mwidani's relations with Wakefield and the negotiations for the start of the Jomvu Mission are in the following documents published in the *United Methodist Free Churches Magazine*: Wakefield to Barton, Mombasa, 5 May 1863, Vol VI (September 1863): 603; "Extract's from Wakefield's Journal," Vol IX (March 1866): 211; Wakefield's Journal, entries for 1 May and 14-15 May 1871, Vol XV (March 1872): 207-208; Letter of Wakefield, Vol XIX (October 1877): 636-637.

⁵⁰ Wakefield wrote of being granted "a large piece of land for which I paid 40 dollars. The Governor of Mombasa, an Arab, refused to affix his signature to the title deed." Letter of Wakefield, 21 April 1877, *UMFCM*, XX (October 1877): 636.

⁵¹ Wakefield described Mwidani as "the most influential man of the place (Jomvu)." Letter of Wakefield, 21 April 1877, *UMFCM*, XIX, (October 1877): 636.

⁵² In 1880, three Muslims were "attending Sunday worship" at Jomvu (Letter of Ramshaw, 16 June 1880, *UMFCM*, 23 (October 1880):640). In 1882, there were four Muslim "candidates for baptism" (Letter of Daring, 2 February 1882, *UMFCM*, 25 (July 1882): 435).

. Christianity must have done inestimable damage to the Muslim cause among the Mijikenda of Rabai and Ribe (and perhaps among other northern Mijikenda⁵³). In general, relations between the Jomvu Muslims and Christian missionaries seem to have been cordial, though not without friction.⁵⁴

Rabai would normally go to Jomvu to be converted to Islam, but Muslim influence did penetrate into one area of Rabai, the village of Shikadabu. In the 1880s, Johari Juma, a Jomvu, set up a small shop at Shikadabu and began trading. Gradually he came to be identified with the Rabai, until they accepted him as one of themselves, and he was initiated into the Kariaka clan. Johari is said to have converted many Rabai, particularly in Shikadabu village.⁵⁵

Rural Mombasa: the northern mainland

Since at least the early 19th century, Mombasans had been farming land on the mainland immediately north of Mombasa town.⁵⁶ Farms were small, and land was used mainly to grow coconut and fruit trees, and some grain.⁵⁷ The agricultural expansion that took place in the 1850s and 1860s⁵⁸ continued during the last decades of the 19th century. Because of a shortage of good agricultural land near Mombasa, the Swahili extended their farms into outlying areas of Mwakirunge. There they came into regular contact with neighbouring Ribe and Kambe, some of whom were attracted to migrate to nearby Muslim villages⁵⁹ or to Mombasa, and to become Muslim. Among the first Ribe converts to Islam was Hamisi Mungumati, who lived in Mombasa. Other early Ribe and Kambe converts settled at Mwakirunge and Maunguja.⁶⁰ Mungumati

⁵³ The Jomvu mission station certainly had an influence on the Duruma. In 1886, Wakefield had "65 children, mainly Duruma, in school" at Jomvu. Letter of Wakefield, 16 March 1886, *UMFCM*, 29 (July 1886): 411.

⁵⁴ Wakefield wrote: "The Jomvu Muhammadans are on first-rate terms of friendship with us." (Letter of Wakefield, 7 June 1883, *UMFCM*, 26 (October 1883): 638.) When Vizetelly was at Mombasa several years later, in 1889, he met the Rev. Carthew, the missionary in charge at Jomvu, who invited him to visit the mission station ("a wretched village of grass huts...with larger huts for church and schoolroom"). At that time, Vizetelly witnessed a dispute over a sheep that had trespassed onto the land of a Christian convert, and concluded that "a good deal of bad blood" existed between the mission and the Jomvu Muslims. Edward Vizetelly, *From Cyprus to Zanzibar* (London 1901):411-13,421.

⁵⁵ Mwidadi Johari, Shikadabu, 24/11/86.

⁵⁶ See Chapter I, p.40, footnote 132, and Chapter II, p51. The northern mainland, which includes the modern locations of Kisauni and Mwakirunge, is today a part of suburban Mombasa (see Map 16). Some Mombasans still farm in the area, but much of what was previously farming land has given way to the housing estates and residential villages of an urban labour force.

⁵⁷ Cooper estimates that the average land holding in Kisauni in the late 19th century was 6.9 acres, compared to an average of 60 acres in the Malindi area. Cooper, *Plantation Slavery*, 103.

⁵⁸ See Chapter II, pp53-54.

⁵⁹ One such village was Mwando wa Hamis founded by Muslim immigrants from Pemba. Saidi Mwangogo, Kilifi, 18/9/87.

⁶⁰ In 1915, most of the elders of Mwakirunge and Maunguja were said to be "Islamised Waribe." Tour Diary, District Commissioner, Mombasa, entry for 20 April 1915, KNA, CP/47/1140.

The Ribe are said to have been converted in larger numbers than other northern Mijikenda: "The Ribe were near Mombasa and could easily become Muslims." Uthman Mwinyiusi, Mkomani, 23/9/87.

came to be the leader of the Ribe-Kambe-Kauma Muslim community in Mombasa, and is said to have been a friend of Swalehe Lenga, the founder of Mtanganyiko,⁶¹ whom he met in Mombasa.

Though the Kilifi traditionally had special relations with the Ribe and Kambe, other Mombasa Muslims⁶² also married Ribe and Kambe women, and came to have "Mijikenda families" in the rural areas. For example, Shebani, a Muslim immigrant from Pemba, married a Ribe wife, built a homestead at Kinung'una, and decided to settle there permanently.⁶³

In spite of the growing diversity of the Muslim population of Mombasa, the Kilifi continued to be the closest allies of the Ribe (and the Kambe).⁶⁴ The Kilifi engaged Ribe (who were usually not Muslim when they began work) as servants and workers, and would provide shelter and food for Ribe visitors. Ribe living in Mombasa occasionally became Muslim, but the number of such converts was small, and reaching a decision about conversion usually took a long time. Only after several years might a Ribe come forward to say that he wanted to become a Muslim. After a simple conversion ceremony,⁶⁵ new converts would be taught the practical basics of Islam, how to perform ablutions, how to pray, etc. Ribe Muslims who settled in Mombasa were given land to cultivate, usually at Kisauni,⁶⁶ and were accorded burial rights by the Kilifi.⁶⁷

Ribe Muslims living in the Mombasa area came directly under the influence of Swahili Islam. They would attend Friday prayers at a mosque in Mombasa town, and some sent their children to learn at a Qur'an school in the town. They might visit their pagan relatives, but they no longer regarded themselves or wanted to be regarded as Mijikenda.⁶⁸ They would eat apart when pagan relatives came to visit them in town.

⁶¹ See Chapter II, pp.60-61.

⁶² Except for the Busaidi. Though they governed Mombasa, and dictated the course of political events, as Ibadhi they were isolated from the everyday religious (and social) life of the town. They had little direct religious influence in Mombasa, and even less among the northern Mijikenda.

⁶³ Saidi Mwagogo, Kilifi, 18/9/87.

⁶⁴ The details given here for the Ribe are equally applicable to the Kambe and Kauma, and to other Swahili-Mijikenda alliances.

⁶⁵ Mijikenda wishing to become Muslim were asked to say the profession of faith (see Chapter II, p.60, footnote 94). Water would sometimes be poured over them, as a symbolic act of ritual cleansing. They would discard their old clothes and put on new Swahili clothes, often given to them by the Muslim converting them. There was usually no need for circumcision, since they had already been circumcised as young men in accordance with Mijikenda custom.

⁶⁶ The Mijikenda Muslim settlements at Mkomani (Kisauni) and Mto Panga may have started in this way. Ali Khamis Kipasho, Mkomani, 26/7/87. According to a tradition collected by Spear, Mijikenda first settled at Kisauni during a famine. Spear, *Traditions*, 57.

⁶⁷ Ribe, Kambe and Kauma Muslims were given burial rights at Kilifi (on Mombasa island), Jibana Muslims at Kwa Mashehe, and Giriama Muslims at Manyimbo. Similarly, Digo Muslims were granted burial rights (by the Kilindini) at Ganjoni on the south of the island. Before burial, the genealogy and religious practices of a dead man were closely scrutinized, to make sure that he was a genuine Muslim. When investigation showed that the deceased had not been practising Muslims, they were denied burial in Mombasa. (Ali Abdallah Tsofi, Mavueni, 1/4/86.) It is unlikely Swahili Muslims made such an assessment, which is after all the prerogative of divine judgement, on Mijikenda Muslims who were known to them. There were, however, many casual visitors, relatives, etc. in town. If such persons died in town, the Swahili may have been reluctant to them grant burial rights as Muslims without some kind of investigation.

⁶⁸ Cultural details would, of course, reveal their Mijikenda origin. For example, in Mombasa today one can find Muslims of Mijikenda descent who have adopted Swahili and whose children no longer speak a Mijikenda language, but whose women sing Mijikenda songs.

They spoke Swahili, wore Swahili dress, and aspired to a Swahili life-style; to be a Muslim was to follow Swahili culture, and to be assimilated into urban Islam.

The earliest detailed accounts of life at Ribe date from 1862, when the Methodist Mission began there. No Muslims were resident at Ribe at that time, and there was little direct Muslim influence. Comments in Wakefield's early letters and Journals indicate that the main Muslim influence came from the employment of young Ribe men as caravan porters. Wakefield mentioned how "of 12 young men and youths, whose names I entered in my books as scholars, only two remain, the others having principally gone to Ukambani [Kamba country] as porters for a Suaheli trader."⁶⁹ Otherwise, there is no mention in his writings of a Muslim presence or influence at Ribe.⁷⁰ The only Muslim community at Ribe was the one started by the missionaries themselves when New brought a Muslim helper with him to the Mission station.⁷¹

The contrast between the kinds of influence being exerted by Islam and by Christianity was obvious: while the Muslim way of life continued to attract people away from *kaya* Ribe,⁷² Christian missionaries were living at the gates of the *kaya*. The first Christian baptisms at Ribe took place in July, 1870, and included "Galla and Wanika...16 adults and 5 children."⁷³ The Ribe Mission soon broadened its scope by sending Ribe Christian converts to work in the outskirts of *kaya* Ribe⁷⁴ and among other Mijikenda. By 1873, the Ribe Mission had begun work among the Duruma⁷⁵ and

⁶⁹ Letter of Wakefield, 25 July 1864, VIII (January 1865): 68. The "young men" schooling with Wakefield were not the only ones who had left Ribe. In the same letter Wakefield stated that the "greater part of the young men have lately joined a Mohammedan caravan and gone to Ukambani."

⁷⁰ In assessing Wakefield's writings (and the writings of other early Methodist missionaries), it should be remembered that the only documents that survive are those that were published in the *United Free Methodist Churches Magazine*, in which there may have been an editorial bias. The original letters and Journals of Wakefield (and New and others) have been lost. The richness of the published extracts confirm that the full documents would have provided an invaluable insight into Mijikenda society of the 1860s and 1870s, and most likely would have given more detailed comments about Islam and its influence on the Mijikenda than were published in the *UFMCM*.

⁷¹ New, 138. According to oral information from Tofiki's only surviving son, Tofiki was of Nyasa origin. He was born and grew up in Mombasa. When he was a young man in his early twenties, he met Wakefield, though it was New who later brought him to Ribe. Tofiki came to Ribe with his wife, but later married a Ribe wife. The Muslim community at Ribe was small, consisting only of Tofiki's immediate family. They did not build a mosque, but used to go to Mwakirunge for Friday prayer and to Mombasa for 'Id celebrations. Mwidani wa Tofiki, 21/10/79.

⁷² Constant emigration, through the marriage of Ribe women to Muslims or the departure of men to work in Mombasa, seems to have depleted the population. It is impossible to assess how many Ribe emigrated from the *kaya* during the last half of the 19th century, but certainly enough to contribute to the steady population decline that occurred. In 1844, Krapf estimated that *kaya* Ribe had "6-700 inhabitants." (Krapf to Venn, 25 September 1844, CMS, CAS/016/28.) In 1864, Wakefield wrote: "The people (Ribe) are amazingly few in number...the whole tribe probably numbers three or four hundred." (Letter of Wakefield, Ribe, 25 July 1864, *UFMCM*, VIII (January 1865): 68.) At the end of the 19th century, Johnstone found that the Ribe were "decreasing in numbers, only approximately two hundred pure-blooded members remaining at the present day." (H.B. Johnstone, "Notes on the Customs of the Tribes Occupying Mombasa Sub-District, British East Africa," *!RAJ*, XXXII (1902): 263-272).

⁷³ Letter of Wakefield, 2 August 1870, *UFMCM*, XIV (January 1871): 65. The Galla were fugitives from Somali-Galla fighting who had settled at the Mission Station.

⁷⁴ "William Chai goes to Kignagnuna (Kinung'una), about five miles to the east of our station, and by far the most populous district of Ribe. He will bring people in to the station every Sunday until we have a Chapel there." Letter of Wakefield, 25 February 1874, *UFMCM*, XVII (July 1874): 442.

⁷⁵ See p.76, footnote 23.

the Chonyi.⁷⁶ In 1880, in what was undoubtedly the most extraordinary example, up to that time, of Mijikenda acquiescence in Christian practices, the Christians were allowed to build a chapel and to pray inside *kaya* Ribe, in an area normally reserved only for Ribe ceremonies.^{*n*}

Mtwapa to Kurwitu: agricultural villages

The area from Mtwapa creek north to Kurwitu and Shariani⁷⁸ was dominated by the Mtwapa, under the leadership of Hamis Kombo,⁷⁹ who resided at the village of Mtwapa.⁸⁰ The area included the Jibana Muslim villages of Mji Mre, Tunzanani and Kidutani,⁸¹ the mixed Muslim villages of Junju (Jibana, Chonyi) and Gongoni (Chonyi, Pemba), and the Digo Muslim village of Mwando wa Panya,⁸² and various agricultural

⁷⁶ Stephen Kireri, one of the first Ribe converts, began working in Chonyi in February 1874. Wakefield described the day as a "Red Letter Day...Stephen Kireri (30 years old) goes to Chonyee [sic], a district and tribe of Wanyika, about 20 miles from Ribe..." Letter of Wakefield, 25 February 1874, *UMFCM*, XVII (July 1874): 442. Kireri worked there until May 1882, when he was withdrawn because of shortage of personnel. Letter of Wakefield, 2 June 1882, *UMFCM*, 25 (October 1882): 634.

^{*n*} Only a few details of this incident are known, as published in an extract of a letter from William During, an Mrican missionary from Sierra Leone who had arrived at Ribe earlier in 1880: "11th instant, after forenoon service at mission, afternoon service in the *kaya*, with dedication of the Chapel. This place is...the chief seat of the Ribe Wanyikas, their metropolis, so to speak. At the end of the service, I gave out to those who attended whoever desired to join the Church should stand...22 stood up and gave their names." Letter of During, undated, *UMFCM*, 24 (January 1881): 63. In the 1870s and early 1880s, the usual interval between the date of a letter from East Africa and publication of the letter in the *UMFCM* was five months. Though the date of During's letter is not given, we can speculate that it was written in either July or August, 1880. The dedication of the Chapel and "the afternoon service in the *kaya*" clearly took place on the 11th day of the same month as the letter, that is, either on 11th July or 11th August, 1880. From During's description of an earlier morning service at the Mission, we can assume that the service in the *kaya* probably took place on a Sunday. Whereas the 11th August 1880 was a Wednesday, the 11th July 1880 was a Sunday (Freeman-Grenville, *Calendars*, 77, Table Four: Perpetual Calendar of the Days of the Week in a Christian Year), which allows us to conclude with reasonable certainty that the event took place on the 11th July 1880. Two years later, on 23 July 1882, *Kaya* Ribe was burnt down -and the chapel with it- when soldiers of the Sultan of Zanzibar attacked Ribe, in retaliation for help the Ribe had given to Shaykh Mbaruk bin Rashid of Gasi in fighting against the Sultan. The Chapel and houses of catechists at Duruma were also destroyed by the soldiers on the same day. Letter of During, 4 August 1882, *UMFCM*, 26 (January 1883): 56. The Chapel inside *kaya* Ribe does not seem to have been rebuilt.

⁷⁸ Kurwitu and Shariani, both founded by Ahmad Stambuli (a Basheikh Arab), are sometimes considered a single settlement. Stambuli's homestead was at Kurwitu; the plantations and slave quarters extended towards Shariani (Abdallah bin Awadh, Kidutani, 10/7/86). The village of Mwando wa Makonde, just north of Shariani and Kurwitu, inhabited by slaves of Salim bin Khamis (the Uwali of Takaungu), was already within the Mazrui sphere of influence (Uthman Mwinyiusi, Mkomani, 26/7/87). When Pigott visited the village in 1889, he found that the headman was a "native of Nyasa." (Diary of J.R.W.Pigott, entry for 14 February 1889, RGS, Library MS.)

⁷⁹ Hamis Kombo has yet to receive due historical recognition as a Swahili leader. In 1865, he was installed as the *tamim* [senior elder] of the Nine Tribes, a position he held for 30 years. ("Succession of Tamims in the Nine Tribes of Mombasa," compiled by FJ.Berg, Fort Jesus No.920, Fort Jesus Archives, Mombasa.) Shown in official records as "Khamis bin Kombo ai-Mutwafy", he is more commonly known by his Swahili name Hamis Kombo.

⁸⁰ Hamis Kombo had two residences in Mombasa, and a residence in the hinterland at Chengoni, in addition to his residence at Mtwapa adjacent to the site of the ancient town (Uthman Mwinyiusi, Mkomani, 22/10/87). Mtwapa seems to have been continuously inhabited since it was seen by Emery in 1824, but it is impossible to know whether the village seen by Emery was what later developed into the village of Hamis Kombo. See Chapter I, p.42.

⁸¹ As Kidutani developed as a port for the export of grain from the surrounding Jibana hinterland, Mji Mre became less important and was eventually abandoned sometime towards the end of the 19th century. Ali Muhammad Chibungu, Kidutani, 26/7/86.

⁸² Krapf refers to Mwando wa Panya as a "Mahomedan village on the coast." Krapf to Venn, 9 December 1847, CMS, CA5/M2/94. The Digo who founded the village may have been Muslim when they migrated into the area, but there is no firm evidence for this.

villages inhabited by slaves who had been brought into the area by the Muslims (Arab, Somali, Swahili) who had established plantations there.⁸³ Mijikenda Muslims tended to live in their own villages, while the agricultural villages were populated entirely by slaves. Most plantation owners resided in Mtwapa or Mombasa, from where they would make periodic visits to their plantations. Despite heterogeneous origins, the various groups (Mombasa Muslims, rural Mijikenda Muslims, and slaves) were loosely united by a common Muslim culture. The inhabitants of the area, Muslim and non-Muslim alike, were united, too, under the person of Hamis Kombo, whose authority they all recognized.⁸⁴

Hamis Kombo was the religious leader of the area, and the mosque he had built at Mtwapa was the Friday mosque: "He would lead Friday prayers at Mtwapa. People would come from Kidutani, Kireme, Bomani, from all the villages. Then after prayers, Hamis Kombo would provide food for everyone."⁸⁵ There was a mosque at Mji Mre,⁸⁶ and there was also a small mosque at Bomani, built by Mwinyi wa Shimbwa, an Mtwapa. And at Shariani, Ahmad Stambuli got his slaves to build a mosque where he would pray with them whenever he came to Shariani.⁸⁷ But many villages had no mosque, because the Muslims who had the means to build a mosque were only occasional residents and had no inclination to do so:

These villages weren't permanent homes. People would go there to supervise agricultural work, but their homes weren't there, nor was Islam an important ingredient of their rural life. Some people built small prayer-houses (Swa. *misala*, sing. *msala* ⁸⁸), but for Friday prayers, people would go to Mtwapa or Mombasa.⁸⁹

Friday was usually a day of rest for slaves. Some prayed, but others would pray only when their master was present, not unlike schoolboys in the presence (or absence) of their teachers. The varying attitudes of slave-owners towards religion often determined the religious practice of slaves: "Muslims who were religiously inclined would sell off slaves who didn't pray, but Muslims for whom religion was unimportant

⁸³ See Chapter II, pp53-54.

⁸⁴ No one was allowed to begin farming or to settle in the area without Hamis Kombo's permission. When giving people such permission, Kombo would also tell them where they should farm or settle. Periodically, the Jibana would ask Hamis Kombo to settle their internal disputes. On such occasions, he would go to stay at Chengoni (which was easily accessible to *kaya* Jibana) for two or three days. Kobana Salim, Mtwapa, 19/11/87.

⁸⁵ Kobana Salim, Mtwapa, 19/11/87.

⁸⁶ See Chapter II, p57-58.

⁸⁷ Uthman Mwinyiusi, Mkomani, 23/9/87.

⁸⁸ A prayer-house (Swahili. *msala* or *mswala*), usually a small hut made out of mud and thatch, is considered a quasi-religious building, but not a mosque. To build a prayer-house is an act of devotion, because one thereby acquires a dignified place to say one's daily prayers, but one is not obliged to have such a place. Hamis Kombo is said to have built a *msala* at Chengoni, his rural residence near the Jibana (see footnote 80 above). The custom of having a prayer-house within one's homestead continues to this day. When, for example, I went to visit Ali bin Haji at Barani in October 1987, I found him at prayer in his *msala*.

⁸⁹ Uthman Mwinyiusi, Mkomani, W/8/87.

wouldn't even give their slaves time off to pray."⁹⁰

Islam in the area, best described as rural or "agricultural plantation" Islam, was much attenuated by the low standard of Muslim education. Illiteracy was high, opportunities for learning few, and knowledge of the faith rudimentary. There were no Qur'an schools. Slaves, and the children of slaves, had little chance of education.⁹¹ But even slaves without a solid grounding in Muslim doctrine have acquired a veneer of Muslim attitudes and practice. New described how slaves "sometimes learn by rote sufficient of the Koran, though in an unknown tongue to them, to take part with their betters in the religious exercises of the mosque."⁹² Binns noted at Rabai that "Runaway slaves who have been in touch with Swahilis are less teachable than the people coming from Giriama."⁹³ In theory, Mijikenda Muslims had access to education, in such places as Mombasa or Mtanganyiko, but few seem to have availed themselves of it.

Mazmi expansion north of Kilifi creek

The fourth area of Muslim influence, from Takaungu north to Arabuko and Msabaha, was dominated by the Mazrui.⁹⁴

In the second half of the 19th century, the Oromo withdrew beyond the Sabaki river, leaving a vast expanse of land empty north of Kilifi creek.⁹⁵ The Mazrui (along the coast) and the Giriama (farther inland), and to a lesser extent other peoples, moved into the region (Map 9).⁹⁶ As early as the late 1840s, the Mazrui began to expand north from Takaungu. Rashid bin Salim (the founder of Takaungu) was the first to establish a homestead outside Takaungu, at Mtondia. In the 1850s, after Rashid's death, his son Abdallah consolidated the settlement and built the first Mtondia

⁹⁰ Uthman Mwinyiusi, Mkomani, 23/9/87. The practice of Islam by slaves is not well documented. In an extensive study of slavery on the Kenya coast during this period, Morton deals with the topic only briefly. He notes that whereas conversion to Islam gave slaves a sense of superiority over unbelievers, rigid class barriers usually prevented them from rising above their inferior status. (RF. Morton, "Slaves, Fugitives, and Freedmen on the Kenya Coast, 1873-1907," Ph.D. thesis, Syracuse University, 1976, pp.101-103.) Cooper states that slaves were taught the Qur'an (Cooper, *Plantation Slavery*, 215), but this would have been true mainly of domestic slaves living in town.

⁹¹ Slaves in Mombasa had better access to education, and sometimes learned to quite high standards. A teacher of the last Liwali of Mombasa, Shaykh Mbarak bin Ali ai-Hinawi, was a slave. Fahmy Mbarak Hinawi, Mombasa, 30/1/87.

⁹² New, p.58.

⁹³ Letter of Rev.H.K.Binns, 23 April 1879, CMS, CAS/03/9.

⁹⁴ Mazrui influence extended south of Takaungu as far as Mwando wa Makonde, a slave village of Salim bin Khamis, the Mazrui Liwali of Takaungu. (Uthman Mwinyiusi, Mkomani, 26/7/87.) Gunya had also settled at Takaungu. (Koffsky, 43-45.) They were second only to the Mazrui in spreading Muslim influence among the Mijikenda. (Uthman Mwanzo, Takaungu, 26/11/86.)

⁹⁵ Sanye hunters remained south of the Sabaki river, particularly in the Arabuko forest area, but did not compete with the Mijikenda for agricultural land.

⁹⁶ Spear, *Kaya Complex*, 109-110. Late in the 19th century, small groups of other Mijikenda migrants (Kambe, Kauma, Chonyi, and Jibana) crossed north of the Sabaki river, to settle at such places as Bura, Singwaya, and Dagamura. Non-Giriama Mijikenda have always been a minority of the population north of Kilifi creek. "Notes on the History of the Wanyika" by Kenneth Macdougall (1914), KNA, DC/KFI/3/3.

mosque. Roka (founded by Juma bin Khamis bin Mbaruk and his brother, Ali bin Khamis) and Uyombo (founded by Su'ud bin Mbaruk) were other early Mazrui settlements north of Kilifi creek.⁹⁷

The Mazrui continued to move northwards until approximately 1875, and established settlements at Kisamba (Mtanganyiko), Koweni, Konjora, Tezo, Sokoke, Shaka, Watamu, Msabaha and Arabuko.⁹⁸ The Mazrui expansion established a Muslim presence on the mainland north of Kilifi creek for the first time in two centuries. The whole coastal plain from Takaungu north to Msabaha and Arabuko became a Mazrui preserve.

Initially, the reasons for expansion seem to have been economic, but after the succession of Rashid bin Khamis to the Liwaliship of Takaungu in 1865, some Mazrui may have moved away from Takaungu because of internal disputes. After becoming Liwali, Rashid bin Khamis visited Sultan Majid in Zanzibar, and the Mazrui and the Busaidi Arabs were reconciled. Takaungu and the other Mazrui villages were incorporated into the Zanzibar commercial system, and gained access to the important entrepot of Zanzibar. Subsequently, the external demand for grain and other exports increased, and more Indian merchants came to Takaungu.⁹⁹ And the Hadhrami soldiers stationed by the Sultan at Takaungu, like their Baluchi counterparts at Mombasa,¹⁰⁰ found time to trade and engage in business. These new developments stimulated agriculture in the Mazrui villages, and increased trade with the Mijikenda.¹⁰¹

Specific families were associated with the beginning of each of the new Mazrui villages, and some villages were closely related to each other.¹⁰² Most villages were both agricultural and commercial, growing grain (mostly for export), exploiting the shore or the near hinterland for such products as ambergris and gum copal, and trading with neighbouring Mijikenda.¹⁰³ But some villages were like large family manor

⁹⁷ The Mazrui had begun taking gum copal from the Uyombo region by 1845, if not earlier. According to Krapf, they paid "one hundred dollars in presents to the Galla and the Dahalo to get permission to dig copal." Krapf's Journal, entry for 24 June 1845, CMS, CAS/016/168. In 1846, Krapf visited Uyombo and described how: "At the western end of the cove (of Uyombo) the Takaungo people have built a hamlet last year. They inhabit these cottages when they come here for copal...copal digging used to be the monopoly of the Wanika of Keriamia (Giriama) and Kaooma [Kauma], but the Takaungo chief wrested it from their hands." Krapf's Journal, entry for 9 March 1846. CMS, CAS/016/169.

There are two villages called Uyombo. The Mazrui village slightly inland should not be confused with the other Uyombo, a Gunya fishing village on the shore. The Mazrui village no longer exists, though it is still possible to identify the site of the Mazrui Uyombo mosque. Muhammad Abdallah Mazrui, Takaungu, 18/9/87.

⁹⁸ Koffsky, 68-70.

⁹⁹ In 1891, Fitzgerald observed that Takaungu had "a great many Indian shopkeepers and merchants." Fitzgerald, *Travels*, 141.

¹⁰⁰ See Chapter IV, pp.105-106, 109.

¹⁰¹ Koffsky, 63-66.

¹⁰² For example, the villages of Sokoke and Tezo stemmed from Konjora. The people of Konjora expanded their farms northwards, and eventually some people moved to Sokoke and Tezo in order to be near their land. The people of Sokoke did not build a mosque, and instead continued to pray at Konjora. (Muhammad Abdallah Mazrui, Takaungu, 18/9/87.) Sokoke no longer exists. Because there was no mosque, it is not easy to identify the exact location of the village. (Charles Pasi, Sokoke, 13/3/87.)

¹⁰³ Muhammad Abdallah Mazrui, Takaungu, 4/3/87.

estates, with large numbers of resident slaves.¹⁰⁴ Each village had its own distinctive character and blend of agriculture and commerce. Like the owners of the villages in the Mtwapa area, the Mazrui depended on slave labour for their plantations. But the Mazrui villages differed from the agricultural villages of Mtwapa. The Mazrui resided in their villages, built mosques, taught their children the Qur'an, and celebrated Muslim festivals. Thus, their villages came to have a more cultured and complete social (and religious) atmosphere.

Relations of the Mazrui with the Kauma and Giriama

The first Mijikenda people with whom the Mazrui developed close relations after settling at Takaungu were the Kauma, their nearest Mijikenda neighbours.¹⁰⁵ As the Mazrui moved farther north and west, they also established contacts with the Giriama. Though the Mazrui had some contacts with other Mijikenda peoples (Chonyi, Jibana, Digo),¹⁰⁶ the Kauma and the Giriama are the two Mijikenda peoples on whom the Mazrui had the strongest influence during this period.

Relations between the Mazrui at Takaungu and the Giriama seem to have begun through joint expeditions into the interior in search of ivory. The Giriama were trading regularly with the Oromo (Galla), and "the Mazrui joined together with the Giriama in trading expeditions to Galla country." So it is said that "whereas relations between the Mazrui and the Kauma arose because they were neighbours, relations between the Mazrui and the Giriama arose because they began to trade together."¹⁰⁷

As well as "trading together", the Mazrui and the Giriama traded with each other. By the 1860s, there was a steady movement of Giriama, bringing grain and other items, such as ivory, skins and cattle, from the hinterland to Muslim traders at the coast. By that time, Mazrui had settled nearer Giriama country at such villages as Mtondia, Koweni and Konjora. Whereas Kauma relations with the Mazrui continued

¹⁰⁴ Pigott and Fitzgerald give us the earliest first-hand descriptions of some of these villages. Pigott described Roka as "a well-to-do looking place, most of the inhabitants are Arabs and seem friendly. The village is surrounded by a stockade, which is fallen out of repair." (Diary of J.R.W.Pigott, entry for 16 February 1889, RGS, Library MS.) Fitzgerald described Shaka as "a large open shamba [field] belonging to the Liwali of Takaungu, with a slave village," and Arabuko as "a village belonging to the brother of the Liwali of Takaungu, a strongly-palisaded slave settlement." (Fitzgerald, *Travels*, 149, 154).

IOS See Chapter II, pp.55-59.

¹⁰⁶ On the whole, the Chonyi came more under the influence of the Gunya and Pemba who had settled near them. But there were exceptions. For example, Muhammad bin Abdallah bin Nassor, a renowned *tabibu* of Takaungu was a great friend of the Chonyi. They would seek his help in times of drought, and after a good harvest would bring bags of grain to his home in Takaungu. Ali Khamis, Kilifi, 30/12/86.

¹⁰⁷ Muhammad Abdallah Mazrui, Takaungu, 18/9/87. Of course, the Mazrui were also trading with the Kauma: "When the Mazrui occupied Takaungu, they entered into friendly relations with the Wanyika (Wakauma and Wachonyi whom they found as far north as Mavueni), but in so doing stipulated that...the Wanyika would agree to give (them) the whole monopoly of their com-trade." "Notes on the History of the Wa-Nyika," Kenneth Macdougall (1914), DC/KFI/3/3. Macdougall was given much of his information by Shaykh Mbaruk bin Rashid of Gasi.

to focus more on Takaungu, Giriama relations with the Mazrui came to be centred on the Mazrui villages north of Kilifi creek. Giriama also came to Takaungu seeking refuge (as did all Mijikenda peoples).¹⁰⁸ But the Kauma associated more closely than the Giriama with the Mazrui at Takaungu. Kauma Muslims would spend the month of Ramadhan at Takaungu, and Kauma immigrants were more numerous at Takaungu than other Mijikenda.¹⁰⁹

There is evidence that the Mazrui took the initiative in fostering contacts with the Kauma and the Giriama. The names of individual Mazrui who did so are well remembered. These persons are described as "the one who went to the Giriama" or "the first to befriend the Kauma". Though the motives of the Mazrui were almost always commercial, in search of persons who might supply them with trade goods, their relations with the Mijikenda were not limited to trade. Abdallah bin Muhammad bin Nassor of Takaungu, one of the first traders to be in close contact with the Kauma, was a "religious teacher who converted many Kauma". One of the first Mazrui to travel to Giriama country was Muhammad bin Nasur, a half-brother of Rashid bin Salim al-Mazrui the founder of Takaungu. Muhammad's relations with the Giriama came to be so close that he was nicknamed the "Liwali of the Giriama". Juma bin Khamis bin Mbaruk, who founded the village of Roka and built its mosque, used to travel to Giriama country to trade; he was a competent *tabibu*,¹¹⁰ who gave medical treatment to many Giriama, some of whom were subsequently converted to Islam. Some Mazrui also took Giriama women as wives, in some cases as a result of already established close relations with certain families or clans. Several Giriama converts came from among male relatives of Giriama women married to Muslims.¹¹¹

In spite of moments of tension, as occurred in 1883-4 when the Mazrui attacked first Fuladoyo, and then the Giriama, in an attempt to recapture runaway slaves, relations between the Giriama and the Mazrui remained basically friendly.¹¹² Most Mazrui villages had Giriama immigrants, but the Muslim influence of the villages depended more on the presence of a strong Muslim personality (or personalities) than on the number of immigrants. Thus, Muhammad bin Abdallah bin Rashid bin Salim, the

¹⁰⁸ Digo who came to Takaungu would usually be sent to Mkongani or Mkomani. Uthman Mwanzo, Takaungu, 26/11/86. See Appendix V, vii).

¹⁰⁹ Salim Omar, Mtondia, 21/11/86.

¹¹⁰ See Appendix IV.

¹¹¹ Mwanajuma binti Maalim Jumaa, Gede, 23/8/86.

¹¹² Fuladoyo was first settled in 1879 by Abe Sidi (also known as David Koi), a Giriama Christian convert, together with "two or three other native Christians." With Abe Sidi's permission, runaway slaves began to settle there. By 1882, the Giriama Christians were well outnumbered; the population of Fuladoyo was "400 souls of whom at least 350 are 'watoro' (runaway slaves)." (Letter of W.S.Price, Frere Town, 7 March 1882, to the Consul General, CMS, G3/A5/1882/40.) After attacking Fuladoyo, the Mazrui attacked the Giriama. The people of Fuladoyo are said to "have rendered the Giriama very efficient help," and the Mazrui were obliged to agree to "humiliating terms of peace" with the Giriama. (Letter of J.W.Handford, Frere Town, 17 May 1884, CMS, G3/A5/1884/66.)

grandson of the founder of Mtondia, is said to have taught many Giriama at Mtondia and Tezo.¹¹³ Other villages like Konjora did not exert so strong a Muslim influence. Konjora is said to have been the centre where the Mazrui received and sold slaves. For this reason, perhaps, fewer Mijikenda were attracted to settle there, and the Mazrui did not encourage such settlement.¹¹⁴ The Mazrui villages of Shaka, Arabuko and Msabaha, were mainly grain-producing settlements, and attracted few immigrants.¹¹⁵ Roka and Watamu were small ports, and traded locally with the Giriama, but attracted few Giriama settlers.

Overall, the number of Giriama in close contact with Muslims was small, and only a minority of Giriama were converted to Islam. The majority of Giriama lived inland and farther north, and had infrequent contact with Muslims. They were attached to the land,¹¹⁶ showed little interest in migration to coastal villages, and continued to follow their own customs and religious practices.

Mtanganyiko: pan-Mijikenda Islam

Soon after the village of Mtanganyiko was founded,¹¹⁷ it began to attract Mijikenda immigrants, and became a gathering point for various Mijikenda Muslim communities:

After Swalehe Lenga founded Mtanganyiko, others came wanting to settle there. He would invite them to stay at his own homestead. Then after a few days, he would take them and show them where they could settle, and tell them, "Here, you can build here." When Dola Mwamrari and Salim Mwamrari [Digos] came, they were told to settle over near the coconut trees. When Abdallah Bekalama, a Giriama, first came with his people, he stayed near the river; then he was told to settle up on the hill. That's the way it was. Every group had its own place.¹¹⁸

The Mijikenda Muslims set up their own councils of elders, and governed themselves just as Mijikenda migrants might have done in any new settlement:

Each community had its own elders. The Kauma had their elders, and the Digo had their elders and the Giriama had their elders. And they would meet together to decide what to do. Once the elders had decided, and the people were told this was their decision, that was it. Everyone accepted their decision.¹¹⁹

During the 1860s and 1870s, Mtanganyiko increased in importance as a trading centre and port of export. Sited at the head of Kilifi creek, the village was easily

¹¹³ Muhammad Abdallah Mazrui, Takaungu, 4/3/87.

¹¹⁴ Except for the Mijikenda Muslims, of whom there were several, who were collaborating with the Mazrui in slave dealings.

¹¹⁵ Yusuf bin Muhasham, Gede, 27/4/87.

¹¹⁶ Fitzgerald described the Giriama around Jilore in 1891: "The Wa-Giryama around Jelori [sic] alone number over three thousand; they are intelligent, industrious, and keen agriculturalists." Fitzgerald, *Travels*, 97.

¹¹⁷ Chapter II, p.61.

¹¹⁸ Ali Abdallah Tsori and Saidi S layman Mwangogo, Mavueni, 1/4/86. The speaker is Ali Abdallah Tsori.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

accessible to Kauma and Giriama farmers, and to Mazrui plantations north of the creek. The Giriama brought much of their surplus grain to Mtanganyiko, and the Kauma shifted trade there from Takaungu. By the 1870s, Mtanganyiko and Takaungu together were exporting more grain than Mombasa. And during the years 1891-1895, Mtanganyiko exported twice as much as Takaungu.¹²⁰ When Fitzgerald visited Mtanganyiko in 1891, he described it as "a small Swahili town" with "a great many Wanika settled around," and he found "several Indian merchants reside here and carry on a considerable trade with the Giriama in maize, tobacco and gum-copal."¹²¹

Mtanganyiko attracted many more Mijikenda settlers, non-Muslim as well as Muslim, than did the Mazrui villages. Like Takaungu, Mtanganyiko became a place of refuge for Mijikenda who wanted to leave Mijikenda country, for whatever reason: to abscond, to look for work, to avoid family problems, or to escape hardships or danger.¹²² The process of migration fed itself, and the presence of Mijikenda Muslim communities tended to attract more immigrants, and more converts.

The Mazrui at Kisamba, just south of Mtanganyiko, extended their settlement, and eventually the village of Kisamba came to form one town with Mtanganyiko. Abdallah bin Zahor bin Abdallah built a mosque (the Mazrui mosque of Mtanganyiko as distinguished from the Kauma or Friday mosque), and began to teach. Though Takaungu kept its preeminent status as the Mazrui capital, Mtanganyiko became a more important commercial centre. Muslims who were trading at Takaungu opened shops at Mtanganyiko as well. Because of the dominant position of the Mazrui in the region, they became the single most influential community at Mtanganyiko, particularly in religious matters. But as one community among many, the Mazrui had to take the opinions of all into consideration, and for this reason did not govern or dominate Mtanganyiko as directly as they did Takaungu. In many ways the Mazrui depended on the Mijikenda Muslims, who taken all together formed the largest single community.

By the 1880s, Mtanganyiko had become the principal settlement for Mijikenda Muslims, and a second generation of Mijikenda Muslims had grown up there. Some of them had been schooled in their faith, and were active in spreading it. They were running a Qur'an school, the first Mijikenda school at the coast, whose influence was felt

¹²⁰ Hardinge called Mtanganyiko the "chief port of Giriama." Enclosure in A. Hardinge, Mombasa, 17 February 1896, to the Marquess of Salisbury, "Correspondence respecting the Recent Rebellion, 1896," *Accounts and Papers* (Parliamentary Papers), LIX (1896): 65. Total export duties at Mtanganyiko for the years 1891-1895 were Rs. 71,550; the corresponding figure for export duties at Takaungu during the same period was Rs. 33,660. Cf. East Africa Protectorate Customs Revenue - Comparative Statement of Duty collected from 1891 to 1897, Appendix A of "Report by Sir A. Hardinge on the Condition and Progress of the East Africa Protectorate from its Establishment to the 20th July, 1897," *Accounts and Papers* (Parliamentary Papers), LX (1898): 45.

¹²¹ Fitzgerald, *Travels*, 138. Some ivory also made its way to the market at Mtanganyiko. Spear, *Traditions*, 94.

¹²² See Appendix V. The towns were also a haven for temporary Mijikenda visitors who would come to spend a few days with relatives or friends, and thereby find some respite from the hardship of rural life. This point came home to me when I once met a Digo woman from a village near Kwale on her way to Mombasa. When I asked her why she was going to Mombasa, she replied, "To rest."

even south of Mombasa. More Digo Muslims came to live in Mtanganyiko, and others sent their children to learn there, since no Digo Qur'an school had yet been established south of Mombasa. Most of the teachers at the school were children of converts, and had learned in Mombasa.¹²³ The pattern of unschooled converts sending their children to Qur'an school had injected vitality into the Mijikenda Muslim community of Mtanganyiko.

Giriama and Digo Muslims at Mtanganyiko, far from their home *kayas*, would occasionally visit relatives, but in general had few contacts with the people or elders of their place of origin. The Kauma Muslims found themselves differently placed, since their home area was so nearby.¹²⁴ Nevertheless, all Kauma Muslims moved away from *kaya* Kauma, and Kauma pagans and Muslims lived separately:

In those days, Muslims couldn't live with pagans. It's not that they would have argued, had they stayed together, but they would have come to scorn each other. When a pagan became a Muslim, the first thing he had to ask himself was, "Now, where can I live?" But Muslims and pagans got along with each other. If some one died at the *kaya*, his Muslim relatives from Mtanganyiko would go to the funeral. And people from the *kaya* would come to bury their relative at Mtanganyiko. They would watch on while the corpse was buried according to Muslim ritual. Then when it was over, they would all go back to the *kaya* together, Muslims and pagans, for the the mourning ceremonies. And Muslims would go to the *kaya* for burials. If your relative there died, you would go, and afterwards you would contribute to the expenses, just like everyone else. And the last day of the mourning period, you would go back again. If they knew you were coming, they would wait and let a Muslim do the slaughtering, so you could all eat together. Pagans and Muslims were like brothers who were living ten miles apart. We were different, but we didn't forget each other.¹²⁵

The Kauma Muslim elders of Mtanganyiko would meet with the *kaya* elders to discuss matters of common concern:

If there was some important matter at *kaya* Kauma, the Kauma Muslim elders would be called to sit with the *kaya* elders. Weren't they Kauma? And weren't we Kauma too? My father used to go, and I used to go myself with my teacher, Mwinyi Mole. He was the one they really listened to. If they started to argue, he would raise his finger and say, "Silence! I don't want to see anyone lift his stick." And everyone would put their sticks down then and there.

They would be drinking palm-wine, but we Muslims wouldn't drink. Nor would we eat any beef, or goat or chicken meat, slaughtered by them. Even if we were thirsty or hungry, we would abstain because of our religion. The elders of the *kaya* didn't like coming down to Mtanganyiko or to the Muslim zone. They were afraid of coming under Muslim influence.¹²⁶

¹²³ The early teachers at the school were almost all Kauma: Said bin Sayfu Kiringe, Nagi bin Swalehe, Abdallah Tsori, Omari bin Hamis Ngoma, and Mwinyi Mole. (Uthman bin Shaykh Mwinyi, Pungu, 22/9/85; Ali Abdallah Tsori, Mavueni, 1/4/86; Muhammad Ab<lallah Mazrui, Takaungu, 4/3/87; Juma Salim Pati, Kitsanga, 20/9/87.) Nagi bin Swalehe was taught *'ilm* by a Mazrui teacher, Muhammad bin Jumaa, and later became the first Mijikenda Muslim to officiate at Muslim marriages in Mtanganyiko. (Ali Abdallah Tsori, Mavueni, 1/4/86.)

¹²⁴ Wakefield gives a good description of *kaya* Kauma as he found it in 1865: "This is certainly the best Kaya I have seen, covering an area of three or four acres. The huts were generally in a good condition, and not too thickly disposed. Wherever we turned, there was an ample passage, and the whole place was airy and clean." Wakefield's Journal, entry for 17 March 1865, *UMFCM*, IX (December 1866): 853.

¹²⁵ Ali Ab<lallah Tsori and Saidi Sulayman Mwagogo, Mavueni, 1/4/86. The speaker is Ali Abdallah Tsori.

¹²⁶ Ibid. The details given here about the practice and influence of Islam make sense, when one remembers that Kauma Muslims were known among the Mazrui for their faithful adherence to Islam, and few Kauma converts apostasized or returned to live in *kaya* Kauma. Contacts between pagan and first-generation or second-generation Muslim relatives continued, but bonds between the younger generations of pagans and Muslims, who had less in common with each other, tended to weaken.

Some converts encouraged friends and relatives to leave the *kaya* and move to Muslim settlements; and the number of converts slowly increased. But this influence took place on an individual, or family, level, and did not present a direct challenge to the integrity of Kauma society. Since converts moved away from the *kaya* and fully respected the customs of their pagan Kauma kinsmen, no ideological conflict or internal struggle occurred. There is no record of any attempt by Kauma or other Muslims to proselytise from within the *kaya*. When visiting the *kaya*, the Muslims would pray apart. Since they had their mosque at Mtanganyiko, and only made brief visits to *kaya* Kauma, there was no question of building a mosque in or near the *kaya*. For them, Islam was distinct, at least in broad terms, from their customs, and was associated with residence outside the *kaya*.

The Busaidi at Malindi and Mambui

The fifth area of Muslim influence, the Sabaki river area, was dominated by the Busaidi at the plantation towns of Malindi and Mambui,¹²⁷ and by Gunya living north of Mambui.

In 1861, possibly in response to growing Mazrui prosperity and in an attempt to prevent the Mazrui from expanding into the area, the Busaidi founded a town at Malindi (on the site of the abandoned earlier settlement);¹²⁸ four years later, some Busaidi settled at the abandoned site of ancient Mambui.¹²⁹ The Busaidi were soon exporting grain from this region to Arabia and Zanzibar. In 1866, after walking from Malindi to Watamu, New wrote: "The whole of the country between the two places had been planted with Mtama (Caffre corn) [a kind of millet] and the crops were looking exceedingly good."¹³⁰ When Kirk visited Malindi in 1877, he found vast fields of millet extending 10-15 miles inland.¹³¹ By that time there were some 500 plantations in the area owned by four main Muslim groups: Omani, Hadhrami, Shela and Gunya, and Bohora Indians had been attracted to Malindi and Mambui to finance the export trade. By 1870, there were twenty-one trading houses in Malindi and two in Mambui, but the towns remained plantation towns and did not develop inland trade.¹³²

¹²⁷ For the location of these towns, see Map 9, p.77.

¹²⁸ Cooper, *Plantation Slavery*, 82-83; Koffsky, 71. Devereux gives us one of the earliest descriptions of 19th-century Malindi, which he visited in November 1863: "a few miserable thatched huts perched on barren sand-hills, and the natives a miserable lot of half-starved slaves." W.C. Devereux, *A Cruise in the "Gorgon"*, London 1869.

¹²⁹ When New visited Mambui in May 1866, Hemed bin Said, the founder of the town, told him that "he had come seven months ago to build Mambui, and that all we saw in the place had been accomplished since that time." New's Journal, entry for 3rd May 1866, *UMFCM*, X (July 1867):500.

¹³⁰ New's Journal, entry for 8th June 1866, *UMFCM*, X (July 1867):504.

¹³¹ Kirk, quoted in Cooper, *Plantation Slavery*, 85.

¹³² For details of the plantation economy of these two towns, see Cooper, *Plantation Slavery*, 88-90.

The Rising of Shaykh Mbaruk bin Rashid al-Mazrui

The Rising¹³³ of Shaykh Mbaruk bin Rashid al-MazruP³⁴ of Gasi in 1895 seriously disrupted the region north of Mtwapa creek.¹³⁵ In June 1895, one of the Takaungu leaders of the Rising, Aziz bin Rashid, attacked and destroyed Mtanganyiko, forcing everyone to flee. In July, Aziz entered Takaungu with a force of some 500 men, and fought a pitched battle with government forces before retiring into the bush, taking women and children with him. In the same month, Shaykh Mbaruk bin Rashid of Gasi sacked the town of Vanga.

In August, the colonial government began to retaliate. Tezo, which had become a support base, was attacked ("a lot of weapons and ammunition" were captured, but "all the rebels escaped into the forest"). The government occupied Gasi in July, and attacked Mwele in August, after which Shaykh Mbaruk moved north of Mombasa. In October, the government raided Sokoke, which had been stockaded and where Aziz bin Rashid had gathered re-inforcements.¹³⁶ In October, Hamis Kombo of Mtwapa, who had already been supplying Shaykh Mbaruk "with gunpowder and every assistance", openly joined the Rising.¹³⁷ "Thirty armed slaves" of Hamis Kombo took control of the ferry across Mtwapa creek, and stopped all traffic to Mombasa. MacDougall noted the consequences: "The fact of Hamis Kombo joining the rebellion has changed the friendly attitude of all the villages from Mtwapa creek to Takaungu on the coast to indirect enmity towards the Government." In the same despatch, MacDougall reported the existence of "rebel villages... belonging to mahajis (Wanyika converts) and

¹³³ Though the Rising is referred to as that of Shaykh Mbaruk bin Rashid bin Salim (of Gasi), it was initiated by Mbaruk bin Rashid bin Khamis of Takaungu, together with his brother, Aziz bin Rashid. When the ruler of Takaungu, Salim bin Khamis, died early in 1895, his nephew Mbaruk bin Rashid bin Khamis, the oldest male heir of the Takaungu Mazrui, should have succeeded him as the new Liwali of Takaungu. The Imperial British East Africa Company (to whom the coastal territory had been leased in 1887 by a Concession of the Sultan of Zanzibar) bypassed Mbaruk bin Rashid bin Khamis, and instead appointed Salim bin Khamis's son, Rashid bin Salim. This provoked Mbaruk bin Rashid bin Khamis to turn against the Company, and against the new Liwali. Shaykh Mbaruk bin Rashid bin Salim (of Gasi) gave his support to Mbaruk bin Rashid bin Khamis (of Takaungu), and became the dominant figure of the Rising.

¹³⁴ See Appendix IX.

¹³⁵ Accounts of the Rising tend to focus on operations south of Mombasa: the sacking of Vanga by Shaykh Mbaruk, the occupation of Gasi by government troops, the storming of Mwele, etc. But on-the-scene reports make it clear that much of the guerrilla activity, government reprisal and destruction took place north of Mombasa. Details can be found in the file "Malindi Inward 1895-98", KNA, PC/COASf/1/1/21(A).

¹³⁶ K. MacDougall, District Supervisor, Takaungu, to Administrator, 20 August 1895 and 12 October 1895, KNA, PC/COASf/1/1/21(A).

¹³⁷ Hamis Kombo was officially proclaimed a rebel on the 22nd October 1895: "Whereas Hamis bin Kombo bin Hamis, El Mutafi, refused to obey the orders of the Government and to come to Mombasa to answer certain charges against him, and when a party was sent to him at Mtwapa, he resisted them by force, he is hereby declared to be a rebel against the Government..all his lands, house, goods, etc. confiscated..all his slaves freed." Proclamations of Public Notices, British East Africa Protectorate, KNA, PC/COASf /1/1/16.

slaves who have joined the rebellion."¹³⁸ Later that month, government forces attacked and captured Mtwapa (Hamis Kombo moved to Bomani), and again attacked Sokoke, but the nearby forest provided safe refuge. MacDougall wrote: "The rebels have no intention of evacuating the [Sokoke] forest...until we are in a position to punish their Wanyika neighbours, who supply them with food and hiding places."¹³⁹

Earlier in October, MacDougall wrote: "The rebels have got friends in every single Wanyika village."¹⁴⁰ It is evident that Shaykh Mbaruk and Hamis Kombo enjoyed enormous support among the Mijikenda. The so-called "rebel villages" of Muslim converts and Muslim slaves lent active support; pagan Mijikenda gave shelter and food, but were less enthusiastic, or not in a position, to undertake fighting. Though not all Mijikenda or Mijikenda Muslims supported the rising,¹⁴¹ the government soon realized the need for Mijikenda cooperation. In the middle of October, MacDougall called in the Giriama and Kauma chiefs and asked them to stop sheltering the anti-government forces. The request, possibly coupled with threats and some kind of amnesty offer, seems to have worked. Soon afterwards, Aziz bin Rashid and his followers were said to have been driven out of Giriama country and to have gone north towards Makongeni on the Sabaki river.¹⁴² At the end of October, "150 slaves and mahaji came in, affirming their loyalty to the government."¹⁴³

The destruction continued. In December 1895, government forces marched on Shimo la Tewa, which they found deserted. They "burnt the town, of 400 good-sized houses and 1 stone house."¹⁴⁴ Shortly afterwards, Kurwitu "joined the rebellion," and Government soldiers attacked and burned the village (of "some 300 good houses"). Subsequently, 220 refugees from Kurwitu came into Takaungu; the men were held in Takaungu, and the women and children sent to Mombasa. As the government began to get the upper hand, violence declined, but as late as May 1896 (after Shaykh Mbaruk bin Rashid had crossed into German East Africa), Muhammad bin Hamis Kombo was still resisting, and government soldiers launched an expedition "to destroy grain in Mikinduni", during which they burned 150 huts at Kijipwa.¹⁴⁵

Though it would be perhaps an exaggeration to call the Rising a Muslim movement, one cannot ignore the role of Islam in uniting some elements of the resistance. On one occasion, MacDougall received reports that Shaykh Mbaruk was "flying a white

¹³⁸ MacDougall to Administrator, 12 October 1895, KNA, PC/COASf /1/1/21 (A).

¹³⁹ MacDougall to Acting Administrator, Mombasa, 26 October 1895, KNA, PC/COASf/1/1/21 (A).

¹⁴⁰ MacDougall to Administrator, Mombasa, 17 October 1895, KNA, PC/COASf/1/1/21(A).

¹⁴¹ When MacDougall went to Mtanganyiko at the end of October, he found some "loyal mahaji" settled there. MacDougall to Administrator, Mombasa, 31 October 1895, KNA, PC/COASf/1/1/21(A).

¹⁴² MacDougall to Administrator, Mombasa, 17 October and 22 October 1895, KNA, PC/COASf/1/1/21(A).

¹⁴³ MacDougall to Administrator, Mombasa, 24 October 1895, KNA, PC/COASf/1/1/21(A).

¹⁴⁴ MacDougall to Administrator, Mombasa, 5 December 1895, KNA, PC/COASf/1/1/21(A).

¹⁴⁵ MacDougall to Administrator, Mombasa, 13 May 1896, KNA, PC/COASf /1/1/21(A).

and red banner with various patriotic and religious inscriptions," and in the attack on Mtwapa "red and white penants, bearing Koran war inscriptions" were captured.¹⁴⁶ In September 1895, Shaykh Mbaruk was reported to have "assumed a more aggressive tone, describing himself as 'Emir' of Islam and talking of a holy war against the infidels."¹⁴⁷ The sympathies of many Mijikenda Muslims were clearly with Mbaruk, and religious bonds must have played a part in this, particularly since the fight was perceived as being against the British not against fellow Muslims.¹⁴⁸

The task of reconstruction began even before the Rising was over. As people surrendered asking for peace, they were given land and told to settle. By October, some had already been settled at Takaungu.¹⁴⁹ In December 1895, there were "40 new houses at Tanganyiko [sic] built by Wagunia and Mahaji who have come in peace since the beginning of November," and the village was said to be "quickly assuming the shape of a populated colony."¹⁵⁰ But such details mask the incalculable damage that the Rising left in its wake. The Mtwapa and Takaungu regions bore the brunt of the violence. Whole villages were destroyed, and populations displaced. Many slaves took advantage of the rising to escape to the other side, whichever that was. Slaves from Takaungu fled to join forces with Mbaruk, just as slaves whose masters were fighting in the rising absconded or were freed.¹⁵¹ After the government attack on Sokoke, MacDougall commented how "many slaves escaped due to our attack."¹⁵²

After the Rising, the government tried to re-establish some of the villages. Where slave communities were more or less intact, they were settled near their original villages.¹⁵³ But few slave communities remained intact. Hardinge's Report summarized how the Rising had dispersed the slave population of the Mtwapa area:

This district suffered a good deal from the disturbances of eighteen months ago,...and it would probably have recovered more rapidly than it has actually done, but for the fact that many of the slaves, who fled into the bush to escape the fighting, have, instead of returning to their villages, either sought work in the

¹⁴⁶ MacDougall to Administrator, Mombasa, 22 September and 20 October 1895. KNA, PC/COASf/1/1/21(A). It is not clear what MacDougall means by "Koran war inscriptions" or even whether he understood or had the inscriptions translated.

¹⁴⁷ A.Hardinge, Zanzibar, 28 September 1895, to the Marquess of Salisbury, "Correspondence respecting the Recent Rebellion, 1896," p.36.

¹⁴⁸ Mbaruk was said to be assisted by •a strong undercurrent of Swahili and Arab sympathy with him, as a Moslem fighting against unbelievers, and by the latent but widespread popular resentment at British policy with regard to the question of slavery, by which the natives are affected as to their religion, their income and their women. • A.Hardinge, Mombasa, 28 February 18%, to Marquess of Salisbury, "Correspondence respecting the Recent Rebellion, 18%, " p.56.

¹⁴⁹ MacDougall to Administrator, Mombasa, 24 October 1895, KNA, PC/COASf/1/1/21(A).

¹⁵⁰ MacDougall to Administrator, Mombasa, 3 and 12 December 1895, KNA, PC/COASf/1/1/21(A).

¹⁵¹ "A few of Aziz's slaves came in and got their freedom in Takaungu" or "10 slaves of rebels in Takaungu and 53 slaves of rebels in Malindi have been freed." MacDougall, District Supervisor, Takaungu, to Administrator, Mombasa, 9 July and 6 August 1895, KNA, PC/COASf/1/1/21(A).

¹⁵² MacDougall, District Supervisor, Takaungu, to Administrator, Mombasa, 12 October 1895, KNA, PC/COAST/1/1/21(A).

¹⁵³ "I hope to visit Mtondia tomorrow to collect together Abdullah bin Rashid's slaves (some 500), who are scattered in the bush and establish them in their boma (protected village), so they can start cultivation." MacDougall to Administrator, Mombasa, 22 December 1895. KNA, PC/COASf/1/1/21(A).

town of Mombasa or on the railway, or settled at one of the mission stations, where they get land on far easier conditions from the missionaries than from their Arab or Swahili masters.¹⁵⁴

The demise of the plantation economy marked the end of prosperity for the land-owning Muslim elite¹⁵⁵, and the beginning of a new life for several thousand slaves.¹⁵⁶ Though many slave villages ceased to exist, and others lost much of their population,¹⁵⁷ most ex-slaves continued to earn their living from agriculture. Some remained on plantations as wage labourers; a few settled in ex-slave reserves established by the British;¹⁵⁸ others moved away, to Mombasa or upcountry, and others still sought to integrate into Mijikenda society.¹⁵⁹

Mtanganyiko recovered temporarily as a port for the export of grain,¹⁶⁰ but slowly declined after 1910.¹⁶¹ Mijikenda Muslims, especially the younger generation,

¹⁵⁴ "Report by Sir A. Hardinge on the Condition and Progress of the East Africa Protectorate," 6. The Report also mentions a concentration of slaves in "the large villages of Mtwapa, Jauri [sic], Kijipoa [sic], and Kurwitu" with a combined population of "about 2,000, mostly slaves of every African race, and all speaking the Swahili language and professing the Moslem faith," but many of the slaves then gathered in those four villages may have originally been from other villages.

Though the hinterland of Malindi and Mambui was not so directly affected by the Rising, thousands of acres of land previously under cultivation were said to be lying idle: the District Officer estimated that in the "coast lands of Malindi and Mambui" out of a total of "110,000 acres taken up and cultivated, most was subsequently abandoned. Now some 5,000 acres under coconut and mango, 10,000 under grain and 95,000 acres of waste land, claimed by various persons on the grounds of former occupancy." Ag. District Officer, Malindi, 23 July 1896, to Acting Commissioner, Mombasa. KNA, PC/COASF/1/1/21(A).

¹⁵⁵ One report tells of the "former prosperity" of the Arabs, who "are for the most part an impoverished section of the community, many of whom find it difficult to make ends meet." Annual Report 1921, Malindi District, KNA, DC/MAL/1/1.

¹⁵⁶ The Abolition of the Legal Status of Slavery Ordinance of 1907 freed the slaves who had not managed to escape or gain their freedom before then. Cooper has shown how the slaves' choice was not so much one between "freedom" or "slavery", as a question of social identity and economic options: much depended on whether or where ex-slaves could acquire land. Cf. Frederick Cooper, *From Slaves to Squatters, Plantation Labor and Agriculture in Zanzibar and Coastal Kenya, 1890-1925*, (New Haven 1980), 75, 165-67.

¹⁵⁷ In 1914, the combined population of the villages of Mtwapa, Jauri, Kijipwa and Kurwitu was 602 persons, a decrease of some 1,500 persons in less than 20 years. Statement of Native Hut and Poll Tax, 31 March 1914, Political Record Book, Mombasa District, 1914-1916, KNA, DC/MSA/3/4. Part of the statistical decline may be attributed to an understatement of population in 1914 in order to avoid tax.

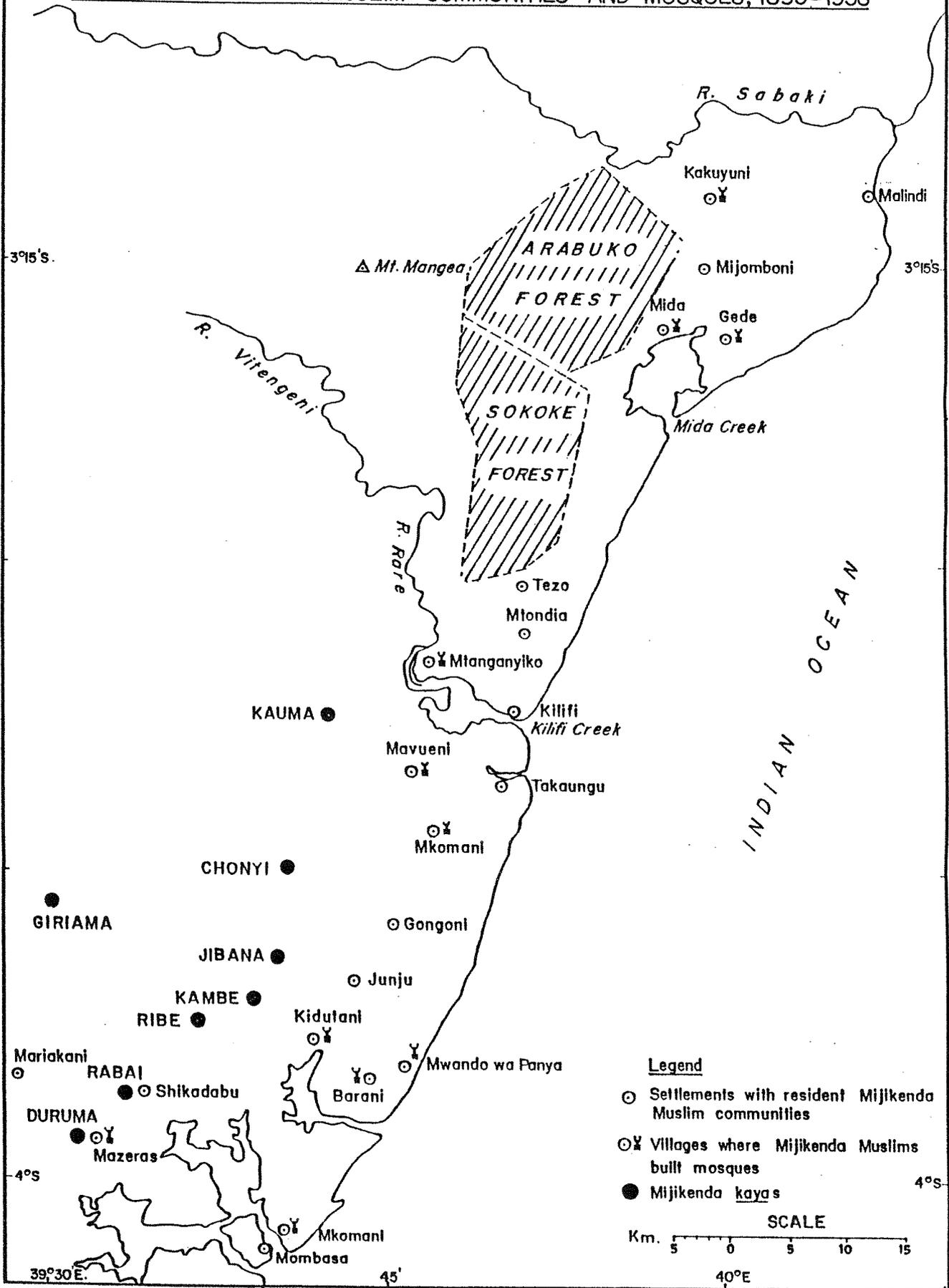
¹⁵⁸ See footnote 167 below.

¹⁵⁹ Many ex-slaves became Giriama either through blood brotherhood or intermarriage. Brantley, *The Giriama*, 62.

¹⁶⁰ In April 1897, the town was said to be making "rapid progress in population and building..a population of nearly 500, all of whom are Mahometans, save a few Hindoo traders." KMacDougall, Collector, Malindi, 15 April 1897, to Commissioner, Mombasa. KNA, PC/COASF/1/1/21(A). The colonial government assisted this by building a pier at Mtanganyiko "to facilitate the export of grain." Sir Charles Eliot, *The East Africa Protectorate* (London 1905): 53. But in 1900, MacDougall wrote that Mtanganyiko, "essentially a grain trading town..has not extended to its former proportions since it has been rebuilt." (KMacDougall, Collector, 9 April 1900, to Commissioner, Mombasa. KNA, PC/COASF/1/1/21(A).

¹⁶¹ There are many reasons for the decline of Mtanganyiko: shortage of water, famine, silting up of the harbour during the Mwachupa floods (1922), the decrease in the export trade, the improvement of roads and road transport, and the opening of alternative markets. In 1916, a market was established at Ganze, and trade at Mtanganyiko was said to be "prejudicially affected by the centre at Ganzu [Ganze] in the Nyika Reserve, for business is drawn off." (1916-17 Annual Report, Takaungu Sub-District. KNA, DC/MAL/1/1.) In 1921, the Assistant D.C. noted: "Mtanganyiko and Konjora which years ago were sufficiently important to engage the attention of a Mudir have now sunk into a temporary dilapidation, owing to the years of famine in Nyika country whence comes their trade. (1921 Annual Report, Kilifi District, KNA, DC/KFI/1/1.) But the decline was more permanent than temporary. As the town lost commercial importance, the younger generation left to seek better opportunities elsewhere. There are no regular population statistics to give information about the rate or extent of the decline of Mtanganyiko. In 1916, the town had a population of "10 Asiatics and 238 natives." (1916-17 Annual Report, Malindi District. KNA, DC/MAL/1/1. The term "Asiatics" clearly includes Arabs and Indians together.) By the 1930s, only a few families remained, and the flourishing Qur'an school had closed. The site of the town of Mtanganyiko is now deserted. Remains of the two mosques are visible, as is the main path through the town down to the harbour, but no residential houses survive. I am grateful to Ali Abdallah Tsori and Saidi Sulayman Mwangogo for showing me around the site, and for making the town come alive for me, on 10th October 1985.

NORTHERN MIJIKENDA MUSLIM COMMUNITIES AND MOSQUES, 1895-1938



emigrated from Mtanganyiko, and from smaller villages like Kidutani and Gongoni, to Kisauni and Mombasa.¹⁶² There was a corresponding migration from the smaller Mazrui villages (which lapsed into subsistence agriculture or were abandoned) to Takaungu, and from Takaungu to Mombasa.¹⁶³ As a sub-district headquarters Takaungu initially retained some importance as a government administrative centre, but when the district boundaries within Seyyidieh Province were reorganized in 1921, and Kilifi was made the new District headquarters, Takaungu declined. In 1923, Takaungu was said to be "in a dilapidated condition" and the population "decreasing."¹⁶⁴

During the early years of the 20th century, the steady migration of pagan Mijikenda into the coastal plain threatened to overwhelm Mijikenda Muslims.¹⁶⁵ Already outnumbered by ex-slaves, they found themselves a declining minority,¹⁶⁶ and struggled to preserve their identity.¹⁶⁷ In a few villages (Junju, Mkomani, Kidutani and Barani) Mijikenda Muslims built their own mosques (Map 10). And after the First World War, Salim Mwamrari, a Digo teacher from Mtanganyiko, started a Qur'an school at Junju, where he taught children from Junju, Gongoni and surrounding villages, but he was the only teacher in the area. Farther north, at Mida, Kakuyuni and Gede,¹⁶⁸ Giriama Muslim communities were consolidated; and new communities of

¹⁶² In 1914, the population of Gongoni was 59 persons, and the population of Kidutani was 62 persons; Junju, the largest of the Mijikenda Muslim villages had a population of 220. By comparison, the population of Kisauni in the same year was 2337. Statement of Native Hut and Poll Tax, 31 March 1914, Political Record Book, Mombasa District, 1914-1916, KNA, DC/MSA/3/4.

¹⁶³ "There has been a tendency in the past few years on the part of the Arabs gradually to leave the District." 1919-20 Annual Report, Malindi District, KNA, DC/MAL/1/1.

¹⁶⁴ 1923 Annual Report, Malindi District. KNA, DC/MAL/1/2. In the same year the post of Liwali of Takaungu was abolished. 1923 Annual Report, Kilifi District, KNA, DC/KFI/1/1.

¹⁶⁵ "The Giriama appear to be slowly migrating in the direction of the Coast and cultivating unoccupied land." Quarterly Report for the quarter ending 31 March, 1912, Seyyidie Province. KNA, CP/21/130. Brantley has shown how the Giriama benefitted by moving into the coastal strip as squatters, bringing abandoned plantation land under cultivation, and providing grain for export. (Brantley, *The Giriama*, 50, 60-63.) The 1921 Annual Report also noted "the influx of Wa-Nyika from the Nyika reserve in search of easier agricultural conditions, and some through impatience of tribal control." (1921 Annual Report, Kilifi District, DC/KFI/1/1.) In 1925, the Assistant Commissioner wrote: "In the coast, the population is a hotch-potch of different tribes and races. Their - natural unit is the village, not the location...large stretches of coast are inhabited by ex-slaves." (Asst. District Commissioner, Kilifi, 6 January 1925, to District Commissioner, Malindi. KNA, PC/COAST/22/22.) The rising number of non-Muslims led to a general decline in Muslim influence: "The influence of the Arab officers will dwindle rapidly as the proportion of Arabs to the total of the coast population is dwindling." Asst. District Commissioner, Kilifi, 6 January 1925, to District Commissioner, Malindi. KNA, PC/COAST/1/22/22.

¹⁶⁶ Many of the younger Mijikenda Muslim men were drafted into the Carrier Corps during the First World War; others fled from their villages to avoid being recruited. All "young and able-bodied" *mahaji* of Takaungu Sub-district were said to have been "drafted into the Carrier Corps." The "aged" *mahaji* were settled at Mavueni, Majajani, Mtanganyiko and Tezo. 1916-17 Annual Report, Takaungu Sub-District, KNA, DC/KFI/1/1.

¹⁶⁷ The government tried to control settlement in the coastal plain by establishing Reserves for Mijikenda Muslims and ex-slaves. By 1923, there were 7 such reserves: 1) the Pumwani, Arabuko and Mijomboni Reserves, "for the use of *mahaji* and ex-slaves;" 2) the Mida Reserve, "for the *mahaji* for their use in perpetuity;" 3) the Tezo Reserve, "for the use of ex-slaves and their children in perpetuity;" and 4) the Mtanganyiko and Mavueni Reserves "for the use of *mahaji* and their children in perpetuity." (District Commissioner, Malindi, 22 October 1923, to Ag. Secretary for Native Affairs. KNA, PC/COAST/1/11/47.) But the Reserves were not popular, and relatively few persons settled in them. By 1915, the Tezo Reserve that had been established in 1911, had only 56 resident families, with 30 others applying for grants of land. (Provincial Commissioner, Mombasa, 9 August 1915, to Hon. Chief Secretary, Nairobi. KNA, PC/COAST/14/187.)

¹⁶⁸ See Map 10, p.98. The inclusive dates of this map have been extended up to 1938 to allow for the building of the first Gede Mosque in 1938 by Jumaa bin Swalehe Kitunga.

Duruma Muslim converts grew up in Mazeras and Mariakani.¹⁶⁹ But few rural communities of northern Mijikenda Muslims remained. Many Mijikenda Muslims had moved to Mombasa and to its new suburban villages at Kisauni.¹⁷⁰ The great majority of northern Mijikenda Muslims were once again being attracted to Mombasa, as in times past.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁹ Much of Mariakani's prosperity came from trade in livestock after an auction yard was opened there in 1917. In his Annual Report for 1919-20, the District Commissioner noted: "Trade in Akamba cattle is bringing much prosperity to the Indian and Arab traders at Mariakani, where trade far surpasses in volume that in Mazeras and Rabai. Annual Native Report 1919-1920, Nyika Reserve, KNA, DC/KFI/1/1.

¹⁷⁰ These villages were established in what is now Kisauni location of Mombasa District. See Map 16.

¹⁷¹ Muhammad bin Ali Garongo, Denyenye, 26/10/87; Ali wa Haji, Barani, 25/10/87; Mzee Baluna and Kombo wa Musa, Mtwapa, 17/10/87; Saidi Mwangogo, Kilifi, 18/9/87; Abdallah bin Said, Mida, 31/8/87; Uthman Mwinysi, Mkomani, 26/8/87; Ali Khamis Kipasho and Fadhili bin Amri, Mkomani, 26/7/87; Khamis bin Jumaa Kitunga, Gede, 23/8/86; Ali Muhammad Chibungu, Kidutani, 26/7/86.

Chapter IV. The Expansion of Islam south of Mombasa, 1865-1933

By 1865, three spheres of Muslim influence were discernible among the Digo south of Mombasa: 1) the immediate southern hinterland, as far as the Mwachema (Diani) river, under the influence of Mombasa and Mtongwe; 2) the area beyond the Mwachema river (but north of the Ramisi river), south as far as Funzi and inland as far as Mwele, under the influence of Gasi; and 3) the area between the Ramisi and the Uмба rivers, under the influence of Wasin and Vanga.¹ In some places the spheres of influence overlapped, but where this occurred the influence of one Muslim town was usually dominant.

Though few Muslim settlements existed on the mainland south of Mombasa, the initiative of Muslim traders stimulated urban-rural contacts. During the last decades of the 19th century, the number of Muslims frequenting Digoland seems to have increased steadily, and their relations with Digo leaders and traders intensified. As Muslims began to visit the hinterland in greater numbers, more non-Muslims were attracted from the hinterland into town. Late in the 19th century, Muslim migrants and traders settled in Digo villages, where their influence was far greater than it would have been, had Muslims established separate villages.

The mainland immediately south of Mombasa was particularly attractive to Muslim traders. In 1865 there were more than ten Digo villages in the region: Kiteje, Bombo, Mihongani, Bofu, Kibuyuni, Puma, Shonda, Timbwani, Similani (Pungu), Waa, Matuga, Tiwi,² and numerous smaller settlements, each made up of various homesteads, surrounded these villages. Viewed in economic terms, the region was unique: it held the greatest single concentration of Mijikenda,³ and was easily accessible from Mombasa. It was also the part of Mijikenda country from which Mombasa was the most easily accessible.⁴ Here the movement of Muslims and non-Muslims back and forth between town and countryside was at its most intense.

¹ The influence of Islam in areas 2) and 3) is discussed in Chapter V.

² See Map 6, p.30.

³ The Digo were the largest Mijikenda group. In 1845 Krapf estimated the total Mijikenda population at 50,000, of whom 30,000 were Digo. Though Krapf did not distinguish explicitly between northern and southern Digo, the way he listed the various Digo groups (Mtawe, Shimba, Longo, Digo, and Jombo) indicates that the northern Digo made up the majority of the Digo population at that time. Krapf, *Travels*, 91, 97-100.

⁴ Most early Digo migration to Mombasa and to the mainland north of Mombasa, to such settlements as Mtopanga, Mkomani and Mwando wa Panya, took place from this part of Digo country. (Muhammad Ali Garon go, Denyenye, 26/10/87; Ali wa Haji, Barani, 25/10/87. See Chapter II, p.54, footnote 55.) Whereas northern Mijikenda tended to migrate and settle in Mombasa as individuals, the Digo (in addition to migrating as individuals) seem to have migrated in family groups that were too large to be absorbed in Mombasa town. The increasing population may have occasionally caused group migration, but there is also evidence that some of the migrant groups were led by Muslims. Such groups may have been undertaking, on a larger scale, a "forced" migration similar to the migration of Muslim converts from northern Mijikenda *kayas*.

Muslim influence varied from village to village, depending on the frequency and nature of contacts between Muslims and non-Muslims. Muslim influence was particularly strong in Kiteje, Mihongani and Likoni (which were in constant touch with Mtongwe and Mombasa), but decreased farther south and towards the interior. Muslim contacts with Digo living far inland were infrequent, and usually took place for specific reasons: because a Digo leader was exceptionally powerful (as for example the Digo Kubo⁵) or because of special temporary circumstances.

Mombasa traders sought to establish and strengthen ties with the leaders and traders of such villages as Pungu and Tiwi. Some Digo acted as local trading agents for town Muslims or came to have a Muslim patron in town who assisted them in their trading ventures. In addition to engaging in local and urban trade, a few Digo joined caravan expeditions and traded upcountry in partnership with Mombasans. As trade grew, the Digo became more involved with Muslims. Commercial interests created common affinities, which in turn gave rise to personal relations, and a number of Digo were attracted and converted to Islam. The number of Digo Muslims gradually increased during the last two decades of the 19th century. Though converts of the 19th century remained a minority (except for persons living in the immediate environs of Mtongwe), in some areas Islam may have already gathered irreversible momentum by 1900. During the early 20th century, more conversions took place, and the proportion of Muslims among the Digo increased until Muslims were a majority.

In general, Muslim traders from Mombasa developed closest trading links with Digo living no more than ten to twelve miles away. Beyond twelve miles, regular contact between town and countryside declined, and there was a corresponding decline of Muslim influence from Mombasa. Thus, it was the immediate southern hinterland that received the full impact of Muslim trade from Mombasa, and felt the full force of urban attraction. The ten-to-twelve mile parameter corresponds roughly to the distance that one can comfortably walk from (or to) town and back in one day, allowing enough time at one's destination for a meeting or trading transaction, some social conversation, and possibly some refreshment. The Sultan of Zanzibar's claim, arbitrary as it was, to suzerainty over a ten-mile coastal strip, in some way reflected the reality of this parameter. And the colonial government seems to have recognized it when first setting out the boundaries of Mombasa District.⁶

⁵ See Chapter I, p.39, footnote 128.

⁶ The southern boundary of Mombasa District was fixed at "a point where the Diani [Mwachema] river enters the sea." Sub-commissioner to H.M. Acting Commissioner and Consul General, Mombasa, 16 October 1896. KNA, Coast Province, MP/93/163. In practice, it proved difficult for the colonial officials in Mombasa to administer Tiwi (the southernmost part of Mombasa District) thirteen miles to the south. See p.117, footnote 73.

During the second half of the 19th century, Digo converts to Islam were associated, in the first instance, with one (or more) of the Muslim towns, either because they had been converted by someone from that town (usually in the town itself), or because they went to the town for community prayers and Muslim festivals. As time passed, and more Digo became Muslims, some Digo villages acquired a Muslim character, and exerted a Muslim influence in their own right.

The building of Digo mosques marked a turning point in the rural development of Islam. Without mosques of their own, the Digo were religious dependants. Community prayer, fasting, the 'Id celebrations, and similar communal ceremonies (which centred on the mosque because of their link with prayer) all took place in the towns. Digo Islam was a subordinate appendage, nurtured and sustained by the Muslim society out of which it had been born. The building of the first Digo mosques was a sign of growing maturity (and in some places an assertion of ethnic identity). The ruralization of Islam can be said to have begun among the Digo, not with the first rural Digo converts, who were town-oriented (and in religious matters town-dependent), but with the creation of rural Muslim institutions.

Until such institutions existed, the differences between Muslim and pagan Digo were mitigated by the fact that Muslims participated in Digo religious ceremonies and sacrifices at home, and observed the communal practice of Islam away from home. The establishment of rural Muslim institutions -centres of communal Muslim practice- within Digo society highlighted the differences between Muslims and pagans. Though the first generation of Muslim converts sought to minimize conflict, second-generation Muslims who had received religious schooling were more aggressively Muslim. Relations between Muslims and non-Muslims became especially tense when Muslims began to press for the adoption of Islamic law in matters of inheritance. Though the colonial government adopted a neutral administrative policy towards Islam, in practice legal rulings in support of Islamic law favoured the spread of Islam in the region.

Mtongwe: Islam and Digo customs

Since founding Mtongwe, the Tangana Swahili had exerted a strong influence on the neighbouring Digo of Mihongani and Kiteje.⁷ This influence continued during the second half of the 19th century. By 1875, the Digo population of Mtongwe (*kayas* Kiteje and Mihongani) is said to have been "half Digo and half Muslim."⁸

⁷ See Chapter II, pp.62-63.

⁸ Muhammad bin Matano Mwakutanga, Mtongwe, 30/4/68.

Though the number of Digo converts continued to increase into the 20th century,⁹ the practice of Islam and Digo customs co-existed: "Mtongwe is the most thoroughly Mohamedan community, but even there the elders regularly attend and sacrifice at their ancestral Kayas."¹⁰ Dundas considered that the Digo had acquired a "vener of Mohamedanism":

Although many Wadigo have become converted to the Moslem faith, this can scarcely be described as their only or true religion. Side by side with Mohamedan practices they continue their tribal religious observances, none of which have been displaced by Mohamedanism. Most of their wives and women folk are pagans and their husbands do not seem to consider it necessary for them to be anything else.¹¹

The intermingling of Islam and Digo custom was nowhere more striking than at Mtongwe: "The Wadigo of Mohamedan persuasion go without exception to the Kayas to sacrifice; in fact at Mtongwe the only man who insisted on the adoption of Mohamedan law was the Mwanati."¹² In spite of discord between the Tangana and Digo elders of Mtongwe, the Tangana-Digo alliance continued.¹³ Digo Muslims still used the Mkunguni and Girandi mosques, and were cooperating with the Tangana in other ways.¹⁴

After the First World War, Mtongwe became the centre for the spread of the Qadiriyya Sufi brotherhood (Arabic. *tariqa*) south of Mombasa.¹⁵ Muhammad

⁹ By 1916 almost all the Digo elders of Mtongwe (Mihongani) and Kiteje were Muslim. List of "Elders of Ngambe" compiled by District Commissioner, 16th August 1916, KNA, DC/MSA/8/2.

¹⁰ File Memo by C.Dundas (1915), KNA, DC/MSA/8/2. By that time the British had combined the elders of Mtongwe (*kaya* Mihongani) and Kiteje into one council.

¹¹ "Religion", File Memo by C.Dundas (1915), Political Record Book, KNA, DC/MSA/8/2.

¹² File Memo on the Digo (1915-16), C.Dundas, District Commissioner, Mombasa District. KNA, DC/MSA/8/2. The "mwanati" (more correctly in Digo, *mwana wa ntsi*, usually shortened to *mwanantsi* or *mwanatsi*, meaning literally "son of the country" or "native son") was the guardian of the *kaya* and the one who led ceremonies performed in the *kaya*. By making this point, Dundas was stressing the fact that not only did the highest ranking Digo ritualist at Mtongwe see no incompatibility between age-old *kaya* practices and Islam, but he was the one who was pressing hardest for the adoption of Muslim law, ostensibly, that is, for an increase in Muslim influence.

¹³ "The Council [of Mtongwe] consists of 6 Nyika and 6 Swahili elders. The former want to be separate from the Swahili and say that they want to be under Nyika custom and not Mohamedan Law though in respect to religion they are Mohamedans. The Mudir says that there is always trouble between the Nyika and the Swahilis and thinks they ought to be separated. As regards law he says they [the Digo] do not recognize Islamic law and follow their own customs." (Tour Diary, Mombasa District, entry for 13 February 1915, KNA, Coast Province, MP/47/1140.) By establishing a joint Tangana-Digo council, the colonial government was perhaps engendering unnecessary conflict.

¹⁴ See Chapter II, p.63. Except for Mpigagunda's Mosque, the Digo built no mosques in the Mtongwe area until after 1933. Mpigagunda, the builder of the mosque, was a Digo whose father, Kikango, had been converted by Mwamwalimu Mtanga, the Mombasa-born son of a Digo mother and a Pemba father. (Muhammad bin Matano Mwakutanga, Mtongwe, 9/5/69.) The sites of the Mkunguni Mosque and Mpigagunda's Mosque both lie within the Mtongwe Naval Base of the Kenya Navy; the mosques are no longer used (and probably no longer exist). Thus, the oldest surviving mosque in the Mtongwe area is the Girandi Mosque, which is still in daily use, as is Jaka's well beside the mosque, where women can be found drawing water in the late afternoon every day.

¹⁵ On the Tanzania coast, the Qadiriyya *tariqa* seems to have spread -from Barawa, via Zanzibar- among African Muslims at least fifteen or twenty years before it began among the Digo south of Mombasa. Nimtz has pointed out the "nationalistic" and egalitarian appeal of the *tariqas*; most leaders were African, and membership did not require a high level of learning. For a study of the development of the Qadiriyya *tariqa* and its socio-political role in Bagamoyo, Tanzania, see August H. Nimtz Jr., *Islam and politics in East Africa: the sufi order in Tanzania* (Minneapolis 1980). Among the Digo south of Mombasa, the Qadiriyya attracted some new converts, but its greatest impact seems to have been to encourage Digo Muslims, including second-generation Muslims, to live their faith more enthusiastically and with greater conviction.

Mbwana, a Digo teacher who had studied in Lamu and Somalia, was the main promoter of the Qadiriyya among the Digo at that time. The first Digo members of the Qadiriyya would come to attend meetings at Muhammad Mbwana's home in Mtongwe. As the *tariqa* attracted more members, Muhammad Mbwana established branches in other Digo villages such as Likoni, Pungu, Waa, Matuga, Tiwi, Diani and Ukunda. Under Muhammad's leadership, the Qadiriyya prospered during the 1930s, and contributed to the consolidation of Islam in the area.¹⁶

Muslim traders at Likoni

By the 19th century, the Digo had settled at four *kayas* in the Likoni area: Puma, Kibuyuni, Timbwani and Shonda. The *kayas* formed a federation: the elders of the *kayas* would meet together, and would carry out common sacrifices. Shonda took precedence over the other three *kayas*, for in it were the earliest ancestral graves, and one of the oldest protective charms (Digo. *jingo*; pl. *mafingo*) of the area was buried there. Ritual processions first passed through Puma, Kibuyuni and Timbwani, before reaching Shonda, where the main ceremonies and sacrifices took place. No Muslims were living at Likoni, but by the middle of the 19th century some Kilindini Swahili had begun farming there.¹⁷

In 1837, a contingent of Baluchi soldiers was stationed at Mombasa.¹⁸ Soon after arriving, they began trading with the Digo and other Mijikenda.¹⁹ In time the Baluchi established especially close relations with the Digo of Likoni and Pungu.²⁰

¹⁶ Uthman bin Shaykh Mwinyi, Pungu, 24/8/85; Shakombo Ali, Mtongwe, 22/9/87. Muhammad Mbwana began to spread the Qadiriyya as soon as he returned from his studies during the First World War. It is not certain whether Muhammad Mbwana was given authority to preside over and promote Qadiriyya activities (Ar. *ijaza*) by Shehe Swalehe Au. ud-Din, who was *khalifa* (leader) of the Qadiriyya for many years in Moshi (Tanzania), or whether Muhammad already had this authority when he returned from his studies. It is known, though, that Swalehe AZ ud-Din visited Mombasa and Mtongwe during the early years of the Qadiriyya.

¹⁷ See Chapter II, p.64.

¹⁸ The Baluchi, from Baluchistan in southwest Asia, have a long history as mercenary soldiers in the employ of the Imams of Muscat. The first person to bring Baluchi to Mombasa seems to have been Imam Sayf bin Sultan, when he conquered Mombasa from the Portuguese at the end of the 17th century. ("Note on the Baluchis", C.B. Thompson, Acting District Commissioner, Vanga District, 11 July 1917. KNA, DC/KWL/3/5.) After capturing Mombasa from the Mazrui in 1837, the Sultan of Zanzibar garrisoned the town with Baluchi soldiers. Some of the soldiers would have been trading part-time; others may have eventually retired as soldiers and taken up full-time trade. And Baluchi traders (who had never been soldiers) came to the Kenya coast later in the 19th century. Over the years, succeeding generations of Baluchi have intermarried with the Swahili and have become Swahili-ized. They now speak Swahili as their mother tongue, though they continue to follow the Hanafi school of law. (Ma'allim Husayn Ahmad Rajab, Kibokoni, 1/12/86.) I am grateful to Ma'allim Husayn for readily agreeing to my many requests for information. Ma'allim Husayn's great-grandfather was among the original Baluchi soldiers to be garrisoned at Fort Jesus in Mombasa.

¹⁹ Krapf noted that "the Beloochees, soldiers of the Imam's fort" were trading slaves to the Mijikenda: "I see them [the Baluchi] (all traders) selling to the right and to the left...• Krapf to Venn, 9 December 1847, CMS, CA5/M2/116. The Baluchi were trading in other goods as well.

²⁰ The Baluchi were also trading at Mtongwe, at a market in the Kibundani area. The large clearing where the market used to take place can still be seen today.

Though many of the Baluchi had come with their own women and children, some of them also took Digo wives.²¹ Trade at Likoni, and indeed much of the trade between Mombasa and the immediate southern hinterland seems to have been carried on by the Baluchi. Other Muslims traded at Likoni, but the Baluchi are remembered as the more frequent traders, and as having spread Islam in the area.

In the absence of an indigenous Digo market at Likoni, traders from Mombasa created their own market. They would lay out their wares near the shore and attract Digo from the neighbouring *kayas*. The Muslim trader whom Krapf saw at Likoni in 1845 may well have been a Baluchi,²² and we know that by the 1850s, if not before, Baluchi were frequenting a large Digo market farther south.²³

Among the early converts at Likoni was Salim Mwabundu, who later became the leader of *kaya* Shonda and Headman of Likoni location. He was converted while still a young man, before he had married, some time before 1880. The details are remembered by his grandson:

Mwabundu was converted by the Baluchi. At that time, people were being converted one at a time. Mwabundu was among the first. He started out trading with the Baluchi in a small way. Then, when he became a Muslim, they had more confidence in him, so trading increased. On market day they would go to Ngare's market [at Pungu], and Mwabundu would go there too. The Baluchi would give him money to buy baskets, mats and skins. They taught him all about trading in these things.

Muradi and Maluki used to come. Then Muradi would go to Kinango to buy goats. He would bring the goats back to Mwabundu's place, where they would stay the night, and then be taken across to Mombasa the next morning.²⁴

At that time there were no mosques at Likoni. Like other Digo converts, Salim Mwabundu would go to Mombasa for Friday prayers²⁵ and for Ramadhan. The number of converts at Likoni slowly increased, until the end of the 19th century when the Digo Muslims of Likoni decided they should have their own mosque. In 1899, Khamis Dzugwe, who is said to have come to Likoni from *kaya* Longo (Mihongani), built the first mosque of Likoni, the Riyadhha Mosque (Map 11A). The first Imam of the Riyadhha Mosque was Amri bin Abeid, a Digo convert who had studied at Mtanganyiko. Amri's brothers at Likoni are said to have gone to Mtanganyiko to bring Amri back to be the Imam.²⁶

²¹ Ma'atlim Husayn Ahmad Rajab, Kibokoni, 1/12/87. Ma'allim Husayn's grandfather, Rajab, who was born in Mombasa, had a Digowife.

²² See Chapter II, p.64.

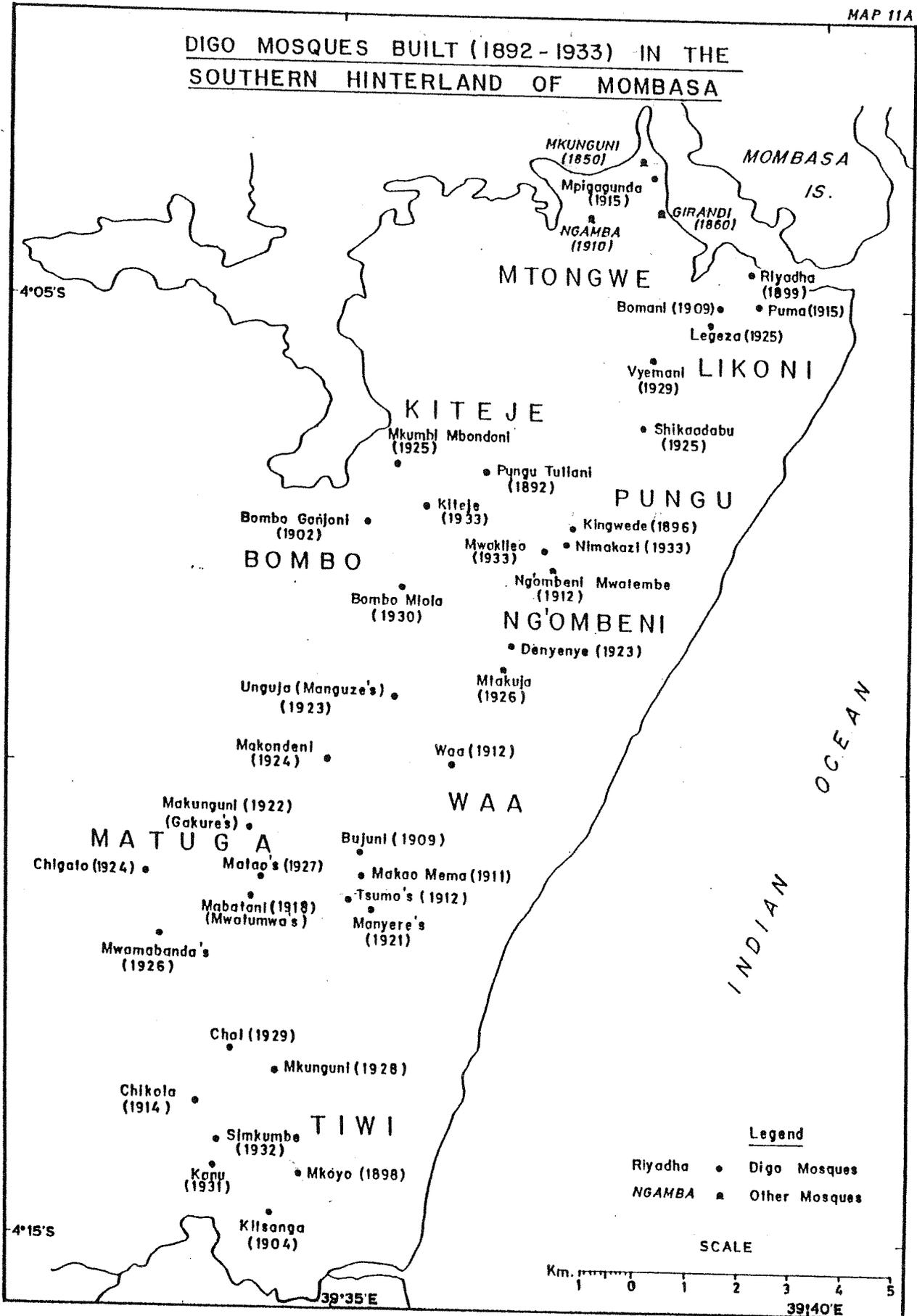
²³ See page 109.

²⁴ Saidi bin Khalfan Mwabundu, Bomani, 15/5/87. Older Baluchi still remember Amir Muradi, who was trading in mats and baskets at Makadara and who had a number of Digo working for him in Mombasa. (Ma'allim Husayn Ahmad Rajab, Kibokoni, 1/12/87.) A certain "Muradi Baluchi", shown as a broker (at the market in Mombasa) in colonial records, is probably the same person. "List of brokers in Mombasa", January 1895. KNA, PC/COASf/1/1/9.

²⁵ Mwabundu is said to have prayed at the Khonzi Mosque, and to have been taught by the Imam of the Khonzi Mosque how to give the Friday sermon (*Swa.hotuba*; Arabic. *khutba*). Saidi bin Khalfan, Bomani, 15/5/87.

²⁶ Bakari Mgumba, Likoni, 2/5/86; Saidi bin Khalfan Mwabundu, Bomani, 15/5/87.

DIGO MOSQUES BUILT (1892 - 1933) IN THE SOUTHERN HINTERLAND OF MOMBASA



In the early 1890s, Salim Mwabundu had sent his eldest son, Khalfan, to study the Qur'an under Mbwana bin Ali Mwarako, a Digo from Tanga,²⁷ who was teaching at Likoni. Khalfan then studied in Mombasa under Ma'allim Jumaa, and finally at Pongwe (and Ramisi) with Bakari Mwanjama, a Segeju teacher who was a friend of Salim Mwabundu.²⁸ When Khalfan came back from Pongwe, he took over as the Imam of the Riyadhha Mosque.

The second mosque in Likoni, the Bomani Mosque, was built by Salim Mwabundu in about 1909. Before building the mosque, Mwabundu is said to have dug a well nearby with the help of a Bohora Muslim from Mombasa.²⁹ By that time Mwabundu was a veteran trader, and had many contacts among the Muslims of Mombasa.³⁰ Khalfan bin Salim Mwabundu left the Riyadhha Mosque to become the first Imam at Bomani. After the First World War, Khalfan started a Qur'an school at Bomani. The third Likoni mosque, the Puma Mosque, was built by Sulayman bin Hemedi in c.1915.³¹

The early converts of Pungu

The first settlers at Pungu came from *kaya* Longo (near Mtongwe). They established a *kaya* at Similani, near the ocean, and later moved to settle some three miles inland near a fresh water pond at Pungu Tuliani. Mwamtsumi Ngare, the founder of *kaya* Similani, is said to have moved from Longo to Pungu at the same time as others moved from Longo to settle at Kiteje, before either Tiwi or Waa had been founded. Only four miles south of Kilindini creek, Pungu was within easy

²⁷ It is interesting to note the influence of a Muslim Digo teacher from Tanga as far north as Likoni. When Homer visited Tanga and the northeastern Tanzania coast in 1866, he remarked that "the Digo have no religion." But at the same time, he found Islam flourishing at Tanga: "Mais la ou l'Islamisme est le plus florissant, c'est a Tanga, qui est plutot une ville qu'un village arabe." R.P.Homer, *Voyage a la Cote Orientale d'Afrique*, (Paris 1872), pp.204, 213. Though Homer says nothing about immigration to Tanga, we can assume that Digo were already immigrating into the [OWI] at that time.

But Mbwana bin Ali was not the first teacher at Likoni, who is said to have been Mwinyikombo bin Mwinyihamis from Pemba, who came in the early 1890s. Muhammad bin Matano Mwakutanga, Mtongwe, 9/5/69.

²⁸ Said bin Khalfan Mwabundu, Bomani, 15/5/87. Khalfan bin Salim was studying at Pongwe when the village was destroyed during the fighting between the British and Shaykh Mbaruk bin Rashid. Many of the Segeju of Pongwe, including Bakari Mwanjama (with his pupils), went to Ramisi. Other Segeju fled from Pongwe to German territory. The British set fire to Pongwe on 20 October 1895. (District Officer, Vanga, to Sub-Commissioner, Mombasa, 23 October 1895. KNA, CP/97/183.) The Segeju became Muslim before the Digo. See Chapter II, p.46-47.

²⁹ Said in Khalfan Mwabundu, Bomani, 15/5/87.

³⁰ In 1913, Salim Mwabundu was the only Digo at Likoni who had a Native Liquor Trading License. "Native Liquor Trade Licenses, Tiwi District, 1913." KNA, DC/MSA/8/2.

³¹ Colonial records show that three mosques existed at Likoni in 1913, belonging to "Khamis Jugwe, Salim wa Bundu and Salim Mwamtalasam." "List of Mosques in Tiwi District, 1913." KNA, DC/MSA/8/2. According to oral information, however, there may have been only two mosques in Likoni at that time. Some confusion may have arisen in colonial records, since Salim Mwamtalasam, the son of Khamis Dzugwe, took over the mosque of his father sometime before the First World War. I am grateful to Kabaya Muhsin bin Uthman for this information. Another possibility is that the third mosque, the Puma Mosque had already been built, but the name of the builder and owner of the mosque wrongly recorded in the list of mosques.

walking distance of ferry transport across to the island of Mombasa; many of the "Whaneekas" whom Emery saw daily in Mombasa must have come from Pungu.

By the middle of the 19th century, Muslim traders had begun to penetrate into the rural hinterland of Mombasa. The Pungu area was particularly attractive to them, since it was easily accessible, and it was the venue for *chete cha Ngare* (Ngare's market), the largest indigenous market of the southern Mombasa hinterland.³² Following Digo custom, the market took place every four days:

It was a large market, everyone would come, the whole world, people from Mtongwe, people from Tiwi, people from Tsimba, from all over, they would all come to sell their goods on a fixed day. People from far away would come the evening before and sleep nearby. In the morning they would be at the market to sell their goods, those with cassava, those with chickens, those with eggs, eggs. A man would sell whatever he had brought with him. Their way of selling was by barter: those who had grain would give those who had fish and be given fish, and those who had coconuts would give those who had clothes and be given clothes. That's the way they used to trade.³³

Two of the first persons to become Muslim at Pungu were Ali Ganyuma Mwanrudzu and Hamisi Mwapodzo. Ganyuma had taken over as leader (*Digo mwanatsi*) of *kaya* Similani from his maternal uncle Mwagodoro Nrudzu sometime towards the end of the second quarter of the 19th century (after the Busaidi of Zanzibar had occupied Mombasa). All who wished to trade in the Pungu area would come to ask permission from Ganyuma. Throughout this period Ganyuma came to have constant dealings with Muslims, in particular with Baluchi traders who frequented the Ngare market: "The Baluchi would come out from Mombasa the day before, bringing cattle, goats, and clothes. They would spend the night there. People would hear they were there, and would be attracted to go."³⁴

As senior elder, Ganyuma would be called to see Muslim leaders in Mombasa, and he also had frequent contact with some of his Akinandzira clan relatives who had already become Muslim at Mtongwe:

Through these contacts he was attracted to Islam at a time when people did not want religion, and it was difficult to become a Muslim; the Muslims were not trying to convert the Digo and the Digo themselves did not want Islam.³⁵

Ganyuma's conversion may have taken place as early as the 1850s.³⁶ On converting he took the name Ali. At the time there were only a handful of Digo

³² Juma Zani, Kundutsi, 3/5/73. There were two other Digo markets to the south, the "chete cha Chiwale" for the villages of Msambweni, Ukunda, Diani and Tiwi, and the "chete cha Mwabwago" at Muhaka, but these were smaller markets, and did not attract traders from Mombasa. Abdallah Mwatari, Diani, 17/2/78.

³³ Uthman bin Shaykh Mwinyi, Pungu, 24/8/85.

³⁴ Abdallah Mwatari, Diani, 17/2/78.

³⁵ I am indebted to Uthman bin Shaykh Mwinyi for this and other information about the life of Ali Ganyuma, who was his great-great-grandfather. Uthman bin Shaykh Mwinyi, Pungu, 8/8/85.

³⁶ Ganyuma died in about 1865. When his eldest son Muhammad applied for a land title in 1915, he stated that he had inherited the land "from my father about 50 years ago." Land Title Application No. 6173/329/9 of 10 May 1915, Provincial Land Office Archives, Mombasa.

Muslims at Pungu, most of whom hardly practised Islam, except when they were in Mombasa. Ganyuma was one of the few converts of that time to bring up his children as Muslims. He was particularly insistent on their Muslim prayers, and is said to have told them: "If you don't pray, you don't eat." At that time there were no Qur'an schools in Pungu (or in any Digo villages), nor was it the custom for early converts to send their children away to school. And so Ali Ganyuma's children received no formal Islamic education, though his eldest son, Muhammad Mwanganyuma, is said to have learned something on his own.

During the Mwakisenge famine (1884-5) Muhammad Mwanganyuma decided to send his son, Ali bin Muhammad, to stay with an uncle, Mwinyihamisi Mwandungo, a Digo trader who had gone to stay at Mtanganyiko in the 1870s. There Ali learned at the Qur'an school under Omari Ngoma, and also under Muhammad bin Ali Mazrui.³⁷ When Ali came back to Pungu after finishing his studies, he began to proselytise among his fellow Digo. He would go with his father to Ngare's market (where his father was trading) and preach about Islam there.³⁸ Popular reaction was hostile ("he was jeered and shouted down") but this does not seem to have deterred him. Ali continued preaching, and he also began to teach the children of Digo converts, and in this way soon came to be known as Mwalimu AIL³⁹ During his studies, Mwalimu Ali had also learned *falaki*;⁴⁰ he would go around treating people, and they would also come to consult him at home.⁴¹

Hamisi Mwapodzo was converted in about 1870 through his contacts with Muslim traders from Mombasa. The details are remembered by his youngest and only surviving son:

Mwapodzo was one of the first to be converted. His conversion took place before he went to see Barghash in Zanzibar. At that time it was difficult to become a Muslim, and very few did so. Mwapodzo was doing business with an Arab from Mombasa, who said to him, 'You are a Nyika, become a Muslim and then we will eat together, and I will buy from you.'⁴²

The first mosques in Pungu (or Pungu Tuliani) Mosque and the Kingwede Mosque) were built by Muhammad Mwanganyuma and Hamisi Mwapodzo, during

³⁷ See Chapter III, p.92, footnote 123.

³⁸ Colonial records show that "Mohamed Mwanganyuma" was a trader at Pungu in 1913. ("List of traders", Political Record Book, Mombasa District, KNA, DC/MSA/8/2.) His son, Ali bin Muhammad may also have been trading at Pungu in his own right; the same list of traders shows an "Ali bin Mohamed selling calico and American cloths" at Pungu. According to oral evidence, Ali bin Muhammad also traded in rubber. (Ngumi bin Shaykh Mwinyi, Viungujini, 20/9/87).

³⁹ The Swahili word *mwalimu*, meaning "teacher", is derived from the Arabic *mu'allim*, meaning "teacher". The modern equivalent would be to call someone "Professor".

⁴⁰ The closest English equivalent to *falaki* is astrology, but in Swahili *falaki* implies not just to predict or interpret events, but the ability to control events as well. The Swahili word *falaki* is derived from the Arabic word *falaq*, meaning the heavenly firmament (and all the bodies in it). *Ilm al-falaq* means "astrology" (and "astronomy") in Arabic.

⁴¹ Ngumi bin Shaykh Mwinyi, Viungujini, 20/9/87.

⁴² Mwapodzo also had contact with the Baluchi: Baluchi soldiers are said to have come and camped near the mosque which he built. But the Baluchi are not remembered as having converted him. Mbarakali Mwapodzo, Msukoni, 9/12/85.

the 1890s. Mwaganyuma's son Ali, who had returned from his studies in Mtanganyiko, became the first Imam of the Pungu Mosque.⁴³ Mwapodzo brought in a Gunya teacher by the name of Mbarakali to teach his children and to take charge of the Kingwede mosque. After Mbarakali left, Mwapodozo sent one of sons, Saidi, to study under Ramadhan wa Muhoro at Mkomani (Kisauni).⁴⁴

Another early mosque in the area was built at Bombo Ganjoni, in c.1902, by Sulayman Abdallah Mwanyemi,⁴⁵ helped by Mwinyikombo Mangisi and others; Sulayman became the first Imam of the mosque. In c.1912, Muhammad Mkongoma Mwajamanda, the chief of Ng'ombeni, built the Ng'ombeni (or Mwatembe) Mosque.⁴⁶ Before then, the Muslims of Ng'ombeni would gather for Friday prayers at the Kingwede Mosque, and after the Kingwede Mosque collapsed, at the Pungu Mosque. Muhammad Mkongoma didn't study (though he had the chance, he didn't want to), but one of his brothers, Abdallah Mwaruwa Mwajamanda, is said to have been the first person from Ng'ombeni to study the Qur'an. Abdallah studied first at Mkomani (Kisauni) and then at Kuze under Ma'allim Ahmad Matano,⁴⁷ a well-known Kilindini teacher. When Abdallah finished his studies, he came back to teach at Ng'ombeni.⁴⁸ Other pioneers of Islam in Ng'ombeni, like Jumaa Saidi Mwat-suluka, later Imam of the Denyenye Mosque, also studied at Mkomani (Kisauni).

Mwinyihamisi Manzu, son of Abdallah Mwavayema, first studied at Bombo under Sulayman Abdallah Mwanyemi. Later, he studied under Ma'allim Ahmad Matano, a Kilindini who was teaching at Kuze in Mombasa.⁴⁹ When Mwinyihamisi finished his studies, he came back to Ng'ombeni and built the Denyenye Mosque (in

⁴³ Ali is said to have returned from Mtanganyiko with his teacher, Omari Ngoma; though Omari did not stay at Pungu long, he would surely have helped out at the Pungu Tuliani Mosque while he was there. Omari named one of his sons Muhammad, after Muhammad Mwaganyuma. Uthman bin Shaykh Mwinyi, Pungu, 14/4/87.

⁴⁴ Juma Salim Pati, Kitsanga, 20/9/87.

⁴⁵ Sulayman Abdallah was the grandson of Kassim Mwanyemi, who had come to Mombasa from Chumbageni (near Tanga) in the 19th century. Kassim Mwanyemi was already a Muslim when he arrived. Kassim Mwanyemi taught Muhammad Mwaganyuma and Mwaganyuma's children at Pungu, at the time Ali bin Muhammad Mwaganyuma was studying in Mtanganyiko. When Ali bin Muhammad returned from Mtanganyiko, Kassim Mwanyemi and his family went to live at Bombo. (Uthman bin Shaykh Mwinyi, Pungu, 21/10/79.)

⁴⁶ The 1913 List of Mosques shows one mosque at Ng'ombeni, belonging to Mohamed Mwajamanda. KNA, DC/MSA/3/1/71. In 1922, Mwajamanda was the Headman of Ng'ombeni Location, and was described as a "charming-mannered old man." Handing-over Report of G.K. Knight Bruce, Vanga District, 30 October 1922, KNA, DC/KWL/2/1.

⁴⁷ See Chapter II, p.51, footnote 43.

⁴⁸ Muhammad Ahmad Matano, Kuze, 15/10/87; Muhammad Ali Garongo, Denyenye, 26/10/87.

⁴⁹ The relationship between Ahmad Matano, Mwinyihamisi's teacher, and Abdallah, Mwinyihamisi's father, illustrates the continuing influence of Kilindini-Digo relations on the spread of Islam: "Abdallah himself hadn't studied, and wanted his son, Mwinyi Hamisi to study. In Mombasa, Mwinyihamisi first stayed at Miembeni, with a friend of his father's, but later Ahmad Matano took Mwinyihamisi into his own home. Ahmad would go to visit Abdallah at Ng'ombeni, and stay for two or three days, during which time Ahmad would pray at the Denyenye Mosque built by Mwinyihamisi. Abdallah, who had a lot of cattle, used to send milk to Ahmad in Mombasa. Mwinyihamisi was the first Digo to study *tajwid* [the art of reading or reciting the Qur'an in accordance with established rules of pronunciation and intonation]. His father told him, 'When you reach the *Subhana* [one of the Suras of the Qur'an], I'll get you a wife,' which is what happened." Muhammad Ahmad Matano, Kuze, 15/10/87.

c.1923), and began to teach.⁵⁰

Early history and the first converts at Waa

The village of Waa, founded in the 17th century by people from *kaya* Kwale, is one of several villages founded by the Digo as they expanded throughout the coastal plain during the 17th and 18th centuries. There is no tradition of earlier settlement in the area. Soon after settling at Waa, one of the founders of the village, Mwamchera Ngoma, died and was taken back to be buried at Kwale. Mwachacha, who had helped to found the village with Mwamchera, carried on consolidating the settlement, together with Mwazua Ngoma, Mwamchera's maternal nephew.⁵¹

In the 19th century, some seven generations after the founding of Waa, Mwasavai Dzilala became the leader of the village. As a direct descendent of Mwachacha, Dzilala was related to the founders of Waa; he had moved there from Ukunda as a young boy in c.1840. As Mwasavai grew up and matured, he gained prestige in the village because of his ability to settle disputes. When Mwamgasi Jefwa, the previous leader, died, Dzilala claimed precedence over Jefwa's nephews and was accepted by the villagers as their new leader.

As senior elder of the village, Dzilala was in contact with the elders of neighbouring villages, and with Muslim leaders and traders in Mombasa. He is said to have been converted by "an Arab friend, Mbwana," with whom he travelled on business trips. Another early convert at Waa was Mwinyi Kombo Mwakovyolo, a fisherman, who was converted by "his Mtangana friend, Babu Hija, from Pemba." A third early convert was a friend of Dzilala, Mwalimu Mwachapora Kidegere, "a rich man, with lots of land, goats and cattle."

Though the first conversions at Waa took place in c. 1865, the village seems to have remained isolated from effective Muslim influence until early in the 20th century. The village was farther away from Mtongwe and Mombasa than Pungu, and did not attract Muslim immigrants as Tiwi did.⁵² Though some of the early Muslim converts at Waa raised their children as Muslims, they did not recruit teachers to come to Waa, nor did they send their children away to Qur'an school until later in the century, and the first mosque at Waa was built some twenty years later than at Pungu or Tiwi.

⁵⁰ Muhammad Ali Garongo, Denyenye, 26/10/87. Once back from Mombasa, Mwinyihamsi quickly acquired prestige as a teacher, and many Digo are said to have gone to learn *tajwid* from him. Ngumi bin Shaykh Mwinyi, Viungujini, 21/9/87.

⁵¹ These details, and following information about the early history of Waa, are from interviews with Hamisi Mwatuwano, Waa, 14/12/67 and 17/12/67, and Juma Zani, Kundutsi, 26/1/72.

⁵² See pp.118-119 below.

When Mwasavai Dzilala died, his son Sulayman Mwaronga Dzilala took over as senior elder of the village.⁵³ He was a man of influence, and a practising Muslim. In c.1912, Sulayman is said to have built the first mosque at Waa.⁵⁴ Before the construction of this mosque, Waa Muslims had been going to the mosque at Pungu for Friday prayers and 'Id celebrations. In 1922, the District Officer described Sulayman Dzilala as "a good Mohamedan...he most certainly runs his location better than anyone else, and if given work to do he does it well. He is always listened to when in the Native Council."⁵⁵

The Coast Technical School, commonly known as the Waa School, was opened by the government at Waa in 1921. The original proposal to put the school at Tiwi had been opposed by Digo Muslims of Tiwi; when choosing Waa as an alternative site, the government must have known that it was a village where Muslim influence was less pronounced. But even in areas that were ostensibly less Muslim at that time, popular sentiment and behaviour was influenced by a strong Muslim undercurrent. In the Annual Report for 1921, C.B.Thompson, the District Officer, noted there was a "poor local response" to the school; the Digo could be induced to send their children to the school "only by constant exhortation."⁵⁶ At the end of the next year, the new District Officer, H.H. Trafford, wrote:

The establishment of an industrial school at Waa is not appreciated, this in part may be due to the Mohammedan element who fear that their children will receive religious instruction, even the pagans are holding back for the same reason, as they are naturally imbued with Islamic ideas... ⁷

Reluctant Digo parents, who had already begun to identify government schools with Christian teaching, would have been fully endorsed by Sulayman Dzilala. At a Joint Chiefs' Council meeting in c.1926, the District Commissioner

⁵³ Mwasavai Dzilala died in 1911. When applying for a land title in 1915, his son Sulayman stated that he had inherited the land "from my father four years ago." (Land Title Application No. 6027/475/9 of 6 May 1915. Provincial Land Office Archives, Mombasa.) According to colonial records, Sulayman was the headman of Waa in 1913, though he was not officially gazetted as such until 20 October 1921. (District Commissioner, Mombasa, to Provincial Commissioner, Mombasa, 24/1/1913, enclosing a list of the headmen of Tiwi District, KNA, CP/1/6/11; and "List of Headmen of Sub-locations of Magajoni, Tiwi, Waa and Pungu," KNA, DC/KWL/3/3.)

⁵⁴ Oral evidence about the first Waa Mosque is not unanimous: most informants agree that Sulayman Mwaronga built the first Waa Mosque, but others say that in c.1910, soon before dying, Mwasavai Dzilala built a small mud-and-thatch mosque, which was later re-built and expanded by his son Sulayman. The mosque survey done by the District Commissioner in 1913 shows three mosques at Matuga and only one ancient mosque (in ruins) at Waa. (List of Mosques in Tiwi (1913), KNA, DC/MSA/3/1/71.) This agrees with oral information which indicates that mosques were built in Matuga before Waa. It is possible that Mwasavai Dzilala built a small family *msala* whose existence was not widely known and which was soon replaced by a community mosque built by his son Sulayman.

⁵⁵ Handing over Report of O.K. Knight Bruce of 30/10/1922, KNA, DC/KWL/2/1. In recognition of Sulayman Mwaronga Dzilala's abilities he was elected by his fellow Headmen to succeed Muhammad Mwamguso as President of the Joint Council [of Headmen] in 1924. "Notes on Headmen," KNA, DC/KWL/3/3.

⁵⁶ The purpose of the School, which was opened on the 16th May 1921, was "to educate young Africans in crafts and trades." (KNA, 1921 Annual Report, Vanga District, DC/KWL/1/7.) By 1924, the enrolment of the Waa School was 134 pupils, but less than half -61- came from the coast, and of the 61 many were not Digo. (1924 Annual Report, Digo District, KNA, DC/KWL/1/10.)

⁵⁷ Annual Report 1922, Vanga District, KNA, DC/KWL/1/8.

tried to persuade the Chiefs of Kwale District to encourage parents to send more children to Waa School. At the meeting, Sulayman Dzilala is said to have spoken against the idea, and against mission education.⁵⁸

The early mosques of Matuga

Since the initial settlement in the 17th century, new immigrants had arrived at Waa, from Kwale and also from other Digo villages. As the population increased, the people of Waa expanded towards Matuga, and eventually the population of Matuga came to be larger than that of Waa.⁵⁹

Oral informants agree that the first mosque in the Matuga area, the Bujuni Mosque, was built by Mwalimu Saidi before the First World War, in c. 1909. Mwalimu Saidi, the son of Hamisi Mwapodzo of Pungu, was one of the first Digos to study the Qur'an. After finishing his studies, he taught for a while at Pungu, but then moved to Matuga to inherit from his maternal uncle there. When he came to Matuga, in c. 1895, he was already a married man with children. At that time, all Matuga residents are said to have been "Digos, not Muslims."

Mwalimu Saidi brought some of his pupils with him from Pungu. His approach towards his fellow Digo and their customs was different from that of his teacher Mwalimu Ali. Instead of condemning Digo customs, he is said to have taken part in traditional Digo dances, as a way of gaining acceptance within the community, at the same time as he began to attract a small group of the men towards Islam.⁶⁰

The second mosque in Matuga, the Makao Merna Mosque, was built in Mnyenzi village in c. 1911 by Bakari Mwakurya. Bakari's father, Gakurya, one of the early converts of the area, had sent Bakari to study at Tiwi. When Bakari finished his studies, he went to be the head tutor and assistant to Mwalimu Saidi at Bujuni. When Mwalimu Saidi went back to Pungu about ten years later, in c. 1925, Bakari Mwakurya transferred the Qur'an school from Bujuni to Makao Merna. As well as teaching the Qur'an, Bakari practised healing.⁶¹ The third mosque in

⁵⁸ When asked about some Digo children with Christian names who had studied at the mission school in Kwale, Mwaronga is said to have replied, speaking in Digo to the assembled Chiefs in the presence of the District Commissioner, "Tell me, tell me, is there anyone in Digo country called Timothy?" "No," they replied. "Tell me, tell me, is there anyone in Digo country called Albert?" "No," they replied. Then, turning to the District Commissioner, Mwaronga told him, "I don't know those children." Juma Zani, Kundutsi, 31/8/73.

⁵⁹ In 1861, von der Decken found two villages -Matuga and Chigato- in the Matuga area, both "surrounded by thorn hedges and with a gate." Von der Decken, *Reisen*, I, 234.

⁶⁰ Mwinyihaji Said Kinyongo, Mwaivu, 15/1/86.

⁶¹ Bakari appears in the colonial records as one of five "medicine-men" at Matuga. Of the five, three have Muslim names: Bakari, Muhammad Manguze and Khamis bin Sulayman. "Names of medicine-men in Tiwi District (1914)." KNA, DC/MSA/3/2/22.

Matuga, known as Tsumo's Mosque (or Mtsangatifu Mosque), was built by Hasan Tsumo⁶² in c. 1912. Another early convert, Tsumo was the headman of Mtsangatifu village. In c. 1900, he sent his son, Ali, to stay with an uncle (Tsumo's brother) in Mombasa, and there Ali studied the Qur'an.

The founding and growth of Tiwi

The present village of Tiwi lies some 13 miles south of Mombasa. It was founded by Digo who migrated north from *kaya* Chinondo in the late 17th century. In the early 18th century, Tiwi was the centre for a sub-group of the Digo known as the Tiwi or the Tiv. In the Book of the Zanj, the Tiwi are mentioned as one of four Wanyika groups living south of Mombasa.⁶³ According to the Mombasa Chronicle, the "people of Tiv" were represented in the delegation sent from Mombasa to Oman in 1729, for they had assisted in the expulsion of the Portuguese from the Fort in that year.⁶⁴

Throughout the 18th and early 19th century, Tiwi carried on regular trade with Mombasa. Like many other Digo villages, Tiwi also developed trade relations with the Tangana Muslims of Mtongwe, after the founding of that village in the 1830s.

Compared with villages to the north such as Kiteje, Bombo, and Pungu, Tiwi was not so well placed for trade with Mtongwe and Mombasa; nevertheless Tiwi lay within the economic hinterland of Mombasa, for it was possible to make the trip from Tiwi to Mombasa and back in one day. One could set out early before dawn, arrive in Mtongwe or Mombasa in the morning, carry out one's business, and return home by late evening the same day. Tiwi was at the southern limit of such day trips, and so was more exposed to Muslim influence from Mombasa than were other Digo villages further to the south. Persons travelling to Mombasa from villages south of Tiwi needed an overnight stop, either on the way or in Mombasa itself. Consequently trade with Mombasa from these villages was less convenient and less frequent. Communications between Tiwi and Mombasa were frequent and well established. In 1906 the Public Works Officer reported:

.between Likoni ferry and Tiwi, a distance of more or less twelve miles, the road is in very good condition, averaging a width of 8 feet. Over this section there is a fair amount of foot traffic, as all the natives are compelled to use this road solely, when coming to Mombasa, while further on, in the neighbourhood of GasI doubt very much if the road is much used. ⁶⁵

⁶² Riziki Hasan Tsumo, Mtsangatifu, 31/12/85. Tsumo is said to have come to Matuga from Pamkote near Tanga (fanganyika).

⁶³ E. Cerulli, *Somalia (Scritti Vari Editi ed Inediti)*, I, Rome 1957, p. 256.

⁶⁴ Capt. W.F. Owen, *Narrative of Voyages to explore the Shores of Africa, Arabia and Madagascar*, I, London 1833, p. 418.

⁶⁵ Public Works Officer, Mombasa, to Sub-Commissioner, Mombasa, 25/9/1906. KNA, Coast Province, MP/1/166.

Being close to the shore, Tiwi was accessible by sea, and was visited by small boats from Mombasa and other coastal villages. The Digo of the area were active fishermen. In 1850, on a boat trip south of Mombasa, Krapf stopped at Tiwi where he met "a great number of Wanika on the beach" and was surrounded by "a multitude of Wanika engaged in fishing"; but he left no description of the village.⁶⁶

Located midway between Gasi and Mombasa, Tiwi was an important settlement. According to Taylor, who lived in Mombasa in the 1880s, Tiwi was the largest village on the Kenya coast south of Mombasa, with an estimated population of 3000, compared to 2500 for Vanga, 2200 for Wasin and 1300 for Gasi.⁶⁷ Eliot names Tiwi as one of the three "chief towns" south of Mombasa, the other two being Gasi and Vanga.⁶⁸ After the digging of a well near the market place in 1904, Tiwi's population increased.⁶⁹ Together with the towns of Pungu, Kwale and Kinango, Tiwi was the site of a traditional weekly market (*Digo. chete*), and eventually, in 1913, came to have a daily market. In 1926, the Government established a dispensary at Tiwi.⁷⁰

Tiwi was an important administrative centre for the colonial government.¹¹ In order to assist the Liwali of Vanga and the District Commissioner at Shimoni, the British established Mudirs at Tiwi and at Gasi. The post of Mudir of Tiwi, established before 1904, undoubtedly added to the Muslim character of the town. Mudirs were influential persons, who worked as magistrates, tax-collectors, marriage-officers, and general advisers. And there is evidence that the Mudir of Tiwi used his position to encourage the spread of Islam; he is said to have requested the building of the first mosque at Vuga in the early 1920s, after visiting the village and finding no mosque there.⁷² In the absence of regular visits by the District Commissioner

⁶⁶ Krapf's Journal, entry for 4th February 1850, CMS, C/A5/M2.

⁶⁷ The figures are based on a hand-written population estimate made by William Taylor in 1882-83. SOAS Manuscript Collection, MS 47758, Taylor Manuscripts, Vol. VIII.

⁶⁸ Sir Charles Eliot, *The East Africa Protectorate*, London 1905, p.57.

⁶⁹ In 1904 the Mudir of Tiwi, Said bin Abdallah, requested permission to dig a well at Tiwi. Inward Correspondence Miscellaneous, Letter from H.M.'s Sub-Commissioner, Mombasa, to the P.C., Mombasa, 15/11/1904. KNA, Coast Province, MP/1/81. Said bin Abdallah was succeeded as Mudir of Tiwi by Omar bin Muhammad (formerly Kathi of Mamburi) in November 1905. (Sub-Commissioner, Mombasa, to the Collector, Malindi, 31 October 1905. KNA, Coast Province, MP/1/70.) A hut count taken in 1913 showed the following number of huts in the main villages of Tiwi sub-district south of Mombasa (Handing-Over Report of 30/10/1922, KNA, DC/KWL/2/1):

Tiwi - 428	Ng'ombeni - 234	Vuga - 84
Mtongwe - 339	Waa - 166	Shimba Kundutsi - 48
Likoni - 273	Pungu - 163	Bombo - 37
Matuga - 271	Kiteje - 101	Mwambara - 22

⁷⁰ Annual Report for Digo District, 1926, KNA, DC/KWL/1/12; and Annual Report for Digo District, 1927, KNA, DC/KWL/1/13.

⁷¹ The name Tiwi was used by the colonial government for one of the four administrative sub-districts of Mombasa District, the other three divisions being: 1) the island of Mombasa; 2) Mtwapu; and 3) Changamwe. In 1914 the sub-district of Tiwi included the present locations of Likoni, Ng'ombeni, Waa, Tiwi, and Tsimba. KNA, DC/MSA/3/1 (see Map 17).

⁷² Mwijaka Mwanzori, Chirimani, 2/2/86. The person referred to was probably Said bin Omar, who was appointed Mudir of Tiwi in August 1921. Annual Report for Vanga District, 1921. KNA, DC/KWL/1/7.

(Mombasa), the Mudir supervised the work of the headmen and elders of the area. In this work, over a period of some twenty years, his influence must have gone much deeper than suggesting that mosques be built.⁷³

With the administrative reorganization of Vanga District in 1922, the office of Mudir of Tiwi was abolished, and Muslim litigants were advised to go to the Mudir of Gasi. Marriages and divorces in Tiwi came to be performed by a Digo Muslim, who would take the fees to Mombasa and obtain a license.⁷⁴ This system, cumbersome as it was, indicated the growing religious responsibilities of Digo Muslims.

Muslim traders and early conversions

Beginning in the middle of the 19th century the number of Muslim traders visiting Tiwi (and other Digo villages south of Mombasa) increased. One of the items of trade was tobacco; von der Decken's map of 1868 (based on his 1861-62 journey) shows tobacco plantations ("Anbau von Tabako") near Tiwi.⁷⁵ By the 1880s, relations with Muslims had led to the conversion to Islam of some of the Digo of Tiwi, among them Mwinyihaji wa Bwika, the senior elder (Digo. *mwanatsi*) of the village.

Mwinyihaji was a man of means; he is said to have had "much land under cultivation and many cattle." He was also a man of forceful character, adept at settling disputes and a good speaker. All of these attributes (which the British later recognized when appointing him Headman of Tiwi) made him an important convert to Islam.⁷⁶ Other persons of his age were converted in Tiwi at this time, including Muhammad Mwasakara Bwika, a brother to Mwinyihaji by a different mother, Mwakongoa, Nasoro Changani and Muhammad Nzoa. Like Mwinyihaji, some of these converts were already grown men at the time of their conversion, but none of them was to have the same impact as Mwinyihaji in promoting the spread of Islam.

⁷³ In 1916, G.H. Osborne wrote: "The separation of Tiwi District from the rest of Wadigo is not altogether satisfactory. With the exception of Mr. Dundas, the D.C.'s of Mombasa have never so far as I know in 10 years experience regularly toured Tiwi District, which has been therefore left to the Mudir of Tiwi. His influence on the ngambis [elders' councils] can only have a Mahomedan Law tendency to the detriment of Wadigo customs ruling decisions. The influence of Tiwi ngambi decisions is bound to affect Vanga District ngambis, and unless we desire Mahomedan law to be the prevailing law inland, considerable confusion will ensue and tend to increase." District Commissioner, Vanga, to Provincial Commissioner, Mombasa, July 1916. KNA, CP/42/867.

⁷⁴ Handing-Over Report, Vanga District, 30/10/22. KNA, DC/KWL/2/1.

⁷⁵ C. von der Decken, *Reisen in Ost-Afrika*, Leipzig 1869.

⁷⁶ District Commissioner, Mombasa, to the Provincial Commissioner, Mombasa, enclosing a detailed list of the Headmen of Tiwi District, 24/1/1913. KNA, DC/MSA/3/1.

⁷⁷ Abdallah Makanzu, Diani, 5/12/61.

Mwinyihaji wa Bwika is said to have been converted by Mwijaka, the Tangana elder of Mtongwe.⁷⁸ According to another source, he was converted by Mbaruk bin Rashid, the Shaykh of Gasi.⁷⁹ Either account could be true, for Mwinyihaji knew both these leaders. According to his grandson, however, Mwinyihaji's conversion came about because of his friendship with Muhammad bin Haji, a Tangana from Mombasa; Muhammad bin Haji had married a Digo woman from Tiwi, and used to come to visit members of her family there. Another early Digo convert was Muhammad Mula, who opened a shop in Tiwi for Muhammad bin Haji; one of Mula's sisters was married to a Tangana in Mombasa.⁸⁰

Besides being more trustworthy, since it is a family account, this last version of Mwinyihaji's conversion is more convincing than the other versions. The Tangana had been trading with the Digo and marrying Digo women for several generations, and close personal relations between Digo and Tangana families are known to have existed in other Digo villages such as Kiteje and Bomba.

At the time of his conversion, Mwinyihaji wa Bwika was a married man with two children. When his wife refused to become a Muslim, he sent her away:

He had two children by his Digo wife, then he sent them away. He told his first wife to become a Muslim and she refused. He told his wife, 'I had better convert you,' but she refused, saying, 'this Islam isn't for me.' So he sent them away, but the two children didn't become Muslims; they went off with their mother.⁸¹

Mwinyihaji's attitude was uncompromising towards others who did not become Muslim:

Some converts said, 'As long as you're not a Muslim, don't come to my place.' A brother could even say that to his brother - Mwinyihaji wa Bwika was one of those.⁸²

During the Mwachisenge famine (1884-85), some Muslim traders took up residence in Tiwi. The villagers welcomed the presence of traders during the famine, since the traders arranged to have food brought to the village. In the years immediately following the famine more Muslim immigrants arrived; some of them were given land to cultivate. The decision to allow immigrants to settle at Tiwi was taken by the elders of the village; as the senior elder, Mwinyihaji wa Bwika was instrumental in the adoption of this decision. The presence of immigrants increased Muslim influence in the village, and they are said to have converted several persons during the 1890s.

⁷⁸ Juma Zani, Kundutsi, 26/1/72.

⁷⁹ Mwamtano Mwakutanga, Ukunda, 16/8/68.

⁸⁰ Mwinyihamisi Bwika, Ttwi Mkoyo, 13/12/79.

⁸¹ Juma Zani, Kundutsi, 26/1/72.

⁸² Juma Salim Pati, Kitsanga, 20/9/87.

Among these early Muslim immigrants were Majaliwa, Beidi, Abdurrahman Chomvi, Abdirabbi Abdallah, Shekeli, Juma Heri and Nasir Vidzoya. They were a mixed group, though resident Muslims of longstanding Mombasa families were notably absent: Beidi was a Makua, Abdurrahman Chomvi was a Chonyi convert, Shekeli was a Mandiri Arab from Mombasa who "came to Tiwi with his slaves, and afterwards went to Diani; he later freed his slaves when he went to Zanzibar", Juma Heri was a Nyamwezi (married to a Digo) who was trading in coconuts, Nasir Vidzoya was a Zigua who was trading in salt. Beidi, Juma Heri and Nasir Vidzoya ("Makua", "Nyamwezi" and "Zigua") were evidently of slave origin, but it is not clear whether they had already been freed by the time they came to Tiwi, or whether they were acting as agents or under some obligation to an owner. Shekeli is said to have come in order to "buy people". The phrase does not necessarily mean that he was a slave-dealer; he may simply have been looking for people who wanted to move to town to work in exchange for food during the famine. As well as doing business, Majaliwa practiced medicine: "People who were sick would go to him and he would tell them that they had an 'Arab devil', that they would get better if they became Muslims". Both Abdirabbi and Nasir Vidzoya, though not particularly well educated themselves, are said to have done some teaching.⁸³ One of the more successful immigrants was Borafia bin Shibu, an ex-slave of Mbaruk bin Rashid, who arrived in Tiwi shortly after 1896; by 1915 he owned a shop, a mosque, and two plots of agricultural land.⁸⁴

Tiwi continued to attract Muslim traders from Mombasa during the famine of 1899. At that time, the District Commissioner wrote:

I am informed by elders of Tiwi and Diani districts that both Arabs and Baloochis frequently arrive at their villages with loads of clothes and rice, etc. which they offer for sale.⁸⁵

In 1915, the British Government required non-Digo Muslims to move away from Tiwi (and other Digo villages), unless they gave proof of ownership of property or had filed application for Title Deeds to land in the area. This action was part of an effort to separate "natives" and "non-natives" into distinct residential areas, and to get Digo claimants to withdraw their applications for Title Deeds, on the grounds that individual ownership of land was contrary to customary law.⁸⁶ By definition, a Digo who filed an application for a Title Deed (as was done by numerous Digo Muslim converts) was considered a "Swahili" (that is, a detribalized "non-native") and no longer a Digo, but such applications were vigorously discouraged, and

⁸³ Abdallah Makanzu, Diani, 5/12/67.

⁸⁴ Tour Diary, Mombasa District, entry for 18 October 1915. KNA, Coast Province, MP/1140.

⁸⁵ Vanga Inward, 1899-1900, report by the District Commissioner, 8 August 1899, KNA, Coast Province, MP/67/16.

⁸⁶ See pp.130-131 below.

eventually disallowed. Abdurrahman filed an application for a Title Deed, as did Makarani, who claimed in his application to be a "Swahili". The District Commissioner wrote in his report: "Makarani, who now says he is a Mdigo, has not withdrawn his application; I have told him that unless he does so, I must consider him to be a Swahili."⁸⁷

The first Teachers and Mosques at Tiwi

About 1894 Juma Matungale, the first Muslim teacher (as opposed to immigrants or traders who did some teaching),⁸⁸ came to live in Tiwi. He came from Kurwitu north of Mombasa (or, according to another account, from Mavueni near Takaungu), and is said to have been educated in Mombasa. Matungale's mother was a Digo from Kitsanga village in Tiwi. By the time Matungale came, he was already a mature married man.⁸⁹

Shortly after Matungale's arrival, in c.1898, the Mkoyo (Sokoni) Mosque was built. This was the first mosque to be built in the greater Tiwi area, and the third to be built under Digo influence south of Mombasa, the other two being the Pungu Mosque and the Kingwede Mosque (Map IIA).

Informants agree that Mwinyihaji wa Bwika built the Mkoyo Mosque, and that Matungale was its first Imam.⁹⁰ According to a mosque survey carried out in 1913, the mosque at Tiwi had been "built by all people of the village." This may have been a reference to a communal effort of Muslim converts, under Mwinyihaji's leadership; it is unlikely that non-Muslims were allowed to participate.⁹¹ Matungale, and others, may well have encouraged Mwinyihaji to build the mosque. No doubt he was responding to the wishes and needs of the small but growing Muslim community of the village. Until that time, Muslims of Tiwi had gone either to Mtongwe or Mombasa for the 'Id and Ramadhan celebrations, but as one informant put it, "Mombasa was too far away." The nascent Muslim community had come of age.

The first Mkoyo Mosque was a modest building (made of mud and thatch) whose simplicity belied its importance: Islam, reinforced by the growth of Islamic institutions, was penetrating southwards. As soon as the mosque was built, it attracted

⁸⁷ Tour Diary of C.Dundas, District Commissioner, Mombasa, entry for 18 October 1915. KNA, Coast Province, MP/1140.

⁸⁸ For a study of the overlapping roles of merchants and scholars, see Nehemia Levtzion, "Merchants vs. Scholars and aeries in West Africa: Differential and Complementary Roles," in Nehemia Levtzion and Humphrey J. Fisher (eds), *Rural and Urban Islam in West Africa, being Asian and African Studies*, Volume 20, Number 1, March 1986, pp.26-43.

⁸⁹ Juma Salim Pati, Kitsanga, 20/9/87.

⁹⁰ Mwinyihamisi Bwika, Tiwi, 11/12/85; Juma Salim Pati, Kitsanga, 20/9/87.

⁹¹ The list of mosques is given in KNA, DC/MSA/3/1/71.

Digo Muslim converts (still few in number) from the nearby villages of Ukunda, Diani and Matuga. As the only mosque for several miles around, the Mkoyo Mosque was adopted by the Muslims of the greater Tiwi area for their weekly community prayers.⁹²

Matungale set up a Qur'an school (*Sw. chua*) and began to teach the children of some of the early converts: among these first pupils were Muhammad Gakurya, Msikiti Mwinyihaji, and Nasoro Changani. After Matungale had been teaching for some four or five years, another teacher, Makarani bin Fadhili, arrived. Fadhili, a Kauma Muslim, was married to Biamu binti Mwahema, a Digo woman from Tiwi whom he had met at Mtanganyiko when she went to visit her relatives there. Fadhili had fought for Mbaruk bin Rashid (of Gasi) during Mbaruk's rising of 1895-96. When Mbaruk withdrew into German East Africa in 1896, Fadhili returned to Mtanganyiko, only to find that his wife and his son had already gone to Tiwi; he then followed them there. The arrival of Fadhili and his family at Tiwi is considered to have been a home-coming.⁹³ Fadhili's son, Makarani, was one of the better educated Digo of the time. He had studied under Mwinyi Mole⁹⁴ at Mtanganyiko, and under a Gunya teacher, Ramadhan wa Muhoro, at Mkomani (Kisauni), and had done some teaching before coming to Tiwi.⁹⁵

Doubling the number of Muslim scholars in Tiwi was not without its complications; Matungale and Makarani could not both preside at the Mkoyo Mosque, and a dispute eventually arose, including a difference of opinion about which of the two was more qualified as a teacher. Here Mwinyihaji wa Bwika showed his mastery at arbitration. He called together the elders of Kitsanga (the village of Matungale's relatives) and put the problem to them. One of the elders, Mwarandu, offered land for a new mosque, and Matungale's relatives invited him to move to Kitsanga, where they gave him land and welcomed him.

Thus the Kitsanga Mosque came to be built (also of mud and thatch) in c.1904, approximately six years after the Mkoyo Mosque, and Juma Matungale became its first Imam, leaving the Mkoyo Mosque to Makarani. The Kitsanga Mosque, described as an "off-shoot of the Mkoyo Mosque", was used only for daily prayers. The Mkoyo Mosque remained the Friday mosque of the area.⁹⁶

⁹² Ibrahim Makarani, Tiwi, 13/12/85.

⁹³ Juma Salim Pati, Kitsanga, 20/9/87.

⁹⁴ See Chapter III, p.92, footnote 123.

⁹⁵ Saidi Sulayman Mwagogo, Kilifi, 31/8/87. Makarani was a friend of Saidi bin Hamisi Mwapodzo, since they had studied together under Ramadhan wa Muhoro; Saidi used to come from Matuga to visit Makarani at Tiwi; and Ramadhan wa Muhoro, Makarani's old teacher, would also come to visit Makarani at Tiwi. Juma Salim Pati, Kitsanga, 20/9/87.

⁹⁶ Juma Salim Pati, Kitsanga, 20/9/87. According to the 1913 survey of mosques, there was only one mosque at Tiwi; though aware of the Friday mosque at Mkoyo, he was evidently not aware of the smaller mosque at Kitsanga. List of Mosques in Tiwi District, 1913, KNA, DC/MSA/3/1/71.

Juma Matungale began to teach at his new home in Kitsanga, while Makarani took over teaching Matungale's pupils and other new pupils at Mkoyo, including children of Mwinyihaji wa Bwika and of some of the other early converts. Between them Juma Matungale and Makarani Fadhili were responsible for giving religious education to early converts and to the children of early converts in Tiwi.⁹⁷

The building of a third mosque, the Chikola Mosque, in 1914, came about in a different way. Many, though by no means all, of the early Digo converts wanted their children to receive schooling. This was not easy, given the scarcity of teachers in the rural areas. A solution adopted by some of the converts (if they could afford it) was to arrange for a Muslim teacher to come and live near their home as a private tutor to their children. Muhammad Nzoa did just this when he invited Mwalimu Nasir to Tiwi Chikola in approximately 1909-10. Nasir, a Segeju from Vanga, had been educated in Mombasa. He came to Chikola to give classes to Salim Mwanzoa, the son of Muhammad Nzoa; in addition to teaching, Nasir did work as a *tabibu*. With the arrival of other students, what began as private tuition to one student gradually developed into a proper Qur'an school, which Mwalimu Nasir eventually handed over to his first student, Salim Mwanzoa.

As Salim was nearing completion of his studies, the villagers ("proud to have an educated son of the village") asked Mwalimu Nasir to supervise the building of a mosque for them. And so the Chikola Mosque came to be built, and Nasir became its first Imam. It was a local, family mosque; the Muslims of Chikola continued to go to the Mkoyo Mosque for Friday prayers. When Nasir died, Salim became the Imam of the Chikola Mosque.⁹⁸

Expansion in the 1920s

During the years after the building of the Mkoyo Mosque, more persons in Tiwi were converted, and the number of Muslims grew slowly. The first converts had been men; in turn they converted some of their wives. The first women Muslim converts are said to have been women of Mwinyihaji wa Bwika's family. Some women, such as Mwanajuma (the Segeju wife of Mwalimu Nasir) of Tiwi Chikola, were also active in converting other women.⁹⁹ More important than the continuing conversions was the growing number of young men (second-generation Muslims) who were undergoing or had completed study of the Qur'an.

⁹⁷ The "children" were of all ages, in some cases young men who were able to take on responsibilities soon after finishing their studies. Juma Salim Pati, Kitsanga, 20/9/87.

⁹⁸ Muhammad Salim Mwanzoa, Chikola, 23/12/85; Juma Salim Pati, Kitsanga, 20/9/87.

⁹⁹ Mwaidi Swaleh Mwadzitso, Tiwi Pongwe, 12/12/85; Mwanalima Abdallah Matumbo, Matuga, 16/12/85.

Mwinyihaji wa Bwika died in 1913, and was succeeded as headman by Muhammad Mwangwaya, wealthy, influential and no less ardent a Muslim than Mwinyihaji.¹⁰⁰ In the same year Mwangwaya gave land to the Government for a "daily market" to be set up at Tiwi; in the Deed of Gift for the land, he refers to himself as "Muhammad bin Mwangwaya El-Muslim, Mzee [senior elder] of Tiwi," and declares that the land is a "perpetual gift true and valid according to the Sheria."¹⁰¹ Mwangwaya's succession to the position of Headman, which he held for more than ten years, was an indication of the continuing strength of Muslim influence in Tiwi.

By 1916, government records showed six (out of thirty-three) of the elders of Tiwi with Muslim names;¹⁰² but according to oral testimony, more than half of the elders were Muslim by that time.¹⁰³ The growing number of Muslims undoubtedly encouraged Mwangwaya to be uncompromising in asserting his Muslim beliefs, and his pro-Muslim conduct as headman took on an aggressiveness which was unknown during the days of his predecessor; in 1924, just before Mwangwaya retired as headman, he was described as "an ardent Mohamedan...out in every way to break Digo triballaw."¹⁰⁴ In 1924 he was succeeded as headman by Muhammad Mwakaneno.¹⁰⁵

The arrival of another teacher, Salimini bin Simba, gave further impetus to Muslim education in the Tiwi and Matuga area. Salimini was a Yao¹⁰⁶ from southern Tanzania who had come to Kenya as a soldier before the First World War. On retirement from the army he decided to settle in Kenya, and went to live at Vuga, with the family of Mwadzala Mwacherero, whose sister he had met and married in Mombasa. While at Vuga, Salimini would come to Chigato, where he was offered farming land by Mwatumwa at Chigongoni village.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁰ At the beginning of 1913, Mwinyihaji is still shown as the headman of Tiwi; in November that year, "A meeting of the Ngambe was held at which 40 elders were present. Mohamed bin Mangwaya [Mwangwaya] was unanimously elected Headman of Tiwi Location." "Detailed list of headmen of Tiwi District," District Commissioner, Mombasa, to Provincial Commissioner, Mombasa, 24 January 1913. KNA, Coast Province, MP/494; Tour Diary, Mombasa District, entry for 3 November 1913, KNA, DC/MSA/3/1/9b.

¹⁰¹ District Commissioner, Mombasa, to the Provincial Commissioner, Mombasa, letters of 15 September 1915 and 2 October 1917. KNA, Coast Province, MP/26/12>8; a translation of the Deed of Gift, dated 31 July 1913, is included in the letter of 15 September 1915.

¹⁰² List showing "Elders of Ngambe", as at 16 August 1916. KNA, DC/MSA/8/2.

¹⁰³ Juma Salim Pati, Kitsanga, 21/9/87. In this case, oral testimony is probably a more reliable indication of the extent of conversion to Islam among the elders.

¹⁰⁴ Acting District Commissioner, Digo District, to the Senior Commissioner Coast, 6 June 1924. KNA, Coast Province, MP/1/24.

¹⁰⁵ Notes on Headmen, showing election of Muhammad Mwakaneno at Tiwi on 1/7/24. KNA, DC/KWL/3/3.

¹⁰⁶ For details of the history of the Yao, and their early exposure to Islam through coastal trading contacts, see Edward A. Alpers, "Trade, State and Society among the Yao in the Nineteenth Century," in *JAH*, X, 3 (1969): 405-420, and "Towards a History of the Expansion of Islam in East Africa: the Matrilineal Peoples of the Southern Interior," in T.O. Ranger & I. Kimambo (eds), *The Historical Study of African Religion* (London 1972), 172-201, and EA. Alpers, *Ivory and Slaves in East Central Africa*, (London 1975).

¹⁰⁷ Hamisi Muhammad Mwakuwamia, Chigato, 3/12/85; Muhammad Mwinyi Ndaro, Magodzoni, 16/12/85.

In 1915, Salimini moved from Vuga to Chigongoni,¹⁰⁸ He subsequently became the Imam of the Mabatani Mosque (also known as Mwatumwa's Mosque) and set up a Qur'an school at Chigongoni. Salimini was the first teacher in the Chigato area, and he immediately attracted students from the surrounding villages. The thirst for education was spreading, as people saw the benefits, in particular the positions held by those who had received some education. Several years later, in c.1922, he helped Mwinyihamsi Gakure, the head of the village and one of the early converts of the area, build the Makunguni Mosque (otherwise known as Gakure's Mosque or the Chigongoni Mosque). Salimini was the first Imam of the Makunguni Mosque, assisted by Abdallah Matumbo, one of his first students, who later became Imam.¹⁰⁹

The First Digo Imams

The impact of Salimini's teaching was soon felt. One of his early students was Kassim Mwachinyama, whose older brother, Hamisi Mwachinyama, was the head of Chigato village. In 1924, when Kasim was about to finish his Qur'an studies, Hamisi decided to build a mosque, the Chigato Mosque, where Kassim Mwachinyama was to become the first Imam. Salimini was aware of the important role his students would play in their home villages. As well as teaching them the Qur'an, he trained a number of them for future Imamship; Kassim Mwachinyama is said to have practised giving Friday sermons at the Makunguni Mosque under Salimini's guidance before becoming the Imam of the Chigato Mosque.^{U0}

In 1919, before Kassim Mwachinyama had become Imam of the Chigato Mosque, Juma Matungale handed over the Imamship of the Kitsanga Mosque to one of his early pupils, Juma Salim Pati. The hand-over indicated a growing maturity among Digo Muslims, and augured well for the future of Islam in the area: "Matungale called me, and he also called Makarani from Mkoyo to be a witness. He told me, 'I'm now an old man, it's time for you to take over.'"¹¹¹

The decade of the 1920s saw the construction of three more mosques in the Tiwi area: Mwamabanda Mosque (1926), Mkunguni Mosque (1928) and Chai

¹⁰⁸ Salimini may have moved to Chigongoni, off the beaten track, to elude British efforts to remove him from the Nyika Reserve. In his Tour Diary of 1915, entry for 21 June 1915, C. Dundas, the District Commissioner of Mombasa, wrote: "At Vuga found a Swahili (ex KAR) who has settled there without permission; told he must go." Four months later, on 19th October 1915, Dundas wrote: "Swahili who used to be at Vuga has left." (Tour Diary of District Commissioner, Mombasa, entries for 21 June 1915 and 19 October 1915, KNA, CP/1140.) The person referred to by Dundas must have been Salimini; no other ex-army persons are known to have lived at Vuga at this time.

¹⁰⁹ Abdallah Mbwana, Chigongoni, 31/12/85; Hamisi Hilali Mwatumwa, Chigongoni, 12/1/86.

¹¹⁰ Hamis Muhammad Mwakuwamia, Kigato, 3/12/85; Nassir Bakari, Chigongoni, 5/12/85.

¹¹¹ Juma Salim Pati, Kitsanga, 20/9/87.

Mosque (1929). Jumaa Mwamabanda was one of the first persons to educate his children at Salimini's. Included among Jumaa's "children" was his nephew, Omari Mwagurumba. Mwamabanda is said to have built his mosque in order to provide for his nephew Omari, who became the first Imam upon completion of his studies.¹¹² Similarly, the Mkunguni Mosque is said to have been built, under Salimini's supervision, by Uthman Mwakuaza (who also offered the land for the mosque) for his son, Sulayman (educated by Matungale), who became the first Imam and started a Qur'an school at the mosque.¹¹³ At approximately the same time, the Chai Mosque was built by Said Chimetse, whose son, Muhammad Bokoko, was one of Salimini's first students. Bokoko became the first Imam of the Chai Mosque, and went on to become an important teacher, after further studies under Mwinyihamisi Manzu at Pungu.¹¹⁴ To some extent the construction of the new mosques of the 1920s corresponded to an increase in the number of Muslims in the area. The new mosques were also the outcome both of a growth in Muslim education and of a friendly rivalry between villages that boasted an "educated son" whom they sought to honour by building a mosque.

By 1930, there were eight mosques in the Tiwi area, seven of them with Digo Imams, whose influence was already being felt beyond Tiwi. Sulayman Mwakuaza, Imam of the Mkunguni Mosque, helped to establish the Vuga Mosque in the 1920s, and he would go there from Mkunguni to conduct Friday and 'Id prayers. There was no Qur'an school in Vuga, but pupils would come from there to be taught by Kassim Mwachinyama at Chigato. Eventually one of the Vuga converts, Tsufu (who had led the building of the Vuga Mosque), convinced Kassim Mwachinyama to move from Chigato to Vuga where he undertook to teach Tsufu's sons.¹¹⁵

The interior: the Tsimba area

Muslim influence from the village of Mtongwe was felt as far away as Tsimba, that is, the whole area around *kaya* Kwale, including the villages of Golini, Kundutsi and Vuga.

As early as the 1840s, before the first conversions at Tsimba, some people from Tsimba are known to have migrated to Mtongwe where they became Muslims. The earliest conversions of Tsimba inhabitants also took place at Mtongwe, towards

¹¹² Mwakande Fatuma, Tiwi, 4/12/85.

¹¹³ Muhammad Sulayman Dzaphara, Mkunguni, 20/12/85.

¹¹⁴ Uthman Ali, Chai, 10/12/85.

¹¹⁵ Abdallah Sulayman Zingizi, Vuga, 4/2/86.

the end of the 19th century. Persons from Tsimba who were sick or possessed by spirits would go to Mtongwe in search of treatment:

There they would be told, Are you feeling pain? ...you had better become a Muslim. When they came back, they were Muslims, but they didn't even know their Muslim names and some went back to Mtongwe to ask what their names were. There were others who went to Tiwi to be cured of sickness or spirit possession, and were converted there. People who were converted in this way didn't behave like Muslims, they didn't pray or fast. At that time the Digo didn't want Islam; they didn't become Muslims because they wanted to, but because they were sick or possessed."¹¹⁶

Conversions also took place through trading contacts between the people of Tsimba and Mtongwe. In the early 1880s, Mwajasi Mwatsudzo of Golini went to trade in Mtongwe, in such items as betel, gum copal and rubber.¹¹⁷ Fifteen years later, in 1898, he came back to Golini a Muslim, by the name of Abdallah; he knew the basics of his Muslim faith, and had even studied the Qur'an a bit. He is remembered as the first Digo in Tsimba to live like a Muslim, and to bring up his children as Muslims. He sent his son Muhammad to study in Mtongwe, and he himself would go to Mtongwe for the month of Ramadhan and for 'Id feasts.¹¹⁸

In the 1880s, after negotiating with the elders of *kaya* Kwale, the Church Missionary Society established a Mission Station at Tsimba and opened a school. But the Mission was short-lived, and had little lasting impact on the Digo of the area.¹¹⁹ At this time there were several Muslim foreigners (Msindo, Heri and Mngindo) living in the Tsimba area. They had come from Mtongwe to the villages of Vuga and Kundutsi in the 1880s (possibly during the Mwachisenge famine of 1884-85) "to trade in beads and rice", and had settled there at the invitation of Digo friends. Msindo had friends at Vuga who welcomed him; Heri was a friend of Mwadzihachi, the headman of Kundutsi; Mngindo, a former soldier of Shaykh Mbaruk bin Rashid, was a friend of Mwamchera, the headman of Vuga.

Several Digo at Tsimba were converted during the 1890s. Mwijaka, son of Mwinyimkuu, at Mtongwe was a friend of Dundu Mwariale of Kundutsi. With

¹¹⁶ Juma Zani, Kundutsi, 17/12/67.

¹¹⁷ The Swahili would mix betel with chewing tobacco to lessen the acidity of the tobacco and give it a more aromatic taste. See Rev. Dr. L. Krapf, *A Dictionary of the Suahili Language*, London 1882, pp. 356-57,409.

¹¹⁸ Juma Zani, Kundutsi, 3/5/73.

¹¹⁹ When Krapf visited Kenya in 1862, he wrote: "The chief of Shimba has been with me recently, requesting us to take up our Mission settlement in his tribe." (Letter of Dr. Krapf, Mombasa, 6/5/1862, *UMFCM*, V, (December 1862): 805.) But nothing specific came out of this meeting until 1882 when W.S.Price made "a tour to Shimba country with Mr. Shaw with a view to a future Mission Station." (Letter of W.S.Price, Frere Town, 5th May 1882, CMS, G3/A5 P2, Item 44.) Towards the end of 1887, Rev. H.K.Binns went to Shimba to start the Mission, where he was said to be settled by December of that year. (Letter of Rev.A.D.Shaw, Frere Town, 24 December 1887, CMS, G3/A5/1887, Item 372). Because of shortage of staff the Shimba Mission proved ineffective. It was abandoned in 1890, and only briefly occupied again between 1900 and 1904. (Cf. James D. Holway, 'C.M.S. Contact with Islam in East Africa before 1914,' *Journal of Religion in Africa*, IV (1972): 200-212.) After 1904, missionaries would occasionally visit the Station. It is undoubtedly due to such visits that a small community of Digo Christians still remains at Vyongwani (near Kwale). In 1925, the District Commissioner wrote: "The C.M.S. Mission functions less and less as the years go by in the District. The Station at Kwale is closed..None of its missionaries have as far as I know visited the District during the year.(1925 Annual Report, Digo District, KNA, DC/KWL/1/11.)

Mwijaka's help, Dundu arranged for his nephew to get rice at Mtongwe and bring it to Kundutsi, where he set up a shop to sell it. Dundu became a Muslim and took the name of his friend, Mwijaka.¹²⁰ During the famine of 1899 (the "Gunny Sack Famine"), people moved from Tsimba to Mombasa, and some became Muslims there before returning to Tsimba. By the turn of the century, between twenty to forty persons (out of a total population of more than three hundred adults) in the Tsimba area may have been Muslim.¹²¹

Another foreign Muslim to arrive in Tsimba was Hemedi, a Gunya friend of Abdallah Mwatsudzo, who came to open a shop at Golini in c.1905.¹²² Though such immigrant Muslim traders are not specifically remembered as converting the Digo to Islam, their arrival reinforced the Muslim presence and is indicative of continuing Muslim penetration into the area.

When Abdallah Mwatsudzo first returned to Golini from Mtongwe, he looked down on his fellow Digo who were not Muslims. Like other Muslim converts he had been told in Mtongwe that he should not eat with pagans ("even if he's your father and he isn't a Muslim, let him eat by himself, he's a pagan") and so he began to eat apart, and to criticise his friends and relatives for their eating habits. A few of Mwatsudzo's friends and his younger brother are said to have become Muslim through his influence.

Mwadhachichi, the headman of Kundutsi, said to be the first convert in Kundutsi, was converted at this time, taking the name Ali, and some of Mwadhachichi's friends are also said to have been converted, following his example. On the other hand, Mwamchera, the headman of Vuga, did not agree to become a Muslim. Mwamchera died just before the first World War, and was succeeded as headman by a Muslim convert, Tsufu.¹²³

After some time Mwatsudzo and Mwadhachichi changed their condescending, separatist attitude towards their pagan Digo relatives and friends, and began to invite them to partake of food during Muslim feasts. The non-Muslims were told to eat apart, but this did not keep them from attending; they came in large numbers. In this way some of them were attracted to Islam.

¹²⁰ Juma Zani, Kundutsi, 9/5/69.

¹²¹ The total population estimate of more than three hundred is based on a 1913 hut count showing 152 huts in the Kwale area, on the assumption that the total population would not have changed that much in fifteen years. The same informant who gave the total number of Muslims as being between twenty to forty in 1899, estimated that less than one in ten persons was Muslim at the time, an estimate which agrees broadly with the total population estimate. KNA, DC/MSA/3/2/29; Juma Zani, Kundutsi, 17/12/67.

¹²² Juma Zani, Kundutsi, 17/12/67.

¹²³ Juma Zani, Kundutsi, 9/5/69. Of the six *ngambi* elders of Kundutsi listed in 1916, only Mwadhachichi used a Muslim name. KNA, DC/MSA/6/167, List of Elders of *Ngambi*, 16th August 1916.

Islam gained impetus with the return of Muhammad bin Abdallah Mwatsudzo, his studies completed, to Golini in 1920. He proceeded to open a Qur'an school for the Muslim children. When Salim Ndaro (who had been sent by his grandfather Mwadhachi to study at the Qur'an school in Muhaka) returned from his studies in 1925, he did the same at Kundutsi. Previously Sulayman Mwakuaza had been coming from Tiwi to do some teaching at Kundutsi.

The first mosque in the Tsimba area was the Ziwani Mosque at Golini (Map 11B). There is conflicting evidence about the date of construction of the mosque. According to one source, it was built by Abdallah Mwatsudzo in c.1924, after his son, Muhammad, returned from his studies. It is said that Abdallah was chided by his Mombasa friends who would come to visit him that there was no mosque in Golini, and so he decided to build one. Other testimony states that the mosque was already standing during the first World War, by 1915.¹²⁴ Both accounts may be correct. It is likely that Abdallah first built a small temporary mosque (*msala*) for personal and family use; later, as the number of Muslims increased, he would have built a larger, more permanent, structure suitable for use by the whole Muslim community.

The second mosque in the area, the Vuga Mosque, was built communally, under the leadership of Tsufu, the headman of Vuga, in c.1922, at the instigation of the "Liwali of Tiwi".¹²⁵ It is said that during one of the Liwali's visits to Vuga, he noticed that there was no mosque, and so called a meeting of the elders to discuss the matter. Tsufu offered land for the mosque and undertook to supervise its construction. There was no local Muslim qualified to be the Imam, so Imams would come from Tiwi. Sometimes Salimini or Kassim Mwachinyama, who were both at Chigato, more often Sul yman Mwakuaza from Tiwi, would come to lead the Friday prayers at Vuga. No Qur'an school was opened at Vuga. Instead, pupils from Vuga would go to Kassim Mwachinyama's school at Chigato, some three miles away.¹²⁶

Before building the Vuga Mosque, Tsufu had sent his sons to learn under Kassim Mwachinyama at Chigato. Shortly after the first World War, he convinced Mwachinyama to move to Vuga so his sons could learn at home. When Tsufu's eldest son, Sulayman Zingizi, finished his studies, Mwachinyama went back to Chigato. Sulayman Zingizi then took over as Imam of the Vuga Mosque and opened a Qur'an school at Vuga.

¹²⁴ Mwijaka Mwandzori, Chirimani, 4/2/86.

¹²⁵ The term "Liwali of Tiwi" is a misnomer. Either the Liwali of Mombasa (or Vanga), or the Mudir of Tiwi, is meant, probably the Mudir of Tiwi, under whose direct jurisdiction *the* village of Vuga fell. That the Mudir should be referred to as "Liwali" is some indication of his prestige. The Mudirate or Tiwi was abolished in 1922, a date which coincides with the estimated date of construction of the Vuga Mosque. See pp.116-117.

¹²⁶ See p.125.

In the mid-1920s Mwalimu Mwinyihamisi Manzu came to Vuga from Pungu in order to educate his brother-in-law, Kassim Mwachuo. Zingizi met Manzu at this time; attracted by Manzu, Zingizi decided to go to Pungu to continue with further studies under Manzu and to work under him in his school there. After gaining further knowledge and experience in Pungu, Zingizi returned to Vuga in the early 1930s, and continued his work as Imam and teacher until his death.¹²⁷

A third mosque, the Tsimba (or Bumbani) Mosque, was built at Kundutsi in the early 1920s, within a year or two of the Vuga Mosque. On the basis of oral evidence, it is difficult to determine which of the two mosques, the Vuga Mosque or the Tsimba Mosque, was built first, and they may well have been built in the same year. The building of a mosque in each of the three principal villages of Tsimba reflects a spirit of village independence and rivalry. Even before the building of the Tsimba Mosque, Muslims from Kundutsi tended to go to Tiwi for Friday prayers, rather than to Golini.

The building of the Tsimba Mosque is attributed to Mwamadi Gongu, an early teacher, and Salim Ndaro, Mwadzihachi's grandson, who had already returned from his studies at Muhaka. Salim Ndaro became the first Imam of the mosque, and also began to teach. Together with Muhammad Abdallah Mwatsudzo of Golini, Salim is said to have converted many people during the latter part of the 1920s: "...sometimes as many as twenty persons a day became Muslims, and were happy to do so...people had begun to accept Islam."¹²⁸ Though the name of Ali Mwadzihachi, the first convert of Kundutsi, is not mentioned in connection with the building of the Tsimba Mosque, the mosque can be said to have grown out of his early initiative in spreading Islam in the village.

By 1933, mosques and Qur'an schools existed in the villages of Golini, Kundutsi and Vuga. A Qur'an school existed at Chirimani village, and mosques had been built in Chirimani (1927) and Kwale (1932).¹²⁹

The Mijikenda Muslim response to land registration

According to Mijikenda custom, a person acquired the right to occupy and use land by clearing and cultivating it. This right could be inherited, but when land was left unused for a long period of time, rights over it lapsed, and the land could

¹²⁷ Abdallah Sulayman Zingizi, Vuga, 4/2/86.

¹²⁸ Mwinyimsa Mwamzuka, Tsimba, 4/2/86.

¹²⁹ In 1924 the colonial government transferred Vanga District headquarters from Shimoni to Kwale, and renamed the District Digo District, and the boundaries were altered. From then on Kwale gained in importance. All Native Tribunals started meeting there in 1925, and in 1926 a school and dispensary were opened. KNA, Annual Reports for 1924-26, KNA, DC/KWL/1/10-12.

then be occupied and used by other persons. In this case, however, trees (and crops) remained the property of the persons who planted them.¹³⁰ In pre-colonial times, land rights rarely needed defining because they were rarely questioned. So long as land was plentiful, as Colson has stated: "...Africans were concerned to use land, not to hold it."¹³¹

The definition of land rights, particularly the right of ownership, was very much an issue arising out of colonial jurisdiction. The official colonial version of customary land tenure among Africans was often influenced by exigencies of government and moralistic views about how rural Africans should behave, rather than by real pre-colonial African behaviour. Thus, most colonial documents stress the communal nature of customary land tenure: land was inalienable (except, of course, by the communal authority), and could not be sold or mortgaged by individuals.¹³²

By the second half of the 19th century, the Mijikenda were allowing foreigners to use Mijikenda land as tenants on payment of a fee, and were selling or mortgaging trees to foreigners. The first foreigners to use Mijikenda land in this way were Muslims from Mombasa.¹³³ Some Mombasa Muslims used Mijikenda land for many years, and came to regard themselves as having acquired ownership.¹³⁴ Some of the Muslims who settled in Digo villages south of Mombasa also presumed that they had bought, not hired, land from the Digo.¹³⁵ But in land ownership disputes between Mijikenda and Muslims during the colonial period, the government consistently upheld the principle of the inalienability of Mijikenda land.¹³⁶

In 1908, the colonial government approved a Land Registration Ordinance,

¹³⁰ "Tribal Law and Customs" - Notes by the Mudir of Tiwi (1913), and "Land Tenure" - Notes by C.Dundas, District Commissioner, Mombasa District (1915). KNA, DC/MSA/8/2.

¹³¹ Elizabeth Colson, "The Impact of the Colonial Period on the Definition of Land Rights," in Victor Turner (ed), *Colonialism in Ajiica, 1870-1960*, Vol 3 (Cambridge 1971), 193-215. The quotation is on p.199.

¹³² The concept of communal ownership not only simplified political control, but also justified the concessions of land by chiefs to colonial governments. See Colson, "The Impact of the Colonial Period," and C.K.Meek, *Land Law and Custom in the Colonies* (London 1946).

¹³³ New noted that this was happening north of Mombasa in the 1860s. See Chapter II, p.55-56.

¹³⁴ When the Muslims who had been using Mijikenda land tried to sell it to a third party, land disputes arose. In 1908, the District Commissioner of Mombasa wrote: "I have the honour to report that certain Waribe wazee [elders] have complained that land belonging to their tribe at Mwakirunge has been sold to Dr.Bowen by two Swahilis of Mombasa. The Waribe state that the land in question was granted to the vendors' grandfather to cultivate, but that they had no right to sell it." District Commissioner, Mombasa, to Ag.Secretary for Native Affairs, 30 June 1908, KNA, PC/COAST/1/11/9.

¹³⁵ At Ttwi, Dundas found: "Nabi has two shops, a house and a shamba (plot of land] which he says he bought from a Mdigo Ali Manyara. It appears that this was confirmed before Liwali Ali and that Ali Manyara admitted that he had no right to sell the land." District Tour Diary, Mombasa District, entry for 12 March 1915. KNA, Coast Province, MP/47/1140.

¹³⁶ The best documented case is: Abdulrasool Alidina Visram versus Muluwa Gwanombi, Golo Azilo and Mwaka wa Ngula (as for themselves and representing all other members of the Jibana tribe of the Wanyika), Civil Appeal No.6 of 1914 in His Majesty's Court of Appeal for Eastern Africa, KNA, DC/MSA/3/4; details of the case are given in East Africa Protectorate LAW REPORTS (1913-14), Vol V, 141-153.

and took steps to begin the registration of land at the coast¹³⁷ Even before land registration was instituted, the government had decided to preserve communal ownership of land among the Mijikenda, and to allow freehold ownership of land only in 'the coastal strip', that is, in the coastal towns and in surrounding areas inhabited mainly by Muslims.¹³⁸ Muslims were to be allowed to acquire freehold title to land, but Mijikenda (who were considered 'natives' and therefore members of a communal group) were not.

Generally speaking, the boundaries of the Nyika Reserves (the areas where the Mijikenda were dominant) marked the dividing line between non-Muslim 'natives' and Muslims.¹³⁹ The categories 'Muslim' and 'native' were not mutually exclusive, however, and did not correspond exactly to areas of residence and land use: some Muslims (Mijikenda and non-Mijikenda) were using land in the Nyika Reserves, and some Mijikenda (Muslims and non-Muslims) were settled outside the Nyika Reserves.

In dealing with these exceptions the government sought to place persons in one of two preconceived categories: *either* Mijikenda 'native' (non-Muslim) inside the Nyika Reserves *or* Muslim non-'native' (non-Mijikenda) outside the Nyika Reserves. Non-Mijikenda Muslims living within the Nyika Reserves were asked to leave the Reserves, and their applications for title to land inside the Reserves were disallowed.¹⁴⁰ Non-Muslim Mijikenda outside the Reserves do not seem to have applied for land titles; Mijikenda Muslims, both inside and outside the Reserves, did apply for land titles, thereby creating special difficulties for the colonial government.

The Land Registration Ordinance was applied successively to different regions of the coast, starting north of Mombasa. In 1910, among those applying for land titles in the Takaungu-Malindi region were a number of Mijikenda Muslims. Initially their applications were rejected; in 1912, writing a judgement on the application of a Giriama Muslim for land at Mida, the Recorder of Titles wrote:

¹³⁷ The move towards land registration was prompted by a memorandum from Chief Justice Sir Robert Hamilton, who observed that insecurity of title to land was retarding economic development. A Land Titles Ordinance was approved in the Legislative Council in April, 1908, and published in the Gazette on 1st December 1908. The Ordinance was first applied to Malindi District, beginning on the 15th January 1909; applicants were initially given a period of 12 months to lodge claims. In March 1910, a Land Arbitration Board was set up, which began work at Takaungu in April 1910. "History of the Coast Land Settlement", Memorandum by A.J. Maclean, Recorder of Titles, Mombasa, 3 October 1918. Provincial Land Office Archives, Mombasa.

¹³⁸ In colonial records, the term used for the coastal area inhabited predominantly by Muslims was "the coast belt", but this area is now more usually referred to as "the coastal strip". Because of differing Mijikenda settlement patterns north and south of Mombasa, the coastal strip north of Mombasa was quite extensive, whereas the coastal strip south of Mombasa was confined to a few villages of non-Mijikenda origin (Mtongwe, Gasi, Wasin and Vanga).

¹³⁹ Some of the work of defining the boundary of the Nyika Reserve north of Mombasa was done as late as 1908: "In 1908, when in order to have a recognized boundary, Mr. Osborne on the instructions of the Government put in what is known as the 'Osborne line', he endeavoured to draw a line that would as far as possible give effect to the 'status quo', leaving the lands of the pagan Jibana on the west and of the Mohammedans, whether Arabs or converts, on the east." Civil Case No.60 of 1913, His Majesty's High Court at Mombasa. KNA, DC/MSA/3/4.

¹⁴⁰ See pp.119-120, and p.124, footnote 108.

The applicant is a hadji [convert to Islam] and is not entitled to any freehold land but has a house and cultivation on this plot. I give judgement that he obtain a certificate of interest in respect of his house and the cultivation of the plot.¹⁴¹

Similar judgements were written on several other applications, but soon afterwards the judgements were amended to allow Mijikenda Muslims to own land.¹⁴² Nevertheless, the government tried to restrict the ownership of land by Mijikenda Muslims in the coastal strip by encouraging them to move to so-called 'Mahaji Reserves'. In effect, the government tried to create and group together another category of land owner, the 'Muslim native', but most Mijikenda Muslims continued to live outside the Mahaji Reserves.¹⁴³

In November 1914, persons who wished to claim land south of Mombasa were invited to apply for title deeds. Evidently this was an administrative mistake, because the demarcation of the communal Digo Reserves had not been completed.¹⁴⁴ Subsequently more than seven hundred applications for land titles were made by Digo Muslims. Most of the applicants were prominent Digo leaders: Khamis Dzugwe and Salim Mwabundu of Likoni, Muhammad Mwanganyuma and his son Mwalimu Ali of Pungu, Muhammad Mwachamanda of Ng'ombeni, Sulayman Mwaronga Dzilala of Waa, Muhammad Manguze and Bakari Mwachakurya of Matuga, Muhammad Mwachwaya, Mwinyi Hamisi wa Bwika, and Juma Matungale of Tiwi, to name but a few. The distribution of the claims (allowing for differences in population) corresponded roughly to the extent of Muslim influence: from Likoni-Mtongwe 96 persons filed 149 claims, from Pungu-Ng'ombeni 89 persons filed 129 claims, from Tiwi 60 persons filed 209 claims, whereas from Tsimba 16 persons filed 18 claims, and from Diani-Ukunda-Muhaka 4 persons filed 5 claims.¹⁴⁵

The scale on which Digo Muslims applied for land titles was clearly unexpected, and administrative and legal consultations soon took place at the highest level of government. By September 1915, a policy was emerging; Hobley

¹⁴¹ Judgement in Application Cause No. 21BD of 1912, Plot 8, Group xvii, at Mida in the Land Registration Court at Malindi. Provincial Land Office Archives, Provincial Headquarters, Mombasa.

¹⁴² For example, ref. Application Cause No. 21BD of 1912 in the Land Registration Court at Malindi, the original judgement was amended in red ink: the words "not" and "any" were crossed out and the word "ownership" was written in the left margin. The amendments have no date, nor is there any indication why or on whose authority the amendments were made.

¹⁴³ In 1917, the District Commissioner noted that "mahaji are settled on their own shambas or on Mazrui land...no mahaji are settled on the reserves set aside for them at Mavueni and Mtanganyiko." Takaungu Sub-District Annual Report, 1916-17, KNA, DCfKFI/1/1.

¹⁴⁴ In 1918, A.J. Maclean stated that inviting applications for the areas south of Mombasa in 1914 was "unfortunate", because "it had been definitely decided and agreed upon that the Ordinance would not be applied to this area until such time as such demarcation was completed." "Short Outline of the History of the Coast Land Settlement," by A.J. Maclean, Recorder of Titles, 3 October 1918. Provincial Land Office Archives, Provincial Headquarters, Mombasa.

¹⁴⁵ Altogether there were 742 applications from 437 persons, with some 40 persons applying for title to more than one plot of land. The original application forms, dated between 18th February and 13th May 1915, are in the Provincial Land Office Archives, Provincial Headquarters, Mombasa.

wrote: "I have interviewed the Hon. Attorney General and he informs me that he is of the opinion that the best procedure would be to induce the Wadigo to withdraw their claim and for Government to return the fee of Re.[rupee] 1 paid on each."¹⁴⁶ The support of the Liwali, Shaykh Ali bin Salim, was sought, and he was asked to take the lead in approaching the Digo Muslims about withdrawing their claims. In early October, the Liwali held a series of meetings with the applicants (in the presence of the Recorder of Titles), at which they agreed to withdraw their applications. In return, certain guarantees were made to them:

- a) that their lands would be defined and demarcated as a Digo reserve;
- b) that in addition to the lands already occupied by them, a certain commonage would be included in their reserves sufficiently large to allow for pasturing their flocks and herds and also for planting cash crops;
- c) that within these Digo Reserves they would be safeguarded from alienating any land to Europeans, Arabs, Indians, Swahilis and others outside the Digo tribe, and that all transactions such as mortgages and sales of land should only be allowed amongst themselves;
- d) that the fees paid by them for registering their claims should be returned to them.¹⁴⁷

By the end of October 1915, the Recorder of Titles was able to report to the Chief Secretary "the withdrawal of the Digo claims to separate title to ownership."¹⁴⁸ The speed with which the government acted was equalled by the readiness with which the Digo applicants agreed to withdraw their claims. The presence of the Liwali, known and respected as a co-religionist by many of the Digo claimants, must have reassured them that what they were being asked to do was in their interest. But in searching for clues to explain the withdrawal of their claims, we need to look at the guarantees asked for, and offered in return.

The guarantee to demarcate and enlarge the lands reserved for them (clauses a) and b) above) must be viewed within the context of the more important guarantee in clause c): to safeguard those lands from alienation. Individual ownership of land may have been seen as presaging the sale of land to foreigners, with profits to the few from what was the heritage of all. But stronger social forces were also at work. The fact that so many individual claims had been made by Digo Muslims indicated not just a deepening of Muslim influence, but a weakening of social bonds. With inheritance disputes also arising at that time, Digo leaders (including those

¹⁴⁶ C.W.Hobley, Provincial Commissioner, Mombasa, to the Hon. Chief Secretary, Nairobi, 20 September 1915. Provincial Land Office Archives, Provincial Headquarters, Mombasa.

¹⁴⁷ Comments by A.I.Maclean, Recorder of Titles, when cancelling Application Cause No.15 of 1915, L.and Registration Court of East Africa at Likoni, 20 October 1915. Provincial Land Office Archives, Provincial Headquarters, Mombasa.

¹⁴⁸ A.I.Maclean, Recorder of Titles, to the Hon. Chief Secretary, Nairobi, 22 October 1915. Provincial Land Office Archives, Provincial Headquarters, Mombasa.

who had applied for land titles) may have been alarmed at the growth of divisive tendencies, and sensed the need to bolster unity.¹⁴⁹ What was a matter of administrative convenience for the colonial government was for the Digo a way of reinforcing communal ties at a time these were increasingly under stress.¹⁵⁰

Matrilineal inheritance and Muslim law

According to Digo custom, a man's property (livestock, coconut trees, crops) was usually inherited by his true brother (son of the same father and mother), and failing a true brother, by his maternal nephew (the son of a true sister). A son would receive personal items that had been used by his father, such as a knife, a chair, a hat, and bows and arrows, but no property of value.

Sons were members of their mother's clan, and the strongest family ties were usually to members of that clan.¹⁵¹ When the time came for a man to marry, his maternal uncle (Digo. *mdzomba*)¹⁵² was responsible for paying dowry (Digo. *hunda*) to the bride's family. If a husband and wife separated, the children were considered to belong to their mother, provided the full dowry had been returned to the husband's family. Not all consequences of the matrilineal system benefitted maternal relatives: for example, when compensation (Digo. *kore*) had to be paid to another clan for murder, maternal nephews or nieces were handed over. Similarly, during famines a man would exchange one of his maternal nephews or nieces for food: "when a nephew (or niece) was sent to Mtongwe, he would have to go and work there, and the father of the boy (or girl) had no say in the matter."¹⁵³

The first Digo converts to Islam continued to follow the matrilineal system:

To become a Muslim didn't mean to change. The first Digo converts had become Muslims all right, but they hadn't changed. They didn't learn about Islam, the only thing they did was to take new names. A man might be called Abdallah, but he would go and take away his maternal nephew just the same. They were converts, but they hadn't learned yet. They kept following their Digo customs. There was no way they could give up their customs.¹⁵⁴

¹⁴⁹ Noting a like response in similar circumstances in Nigeria, Meek concluded: "A lineage will postpone legal partition of land as long as possible since ownership in common is the most powerful means of preserving unity and strength of lineage." C.K.Meek, "Land Tenure and Land Administration in Nigeria and the Cameroons," in N.Rubin and E.Cotran (eds), *Readings in African Law* (London 1970), 299.

¹⁵⁰ Soon afterwards Maclean wrote: "There is no doubt that this withdrawal of claims was a very popular move and as such unanimously and eagerly agreed to by the Digo people." A.L.Maclean, Recorder of Titles, to the Hon. Chief Secretary, Nairobi, 22 October 1915. Provincial Land Office Archives, Provincial Headquarters, Mombasa.

¹⁵¹ See Chapter I, p.22.

¹⁵² The Digo word *mdzomba* means both maternal uncle and maternal nephew; the two are distinguished from each other by the context, or when necessary by extra explanation. The corresponding Swahili word *mjomba* is used in the same way. See Chapter II, p.71, footnote 151.

¹⁵³ "Notes on Marriage" (1916), G. Osborne, KNA, DC/KWL/3/5; Juma Zani, Kundutsi, 26/1/72.

¹⁵⁴ Juma Zani, Kundutsi, 26/1/72.

conflict, maternal heirs may have allayed feelings, and contained dissent, by judiciously sharing their inheritance with Muslim paternal descendants. The inheritance dispute that arose in 1913-14 after the death of Mwinyihaji wa Bwika, the senior elder of Tiwi, was less easily resolved.¹⁵⁹ Mwinyihaji's grandson recalls the circumstances of the dispute:

Before Mwinyihaji died, he called his son Muhammad and told him that he wanted him to inherit. But Muhammad was afraid to claim the inheritance after his father died, and so Mwinyihamisi inherited. After about a year, during the month of Ramadhan, Muhammad wanted some coconuts from his father's trees to break the fast one evening, and Mwinyihamisi told him he couldn't have them. That night Muhammad couldn't sleep. Then he talked with his friends, and decided to take all the coconuts and all his father's cattle. Mwinyihamisi brought a case against him which went on for four years. Eventually, Mwinyihamisi and Muhammad reached an agreement and made up.¹⁶⁰

In 1914, the year after Mwinyihaji's death, the month of Ramadhan occurred in August.¹⁶¹ Soon after Ramadhan, Mwinyihamisi's case against Muhammad came before the elders of Tiwi, who decided in Mwinyihamisi's favour. Instead of appealing to the District Commissioner, Muhammad seems to have submitted the case to the Muslim courts of Mombasa, hoping to obtain a favourable ruling there.¹⁶² That Muhammad initially hesitated to claim his father's property may reveal some character trait. More likely, it indicates that Digo inheritance customs were intact, and had only just begun to be challenged.¹⁶³ Digo Muslims were themselves divided on the issue. Mwinyihamisi, Bwika's brother (and heir according to Digo custom), was a Muslim, and many other Digo Muslims felt that Digo inheritance customs should be followed. The issue had pagan-versus-Muslim undertones, but was as much a debate between Muslims about whether Muslim practice should take precedence over Digo custom.

Early in 1915, Charles Dundas¹⁶⁴ was appointed District Commissioner of Mombasa District, and began to take an interest in the inheritance issue.¹⁶⁵ He does

¹⁵⁹ See p.123, footnote 100.

¹⁶⁰ Mwinyihamisi bin Muhammad bin Mwinyihaji wa Bwika, Tiwi Mkoyo, 13/12/79. A 1913 "List of traders" for Tiwi shows Muhammad wa Mwinyihaji engaged in "buying and selling coconuts." KNA, DC/MSA/8/2.

¹⁶¹ Cf. Freeman-Grenville, *The Muslim and Christian Calendars*.

¹⁶² Knowing that the District Commissioner would confirm the elders' decision, Muhammad probably decided to try to bypass him, but the District Commissioner undoubtedly knew about the case. Paragraph no.4 of his letter of 15 July 1915 to the Provincial Commissioner, refers to an inheritance dispute which could well be the Bwika case. For the letter, see Appendix VI.

¹⁶³ Testimony from other Digo villages confirms that Mwinyihaji wa Bwika was the one who introduced inheritance according to Islamic law among the Digo. "In matters of inheritance, the one who began it all was Mwinyihaji at Tiwi. I didn't see Mwinyihaji, but I heard about the case. The son who inherited from him was called Muhammad, he's the one who took his father's inheritance." Juma Zani, Kundutsi, 26/1/72.

¹⁶⁴ Though only twenty-nine years old at the time, Dundas already had seven years of experience in Kenya, having served tours among the Kamba of Kitui and among the Kikuyu of Kiambu and Nyeri Districts, and part of a third tour at Rabai, the headquarters of the Nyika District. During those years he had come to have great respect for African institutions, especially for the work of councils of elders. His belief that customary law as applied by the elders was the soundest basis for administration comes out clearly in his notes and letters, and in his account of his experiences in Africa. As he put it, "There was much wisdom in the law of old." Sir Charles Dundas, *Ajiccan Crossroads* (London 1955), 46.

¹⁶⁵ The southern hinterland of Mombasa as far as Tiwi was still part of Mombasa District. See p.102, footnote 6.

not mention names in his reports, but the dispute at Tiwi undoubtedly came to his notice and may have prompted his investigation. Dundas consulted various persons, including the Mudir of Tiwi and the Councils (Digo. *ngambi*) of Digo Elders of Mombasa District. Without exception the Councils affirmed their wish to follow customary law rather than Islamic law. The elders assembled at Tiwi declared:

We, the elders of Ngambi of Tiwi, Magojoni, Waa, Matuga and Ngombeni, being asked by the District Commissioner to consult and decide as to the following:-

1. Whether we wish matters of inheritance to be guided by Digo custom or Mohamedan law;
2. Whether we wish our lands to be held as common property by the Ngambi or as individual property of the occupier,

do hereby declare after consultation that in both matters we wish to abide by our tribal custom. Under tribal custom inheritance goes to the brother and not to the son, land belongs to God and not to any one person.

We further declare that in all matters of law we wish to follow our own customs and not Mohamedan law. We have adopted the religion of Islam only.¹⁶⁶

In July 1915, Dundas presented his findings to the Provincial Commissioner, Mombasa, and recommended that "Mohamedan law does not obtain among the Wadigo."¹⁶⁷ Dundas's recommendations may have been sound, but in retrospect his assessment that "no dividing line can be discerned between Mohamedan and pagan Wadigo" was mistaken. He correctly observed that "a few individuals" were responsible for breaking a "system of inheritance acceptable by the tribe as a whole", but he failed to perceive the determination and influence of those few individuals or the difference of opinion among Digo Muslims about the application of Islamic law.

Two years earlier, Charles Hopley, the Provincial Commissioner of Mombasa, had advocated a policy of administrative neutrality in dealing with Islam:

It must be realized that it is not in our interest or the interest of the people that the Mohamedan faith and the sharia [Islamic law] should spread among the aboriginal tribes...

I desire it, however, to be clearly understood that administrative officers are not in any way to depart from the path of strict neutrality with regard to Islamism.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁶ This declaration was made at Tiwi on the 19th June 1915 in Dundas's presence. Similar declarations were made by the elders of Likoni and Pungu on the 22nd June 1915, and by the elders of Mtongwe on the 24th June 1915. The declarations are certified ("made in my presence, read over and assented to") and signed by C. Dundas, District Commissioner, Mombasa. ("Declaration of Ngambi elders," KNA, DC/MSA/3/4.) Ref. no. 2 of the declaration, and the issue of land ownership, see pp.106-108.

¹⁶⁷ District Commissioner, Mombasa, to Provincial Commissioner, Mombasa, 1st July 1915. KNA, DC/MSA/3/4. The full text of the letter is in Appendix VI.

¹⁶⁸ C.W.Hopley, Provincial Commissioner, Mombasa, to Asst. District Commissioner, Shimoni, 12 March 1913. DC/KFI/3/3.

The inheritance issue among the Digo was a vexing one, because it bridged administrative and Muslim jurisdictions. Administrative officers might be neutral towards Islam (in practice they tended to favour Digo custom), but the judicial system of the East Africa Protectorate provided that "the law administered...among the Mahomed natives in the dominions of the Sultan of Zanzibar [is] Mahomed law, or the Sheriah [Islamic law (Arabic. *shari'a*)]."¹⁶⁹ As 'natives', the Digo were subject to the Local Native Councils and the District Court, but the Muslims of the coastal belt (including presumably Digo converts to Islam who lived in the coastal belt) were "under Mohammedan Law and under the jurisdiction of the Liwali and Mudirs."¹⁷⁰

The colonial government continued to administer all Digo (Muslim and non-Muslim) as 'natives', but the legal status of Digo Muslims was increasingly ambiguous.¹⁷¹ After July 1915, this matter was raised to the Chief Justice, who evidently felt that Muslim converts should be subject to the jurisdiction of the Muslim courts, though no official legal ruling seems to have been made.¹⁷² In April 1916, Dundas again wrote to Robley, pointing out the injustice **nd** complications that would arise among the Digo (a mixed society of pagans and Muslims), if the Islamic law of inheritance were applied to Digo Muslims, who would thus be exempt from the jurisdiction of the Local Native Councils.¹⁷³

The years after 1915 were especially trying for the colonial administration on the Kenya coast. The War in Europe spread to Africa, and the Germans (from

¹⁶⁹ *East Africa Protectorate LAW REPORTS (1895-1905)*, Vol I (Mombasa 1906), p.iii.

¹⁷⁰ "Sub-divisions of Tiwi Sub-District," KNA, DC/MSA/8/2.

¹⁷¹ This ambiguity was evident as early as 1911 in the first recorded Muslim inheritance dispute, which came successively before the Resident Magistrate, the Qathi, the Liwali, and the District Commissioner, before being decided by the Tribal Council: "Sometime about 1910-11 there died in Tiwi a man called Mwinyi Kombo bin Mwangangu. About July 1914 the Resident Magistrate, with some reason, felt the case to be one unsuited for trial by him and sought the aid of the Cathi [Muslim judge]. Herewith the case before the third court since 1911. Later the RM. gave judgement according to the Cathi's decision which after no undue haste and ignoring the Liwali's decision as well as Digo custom, awarded the shamba to both widows and eight children. I referred them to the Tribal Councils which without further palaver awarded the shamba to Mohamed Magwaya who, as brother of the deceased, appeared to them as the undoubted heir to the deceased's estate." District Commissioner, Mombasa, to Provincial Commissioner, Mombasa, 15 September 1915. KNA, MP/26/288.

¹⁷² The opinion of the Chief Justice, as stated in his letter of 25 March 1916, is quoted in the letter of Dundas to Hobley of 15 April 1916 (see Appendix VI). In general, British judges in Kenya were highly respectful of Islamic law. Muslim judges [Kathis] were appointed Assessors in cases being heard before civil courts, and British judges frequently sought the advice of Muslim judges before giving judgement in cases involving Muslims, and deferred in their rulings to the opinion of Muslim judges with such phrases as "The judge notes the opinion of the Kathi and of the Assessor (Sheikh Nasor)...", "I have consulted with the Sheikh ul Islam...", or "I am assured by the Sheikh ul Islam..." And in giving judgement, British judges quoted Muslim law commentaries: "The law as applied in clearly in accordance with...the Shafei commentaries of Min Haj." *East Africa Protectorate LAW REPORTS (1895-1905)*, Vol I (Mombasa 1906), 2,12,45,55,96.

¹⁷³ Letter of C.Dundas, Moshi, to Mr.C.Hobley, 15 April 1916. KNA, DC/MSA/3/4. See Appendix VI for extracts from the letter. Early in 1916, Dundas was seconded from the colonial to military service. Because of his knowledge of German, he was assigned to British advance headquarters set up at Moshi (German East Africa) after the Germans had evacuated the Kilimanjaro region. That Dundas, on military secondment with new responsibilities, should continue to write to Hobley about the Digo inheritance issue is remarkable evidence of the sincerity of his belief in African institutions and his commitment to what he viewed as a just solution. His letter, addressed to Mr.C.Hobley, is clearly unofficial.

German East Africa) invaded southeastern Kenya. Vanga District Headquarters was moved from Shimoni to Gasi (where it remained until March 1918). By September 1915, the Germans were raiding north of the Ramisi river, and camps had to be set up for several thousand Digo refugees who abandoned their villages. At the same time, the administration was coping with the aftermath of the Giriama Rising north of Mombasa¹⁷⁴ The ensuing years 1918-23 brought drought, floods, and smallpox and influenza epidemics.¹⁷⁵

Given the number of pressing matters requiring attention, it is not surprising that the law of inheritance issue drifted along without a clear policy decision. In 1920, the administration tried to regulate Muslim inheritance claims by declaring that "anyone wishing his property to be inherited according to the Shariah must register himself accordingly with the District Officer." In the beginning, few Digo Muslims registered with the District Officer. Inheritance cases continued to be heard by the local elders' councils, and on appeal by the District Commissioner, who consistently supported the elders' rulings in favour of Digo custom¹⁷⁶

Within a few years, events had overtaken Dundas's recommendations. As more Digo Muslims died, paternal Muslim descendants began to question Digo custom more openly, and feelings were aggravated. Early in 1924, the District Commissioner noted: "There is a current of feeling running pretty strongly in the more Islamised district along the coast against Pagan native custom."¹⁷⁷ By that year the number of inheritance cases being heard by the Native Councils was increasing, as was the number of appeals to the District Commissioner (in his capacity as a Second Class Magistrate). In his Annual Report, the District Commissioner wrote: "The most interesting civil cases have been appeals from Native Council findings in inheritance cases." In the same Report, he noted an increase in external Muslim practices: "The Wadigo...are rapidly assuming Mohammedan names and outward customs, though their religion is shallow in the extreme."¹⁷⁸ When Digo Muslims realized that appeals from Native Council decisions to the District Commissioner had little chance of success, they began to register or to write wills.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁴ Brantley, *The Giriama*, 125-142.

¹⁷⁵ Annual Reports, Vanga District, 1915-1923. KNA, DC/KWL/1/1-S. The smallpox epidemic of 1920, which caused 427 deaths in Vanga, was described as "one of the most serious epidemics within living memory." Handing-over Report of 3 February 1921. KNA, DC/KWL/2/1.

¹⁷⁶ Handing-over Report of 21 January 1922, Vanga District. KNA, DC/KWL/2/1. According to this report, no Digo Muslims had registered with the District Commissioner during the previous ten months.

¹⁷⁷ In August the same year, the District Commissioner reported that he had "interrogated elders on the question of changing their inheritance law" and that "66% (were) in favour of change." Station Diary, Digo District, entries for 28 February and 4 August 1924. KNA, DC/KWL/5/1.

¹⁷⁸ "There were only 9 appeals out of a total of 292 cases, but the number of civil cases had increased from 13 in 1923 to 43 in 1924. The Report does not explicitly say so, but some of this increase in numbers may have been because of an increase in inheritance disputes. Annual Report for Digo District, 1924. KNA, DC/KWL/1/10.

¹⁷⁹ "To avoid the tribal system of inheritance it is a common thing for the Wadigo to make wills leaving their property to their sons." Annual Report 1926, Digo District, KNA, DC/KWL/1/12.

One of the appeals heard by the District Commissioner of Digo District was that of Mwalimu Ali, son of Muhammad Mwanganyuma of Pungu. As at Tiwi, the disagreement at Pungu was between Muslims. When Muhammad Mwanganyuma died,¹⁸⁰ his brother Ali Ganyuma claimed his property in accordance with Digo custom, but Mwanganyuma's son Mwalimu Ali protested. The subsequent dispute had a more far-reaching effect than the Bwika dispute at Tiwi, for Mwanganyuma's relatives were unable to reach a compromise, and they proceeded to raise their dispute from the elders' council through successive courts to the Court of Appeal for Eastern Africa.¹⁸¹ The details are remembered by Mwalimu Ali's grandson:

When Mwanganyuma died, the inheritance was claimed by his brother Ali. Mwalimu Ali didn't agree to that. He told his uncle, 'You have your sons, and Mwanganyuma had his son, who is me. You can't take my father's property.' They quarrelled about it, until the case came before the elders. Then the case went to Shimoni, but before it was decided it came to Kwale. There Mwalimu Ali lost the case because of Digo custom. He was told, 'You can't have your father's property, it will go to your father's brother.' But he refused to accept this. So he brought the case before the court in Mombasa. His attorney was Mr. Barker. Do you know Mr. Barker? He had a farm out at Changamwe, then later he moved to Nairobi. He was the one who represented Mwalimu Ali. So the case was heard in Mombasa, and then in Nairobi, but it didn't end there, until it went to Kampala where it was heard by three judges. The person who really helped Mwalimu Ali through all this was his son Shaykh Mwinyi, who had studied some Islamic law.¹⁸²

The role of Shaykh Mwinyi, one of the few (and best educated) fourth-generation Muslims of his time, reflects the deepening hold of Islam with the passing of generations, and the influence better educated Digo Muslims had begun to exert.¹⁸³ For some Digo Muslims, Islam may have been more of a pretext than a principle,¹⁸⁴ but there is little doubt that Mwalimu Ali persisted in his legal appeal out of religious conviction. In doing so, he became a decisive force for change, what the District Commissioner described, in referring to the case, as a "more progressive spirit."¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁰ Muhammad Mwanganyuma is said to have died in c.1922. Ngumi bin Shaykh Mwinyi, Msambweni, 21/9/87.

¹⁸¹ CA.27/1927, Court of Appeal for Eastern Africa (at Kampala), Ali Ganyuma vs. Ali Mohamed. *East Africa Protectorate LAW REPORTS (1927-28)*, VolIII, Mombasa 1929, p.30. The legal technicalities of the case are discussed in J.N.DAnderson, *Islamic Law in Africa*, London 1970, pp.111-114

¹⁸² Uthman bin Shaykh Mwinyi, Pungu, 14/6/86. The appeal to the District Commissioner must have been made in 1923 or early 1924, coinciding with the transfer of the Headquarters of Digo (previously Vanga) District from Shimoni to Kwale. The transfer took effect on 16 March 1924. Annual Report 1924, Digo District, KNA, DC/KWL/1/10.

¹⁸³ Shaykh Mwinyi bin Mwalimu Ali later went to teach at Msambweni, and eventually died at Lungalunga in 1947. Ngumi bin Shaykh Mwinyi, Msambweni, 21/9/87.

¹⁸⁴ "In Digo the profession of the Mohammedan faith is...frequently nothing but an excuse. Many Digo who have no idea of the obligations (in inheritance or otherwise) imposed by the Sharia [Islamic law] claim to follow the male line by virtue of their religion." "Note on *Mjomba* rule," Assistant District Commissioner, Digo District, 30 May 1924. KNA, DC/KWL/3/5.

¹⁸⁵ "Matrilineal inheritance is being challenged by the more progressive spirits, who seek to inherit by Shariah [Islamic law]. A civil case, in which this very point is in dispute, has already been heard in three courts, and is at the time of writing awaiting the decision of the fourth." (The fourth court was the Court of Appeal for Eastern Africa.) Annual Report, Digo District, 1927. KNA, DC/KWL/1/13.

In March 1928 the Court of Appeal gave its ruling on the Mwanganyuma case: "Mohammedan Law applies and the estate descends patrilineally."¹⁸⁶ The ruling was a legal victory for committed Digo Muslims, but the Digo elders, meeting in joint council that same year, sensed the inadvisability of forcing the pace of change, and cautioned that strict application of the principle of patrilineality threatened to create as many problems as it solved. The District Commissioner summarized the views of the elders in his Annual Report:

The chief matter of interest to the Wadigo during the year has been the finding of the Court of Appeal. This finding has created a somewhat difficult position as at present two conflicting laws of inheritance prevail among the tribe, according to the Shariah and to Tribal Custom. There is definitely a feeling among the people that the patrilineal system of inheritance should supersede the Tribal Custom of matrilineal inheritance, but the feeling is by no means unanimous, and it is felt that as time goes on the matter will solve itself. The Council [Local Native Council of Kwale District] has passed a Resolution requesting Government to amend the law to permit of inheritance following Tribal custom except in cases where the deceased has disposed of his property otherwise by will.¹⁸⁷

What the elders were saying, in effect, was that social change should not be forced: not all Digo Muslims should be obliged to follow Islamic law, because not all of them wanted to. Many Digo (including Muslims), who recognized the advantages of the patrilineal system (as a system, not as a religious norm) had deep matrilineal bonds that were not easily severed.

The colonial administration was concerned about how to implement the Court ruling. In 1928, the Provincial Commissioner of Mombasa wrote to his counterpart in Tanga, Tanganyika, enquiring about inheritance practice among the Digo living in Tanganyika. Subsequently a meeting took place between officers of the two governments to discuss the matter.¹⁸⁸ It is not clear how this meeting affected policy. The Kenya colonial government may have decided that the simplest way of dealing with the matter was not to interfere administratively, since the 1928 ruling of the Court of Appeal created a precedent for future cases before the courts.

By 1929, with the request of the previous year unanswered, the Digo elders continued to feel that change was being forced on them too abruptly:

The Resolution of the Local Native Council referring to inheritance, mentioned in last year's report, has not yet received the sanction of the government, and the general opinion at present is that the Government has disallowed the tribal system of succession... the feeling of the people is that they should be allowed to evolve a system of patrilineal inheritance, rather than that the old custom should be done away with by the 'stroke of a pen'.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁶ For details of the judgement, see Appendix VII.

¹⁸⁷ Annual Report 1928, Digo District, KNA, DC/KWL/1/14.

¹⁸⁸ Provincial Commissioner, Mombasa, to Provincial Commissioner, Tanga, 21 August 1928. As noted in the "Record of a Meeting held at Tanga on December 8-9th 1928, between Officers of Kenya and Tanganyika Governments", the inheritance issue had arisen in Tanganyika under German rule, and "the German authorities issued an administrative order abolishing matrilineal inheritance among the Wa-Digo...this order is still followed and has never been challenged in the Court of Appeal." KNA, DC/KWL/3/5.

¹⁸⁹ Annual Report 1929, Digo District, KNA, DC/KWL/1/15.

In 1930, the District Commissioner wrote: "The Wadigo are rapidly becoming Islamized and their customs in matters of inheritance are breaking down..they are in a transition stage, going from matrilineal to patrilineal inheritance."¹⁹⁰ What he failed to mention was the acrimony and bitterness that the transition was generating among the Digo. All who lived through the years of inheritance disputes, from the early 1920s into the 1930s, agree that the Digo experienced internal disunity, including family and clan dissension, such as they had not known since the beginning of colonial times.¹⁹¹

Islamic law prevailed, but tension and problems continued. In 1941, at a meeting of Mijikenda elders with the Governor, Sir Henry Moore, the elders complained about "the injustice of pagans not being allowed to inherit from Mohammedans even when they [the pagans] were wives and children, and Islam had only been embraced on the death bed."¹⁹²

¹⁹⁰ Handing-over Report (March 1930), KNA, DC/KWL/2/1.

¹⁹¹ Describing the situation among the Digo in 1933, the Provincial Commissioner wrote of "protests by old adherents." Provincial Commissioner, Mombasa, to Hon. Chief Native Commissioner, Nairobi, 15 February 1933, KNA, PC/COAST/1/11.

¹⁹² File Minute on Mariakani meeting of 21 August 1941, KNA, DC/KWL/3/4. In commenting on the applicability of the Muhammadan Marriage, Divorce and Succession Ordinance, 1920, to such cases, Anderson has pointed out that Section 4 of the Ordinance by no means provides that "Muhammadan law prevails to the exclusion of tribal law in cases where the deceased was a Muhammadan," since the Section lays down that the deceased should be either the child of a regular Muslim marriage or else have contracted such a marriage. Had these terms been consistently applied, "some of the more extreme cases of conflict of law could never have arisen, since a death-bed conversion to Islam would have no effect on the inheritance of the convert unless either his parents had been practicing converts or he himself followed his death-bed conversion with a death-bed contract of valid Muhammadan marriage (having previously dissolved any previous customary marriage) -both of which contingencies seem sufficiently remote." J.N.DAnderson, *Islamic Law in Africa* (2nd edition, London 1970), 112-114.

Chapter V. The Spread of Islam in the Gasi-Vanga Hinterland, 1865-1933

In 1865, the Digo of the southernmost region of the Kenya coast (south of the Mwachema river) were settled in four main areas: 1) in the coastal strip, between Diani and Msambweni; 2) inland, around Kikoneni and along the Rarnisi river; 3) on the Shimoni peninsula (at Chwaka); and 4) along the Uмба river. All these areas were, for the most part, outside the sphere of influence of Mombasa. Three different Muslim peoples inhabited the region: the Mazrui at Gasi, the Vumba at Wasin and Vanga, and the Shirazi in small scattered villages between Msambweni and Vanga. Each of these peoples influenced one or more Digo groups. The Digo between Diani and Msambweni came under the influence of the Mazrui at Gasi; the Digo of Kikoneni and Chwaka under the influence of the Vumba at Wasin and of the Shirazi; and the Digo along the Uмба river under the influence of the Muslims of Vanga.

The main centres of Islam, the towns of Wasin, Vanga and Gasi, differed from each other in origin and character. Wasin, the oldest of the three towns, had a strong religious tradition, but was poorly sited for trade and did not develop as a commercial centre.² Vanga, on the other hand, had grown steadily since its foundation early in the 19th century. Originally founded by Vumba, who were still the dominant group, Vanga attracted a steady stream of immigrants (Muslim and non-Muslim), and by 1865 had become a prosperous Muslim centre, second in importance only to Mombasa.³ Gasi, the youngest of the three towns, was a plantation settlement where the Mazrui had lived peacefully for thirty years, in friendly rapport with the neighbouring Digo.⁴ This changed in 1865 when Shaykh Mbaruk bin Rashid⁵ acceded to power. More aggressive and more ambitious than Abdallah bin Kharnis, the previous ruler of Gasi, Shaykh Mbaruk tried to expand his influence, and raided those who opposed him.⁶ For the next thirty years, until the

¹ A fourth people, the Segeju, lived mainly in the Shimoni peninsula. Originally pagan, the Segeju had come under strong Muslim influence from the Vumba, and by 1865 many Segeju were Muslim. (See Chapter II, p.28.) Segeju-Digo relations had always been strained, if not openly hostile, and the Segeju exerted little Muslim influence on the Digo until late in the 19th century. During the 20th century, the number of Segeju in Kenya steadily decreased; in 1921, the District Commissioner of Vanga District noted: "The tendency of recent years has been for the Wasegeju to migrate to Tanganyika territory where the tribe exists in large numbers." Annual Report 1920-21, Vanga District, KNA, DC/KWL/1/6.

² On the origin of Wasin, see Chapter I, p.25.

³ See Chapter II, p.47.

⁴ See Chapter II, p.65. In 1890, Gasi was still a plantation town; Le Roy noted that "numerous slaves were at work in rice-fields in the vicinity." ("Aux environs, nombreux esclaves sont occupés dans des rizieres.") A. Le Roy, *Au Kilima-ndjaro*, Paris 1893, 56.

⁵ See Appendix IX.

⁶ The effects of Shaykh Mbaruk's raiding were evident as late as 1921; in that year, C.B. Thompson, the District Commissioner, noted that the country between Gasi and the Ramisi river was very sparsely settled, since "fear of Sheikh Mbaruk of Gazi (slave raiding)" had led many Digo "to retire west of Ramisi." (Annual Report 1920-21, Vanga District, DC/KWL/1/6.) During the following years, large numbers of refugees and immigrants settled in this area, which corresponds roughly to the present location of Msambweni. See p.146, footnote 18.

end of the Rising of 1895,⁷ the Gasi-Vanga region was the most turbulent and least secure part of Mijikenda country,⁸ due to continual strife between Shaykh Mbaruk and the other peoples of the region.⁹ The only people on consistently friendly terms with the Mazrui of Gasi after 1865 were the Digo of *kaya* Kinondo, and the Duruma and Digo around Mwele, the settlement established by Shaykh Mbaruk as an inland stronghold to which he could retreat when Gasi was threatened.¹⁰

The period between 1896 and 1914 was one of peace and stability. For the first time in many years, it was possible to move about the region in relative safety. Trade increased, and Muslim traders from as far away as Mombasa began to frequent the Gasi-Vanga hinterland.¹¹ During this period, Islam began to consolidate among the Digo of the region. The first Digo mosques were built, and a number of Muslim immigrants settled in Digo villages and began teaching.¹² By the time the First World War began, Digo Muslims had established their own institutions in a number of villages, and Islam had begun to take root.

In 1915, the Germans invaded and occupied much of the region west of the Ramisi river.¹³ The Digo along the Uмба river were evacuated to refugee camps at

⁷ For details about the Rising, see Chapter III, pp.94-96.

⁸ After visiting Kikoneni in 1890, Le Roy remarked: "The Digo testify unanimously that in times past Mbaruk has ruined their villages, and transformed the magnificent countryside into a solitary desert." ("Au temoinage unanime des Digo, il a jadis ruine leur villages, transforme en deserts solitaires des pays magnifiques...") Le Roy, *Au Kilima-ndjaro*, 54.

⁹ By the late 1860s, deteriorating relations between Shaykh Mbaruk of Gasi and Sultan Majid of Zanzibar had brought tension to the Gasi region. The Digo, and other peoples of the region, were drawn into the conflict. In general, the Vumba, the Digo of Kikoneni, the Shirazi and the Segeju, opposed Shaykh Mbaruk; the Digo and the Duruma to the north of Gasi tended to support him. In 1873, Shaykh Mbaruk attacked Vanga. This led the Sultan of Zanzibar to retaliate, and marked the beginning of a strong Zanzibar Omani presence at Vanga, which the Sultan's forces made their headquarters. Further fighting in 1882 led to a permanent Zanzibar Omani presence in Vanga: a small garrison of troops was stationed there, a Zanzibar Omani Governor was appointed, and the Zanzibar Omani community began to acquire land. (McKay, 202-5). A Mazrui saying illustrates their feelings about Gasi after 1865: "Takaungu ni biashara, Gasi ni vita", which roughly translated means: "Takaungu is a place of commerce, Gasi a place of war." (Muhammad Abdallah Mazrui, Takaungu, 4/3/87.)

¹⁰ Mwele continued to exert a Muslim influence on the surrounding peoples after Shaykh Mbaruk went to German East Africa. In 1912, the District Commissioner wrote: "Mwele is a small village presided over by Hamis bin Mataka, an intelligent Swahili, who appears to have a considerable influence with the Digo and neighbouring tribes." (Quarterly Report Vanga District for Quarter ending 30/6/1912, KNA, Coast Province, MP/3/233.) Hamis bin Mataka was the son of Mataka, the Akida (Commander) of Mwele during the time of Shaykh Mbaruk. The District Commissioner in 1915 also noted Hamis bin Mataka's influence: "Hamisi Mataka, the headman of Mwele, is a fervid apostle of Islam and has done his best to fight against the influence of the Mission Stations at Viziani and Kwale." District Commissioner, Gasi, 9 April 1915, to Provincial Commissioner, Mombasa, KNA, Coast Province, MP/21/914.

¹¹ One of the commodities stimulating the expansion of trade was rubber, which grew abundantly in the forests of south-eastern Kenya. Harms concluded that the world rubber shortage brought "large numbers of Africans into the international economy for the first time." In German East Africa, for example, the value of rubber exports surpassed that of ivory in 1899, and rubber production doubled between 1900 and 1902. But the boom was short-lived: by 1910, cheap rubber from southeast Asia had begun to depress the market. Robert Harms, "The End of Red Rubber: A Reassessment," in *JAH*, XVI, 1 (1975): 73-88.

¹² Among the immigrants were Digo (and other) Muslims from German East Africa. In 1898, for example, many people left German East Africa to escape the hut tax imposed by the Germans. Letter of District Officer, Shimoni, 10 June 1898, KNA, Coast Province, MP/97/183.

¹³ The first record of military action in the East African campaign of the First World War was a report of German soldiers entering the town of Vanga on the 25th August 1914. ("Dates of Campaign in Vanga District, August 1914," KNA, DC/KWL/6/1.) The main German advance into southeastern Kenya came in 1915, and by December 1915 two-thirds of Vanga District was in German hands. (Annual Report 1915-16, Vanga District, KNA, DC/KWL/1/1.)

Muhaka and Galu, and numerous Digo from Kikoneni fled east of the Ramisi river, some into the interior and others to the refugee camps at the coast. By the middle of 1916, the Germans had withdrawn, and the refugee camps were dismantled.¹⁵ Reconstruction took place under difficult circumstances, because of a smallpox epidemic, famine and floods in the years 1916-22.¹⁶ Some of the refugees returned to their former home districts,¹⁷ but others remained in the Msambweni area.¹⁸ With the growth of Mombasa and the improvement in road communications after the War, the ports of Gasi and Vanga declined in importance,¹⁹ and new colonial administrative centres such as Msambweni and Lungalunga grew up. The decline of Gasi and Vanga was reflected, too, in the declining role these towns played in spreading Islam. Between 1916 and 1933, the growth of Islam among the Digo was promoted by the new group of indigenous Digo Imams and teachers who were at school before the War.

¹⁴ Digo from the Tanga region of German East Africa also took refuge in Kenya. In March 1915, the refugee camp at Muhaka had some "400 refugees from the Umba valley" and the camp at Galu contained "refugees from Vanga and Gazi plus German East African natives." (District Commissioner, Gasi, to Provincial Commissioner, Mombasa, 19 March 1915, KNA, PC/COAST/1/3/95.) The Annual Report for 1915 (including the first quarter of 1916) estimated that there were 1000 refugees at Muhaka and 2500 at Galu. (Annual Report 1915-16, Vanga District, KNA, DC/KWL/1/1.) By the middle of 1916, Government reports mentioned a concentration of "several thousand Digo and other refugees at Galu and other places behind Msambweni." (Provincial Commissioner, Mombasa, 28 June 1916, to District Commissioner, Gasi, KNA, PC/COAST/1/3/95.)

¹⁵ The refugee camps were dismantled at the beginning of July 1916, and on the 8th July 1916, the Liwali of Vanga returned to Vanga. Annual Report 1916-17, Vanga District, KNA, DC/KWL/1/2.

¹⁶ The famine of 1916-17 was followed by a smallpox epidemic in 1919-20, a food shortage in 1921, and floods in 1922. (Annual Reports 1916-22, Vanga District, KNA, DC/KWL/1/2.16.) In 1921, Thompson estimated that approximately 2000 persons had died of smallpox in Vanga District. The Kikoneni area was particularly hard hit; the Tour Diary for 28th April 1921 reads: "To Kikoneni. Country in the neighbourhood of Kiraku hill absolutely deserted, and all old shambas [agricultural plots] abandoned...the following villages were reduced to a few huts only: Kiraku, Mwandeo, Mwabandari, Mpoponi, Kigandini, Kivumoni, Maumbani, while the villages of Saadani and Kidiani had ceased to exist altogether." (Tour Diary, Vanga District, entry for 28 April 1921, KNA, Coast Province, MP/47/1156.)

¹⁷ Though not necessarily to the same villages: *kaya* Gonja, for example, was not re-settled. The Annual Report for 1916-17 observed: "With regard to the resettlement of the natives in their old locations, it must be admitted that the war coupled with the subsequent shortage of food has prevented many people from returning to their original homes. (Annual Report 1916-17, Vanga District, KNA, DC/KWL/1/2.) Gerlach notes that the Digo who fled from the Umba river area during the First World War had developed new ties by the time they returned. Clan and *kaya* allegiances broke down, and people settled in new residential units that had no direct links with the old *kayas*. Gerlach, "The Social Organization of the Digo," 27.

¹⁸ There are references in official correspondence to a proposal for "the settlement of Digo refugees from the Umba valley and German East Africa at Msambweni" (Provincial Commissioner, Mombasa, 5 February 1915, to District Commissioner, Gasi, KNA, PC/COAST/1/3/95), but it is difficult to estimate the number of refugees who remained in the Msambweni area after the War. Some former refugees were employed on the sisal and sugar estates that were developed north and south of Msambweni. In 1918, 208 of the 310 resident labourers at the East African Estates (Sisal) Ltd. at Kinondo were Digo; of the 332 resident labourers at the Gazi Rubber and Fibre Estates, 46 were Digo and 265 were "German East African natives" (of whom many would also have been Digo). (Provincial Commissioner, Mombasa, to Chief Secretary, Nairobi, 7 November 1918, KNA, PC/COAST/1/9/38.) Originally intended for rubber production, by 1918, the 1600 acres of the Gazi Rubber Estates were entirely planted with coconuts. (Annual Report 1916-17, Vanga District, KNA, DC/KWL/1/2.)

¹⁹ Gasi, destroyed during the First World War, was built anew in 1916, but never recovered its former importance. In 1931, the District Commissioner wrote: "Gasi continues to decrease in importance as a port, owing to the increase of traffic on the Ramisi-Mombasa road which is now all-weather." (Annual Report 1931, Digo District, KNA, DC/KWL/1/17.) The 1932 Annual Report said: "Gasi continues to decay and is a place of little importance. The presence of the Mudir is the only hindrance to its demise." (Annual Report 1932, Digo District, KNA, DC/KWL/1/18.)

The beginning of Islam at Diani

Sometime in the late 17th or early 18th century, two brothers, Mwalela Bawa and Mwalela Gongo (of the Akinalala clan) migrated, with their sisters Nlela²⁰ and other family members, from *kaya* Jombo to Diani. Mwalela Gongo eventually migrated farther north, and founded *kaya* Timbwani just south of Mombasa. Mwalela Bawa remained at Diani, as the founder and *mwanatsi* of *kaya* Diani. As time passed, members of other clans came to settle at Diani, but the leadership of the *kaya* remained in the hands of Mwalela Bawa's matrilineal descendants.²¹

The first six leaders of *kaya* Diani were not Muslim. Kivoyero Mwapodzo, the seventh *mwanatsi*, was the first elder of the *kaya* to become a Muslim. Mwapodzo was born at Ukunda in c.1840. He came from Ukunda in order to inherit the leadership of *kaya* Diani from his maternal uncle Mwatsavua. This is said to have occurred some five generations after the founding of Diani when Sayyid Majid was Sultan of Zanzibar, which would place it some time between 1856 and 1870.²²

Mwapodzo was among the first (many say he was the first) Digo of Diani to be converted to Islam.²³ Mwakulenje Podzo, his father, used to go to Mombasa to visit relatives. Through these trips Mwapodzo was introduced to life in Mombasa, and first came into contact with Muslims. His conversion took place at the time of the Mwakisenge famine (1884-85). During the famine, Mwapodzo and his father went to stay with Digo (Muslim) relatives at Takaungu. At that time both Mwapodzo and his father contracted smallpox. Whereas Mwakulenje Podzo died, Mwapodzo "was cured and became Abdallah." When he came back after the famine, he was a Muslim, and "was speaking Swahili."²⁴ After his conversion, Mwapodzo continued to visit Mombasa, where he did some trading, and he is also said to have visited Zanzibar. As *kaya* elder,²⁵ he continued to lead ritual ceremonies at Diani; his intercession for rain was considered particularly efficacious, and he "would be

²⁰ At that time it was common for sisters to have the same name. Nlela means "daughter of Lela", just as "Mwalela" means "son of Lela".

²¹ Abdallah Mwatari, Mvumoni, 8/12/67.

²² Muhammad Mariaka, Diani, 7/12/67.

²³ There is evidence that others were converted before Mwapodzo. The first converts either moved to Mombasa, or were nominal Muslims who hardly practised Islam. Being the first convert who put his faith into practice and had a Muslim impact in the village, Mwapodzo is understandably remembered as the first to become a Muslim.

²⁴ Abdallah Makanzu, Diani, 5/12/67. Smallpox epidemics of this period are well documented in missionary records; one occurred in September, 1885. (Letter of J.Houghton, Ribe, 25/9/1885, *UMFCM*, 29 (January 1886): 60.) At that time, knowledge of Swahili was the mark of a person who had regular dealings with townspeople; most Mijikenda did not speak Swahili, and could only understand it at a rudimentary level.

²⁵ Abdallah Mwapodzo was also appointed by the British as Headman of Diani, a position he held until his death in 1923. By 1916, he was already described as "very old", and had been exempted from attending Council meetings. (Vanga District, Handing-over Report of 24 August 1916, KNA, DC/KWL/2/1.) After Mwapodzo's death, Abdallah Mwarandu was chosen Headman to succeed him. (four Diary of the District Commissioner, H.E.Lambert, entry for 10 July 1923, KNA, Coast Province, MP/47/1156.)

given goats, chickens and other animals to sacrifice during the *kaya* prayers."²⁶

Among other early converts at Diani were Saidi Boga, Muhammad Mwacharo, Muhammad Mwalitseso, Salim Mwaremwa and Harnisi Kitendo. The circumstances of their conversions varied. Saidi Boga was trading in goats and coconuts at Mtongwe and Mombasa; he was converted by a Muslim friend in Mtongwe. According to one account, Muhammad Mwacharo, a trader in rice, was converted by a Digo Muslim friend, Omari Mwakikweza, who lived in Mombasa; according to another account, Mwacharo was converted by Makarani at Tiwi.²⁷ Muhammad Mwalitseso and Hamisi Kitendo ("a very rich man") were fishermen as well as traders; they are said to have been converted at Pemba, where they used to take cattle and goats for sale. Harnisi Kitendo, like Abdallah Mwapodzo, was a friend of Shaykh Mbaruk bin Rashid of Gasi. Salim Mwaremwa was converted by an Arab trader named Idi, who used to come from Mombasa; he would beach his boats near the Kongo Mosque, and bring "clothes and maize in exchange for tobacco." Other early converts at Diani are said to have been converted "from Tiwi", by friends or by Makarani or Juma Matungale.²⁸

These accounts reveal numerous Muslim influences converging on Diani. Apparently conflicting evidence about the conversion of, for example, Muhammad Mwacharo, may simply reflect dealings with various Muslims. In this, and similar cases, conversion was probably the cumulative result of different Muslim contacts over a period of time rather than the lone work of one Muslim.

In general, men were converted before women, who are said to have been "more attached to their culture." But some wives of early converts also became Muslim, like Nchakure, the wife of Hamisi Kitendo. In at least one case a man, Salim Mwaremwa, and his wife, Mwanalima Mpazia, discussed the matter and decided to become Muslims together.²⁹ One woman, Nchisembe (who took the Muslim name Mwanasha), agreed to become a Muslim, even though her husband had refused to do so. She and her husband remained together as man and wife, but not without some inconvenience, as she then had to use different cooking pots and utensils for herself and for her husband.³⁰

²⁶ Kassim Kinjoi, Diani, 5/2/87.

²⁷ Omari Mwakikweza's father, Mwanaphyori Kikweza, was an early Digo convert from Diani who had gone to live in Kibokoni, Mombasa. Omari stayed at Mombasa, and came to be regarded as the head of the Digo Muslims there. Muhammad Ali Mwajinga, Mkwakwani, 31/1/87.

²⁸ Hamisi Mwakalato, Diani, 7/12/67.

²⁹ Fatuma Said, Tiwi, 7/12/86

³⁰ Mwinyikai Sulayman, Diani, 3/12/86.

Immigrants and traders at Diani

In the mid-1880s and 1890s a number of Muslim immigrants came to settle at Diani. They came "for business, but were given land to cultivate and they helped the people." They offered shark, kingfish, dates, beads, cloth and clothes for sale, in exchange for which they would buy coconuts and tobacco. During times of famine (which were frequent between 1884 and 1900),³¹ they were able to supply maize, rice and millet. They would organize expeditions into the hinterland to buy tobacco. Mwapodzo would give them an escort, and the traders themselves had guns. The inhabitants of Diani are said to have been happy to have resident traders, who improved the security of the village and offered ready credit: "they had guns..and if someone needed clothes or maize, he would be given some immediately."³²

Those who came to settle at Diani Mwaroni (where Abdallah Mwapodzo stayed) were Shekeli (who had been at Tiwi earlier), Mbega, Mzee and Manga; those who came to Diani Mvumoni were Jaffari, Baraka and Gudura. These were the first foreigners (that is, non-Mijikenda) to come to stay at Diani. As in the case of the Muslim settlers at Tiwi, they constituted a mixed group. Shekeli was a Mandiri Arab ("who had slaves whom he later freed"), Mbega was a "freed slave". Mzee was a Nyasa; Gudura and Jaffari were Zigua; and Baraka is said to have "come from the south." These last four, who are said to have had their masters in Mombasa, were working as agents for Mombasa Muslims; their owners took a share of the profits they were making. At first Jaffari came as an "itinerant trader", but then he decided to stay at Diani. He brought his wife with him from Mombasa, and was given land to settle on. When he left, the land reverted to the Digo who had given it to him.

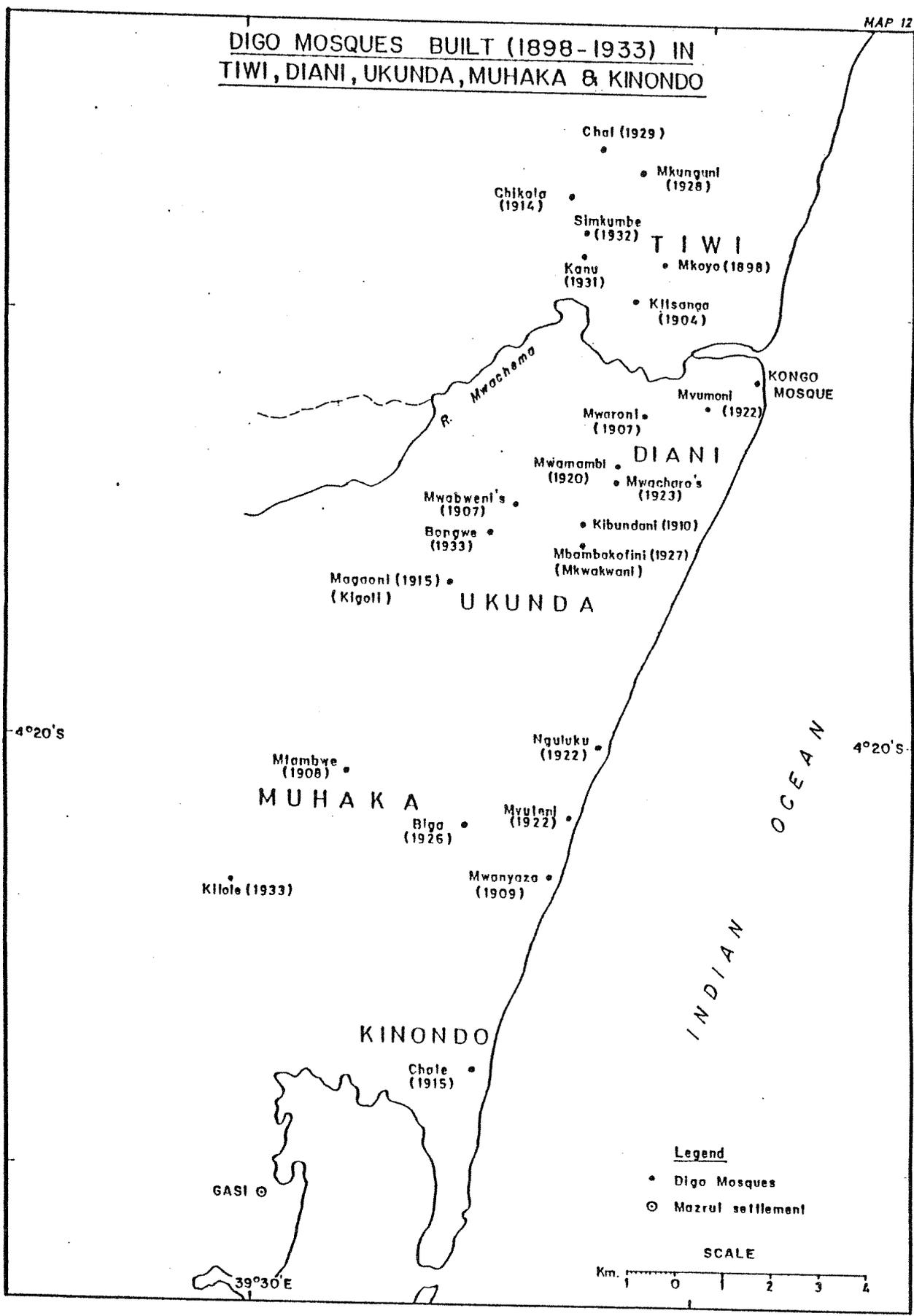
The newly-arrived Muslim immigrants all had friends in Diani. Mbega was a friend of Abdallah Mwapodzo, Shekeli was a friend of Mwamkoi Koto, who gave him land on which to build a house. Shekeli, though an Arab, is said to have "lived with the Digo". Manga was also a friend of Mwamkoi. Mzee, a friend of Pafu, became a member of a Digo clan, the Akinalela.³³ Though none of the Muslim immigrants undertook formal teaching, their close relations with Digo Muslim converts undoubtedly confirmed the converts in their faith, and strengthened bonds within a wider Muslim community.

³¹ See Thomas J. Herlehy, "An Historical Dimension of the Food Crisis in Africa: Surviving Famines along the Kenya Coast, ca.1880-1980," paper presented at the African Studies Association Conference in Boston, December, 1983.

³² Abdallah Mwatari, Mvumoni, 10/12/67. The "easy" terms of credit were not so advantageous as they appeared. When first pledged, the land was of little value; years later people unsuccessfully sought to redeem their land for the same amount they had originally been advanced. In 1916, the District Commissioner of Mombasa noted the difficulties being faced by persons wishing to redeem plots of land which had been offered as "security for debts or against small advances of money many years ago." Memorandum on Redemption of Land, dated 18/8/1916. KNA, DC/MSA/3/1/166.

³³ Abdallah Makanzu, Diani, 5/12/67; Abdallah Mwatari, Mvumoni, 24/4/70.

DIGO MOSQUES BUILT (1898-1933) IN TIWI, DIANI, UKUNDA, MUHAKA & KINONDO



Teachers and Mosques at Diani

The first mosque at Diani, the Mwaroni Mosque, was built by Abdallah Mwapodzo near his home in c.1907 (see Map 12). It was initially built of mud and poles, and had a palm-thatched roof. The Mwaroni Mosque is said to have been built because the number of Muslims was increasing, and the people of Diani needed their own mosque. Before the mosque was built, people would go to Gasi or Tiwi for Friday prayers, or would pray inside small enclosures (Sw. *ua*, pl. *maua*) made out of palm fronds. For bigger celebrations, such as the 'Id festivals, the Muslims of Diani used to go to Mombasa:

At the time of the Magunia famine [1899] the Muslims were people like Abdallah Mwapodzo. When the time for the 'Id celebrations came, they would go to pray in Mombasa. They would set out on the 28th of the month, and spend the night at Pungu with someone like Muhammad Mwaganyuma [the senior elder and an early convert of Pungu]. Then the next day, they would get up and be on their way. The people of Pungu would stay right there at Pungu. Most people in Tiwi, Diani and Ukunda, hadn't been converted yet. After Islam spread, everyone would gather for the 'Id celebrations at Tiwi, the people of Pungu were there at their place in Pungu, and then even the people of Diani built their own mosque.³⁴

The first Imam of the Mwaroni Mosque was Shehe Baimba, a Gunya "who came as a trader selling beads and mirrors, and offered to teach." Mwapodzo's nephew, Hamisi Mwaramunda, later took over as Imam. Several candidates vied for the position of Imam; Hamisi "passed an interview in competition with the others" and was duly appointed.³⁵

After the First World War there was a steady increase in the number of Muslims in Diani. By 1920 at least five (out of seventeen) of the members of the *ngambi* were Muslim.³⁶ The second mosque in Diani, the Mwamambi Mosque, was built in 1920 by Saidi Mwakaphola and Muhammad Mwacharo. The two men worked together putting up the mosque (on Mwakaphola's land), and they also financed the digging of a well near-by. At a certain point Mwacharo withdrew from the project, hence the Mwamambi Mosque is usually referred to as Mwakaphola's mosque.³⁷ In 1922, shortly after the construction of the Mwamambi Mosque, Salim Mwaremwa built the Mvumoni Mosque. Though the increase in the number of mosques was clearly in response to a general growth in the number of Muslims, there is also evidence that prayer at the mosques, if not their actual construction,

³⁴ Abdallah Mwatari, Mvumoni, 18/1/76.

³⁵ Mwinyikai Hamisi Chisinyo, Mvumoni, 20/1/87.

³⁶ Vanga District, Handing-over Report of 8/4/1920. KNA, DC/KWL/2/1. The names of elders as shown in colonial records give only an indication of the number of Muslim elders; the actual number was invariably higher than shown, since some Muslims continued to be known, and listed in government records, by their Digo names. In this 1920 Handing-over Report, for example, one of the early converts, Muhammad Mwalitseso, is recorded by his Digo name only. See Chapter IV, p.123, footnote 103.

³⁷ Mwakaphola is said to have been from Gasi (where he was converted). Saidi Mwakaphola, Mwamambi, 9/12/86.

took place along clan lines. Thus, the Mwaroni Mosque is said to have been "of the Akinalela", the Mwamambi Mosque "of the Akinangome" and the Mvumoni Mosque "of the Akinangomba".³⁸

Maulid and the Kongo Mosque

In the late 1920s, the ruins of the Kongo Mosque lying in thick bush near the shore were recognized by the Digo as a mosque. Up to that time the Digo had considered the overgrown mosque to be a haunt of spirits (Digo. *mizimu*), and used to offer sacrifices there. The horn was sounded summoning the villagers (Muslims and non-Muslims alike) to a communal bush-clearing. The District Commissioner seems to have recognized the importance of the occasion, as he is said to have supervised the opening up of a path to mosque.³⁹ According to the general testimony of Digo Muslims, Shaykh Mwinyikombo bin Makame⁴⁰ discovered the Kongo Mosque and restored it to its original purpose:

Mwinyikombo called the elders of Diani together and told them, 'Kongo is a mosque, it's not an *mizimu* [place of spirits]. The people going there to slaughter chickens and things like that are desecrating it, that's wrong.' Mwinyikombo convinced them to revive the mosque. So the bush was cleared and a path was made leading to the mosque. The mosque wasn't used until the day of the first *maulid*. Then after that the Kongo Mosque became the Friday mosque for Diani. Some people from Tiwi would go too. The people of Tiwi would alternate; one Friday they would go to Kongo, the next Friday they would stay at Tiwi.⁴¹

In the year 1932, Shaykh Mwinyikombo organised a *maulid* celebration for the official opening of the Kongo Mosque; Digo Muslims attended from all over Digo District, as did Muslims, including Sayyid Amin⁴² from Takaungu, from other parts of the coast. At the *maulid*, Mwinyikombo delivered a homily in which he is said to have told the gathering that they should celebrate the *maulid* three times a

³⁸ Abdallah Mwatari, Mvumoni, 10/12/67.

³⁹ Existing colonial records do not mention this event, which according to oral testimony took place when Mr. S.V.Cooke was the District Commissioner. This would place it sometime between March and July 1927; Cooke took over as District Commissioner from Mr.W.S.Marchant on 5th March 1927, and handed over to Mr.C.B.Thompson on the 20th July 1927. (Handing-over Reports, Digo District, KNA, DC/KWL/2.) The colonial administration (and Muslims in Mombasa) knew of the existence of the Kongo Mosque at least as early as 1914. In that year, Watkins, the District Commissioner, wrote of a ruined mosque at Diani "in remarkable preservation, with the roof still on but "badly overgrown." (File Memo, "Ruins", 1914, KNA, Coast Province, MP/12/172.) The government must have approached the Wakf Commission for assistance in repairing the mosque, because in July 1914, the Secretary of the Wakf Commission wrote to say that it was not possible to use Wakf funds for an ulterior purpose...to repair the mosque at Diani." (Secretary of the Wakf Commission to Acting Provincial Commissioner, Mombasa, 7 July 1914, KNA, Coast Province, MP/12/172.

⁴⁰ Shaykh Mwinyikombo's mother was a Kilindini and his father a Pemba who had close ties with the Tangana. At the time, Mwinyikombo was Imam of the Khonzi Mosque in Mombasa, and was well known for the *maulid* he held at the Khonzi Mosque. Shakombo Ali, Mtongwe, 22/9/87.

⁴¹ Juma Salim Pati, Kitsanga, 20/9/87.

⁴² At that time Sayyid Amin was the main promoter of *maulid* in Takaungu. He, Shaykh Mwinyikombo and Muhammad Mbwana formed a triumvirate of *maulid* supporters, who are said to have attended *maulid* celebrations up and down the entire Kenya coast.

year; "from now on this mosque is your Mecca," he told them.⁴³

The public celebration of *maulid* spread rapidly during the years 1932-35,⁴⁴ and became a regular feature of Digo Islam:

Mwinyikombo would attend all the *maulid* celebrations. He would give a sermon instructing the people on the basic tenets of Islam, and then afterwards he would go around asking people, 'Are you a Muslim? Are you married?' If they weren't married as Muslims, he would marry them right there. He wasn't converting people; he was bringing them out of their state of ignorance and closer to their faith. Because of the *maulid* celebrations, many people stopped going to Digo dances, and started practising as Muslims.⁴⁵

Non-Muslims would attend *maulid* celebrations, and in this way were attracted to Islam. But a more important effect of the celebrations was to encourage nominal Muslims to practise their faith. *Maulid* celebrations also broadened the context of Digo Islam by regularly bringing together Digo Muslims from different villages, or even homesteads of the same village, and Muslims from other parts of the coast. The presence of eminent Muslims, such as Shaykh Mwinyikombo and Sayyid Amin, from the main coastal towns, gave a new prestige to Digo Islam, and guaranteed its spiritual efficacy. The difficult pioneering years of rural Islam were over: "The *maulid* celebrations brought us the joy of the religion of Islam."⁴⁶

Muslim influence at Ukunda

The village of Ukunda (*Digo*. Likunda)⁴⁷ was founded by migrants from *kaya* Kinondo sometime in the 18th century; later, Digo of *kaya* Kwale (from Vuga and Chirimani) migrated to Ukunda. More than fifteen miles south of Mombasa and slightly inland, Ukunda is not mentioned in the 19th century writings of early European explorers and missionaries. Nor did Muslim traders regularly make their way there until the early 20th century. In the late 19th century, the main Muslim

⁴³ Juma Peremende, Mvumoni, 20/9/87. Immediately after the first *maulid* celebration, Mwinyikombo began giving classes of *'ilm* at the Kongo Mosque every Thursday after evening prayers for a group of seven or eight pupils from Diani and Tiwi; he continued to give these classes regularly until his death. (Juma Salim Pati, Kitsanga, 20/9/87). Shaykh Mwinyikombo died on the 5th day of 5th month (Swa. *Mfunguo tano*; Ar. *Safar*) of A.H. 1353, which corresponds to the 20th May 1934. He is said to have prophesied his own death: one Saturday, he said, 'Fahali aenda zake, hutamwona lena.' ('The strong man [lit. 'bull'] is going away, you won't see him again.' On the following day, Sunday, he was taken by a fever and died. (Shakombo Ali, Mtongwe, 17/10/87.)

⁴⁴ During these years, *maulid* spread to such places as Mtongwe, Likoni, Vyemani, Pungu, Ng'ombeni, Matuga, Ukunda, Msambweni, Kikoneni and Lungalunga. (Shakombo Ali and Juma Peremende, Diani, 17/10/87). Almost without exception, the praise-song recited in honour of the Prophet Muhammad during such *maulid* celebrations was the *Simt ad-Durar* ("The String of Pearls"). This can be recited by voice only, or to the accompaniment of a kind of tambourine (Sw. *tari*). In some places, for example Ukunda, the *maulid* was first celebrated without any musical accompaniment. *Tari* accompaniment proved popular when it was added on later, and even more people were attracted to attend *maulid* celebrations. (Muhammad Ali Mwajinga, Mkwakwani, 31/1/87.)

⁴⁵ Shakombo Aii, Diani, 17/10/87.

⁴⁶ "Maulid ilituletea furaha ya dini." Juma Salim Pati, Kitsanga, 21/9/87.

⁴⁷ Ukunda is sometimes referred to as a *kaya* in its own right, but it is more correct to consider it a subsidiary settlement of *kaya* Kinondo.

influence on Ukunda came from Gasi (ten miles away). When the town of Gasi declined after 1895, Ukunda came under the influence of Muslims at Tiwi, only four miles away.⁴⁸ As one informant put it: "The people of Ukunda were converted to Islam at Tiwi, not at Mombasa."⁴⁹

The few Muslim immigrants who came to settle at Ukunda had a strong impact. Among them were Muhammad Bongi, Muhammad bin Yusufu, and Abdallah Awadh. Muhammad Bongi is said to have come as a trader from Lamu, via Mombasa (where he studied); he was given land to cultivate and settled at Magutu.⁵⁰ Muhammad bin Yusufu was a Comorian, who came from Tanganyika, as a trader; he settled at Kilolapwa where he started a Qur'an school.⁵¹ Abdallah Awadh came from Mambrui and settled at Bongwe, where he married a Digo woman and converted the first Muslims of Bongwe.⁵²

Among the early converts at Ukunda were Ali Mwakulonda (the senior elder of the village at the end of the 19th century), Salim Mwadzoho (Ali's Mwakulonda's deputy), Sulayman Mwangumbo, Muhammad Mwasemani, Omari Mwadzowa, and Ali Pataka Mwabweni, who was appointed headman of the village by the British after Ali Mwakulonda's death.⁵³ Ali Mwakulonda and Salim Mwadzoho are said to have been converted by Muslims who had stopped at Ukunda on their way from Tanga to Mombasa. Sulayman Mwangumbo and Muhammad Mwasemani were converted by Muhammad Bongi. Ali Mwabweni was a friend of Mwinyihaji wa Bwika, and may very well have been converted by him.⁵⁴

The building of mosques at Ukunda followed a pattern similar to that in other Digo villages: the building of one mosque stimulated the building of other mosques, by leading Muslim converts or by their sons, in close succession. The first mosque at Ukunda was built by Ali Mwabweni in c.1907. The mosque no longer exists, and has no remembered name; when going to pray, people would just say, "We're going to Mwabweni's", and the mosque came to be known as Mwabweni's Mosque.⁵⁵

⁴⁸ The influence of Tiwi on Ukunda was increased by the fact that the elders of Tiwi, Diani and Ukunda, had formed a joint council. "The elders' councils of Ukunda, Diani, and Tiwi, were separate, but they would meet together to discuss common matters or special problems. They used to meet at a place called Mkwakwamwanate at Chigogoni." Abdallah Mwatari, Diani, 12/12/67.

⁴⁹ Saidi Kongo, Chidze, 14/2/87.

⁵⁰ Bongi is described variously as an Arab or a Swahili. Muhammad Ali Mwajinga, Ukunda, 31/1/87.

⁵¹ Muhammad bin Yusufu is buried near the Kilolapwa Mosque at Kibundani. Muhammad Matano Mwashauti, Ukunda Kilolapwa, 26/12/86.

⁵² Hamisi Sulayman Bugu, Bongwe, 4/1/87.

⁵³ It has not been possible to confirm the exact date of this appointment. According to H.E.Lambert, the District Commissioner of Digo District, Ali Mwabweni acted as regent for Ali bin Abdallah, the rightful heir to the position, who was too young to inherit. Mwabweni died some time between September 1922, when he was said to be "too old for any active work," and July 1923, when a meeting was held "to determine the people's wishes with respect to a successor." District Tour Diary, entries for 15 September 1922 and 18 July 1923, KNA, Coast Province, MP/47/1156.

⁵⁴ Abdallah Ali Mwakulonda, Shamu, 11/12/86.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

The second mosque, the Kibundani (or Kilolapwa) Mosque was built in c.1910 by Salim Mwatebwe on land belonging to Matano Mwashauti. Mwatebwe, the son of an early convert (Omari Mwadzowa), and Mwashauti had both studied under Muhammad bin Yusufu (the Comorian). Muhammad bin Yusufu became the first Imam of the mosque (he was already teaching nearby), helped by his former students Mwatebwe and Mwashauti. The mosque was only used for daily prayers; the Muslims of Ukunda continued to go to Gasi or Tiwi for community prayers on Friday.⁵⁶

The third mosque in Ukunda was built at Magaoni (Kigoti) in 1915, through the joint effort of the Mwakulonda and Mwadzoho families. Before the mosque was built, people are said to have prayed at Mwabweni's Mosque. The first Imam of the mosque was Matano Abdallah (from Tanga), who was teaching at Magaoni. Among his pupils was Ali Mwadzoho, son of one of the builders of the mosque.⁵⁷

The spread of Islam in Kinondo and Muhaka

Far from Mombasa and Vanga, the people of *kaya* Kinondo had little contact with Muslims during the 18th and early 19th century, and might have remained isolated from Muslim influence throughout the 19th century, had it not been for the Mazrui migration from Mombasa to Gasi in 1837. Close relations developed between the Mazrui of Gasi and the Digo of such villages as Chale, Galu and Muhaka.⁵⁸ The Mazrui of Gasi took Digo women as wives, and employed Digo to work for them in town; and fugitives found ready refuge in Gasi.⁵⁹ The Digo who lived in Gasi were attracted to the Muslim way of life, and some were converted; in such cases, they usually became permanent town-dwellers.

Conversions of Digo elders also took place arising out of "their friendship with the Mazrui." Because the Mazrui had a "certain ascendancy" over the neighbouring Digo, it was easy for them to convert the Digo to Islam. Among the first to be converted by the Mazrui were Ali Dzogolo, the senior elder of Kinondo,⁶⁰ and Hamis Mahendo Mwamambo, the senior elder of Muhaka.⁶¹ Other early converts

⁵⁶ Ali Mwavua Mwatebwe, Kibundani, 6/12/86. According to other accounts, Salim Mwatebwe, the builder of the mosque was also the first Imam.

⁵⁷ Abdallah Ali Mwakulonda, Shamu, 11/12/86.

⁵⁸ These villages all stemmed from *kaya* Kinondo.

⁵⁹ Colonial documents record the case of a Digo called Kironda who "quarrelled with the Digo *ngambi* and put himself under the protection of Mbaruk." Properties of Mbaruk forfeited to the Government in accordance with a proclamation of HJI. The Sultan of Zanzibar dated April 2, 1915. KNA, DC/KWL/3/5/14fJ.

⁶⁰ Hamad Mwachirenje, Kinondo, 23/1/87.

⁶¹ Hamis is said to have been converted together with his family by his Mazrui friend Rashid bin Zahran. Yusuf Ali Mwahambwe, Mwabungo, 5/3/87. In general, the Digo of Muhaka were converted later than the Digo of Galu and Kinondo.

were Abdallah Mwakidoti (and his brother, Nasoro Mtsumi)⁶² and Bakari Mwachala of Galu, who were both friends of Shaykh Mbaruk.⁶³ Relations between the Mazrui and the Digo of Kinondo are said to have been so close⁶⁴ that many Kinondo Digo became Muslims during the time of Shaykh Mbaruk, though "in a half-hearted way": they prayed in the mosque but also continued to follow all their customary prayers and sacrifices at *kaya* Kinondo. The Mazrui especially remembered as converting the Digo of Kinondo are Sulayman bin Rashid and Rashid bin Zahran. Most, but not all, conversions took place at Gasi; some of the early converts at Kinondo are said to have been converted at Wasin, or through friendship with the Segeju.

Many conversions are said to have taken place at marriage ceremonies. Couples would go to Gasi, even when both partners were pagan, where they would first be converted to Islam: they would recite the *shahada*,⁶⁵ clean water would be poured over them, and they would be given Muslim names; then they would be married by the Qadhi.⁶⁶ Muslim converts changed their way of dressing: women discarded their traditional Digo skirt (Digo. *mahando*) and began to wear Swahili-style clothes (Swa. *kanild*); and men began to wear white gowns (Swa. *kanzu*) and Muslim caps (Swa. *kofia*). Later, under the influence of Islam, Digo burial customs changed: the customary seven-day mourning period was reduced to three days, and the dances, such as *chifudu* and *liganze*, that used to take place during mourning ceremonies were discontinued.⁶⁷

For many years after the first conversions, the Muslim life of the Digo converts centred on Gasi. Then, in c.1908, Kassim Mwamahendo built the first Digo mosque of the Kinondo-Muhaka area at the village of Mtambwe.⁶⁸ The Mtambwe

⁶² Abdallah Mwakidoti was the son of Mwanjama Kidoti, who is said to have welcomed the Mazrui to Gasi in 1837. Mwanjama's father, Mwalugwe Njama, is the one who named Galu. Yusuf Ali Mwahambwe, Mwabungo, 5/3/87.

⁶³ Mwachala was also a "neighbour" of Shaykh Mbaruk. In the description of properties forfeited by Shaykh Mbaruk (in accordance with a 1915 proclamation of the Sultan of Zanzibar), Mbaruk is shown as having a plantation of "912 coconut trees" at Galu, bounded on the north by the "palms of Bakari Mwachala." See footnote 35 above. In a report of 1920. Bakari Mwachala is described as an "energetic, intelligent, loyal" elder. (Handing-over Report, C.B.Thompson, 14 February 1920, KNA, DC/KWL/2/1.)

⁶⁴ Relations between the Digo of *kaya* Kinondo and the Mazrui of Gasi were similar to relations between the Digo of *kaya* Kiteje and the Tangana of Mtongwe: in both cases, the peoples were living so near to each other that their daily lives were inevitably intertwined, and Islam came to exercise a strong influence on the Digo. See Chapter II, pp.62-63.

⁶⁵ See Chapter II, p.60, footnote 94.

⁶⁶ At the time, the Qadhi must have been Rashid bin Zahran, who is mentioned as converting many Digos at marriage ceremonies. Yusuf Ali Mwahambwe, Mwabungo, 4/12/86; Abdurrahman Mwakutanga, Mvuleni, 9/12/86. There is no evidence for this extraordinary practice elsewhere among the Mijikenda, but it is consistently mentioned in the Muslim traditions of Kinondo and Muhaka, and there is no reason to doubt its occurrence.

⁶⁷ Hamad Mwachirenje, Kinondo, nj 1/87.

⁶⁸ It is also said that Hamis Mahendo built the Mtambwe Mosque. Apparently he was still alive at the time of the building of the mosque, but he was a very old man and did not do any of the actual work of building. (Yusuf Ali Muhambwe, Mwabungo, 25/8/87.) In 1914, Kassim Mwamahendo (also shown in colonial records as Kassim Mwamambo) was Headman of Muhaka, a position from which he resigned on 18/1/1924. ("Salaries of chiefs and headmen, 1914," KNA, CP/1/6/494; District Station Diary, entry for 18th January 1924, KNA, DC(KWL/5/1.) He died eight months later on the 6th September 1924. (District Station Diary, entry for 6th September 1924, KNA, DC/KWL/5/1.)

Mosque was small -there were few Muslims at the time- but its construction was an assertion of independence: "The Digo Muslims were tired of staying at the back of the mosque in Gasi; they asked themselves, 'Why is it that at Gasi even the slaves are in front of us in the mosque?'" As soon as the mosque was ready, it was used for Friday prayers. The first Imam of the Mtambwe Mosque was Ali bin Mzee, a Gunya who had been given land to farm nearby.⁶⁹ Ali bin Mzee also taught at Mtambwe, and eventually one of his pupils, Hamad Kassim Mambo, the grandson of Hamisi Mahendo, took over as Imam of the Mosque.

The Muslims of Mtambwe also began to celebrate the 'Id festival (at the end of the month of Ramadhan) at Mtambwe instead of Gasi. The importance of the month of Ramadhan for early Mijikenda converts features in the oral testimony of many villages, and Mtambwe was no exception. In early teaching about Islam, the Mazrui (and other Muslims) stressed the value of fasting, and of living other Islamic precepts, during the month of Ramadhan. Muslim converts, most of whom continued drinking palm-wine after becoming Muslim, would be told to give up drinking during Ramadhan, which they would do, only to resume after Ramadhan was over. Converts witnessed and were taught the importance of explicitly formulating one's intention (Swa. *kunuia*) of fasting each day. After the evening prayer, the Imam would lead the congregation in repeating (in Arabic) the usual Shafi'i formula declaring one's intention of fasting the following day; the members of the congregation would then go home and repeat the formula (in Digo) to their wives and women relatives at home.⁷⁰

Following Mwamahendo's example at Mtambwe, Bakari Mwachala soon built the Mwanyaza Mosque at Galu in c.1909.⁷¹ Bakari brought a Digo Muslim teacher from Tanga, Hasan Mwatwenye, to teach his two sons Omari and Jamali, who were joined by a third pupil, Said Chala, son of Abdallah Fumbi. Said Chala later became a teacher and the Imam of the Mvuleni Mosque built by Hemed Mwafujo in c.1922.⁷² In c.1915, Ali Boi, an early convert, built the Chale Mosque at Kinondo, and Halfan Tsumo, who had studied at Msambweni under the Segeju teacher Maalim Chinabo, became the first Imam.⁷³ With the construction of these

⁶⁹ Ali was one of several foreign Muslims who settled at Muhaka. In 1921, the population of Muhaka location was 1273, of whom 21 were "Swahili men". Population Statistics 1921, KNA, DC/KWL/9/1.

⁷⁰ According to the Shafi'i school of law, an explicitly formulated and declared (if only to oneself) intention (Arabic. *niya*; Swa. *nia*) is essential to the validity of one's religious acts. The formula ("Nawaitu sauma ghadin 'an 'ada'i fardha ramadhani hadhih-il-sanati lillahi Ta'ala.") can be found in Shaykh Hasan bin Umayr ai-Shirazi, *Wasilat-ul-Raja'*, Singapore 1951, p.115. I am grateful to Sayyid Saggaf Ba-Aiawy for teaching me the formula, and to Ma'allim Yahya Ali Omar for the written reference.

⁷¹ Bakari is said to have been a man of means, who used to fish with large nets. "When he saw that Mwamambo had built a mosque at Mtambwe, he decided to do the same." Yusuf Ali Muhambwe, Mwabungo, 25/8/87.

⁷² Mwalimu Said Chala, Biga, 13/12/86.

⁷³ Hamad Mwachirenje, Kinondo, 23/1/87.

first mosques, Muslim religious life came to be centred in indigenous Digo villages. Teachers such as Said Chala began to take the initiative in converting their fellow Digo, and the number of Digo being converted at Gasi declined. Other Digo in some of the outlying villages of Muhaka, such as Kilole, are said to have been converted by Digo Muslims who came from German East Africa during the First World War and settled in Kenya.⁷⁴

The Jombo-Kikoneni area: early relations with Muslims

The first Digo to settle at *kaya* Jombo (Digo. *Dzombo*) may have come from Kinondo as early as the 17th century. They were followed by settlers from Kwale who eventually came to dominate the *kaya*.⁷⁵ The first ruler to gain prominence at Jombo was Mbogo Mwamzungu (also known as Kikonga), who came from Kwale during a famine at the end of the 18th century. He is said to have brought rain to the country, after which the people accepted him as their leader.⁷⁶

Endowed with a forceful personality, Mwamzungu soon became the dominant leader of the southern Digo, and took the name Kubo.⁷⁷ During his rule, Jombo was abandoned, and Mwamzungu moved to Kirwa (near Kikoneni). He extended his control by placing his sons at Mafisini, Kigombero and other outlying villages, and other Digo in the area came to be subject to his authority.

Some forty miles south of Mombasa and fifteen miles inland, Kikoneni was well isolated from Muslim influence throughout much of the 19th century, with one exception: the influence of the Vumba Diwans. Kubo Mwamzungu is said to have valued the magical powers of Diwan Pinda, who was elected Diwan of Vanga in 1826. Diwan Pinda was recognized as the final arbitrator over Digo disputes, and seems to have supplied the Digo with protective charms.⁷⁸ The Digo and the

⁷⁴ Omar Bakai Mwakaniki, Mtambwe, 27/12/86.

⁷⁵ Hamisi Mwatuwano, Waa, 14/12/67.

⁷⁶ Mkulu bin Abdallah, Mwaluvanga Eshu, 6/9/76. At the time of the succession dispute among the Vumba in c.1803-4, Kubo Mwamzungu was already in power. Hollis, "History of Vumba," 289.

⁷⁷ The name Kubo was subsequently used by Mwamzungu's successors, and became a title of authority. (Mkulu bin Abdallah, Mwaluvanga Eshu, 28/9/76.) According to another tradition, the name Kubo was given to Mwamzungu by the Vumba. (Omari Muhammad Masemo, Kikoneni, 31/1/75.) British colonial officers took singular historical interest in the political institution of Kuboship, which was a more centralized form of authority than was found elsewhere on the Kenya coast; as a consequence, there are abundant government documents on the topic. See, for example, "The Chieftainship Kubo," File Memo (signed by G.H.Osborne, 1916), DC/KWL/3/5.

⁷⁸ In 1898, the District Officer wrote that in unresolved disputes among the Digo of Kikoneni, "the case would be referred to the Diwan of Vanga whose judgment would be final. Since an English officer has been placed by the Government at Wasin, the old custom of going to the Diwan to have their disputes settled has stopped, and now all cases are referred to the European or Liwali. This has greatly reduced the wealth of the Diwan, who derived (I think I may say) one half of his money by giving small pieces or paper called *hirtzi* or charms which were supposed to save the wearer from many dangers." Letter of the District Officer, Shimoni, 30 June 1898, KNA, MP/97/183.

Vumba are said to have placed a protective charm (Swa. *Jingo*) at *kaya* Jombo together. And Diwan Pinda visited Kikoneni, where he and Kubo Mwamzungu celebrated a ceremony of blood-brotherhood (Swa. *kula chafe*) by sharing meat mixed with each other's blood; During the *chale* ceremony, Diwan Pinda is said to have protested about eating unclean meat (not slaughtered according to Muslim ritual):

When the Vumba leader Diwan Pinda came here, he made friends with Kubo Mwamzungu, and Mwamzungu told him, let's be blood-brothers, we'll mix your blood and mine together with meat, and eat it. Pinda protested, No! No! No! But Kubo got a chicken and killed it by biting it with his teeth, then he threw it down and it fluttered around. Once dead, the chicken was cooked, and they all ate it, including the Diwan. That's how the Vumba became our brothers, that is, the Vumba of the Diwan's clan. There are many different Vumba clans. The Diwan's clan are the ones who are our brothers. We are Hindzano and they are Wanachamvi. A Mwanachamvi and a Hindzano are brothers: the Diwan and the Kubo. From the days of Kubo Mwamzungu and Diwan Pinda we became brothers. That's the way it was.⁷⁹

These events led to the special relations existing to this day between the Hindzano clan at Kikoneni and the Vumba of Vanga.⁸⁰ Though the relations brought tangible Muslim influence to the Kikoneni area by the end of the 19th century,⁸¹ neither Mwamzungu nor his son, Jita Mwakubo,⁸² who took power after Mwamzungu's death, became Muslims. And it is uncertain whether Jita Mwakubo's son, Mangaru Mwajita, who ruled as Kubo from c.1865-1894, became a Muslim or not.⁸³

Kubo Shehe Mwacholozzi,⁸⁴ who succeeded Mangaru Mwajita, did become a Muslim, converted by the Vumba Diwan of Vanga, Sayyid Ahmad bin Sultan

⁷⁹ Omari Muhammad Masemo, Kikoneni, 31/1/75. Omari Muhammad Masemo worked as clerk to Shehe Mwacholozzi.

⁸⁰ Hollis gives details of the special deference shown to the Hindzano clan at the time of the enthronement of a new Vumba Diwan. (Hollis, "History of Vumba," 279.) Hollis implies that the special relations between the Digo Hindzano clan and the Vumba go back to the time of the Vumba-Shirazi war in the 17th century (see Chapter I, p.24-25), but oral testimony now indicates that the relations may have originated as recently as the early 19th century under Kubo Mwamzungu and Diwan Pinda. Thus, the relations between the Digo Hindzano clan and the Vumba Wanachamvi should not be confused with the older ties between the Digo Birini clan and the Vumba Ba-Amiri. See Chapter I, p.25, footnote 61.

⁸¹ When visiting Kubo Mangaru in 1890, Le Roy noted the cultural influence of Islam: "We immediately noticed that the people were not the same...they were less simple, their bodies more heavily clothed...there was a leaven of Islam here. • ("Nous remarquons tout de suite que la population n'est plus la même...les figures sont moins simples, les corps plus vêtus...c'est qu'il y a ici un levain d'Islam.") LeRoy, *Au Kilima-ndjaro*, 47.

⁸² The genealogies given in colonial records include various persons who never held the title of Kubo.

⁸³ According to one informant, Kubo Mangaru was converted to Islam during a trip to Zanzibar to see Sayyid Barghash. (Mkulu bin Abdallah, Mwaluvanga Eshu, 28/9/76.) Mangaru was certainly close to Barghash: when Mangaru, the only Digo ruler strong enough to offer resistance, came into conflict with Shaykh Mbaruk of Gasi, Sultan Barghash sent Baluchi soldiers to Kikoneni to protect Mangaru. (Mkulu bin Abdallah, Mwaluvanga Eshu, 28/9/76.) But Mangaru seems never to have used a Muslim name, nor is a Muslim name for him remembered. If Mangaru did become a Muslim, there is little indication that he practised Islam in any way. In letters from Mangaru to Mr. Pigott, Sub-commissioner of the Imperial British East Africa Company, written in 1894 (KNA, Coast Province, MP/14/67), Mangaru signs himself, Kubo bin Jetha [Kubo, son of Jita]; but Mangaru had a Vumba scribe, and the Muslim use of "bin" ("son of") may have been the scribe's doing. Our final evidence is the testimony of the District Officer in 1916, when the last Kubo, Shehe Mwacholozzi, died; the District Officer then wrote: "The late Kubo Shehe was the first Kubo to adopt the Islam religion." (File Memo, "Death of the Kubo," signed by G.H. Osborne, 1916, DC/KWL/3/5.)

⁸⁴ Shehe Mwacholozzi, the son of Cholozi (more correctly in Digo, Tsolozzi) Mwajita, was Mangaru Mwajita's nephew. Mkulu Abdallah, Mwaluvanga Eshu, 28/9/76.

Twahiri, sometime before being installed as Kubo at Kikoneni in 1895.⁸⁵ When Kubo Shehe died in 1916, he was buried at Msambweni "according to Mohammedan rites".⁸⁶ During the last years of his life, he was apparently under pressure to adopt a more Muslim way of life, and to introduce Muslim precepts into Digo society, but such pressure had little evident success.⁸⁷

Early converts and the beginning of Muslim education at Kikoneni

The first Digo convert from Kikoneni was Mwalimu Mnena (of Mwakoyo village). He was converted to Islam at Mombasa sometime in the 1870s or 1880s. When Mwalimu Mnena returned from Mombasa, he was literate, and he began to teach others the rudiments of Islam. Mwalimu Mnena had no children and left no direct descendants, but he brought Muslim influence to Kikoneni at a time when no one else was a Muslim. :

The only one who was a Muslim here was Mwalimu Mnena, of the Dzirive clan. As for his conversion, all I know is that he became a Muslim at Mombasa. Then he studied, and when he knew how to read and write, he came back home. Though he didn't set up a proper school, he was a teacher. He knew how to read, and he began to explain things to his friends in such a way that some of them were attracted to become Muslims. One person he taught was Muhammad Dzugwe, and together they taught others.⁸⁸

Another early convert at Kikoneni was Muhammad Masemo. He was converted in the 1880s by an itinerant healer from Mombasa who was passing through the area. During his stay he converted Masemo and Masemo's wife; Masemo took the name Muhammad (after the healer who converted him), and his wife took the

⁸⁵ In 1898, the District Commissioner wrote: "Some of the Wazee [elders], namely Kubo and Hamed Mamgongo, with a few of their followers, have adopted the Mohammedan faith and have learnt a few prayers and attitudes while praying from the Shereefs who helped to rule them a few years ago. Few understand the meaning of their prayers, and only pray because by so doing they gain respect and influence over their people." Letter of District Officer, Shimoni, 30 June 1898, KNA, Coast Province, MP/97/183.

⁸⁶ "Death of the Kubo," File Memo by G.H. Osborne (District Officer from 18/8/15 to 31/3/17), KNA, DC/KWL/3/5. Kubo Shehe Mwacholozzi died on the 20th February 1916. After his death, there was a dispute over succession to the Kuboship, which was claimed by six different persons. The election was delayed because of the First World War, and the British decided to appoint Fundi Mwabege (also known as Fundi Mwakimatu), one of the aspirants to the Kuboship, as "headman" at Kikoneni. (Provincial Commissioner, Mombasa, to District Commissioner, Gasi, 15 March 1916, and District Commissioner, Gasi, to Provincial Commissioner, Mombasa, 16 November 1917, KNA, Coast Province, MP/24/237.) Fundi was not installed as Kubo, and the title subsequently fell into disuse.

⁸⁷ In 1913, Hobley wrote: "...the information contained in your letter, 'that the late Kathi of Wassin did his utmost although without success to persuade the Kubo (hereditary chief) of the Wa-Digo to relinquish Wadigo laws and customs and adopt the Sheria,' is to my mind a definite case in which a Government official is using his official position to spread his religion, and I am very glad that the matter has been brought to my notice, as it may be going on all along the Coast Zone. To put a definite stop to this sort of thing is our duty." (C.W. Hobley, Provincial Commissioner, Mombasa, to Asst. District Commissioner, Shimoni, 12th March 1913, KNA, DC/KFI/3/3.) The 'late Kathi' referred to in the letter was Shaykh Rashid bin Kassim; at a meeting of elders of Pongwe, Majoreni and the surrounding district, held at Shimoni on the 8th May 1912, Kassim bin Muhammad was "unanimously elected to succeed his uncle, the late Sheikh Rashid bin Kassim as Government Kathi." (KNA, Coast Province, MP/57/167.)

⁸⁸ Omari Muhammad Masemo, Kikoneni, 31/1/75.

name Mwanaisha.⁸⁹ In the 1890s Muhammad Masemo began tapping rubber, together with his father-in-law, Muhammad Mwamvini, another early convert.⁹⁰ Through the rubber trade Masemo came to have regular dealings with Mwalimu Mbulushi bin Fakir, a Baluchi trader, and became his purchasing agent and friend; Masemo would get money from Mbulushi, and go out and buy rubber for him. Muradi,⁹¹ Mbulushi's older brother in Mombasa, would come to Kikoneni periodically, to make large purchases of rubber:

Mbulushi was just an agent for his older brother Muradi, who would come to buy large quantities of rubber. He would buy from Mbulushi, and from all those who were supplying it. He used to come with a large sum of money, like ten thousand shillings, to buy rubber.⁹²

Other Baluchis who used to come to Kikoneni were Maluki, who was trading in skins, and Jamir, who went to Mkongani where he took a Digo wife and settled. And some Mazrui Arabs came from Gasi to trade in rubber.⁹³

On other occasions Masemo would take goods to Mombasa, some forty miles away, a journey of two days; his son Omari used to accompany him:

We always used to sleep at Tiwi where he had a friend called Mwinyi Haji wa Bwika, that's where we would sleep the night, at Tiwi, at my father's friend's place. What could we do? We couldn't get to Mombasa in one day... and we saw Mwinyi Hamisi Mwapodzo at Pungu, and there at Pungu my father gave his sister Nimasemo in marriage to Uthman Mwabua. Then at the first crowing of the cock, we would leave Tiwi and get to Mombasa in the morning. Once in Mombasa we would sell our skins to the Baluchi and then sleep there. They would give us a place to sleep. What could they do? We were their supplier, we had brought them goods, he had to treat us well, he would say, sleep here.⁹⁴

The famine of 1898-99 and the years immediately following brought an increase of Muslim influence in the Kikoneni area. Trade between Vanga and Kikoneni increased. Grain was brought to the port of Vanga, from where it was transported to Kikoneni, the main inland market and distribution centre for the southern interior. Indian and Baluchi traders provided grain to meet the needs of the famine, at the same time as they traded in rubber:

People went to Vanga to bring gunny-sacks off the dhows; the Banyanis were there on account of the famine and collecting rubber?

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Rubber tapping had begun by the early 1890s or before; in 18%, the District Officer, Vanga District, wrote: "The principal rubber district lies between Mamoja near Shimoni, Gazi and Mwele...The Wadegos are commencing to bring rubber in at Wanga now." (District Officer, Shimoni, 21 July 1896, to the Sub-Commissioner, Mombasa, KNA, Coast Province, MP/jJ7/183.)

⁹¹ This is probably the same Muradi who was trading in mats, baskets and skins at Makadara. See Chapter IV, p.106, footnote 24.

⁹² Omari Muhammad Masemo, Kikoneni, 16/1/76.

⁹³ There is evidence that the rubber trade existed before 1895: "When Mbaruk was in power and lived at Gazi, every caravan had to deposit with him 100 rupees or more, and when the rubber was collected, he used to take his own duty first before the caravan returned to Mombasa." (District Officer, Shimoni, 21 July 18%, to the Administrator, Imperial British East African Protectorate, KNA, Coast Province, MP/97/183.)

⁹⁴ Omari Muhammad Masemo, Kikoneni, 1/2/75.

⁹⁵ Omari Muhammad Masemo, Kikoneni, 31/1/75.

The people carrying the sacks of rice were given one *pishi* [of rice] as payment for their work; then the same people would go off and look for rubber.⁹⁶

During the famine one Indian and three Baluchi traders opened shops at Kikoneni. One trader, Muhammad Yaru, was a friend of Ganzi Mwamambea; he stayed at Ganzi's place at Kiunga and opened a shop at there. Mwalimu Mbulushi, who may have been resident at Kikoneni before the famine, married a Digo woman and settled. Both these men died and were buried at Kikoneni.⁹⁷

Originally in some kind of partnership with his Baluchi friends, Muhammad Masemo set up his own shop in c.1905, and thus became the first Digo to start trading in clothes at Kikoneni:

My father had a shop, he would buy rubber, skins, everything that was in demand in Mombasa he would buy here and take to Mombasa; after selling these things, he would buy clothes, beads, oil, and other goods to bring back to Kikoneni. While in Mombasa, he would stay with Mwalimu Mbulushi's brother, Muradi.

When he left off trading, I took it up. If I had skins, I would get four or five porters to carry them to Mombasa. Then on the return trip I would send the porters ahead while I stayed behind an extra day. When I arrived home, my goods were already here, all laid out.⁹⁸

Though Fundi Mwabege was officially chosen as headman after the death of Kubo Shehe Mwatsolozzi in 1916, Masemo became the real leader of Kikoneni location.⁹⁹ On the death of Mwabege in 1920, Masemo succeeded him as Headman of Kikoneni location, and President of the Digo Central Council,¹⁰⁰ a position from which he continued to exercise a strong Muslim influence.¹⁰¹

Another early convert at Kikoneni was Omari Mwakilalo, an age-mate of Muhammad Masemo. Born at Maumba, near Kikoneni, Omari began trading to Pemba and Zanzibar when he was still a young man before getting married.¹⁰² His main trade was with Pemba, taking cattle, sheep and goats there and bringing back

⁹⁶ Mkulu bin Abdallah, Mwaluvanga Eshu, 6/9/76. In 1903, the District Commissioner "inspected the rubber-bearing forests near Mwele" and found "50% of the vines destroyed by native tappers cutting them." Quarterly Report, Vanga District, 21/10/1903, KNA, Coast Province, MP/2/166.

⁹⁷ At least two Baluchi were running shops at Kikoneni during the 1910s. In October 1917, the D.C. received a report that "one of the Baluchi shopkeepers had died in Kikoneni; and in April 1919, another report that the "Baluchi shopkeeper Yar Mohamed had died." (four Diary, entries for 8 October 1917 and 28 April 1919. KNA, Coast Province, MP/47/1156.) The total number of Baluchi traders was never high. In 1917, there were five Baluchis resident in the whole of Digo District, one at Gasi and "four traders at Mkongani and Kikoneni." The traders "were none of them born in Africa, but have emigrated in recent times from Baluchistan." File Memo "Baluchis", Acting D.C., Vanga District, 11/7/1917, KNA, DC/KWL/3/5.

⁹⁸ Omari Muhammad Masemo, Kikoneni, 1/2/75.

⁹⁹ In a handing-over report of 1920, the D.C. of Vanga District wrote: "The [Kikoneni] Council is nominally under Fundi Mwabege of Mrima, who is old, and the active work devolves on Mohammed Mwamasemo." KNA, DC/KWL/2/1.

¹⁰⁰ Handing-over Report, G.B.Thompson, 23 January 1922, KNA, DC/KWL/2/1. Masemo was described as "one of the most energetic and intelligent Presidents in the District." (Handing-over Report, H.A.Trafford, 14 November 1923, KNA, DC/KWL/2/1.) As President of the Digo Central Council, Muhammad Masemo was one of two Digo elders invited to visit the British fleet in Mombasa in January, 1924. (District Station Diary, entry for 13th January 1924, KNA, DC/KWL/5/1.)

¹⁰¹ Masemo's pro-Muslim views were well known to colonial officers. In 1924, the District Commissioner "interviewed Mohamed Mwasemo of Kikoneni and discussed the change of inheritance [law]- Mohamed welcomes the change." Station Diary, Digo District, entry for 9th August 1924, KNA, DC/KWL/5/1.

¹⁰² These and other details about Mwakilalo's life were related to me by his grandson, Muhammad Husayn Omari Kilalo, Mwaembe, 21/9/87.

clothes.¹⁰³ He is said to have studied at Wasin, and at Zanzibar and Pemba. When he finished his studies, in c. 1895, he moved from Maumba to Bwagambu (near Kivuleni), and established another home on the coast at Mwaembe (south of the present-day administrative centre of Msambweni), the point of departure for his trips to Pemba.¹⁰⁴ He brought a Gunya teacher by the name of Abdallah from Lamu to teach at Mwaembe. After Abdallah left, Mwakilalo brought a Segeju teacher, Abdallah bin Kasim Mwangurni, from Pongwe to Mwaembe to teach his sons, Mkulu and Hamadi. Mwakilalo sent his youngest son, Husayn, to study under Habib Ali Shaykh in Pemba.

Abdallah bin Kasim Mwangumi taught first at Mwaembe, and then in c.1903 moved to Bwagambu (Kikoneni). Though he went there expressly to teach Mwakilalo's sons, children of other early converts were allowed to join the classes. One of the first students, Omari, son of Muhammad Masemo, described what happened:

Omari Mwakilalo was the one who brought the Segeju teacher, Abdallah bin Kasim, from Pongwe to teach his children, Mkulu bin Omari and Hamadi bin Omari; he gave them to Abdallah to teach. They were the ones who studied first. Then two or three years later, everyone realized the advantage of sending his own child to study, so we too were sent there to school...I was in the first group he taught here. My fellow-students were Hasani, son of Fujo Mwamkuna of Mwaluvanga, Ali, son of Kasim Mwakuko, and Hamadi, son of Nasoro Mwabweke; we used to learn at Mwabweke's, as his son Hamadi was Abdallah's helper (Swa. *mftmzi*).¹⁰⁵

Mwakilalo was a wealthy man who owned large numbers of cattle and goats, and is said to have had dealings with Indians, Arabs and Baluchis, all of whom would come to Mwaembe. Like other early educated Muslims, he was an innovator: he is said to have been the first person at Msambweni and Kikoneni to own a bicycle and a sewing-machine.¹⁰⁶

The First Mosques of Kikoneni and Msambweni

The first mosque in the Kikoneni area was the Mophe Mosque built by Muhammad Masemo at his homestead in c.1906.¹⁰⁷ Mwalimu Mbulushi was the

¹⁰³ Trade in livestock with Pemba was lucrative and flourishing at that time. During the First World War, the trade was suspended for security reasons, but in 1916 traders were already pressing for trade to be re-opened. In that year, Hopley wrote: "When at Vanga recently, I received applications from various natives for permission to take cattle by dhow to Pemba for sale...any objection to such permits being issued?" C.W.Hopley, Provincial Commissioner, Mombasa, 29th December 1916, to Chief Secretary to the Government, Zanzibar, KNA, PC/COA'Sf/1/2/22.

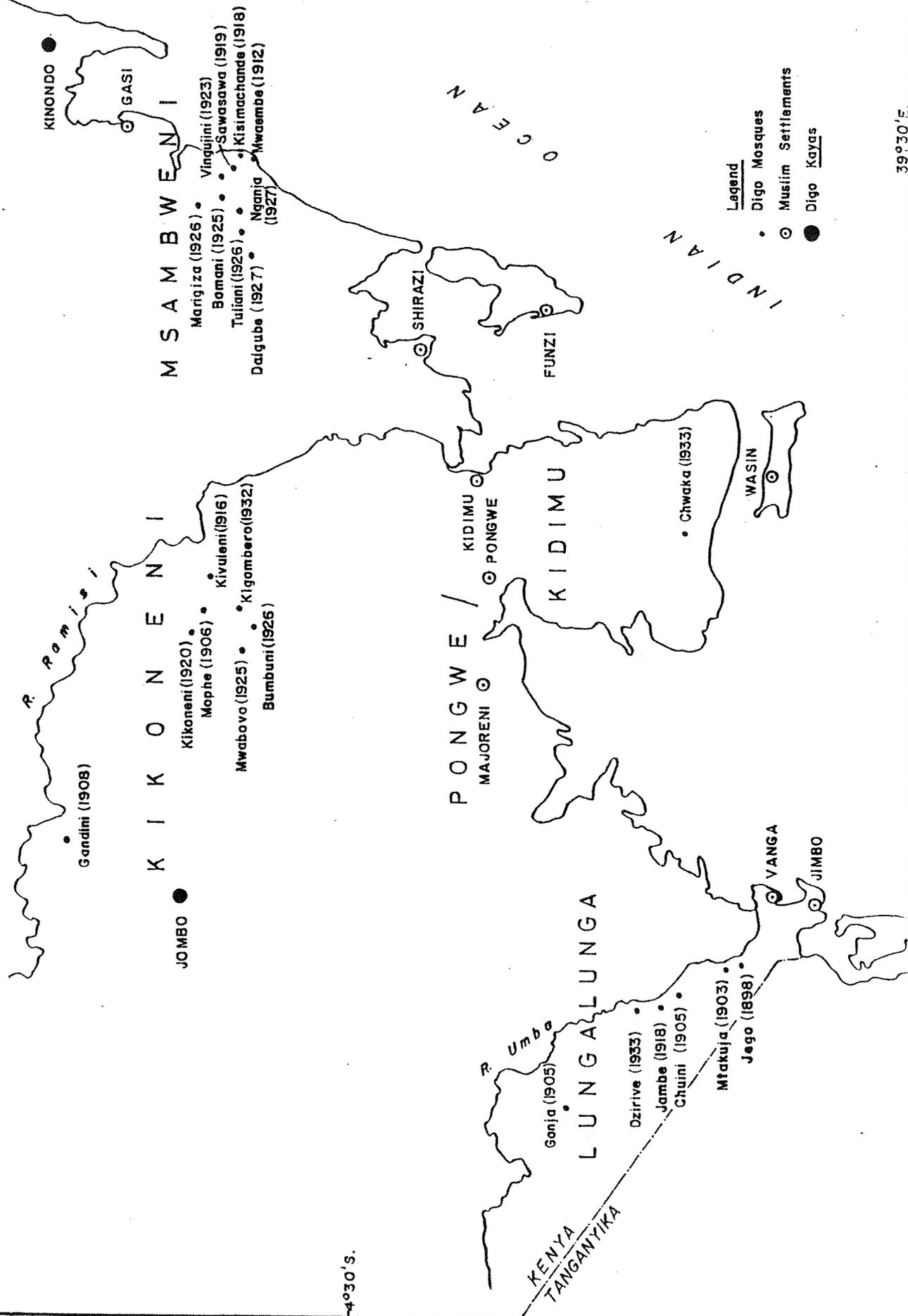
¹⁰⁴ The island of Pemba is some thirty miles from Mwaembe; in good conditions, the crossing can be made in three or four hours by dhow.

¹⁰⁵ Omari Muhammad Masemo, Kikoneni, 31/1/75 and 1/2/75.

¹⁰⁶ Muhammad Husayn Omari Kilalo, Mwaembe, 21/9/87. In 1920, Omari Mwakilalo is shown as one of the Digo elders of Msambweni. Handing-over Report, W.S.Marchant, 8 April 1920, KNA, DC/KWL/2/1.

¹⁰⁷ An official mosque survey shows one mosque at Kikoneni in 1913. List of Mosques, 1913, KNA, DC/KWL/3/5.

DIGO MOSQUES BUILT (1898-1933) IN MSAMBWENI, KIKONENI, LUNGALUNGA & PONGWE / KIDIMU



4°30'S.

39°30'E

first to lead prayers at the mosque, and he would come to give the sermon during 'Id celebrations. As soon as Omari, Muhammad Masemo's son, finished his studies, he became the Imam of the mosque:

People from Nyamala would come to pray, people from Vivwini, people from Mwaluvanga, people from Mrima, everyone. There was only one mosque, so people would come from all over for Friday prayers or for a feast-day, and I would lead the prayers.¹⁰⁸

Before the first mosque was built, the Muslims of Kikoneni used to pray Friday prayers on mats in the open air; even during the month of Ramadhan, they would stay at Kikoneni: "They wouldn't go anywhere else, a man would just pray on his mat, then he would go and break the fast."¹⁰⁹ The Mophe Mosque collapsed during the First World War. After the war, Muhammad Masemo moved to Kikoneni centre and re-built the mosque in its present location near his new home.

The second mosque to be built in the Kikoneni area was built at Gandini in c. 1908 by Muhammad Ndaro, and his brothers, Kassim Ndaro and Swalehe Ndaro. Muhammad Ndaro had studied in Msambweni under Omar Sebe (who had learned at Pongwe), and had then gone on for advanced Islamic studies (Swa. *ilmu*) under Maalim Mwinyi Hija at Jego (near Vanga). Omar Sebe later came from Msambweni to start a Qur'an school at Gandini. During the First World War, the Ndaro family moved away from Gandini; the mosque collapsed, and the school was closed.¹¹⁰

The third mosque, known as the Kivuleni Mosque, was built in c.1916 at Vivwini by Shehe Mwakoja, another early convert and a friend of Omari Mwakilalo. Omari became the first Imam of the mosque, and started a Qur'an school at Kivuleni. Before the Kivuleni Mosque was built, people used to pray at the Mophe Mosque in Kikoneni.¹¹¹

Two more mosques were built during the 1920s. In 1925, the Mwabovo Mosque was built by Kasrani Mwaenzi and the villagers of Mwabovo.¹¹² One year later, in 1926, the Bumbuni Mosque was built by Nasir Mwabege and Alawi Mwabege of Bumbuni and Haji Sudi Miki, a Digo teacher who had come from Majoreni to settle and teach at Bumbuni at the invitation of the Mwabege family. Haji had studied in Wasin before coming to Bumbuni. He became the first Imam of the Bumbuni Mosque and started a Qur'an school.¹¹³

¹⁰⁸ Omari Muhammad Masemo, Kikoneni, 31/1/75.

¹⁰⁹ Omari Muhammad Masemo, Kikoneni, 1/2/75.

¹¹⁰ Hamza Kasim Ndaro, Kigombero, 20/12/85. Many of those who moved away during the First World War did not return to their old villages. During 1921-22, the Kikoneni area suffered a series of natural disasters: small pox, followed by influenza, then drought, and finally, floods. Many people migrated to Msambweni and the Uмба region, and whole villages in the Kikoneni area disappeared. Tour Diary of Vanga District, entries for 1921-22. KNA, CP/47/1156.

¹¹¹ Bakari Shehe Mwakoja, Kivuleni, 19/12/85.

¹¹² Mushee Salim Chizuwa, Mwabovo, 10/12/85.

¹¹³ Haji Sudi Miki, Bumbuni, 11/12/85.

Every place where people had become Muslim they built a mosque; they just built one because Islam had spread, and each village wanted its own. The people of a village would confer together: to pray outside our village isn't so good, let's build a mosque. And they would build one, no one was stopping them.¹¹⁴

In 1912, after Abdallah bin Kasim had begun teaching, Omari Mwakilalo built the Mwaembe Mosque, the first mosque in the Msambweni area. Other mosques soon followed at Kisimachande (built by Hamisi Mwariale in 1918) and Sawasawa (built by Ali Mwakutwaa in 1919).¹¹⁵ Msambweni attracted immigrants from Kikoneni and other areas, and grew in importance during the years 1920-1933. As the population increased, mosques proliferated, sometimes quite close to one another.¹¹⁶ More than a matter of convenience, the pattern of each village having its own mosque was an expression of Muslim identity based on family and clan solidarity.

Muslim influence at Vanga

Vanga had grown steadily throughout the second half of the 19th century.¹¹⁷ With a good natural harbour and extensive trade with the interior, Vanga attracted a cosmopolitan mixture of temporary and permanent immigrants, among them neighbouring peoples (Shirazi, Segeju and Digo) as well as foreign Muslims; it was the largest town on the southern coast, and a meeting and mixing point for diverse peoples.¹¹⁸ In the last quarter of the century, Vanga was attacked several times by Shaykh Mbaruk bin Rashid of Gasi, the most destructive attack being that of August 1895, when the town was completely destroyed; but each time the town was rebuilt

¹¹⁴ Omari Muhammad Masemo, Kikoneni, 31/1/75.

¹¹⁵ Abdallah Hamisi Mwariale and Muhammad Hamza Hasan Tsari, Msambweni, 22/11/85.

¹¹⁶ See Map 13 and Appendix X. Population statistics for 1921 give the population of Msambweni and other locations south of the Mwachema river as follows: Msambweni- 11%; Kikoneni -1128; Kinondo- 252; Galu- 218; Diani- 537; Ukunda- 1413; Muhaka- 1273. ("Population of Wadigo in different locations, 1921," KNA, DC/KWL/9/1.) Msambweni had the advantage of being "situated midway between two estates employing large numbers of African natives." (Annual Report 1931, Digo District, KNA, DC/KWL/1/17.) Though the two estates, the Ramisi Sugar Estates and the Gasi Sisal Plantations, employed over 1100 men between them, by the early 1930s more than two-thirds of the labourers were from upcountry. (File Memo, "Labour", December 1931, KNA, DC/KWL/10/1, and Annual Report 1932, Digo District, KNA, DC/KWL/1/18.) The growing importance of Msambweni was recognized by the colonial government: in February 1932, a village school, the fifth village school in Digo District, was opened at Msambweni; and in October the same year, a "native hospital" was opened there. (Annual Report 1932, Digo District, KNA, DC/KWL/1/18.)

¹¹⁷ For the early history of Vanga, see Chapter II, p.47.

¹¹⁸ In 1882 Taylor estimated that the population of the town of Vanga was 2500, compared with such neighbouring villages as the Shirazi village of Aleni which had only 120 inhabitants. (Population estimates by W.E. Taylor in SOAS Manuscript Collection, MS 4TI58, Taylor Papers, Volume VIII.) In Hardinge's 1897 Report, the population of Vanga District is given as "about 25,000, of whom 500 at most are real or half-caste Arabs, 4,000 or so Swahilis or Mahajis (people of neighbouring tribes, Wadigo, Wasegua, and Waduruma, who have been Islamised and have adopted Swahili custom, and are scarcely distinguishable from the Swahilis), whilst the remaining 20,500 are heathen, the most numerous tribe among them being the Wadigo." ("Report by Sir A. Hardinge on the Condition and Progress of the East Africa Protectorate from its Establishment to the 20th July, 1897," *Accounts and Papers* (Parliamentary Papers), LX (1898): 4.) Because of the imprecise terms of the Report, it is impossible to be sure how many of the "4,000 or so Swahilis or Mahajis" were Digo. What the Report does confirm for us is that a large majority of the Digo were still pagan at that time.

and regained prosperity.¹¹⁹

By the end of the 19th century, Digo were visiting and migrating to Vanga town in large numbers,¹²⁰ and numerous Digo were settled in villages near the town.¹²¹ Intercourse between town and countryside brought a continual Muslim influence to bear in the rural areas, particularly among Digo men who had dealings with the Muslims of Vanga town. Eventually relations between the Muslims of Vanga and the neighbouring Digo led to conversions.

Many of the early converts came from Jego and Chuini, the Digo villages which were nearest Vanga, and in which Muslim influence was at its most intense. People like Mwakiko Nundu, Kivumbo and Mwachawavi, who were elders or wealthy men in Jego, became Muslims in the 1880s. They are said to have been converted, at their request, by Bakari bin Ali (a Vumba) the 'Diwan of Vanga',¹²² not because of any special relationship with him, but because it was prestigious to be converted by such an important man. They did not follow Islam strictly, nor did they try to convert others, though some of the early converts, like Mwakiko Nungu, moved to Vanga to live, "because he regarded himself as a totally different person."¹²³ Other early converts at Jego were Omar bin Mkopi, Muhammad Jambia, Bakari Luganza, and Abdallah Mwatondo. The conversion of influential persons

¹¹⁹ In 1897, Hardinge wrote: "The only place in the district which could properly be called a town, namely Vanga, was burnt for the fourth or fifth time within the last quarter of a century by Mubarak of Gazi when he finally determined in August 1895 upon rebellion, the destruction of Vanga being always his first move in his successive insurrections against the successive Governments with whom he has been at war. The town, when I visited it a year before it was burnt and sacked by Mubarak, contained a population of about 3,000. It is now gradually being rebuilt, and its population are beginning to return from German territory, whither they fled from Mubarak. It already has 600 inhabitants and six Indian shops..." "Report by Sir A. Hardinge on the Condition and Progress of the East Africa Protectorate from its Establishment to the 20th July, 1897," *Accounts and Papers* (Parliamentary Papers), LX (1898): 4-5.

¹²⁰ In 1895, the District Superintendent wrote: "Wanga, although unhealthy at times is preferred by all the Indians, as they make a lot of money there. One Indian told me that he realized nearly 100 dollars daily. All the Wadoko people go to Wanga..." (District Superintendent, Shimoni, 17 September 1895, to the Administrator, Mombasa, KNA, Coast Province, MP/97/183.) Included among visitors and settlers in Vanga town were Digo from German East Africa; in 1903, J. Hope, the District Officer wrote: "All the natives in German East Africa in the neighbourhood of the boundary attend the Wanga market and the shops at Wanga are the only ones available for them, the nearest shops in German East Africa being at Moa, 12 miles from the boundary." (Quarterly Report, 5 January 1903, KNA, Coast Province, MP/2/166.) A 1920 census of Vanga township showed 102 Digo out of a total population of 1131. (Ag. District Commissioner, Shimoni, to Provincial Commissioner, Mombasa, 12 February 1920, KNA, Coast Province, MP/18/342.)

¹²¹ In 1903, the District Officer, J. Hope, wrote: "Around Vanga the villages are more numerous, but after a distance of 4 miles from there, the villages are very scattered, generally one hour or one and a-half hours apart and sometimes more, and the number of huts in each village is on an average not more than six." Quarterly Report to 31/3/1903, KNA, Coast Province, MP/2/166.

¹²² Bakari bin Ali was Qadhi of Vanga, and later Liwali, but never Diwan of Vanga. The Blue Book for 1911-12 shows that Abubakr bin Ali was appointed Liwali of Vanga on 1/7/1897 (KNA, COAST/1/96); before then he had been the Qadhi of Vanga (Hollis, 295). The last Diwan of Vanga was Sayyid Ahmad bin Sultan Twahiri, who was elected in 1871 (Hollis, 294-95) and died on the 8th August 1897 (Letter of District Officer, Shimoni, 23 May 1898, KNA, Coast Province, MP/97/183). After the death of Sayyid Ahmad, no one was elected Diwan, and the Liwali appointed by the British became the supreme authority; it is not surprising that in oral testimony he should be referred to as the Diwan, the title of authority that had been used in the Vanga area for centuries. Abubakr bin Ali died on 14/10/21, after serving as Liwali for nearly twenty-five years. (KNA, DC/KWL/3/4/43.) By all accounts, he was an exceptional person: during the First World War in 1916, for example, he was praised for his "excellent work in setting up the refugee township of Galu." (Annual Report 1915-16, Vanga District, KNA, DC/KWL/1/1.) He may well have been instrumental in converting Digo to Islam as Qadhi, before becoming Liwali in 1897.

¹²³ Jerumani Chawiya, Jego, 19/12/86.

attracted others to Islam: "People would become Muslim after hearing that so-and-so has become a Muslim." Some Digo are also said to have become Muslim at this time in order to avoid capture into slavery.¹²⁴

During the 1890s, several Gunya traders came to Vanga. They came to trade in fish, spices and other items. They didn't bring their wives with them, nor did they marry local women. Though not itinerant traders, they didn't stay long in one place either; before coming to Vanga, some of them had been trading at Shimoni.¹²⁵

One of the Gunya traders, Maalim Malan, began trading in neighbouring Digo villages, including the village of Jego. He is said to have been moved by the ignorance of the people of Jego whom he found praying at trees and stones, and so he decided to go to Jego to teach them. He gave up his trading activities and settled down to teach; he would earn his living by sewing kanzus to sell to Muslims. Malan and another Gunya trader, Maalim Omar, established the first Qur'an schools for the Digo in the Vanga area. It is said that the Vumba "only encouraged the Digo to become Muslims, but didn't teach them." Maalim Malan is said to have influenced people at Jambe and Dzirive¹²⁶ as well; and the Muslim influence from Jego also spread to such far-away places as Mwalewa and Kiwegu.

Another early teacher at Jego was Mwalimu Ngoro, who had been taught in Vanga by Bakari bin Ali, the Qadhi (and later Liwali) of Vanga.¹²⁷ Others in Jego were converted by Mwalimu Makame, a Digo from Mayomboni (Tanga), who would come to visit relatives in Jego. At that time early converts to Islam went through a conversion ceremony:

They would be taken down to the sea-shore and immersed in the water up to their navels, after which they were considered to be Muslims. If they were far from the sea, they would be taken to the river, and if that wasn't possible, water from a pot would be poured over them from head to toe. These early practices were abolished as people became more enlightened.¹²⁸

¹²⁴ Mwabaka Bakari Luganza, Jego, 25/11/86. The argument about becoming Muslim to avoid slavery has probably been - exaggerated in Western writing, but may here be correct: of the 143 slaves freed after the death of the last Diwan of Vanga in 1897, 59 were Digo. (Letters of the District Officer, Shimoni, 23 May and 30 June 1898, KNA, Coast Province, MP/97/183.)

¹²⁵ The village of Shimoni (originally called Chuyu), on the mainland opposite Wasin island, was the site of a station of the Imperial British East Africa Company, built between 1890 and 1892 under the supervision of Mr. Gilkison, an officer of the Company. The village of Chuyu, originally settled by Vumba, already existed in 1882: in that year, Taylor estimated the population of Wasin at 2200 and the population of Chuyu at 350. (SOAS Manuscript Collection, MS 47758, Taylor Manuscripts, Vol VIII.) Le Roy described Chuyu in 1889 as a place "where some inhabitants of Wasin have their fields." (Le Roy, *D'Aden a Zanzibar*, 235.) Hopley visited Chuyu in 1892: "The Company have here built a substantial residence for the agent of the district; it is a very pleasant site." (C.W.Hopley, "Upon a Visit to Tsavo and the Taita Highlands," *The Geographical Journal*, VI (1895): 545-561.) In 1895, the British government took over the station and made it the headquarters for Vanga District, after which the present name Shimoni became current. The station was abandoned during the First World War from 24/9/14 to 27/3/18, during which time it was destroyed by the Germans. The British rebuilt it in 1918, but closed it soon after, in 1924, when the District headquarters was moved to Kwale. File Memo "Shimoni," undated, Vanga, KNA, DC/KWL/3/1.

AOSE relations between the Digo and the Gunya may go back some time: the Digo are said to have learned to plant coconuts from the Gunya. Saidi Pimwe, Dar es Salaam, July 1948, E.C.Baker's "Wanyika and Wadigo notebooks", MSSAfr.r.84, Rhodes House, Oxford.

¹²⁶ When Hollis visited Dziribe in 1898, it had a population of "some 800 persons." KNA, CP/97/183, letter of 24 January 1898.

¹²⁷ Kicheko Mwakiko, Jego, 12/1/87.

¹²⁸ Jerumani Chawiya, Jego, 19/12/86. Immersion in water was accompanied by other signs of conversion, such as the recitation of the *shahada* and the taking of Muslim names.

Maalim Malan and Maalim Omar also taught at Chuini. There they taught such people as Mwalim Jambia Mwamaendo and Sulayman Mwakasha.¹²⁹ They taught at Chuini for several years, then they went on to Mkongani, where they died. Malan and Omar were the first to establish Qur'an schools. It is said that the Sharifs at Vanga encouraged people to become Muslim, but did not educate them.¹³⁰

The first Digo mosque in the Vanga area was the Jego mosque built in c.1898 by Mwakiko Nundu, the head of the village, in the old village of Jego. Maalim Juma Farnan, a Digo who had learned under Maalim Malan, became the Imam of the Mosque and also began to teach. Before the first Jego Mosque was built, people used to pray on palm-leaf mats; for Friday prayers and 'Id celebrations they would go into Vanga town. When the Jego Mosque collapsed after about five years, it was rebuilt at Mtakuja (the new village of Jego).

The second Digo mosque near Vanga was built at Chuini in c.1905. The Chuini Mosque was built by the early Digo converts of the village, helped by Maalim Malan and Omar. The first Imam was Sulayman Mwakasha, one of Maalim Malan's pupils. Eventually after Maalim Malan left, Sulayman Mwakasha became the teacher as well as the Imam. During the First World War, many people abandoned the village of Chuini, and the Chuini Mosque collapsed. After the War, in c.1918, a mosque was built at Jambe; at that time Abdallah Sarai from Jambe was the Imam and teacher. The Jambe Mosque was used for Friday prayers for some time, but the Friday mosque was eventually shifted to Dzirive.¹³¹

*The first Muslims at Gonja*¹³²

The history of Islam in the Gonja area shows strong influences coming from Muslims to the south. Maalim Masai, a Comorian from Zanzibar, came to Gonja where he started a Qur'an school and taught the first Gonja converts, people like Uthman Fumbwe, Bakari Fumbwe, and Salim Mwachitema. Maalim Masai is said to have come as a teacher ("his work was teaching") not as a trader. Before Maalim Masai came, most people were not Muslim.¹³³ Maalim Masai was later helped in his work of teaching and converting people to Islam by a Gunya, Shehe Kineru, who

¹²⁹ Mwabaka Bakari Luganza, Jego, 2/12/85.

¹³⁰ Mwabaka Bakari Luganza, Jego, 21/10/87.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Lungalunga, the modern name for the Gonja area, came into use during colonial times after *kaya* Gonja was abandoned during the First World War. Lungalunga was declared a trading centre in 1916, but did not develop until later; in November 1924, the District Commissioner "marked the site for the gazetted Trading Centre at Lungalunga." District Station Diaty, entry for 19th November 1924, KNA, DC/KWL/5/1.

¹³³ Maalim Masai has been described as one of the "pillars of Islam" in Gonja. Hamisi Mwamtunda, Lungalunga, 6/12/86.

"came to buy coconuts."¹³⁴ The first mosque in the area, the Gonja Mosque, was built by Maalim Masai at Maweni in c.1905. The existence of the mosque is confirmed by colonial records which show one mosque at Gonja in 1913.¹³⁵

Other early converts were Abdallah Mwapongwe and Bakari Chuo.¹³⁶ Abdallah Mwapongwe went to Mabafweni "in search of religion" and later went to study at Zanzibar; when he came back he started a school at Botola. Some of the early converts from Gonja had moved away to settle at Botola, a village originally founded by Digo pagans. Botola became a kind of Muslim village where almost everyone was a Muslim. Even the old men of Botola were converted to Islam.¹³⁷ The first Botola Mosque was built after the First World War by Abdallah Mwaluuchu, who had been taught by Maalim Masai; Mwaluuchu was Imam of the mosque and also began to teach.¹³⁸ The second mosque at Botola was built by Bakari Chuo, who had also learned from Maalim Masai. The Imam of the second Botola mosque was Bakari Chuo, later helped by Juma Nyevu, who had learned from his uncle, Ali Kama, at Kilulu (Tanzania).¹³⁹

Another early Digo converts at Gonja was Kombo Mambo. When his uncle refused to pay bride-price for him, he went to Zanzibar to look for a wife. He married in Zanzibar and stayed on to study. When he came back, he started a Qur'an school at Botola and began teaching some of the early converts: Bakari Fumbwe, Khalfan Fumbwe, and Abdallah Luphutsu.¹⁴⁰ Among those taught by Kombo Mambo was his nephew, Rashid Wendo, who was later instrumental in starting *maulid* in Lungalunga.¹⁴¹

Dzirive was another village founded by people who moved away from *kaya* Gonja. Instead of inviting outside teachers to come to Dzirive, the people of Dzirive sent their children away to study. Thus, the first teachers at Dzirive were Ali Pongwe Mnyeto and Bege Mnyeto, both of whom had gone from Dzirive to study in Tanzania. Before the first mosque was built at Dzirive in c.1933, the people used to go to Jambe for Friday prayers and Muslim celebrations.¹⁴²

¹³⁴ Juma Nyevu, Makwenyeni, 25/7/87.

¹³⁵ List of mosques, 1913, KNA, DC/KWL/3/5. When *kaya* Gonja was abandoned during the First World War, the Gonja Mosque fell into disrepair, and eventually collapsed.

¹³⁶ In 1924, Bakari Chuo was awarded the King's Medal "for services rendered during the war." Station Diary, Digo District, entry for 28 May 1924, KNA, DC/KWL/5/1.

¹³⁷ Said Bamvua, Botola, 20/12/86.

¹³⁸ Seif Abdallah Muhammad, Lungalunga, 6/12/85.

¹³⁹ Juma Nyevu, Makwenyeni, 25/7/87.

¹⁴⁰ Said Bamvua, 20/12/86; Juma Nyevu, Makwenyeni, 25/7/87.

¹⁴¹ Sayf Abdallah Muhammad, Lungalunga, 6/12/85. Though *maulid* in Lungalunga is said to have been started by Rashid Wendo and Juma Nyevu, Nyevu himself attributes the beginning of *maulid* in the area to Gulam Khan, an Indian Bohora trader, who had come to Lungalunga in 1930. (Juma Nyevu, Makwenyeni, 25/7/87.) Most probably all three were involved in some way.

¹⁴² Omar Kombo Mvumbo, Dzirive, 17/12/85.

Chapter VI. Conclusions

The pattern of islamization to the middle of the 19th century

By the end of the 18th century, it is likely that some Mijikenda had already become Muslim.¹ Most Mijikenda converts were probably resident in Mombasa, but there could have been a few at Jomvu and Wasin, and Jibana Muslims may have settled at Mji Mre by that time.² The first Mijikenda converts were attracted to Islam through the close relations that had grown up between the Mijikenda and neighbouring Swahili peoples.³ The conversions of the 18th and the early 19th century were uneventful:⁴ they took place in a local setting amidst the ordinary circumstances of everyday life. The main agents of islamization were Muslims from nearby towns. In addition to the Swahili, the only major Muslim group to influence the Mijikenda during this period was the Mazrui.⁵

The influence of Islam was selective. It was particularly strong among Mijikenda who lived within twelve miles of Swahili towns,⁶ and among Mijikenda who had regular dealings with Muslims: elders,⁷ traders,⁸ the relatives of Mijikenda women married to Muslims,⁹ and immigrants to town.¹⁰ A high proportion of early Mijikenda converts came from among these groups. Another group of Mijikenda, the sick and possessed, was liable to conversion by Muslim healers, but the random influence of healers tended to be less enduring than influences stemming from regular contacts.¹¹

¹ See Chapter I, p.43. This is an earlier date for the first Mijikenda conversions than previously suggested. In a preliminary study, I wrote that the first Mijikenda conversions may have occurred as early as the 1830s and 1840s. (David Sperling, 'Islamization in the Coastal Region of Kenya to the end of the Nineteenth Century', in Bethwell A. Ogot (ed), *Kenya in the 19th Century*, Nairobi 1985, 33-82.) To place the first conversions before the 18th century would be to overspeculate.

² See Chapter II, p.56.

³ See Chapter I, pp.32-35, and Appendices II and III.

⁴ Except for the killing of Haji Kitungule. See Chapter II, p.56-57.

⁵ See Chapter I, p.39, and Chapter II, pp.59-60.

⁶ On the importance of the twelve-mile parameter, see Chapter IV, p.102. Migrant Muslim groups exerted a similar local influence on Mijikenda near whom they settled in the 1830s: the Tangana at Mtongwe influenced the Digo of *kaya* Kiteje, the Mazrui at Takaungu the Kauma, and the Mazrui at Gasi the Digo of *kaya* Kinondo. (See Chapter II, pp.58-65). Mijikenda who lived more than twelve miles from towns were relatively isolated from Muslim influence until Muslims began to penetrate into the hinterland later in the 19th century.

⁷ For example, Mwajamvua, the Digo elder of *kaya* Kiteje, and Mwinyimkuu, the Tangana elder of Mtongwe. See Chapter II, p.63.

⁸ For example, contacts between Muslim traders of Mombasa and the Giriama. See Chapter II, p.49 and Chapter III, pp.78-79.

⁹ Mijikenda women married to Swahili Muslims usually became Muslim. In explaining the attraction of Islam at a personal level, I have often used the example of a pagan Mijikenda man from the countryside who regularly visits his Muslim sister in town to see how she is getting on. If she is happy and well-treated, the tangible benefits of Islam will be evident to her brother. And he will tend to be drawn into Muslim society, not least through emotional ties to his sister's children, who are his Muslim nephews. No wonder that such pagan relatives sometimes became (and still become) Muslim.

¹⁰ See Chapter III, p.90.

¹¹ See Chapter III, pp.79-80 and Chapter IV, p.126.

In spite of close relations between Mijikenda and Muslims, the number of Mijikenda converts was small during the 18th and early 19th century. This seems to have been due as much to an absence of proselytising by Muslims as to the integrity and strength of Mijikenda society.¹² The Swahili were not organised to propagate Islam, and there is little evidence that they were disposed to do so. Conversions resulted more from fortuitous relations between individual Mijikenda and Muslims than from a concerted effort by Muslims to spread Islam.

Conversion seems to have been a highly personal matter, and usually took place only after a long period of contact with Muslims, under a minimum of social or other pressures.¹³ If anything, pressure from within Mijikenda society during this early period worked against conversion.¹⁴ For the most part, Mijikenda converts did not change their way of life. They were, however, expected to conform to a minimum of the Muslim code. Recitation of the *shahada*, Friday prayer, fasting during the month of Ramadhan, adoption of Muslim dress and abstention from unclean meat were the aspects of Muslim behaviour stressed most to new converts.¹⁵

Urbanization and conversion were closely linked; most converts had settled in town before conversion, or migrated to town soon afterwards.¹⁶ There were various reasons for Muslim converts to settle in towns. Many converts were already fully or semi-urbanized, and preferred town life. Moreover, converts residing in their home villages were under strong social pressure to participate in Mijikenda ceremonies; those who did not do so may have been forced to leave.¹⁸

Some Mijikenda Muslim converts established new villages instead of moving to towns. Rural Muslim villages, arising out of group not individual migration, were established by Jibana Muslims at Mji Mre,¹⁹ and by Digo Muslims at Mwando wa Panya,²⁰ and later at such places as Bwaga Moyo, Mkongani and Mtanganyiko.²¹ Whereas Mijikenda immigrants to town were usually assimilated into Swahili society, the Mijikenda Muslims of rural villages retained a stronger ethnic identity. They would sometimes visit their pagan relatives, and on occasion attended Mijikenda ceremonies.²² The rural Muslim villages attracted Mijikenda immigrants

¹² See Chapter II, pp.68-70.

¹³ See Chapter III, p.82.

¹⁴ See Chapter IV, pp.109-110.

¹⁵ See Chapter V, p.156.

¹⁶ See Chapter II, pp.65-66.

¹⁷ See Chapter II, p.51.

¹⁸ See Chapter II, p.71.

¹⁹ See Chapter II, pp.56-58.

²⁰ See Chapter III, p.84, footnote 82.

²¹ See Chapter II, pp.53-54, 6(U)1.

²² See Chapter III, pp.82, 92-93.

and converts in the same way as the towns, but most rural villages had no mosque (or Qur'an school), and Muslim villagers frequented a nearby town for Friday prayer and religious festivals. Except for Mtanganyiko, the rural villages did not develop strong Muslim institutions.²³ The immigration of Mijikenda converts to Muslim towns (that is, 'urban islamization') and to rural Muslim villages (that is, 'village islamization') kept the influence of Islam from spreading more widely among the Mijikenda.

Beginning in the 1830s, the economy of the coastal hinterland expanded,²⁴ and the activities of Muslim entrepreneurs increased: agriculturalists were attracted towards the north by large tracts of uncultivated land,²⁵ and traders towards the south by the large concentration of population.²⁶ The Swahili and the Mazrui were joined by other Muslims in promoting this expansion, and the Mijikenda became subject to various Muslim influences.²⁷

The increase in Muslim commercial activity did not result in a noticeable increase in proselytising. The number of Mijikenda conversions may have risen slightly, but hardly in proportion to the enormous increase in contacts between Mijikenda and Muslims. There was, however, an increase in the cultural influence of Swahili Islam: pagan Mijikenda learned to speak Swahili,²⁸ adopted Muslim dress, and built Swahili-style houses.²⁹ The pattern of 'urban islamization' and 'village islamization' continued unchanged. Mijikenda converts, still few in number, migrated away from the Mijikenda *kayas*.³⁰ By the middle of the 19th century, hardly any Mijikenda Muslims resided among their own people, and there were no signs that Islam would penetrate into Mijikenda society.

The beginnings of rural islamization

Beginning in the 1850s, a new kind of Muslim presence and a new pattern of islamization (what might be called 'rural islamization') emerged among the Mijikenda south of Mombasa:³¹ a few Digo elders became Muslim, and remained in their villages instead of immigrating to town. Mijikenda Muslims had occasionally

²³ See Chapter III, pp.90-92.

²⁴ See Chapter II, pp.44-54.

²⁵ See Chapter III, pp.81, 84-87.

²⁶ See Chapter IV, pp.101-102.

²⁷ See Chapter II, p.45.

²⁸ See Chapter III, p.79.

²⁹ See Chapter II, p.67-68.

³⁰ See Chapter II, pp.56-58.

³¹ If we focus mainly on the growth of Islam south of Mombasa, it is because Islam among the northern Mijikenda, who did not enter the stage of resident conversions, offers little basis for comparison. See Chapter III, pp.72-93.

been resident in Mijikenda *kayas* before 1850, but very much as an exception.³² Now, elders in several Digo villages became 'resident converts', and 'resident conversion' became a distinct tendency in three areas south of Mombasa.³³ The tendency was most pronounced in the immediate southern hinterland of Mombasa, where urban influences, including the influence of Muslim traders, were strongest and relations between Muslims and Digo most intense,³⁴ but it also occurred in the hinterland of Gasi,³⁵ and later, in the hinterland of Vanga.³⁶ North of Mombasa, there was no comparable Mijikenda population resident in the immediate hinterland of the Muslim towns, and 'resident conversion' did not take place.

Only a few Digo elders became Muslim. There is no evidence that they did so as a group, or that they were seeking to bolster their authority in response to a challenge from within Digo society.³⁷ Evidence indicates rather that Muslims and Digo developed personal friendships. Individual Muslims (many of whom are remembered by name) encouraged individual Digo to become Muslim, and conversions took place individually, one by one. Thus, rural islamization began through a series of individual decisions, not as a popular mass movement. The Digo who adopted Islam may have gained a competitive advantage over pagans in trading with Muslim traders,³⁸ but conversion does not seem to have been prompted primarily by commercial motives. Rather, converts were attracted through friendship with Muslims, and by the order, efficacy, cleanliness and other attributes of Muslim society. Muslims were seen as prosperous and successful because of their religion, but together with success went a host of other characteristics whose power of attraction cannot be underestimated.³⁹ Through conversion, the Digo Muslims came to share in the prestigious world of Islam, whose values and success (material as well as spiritual) were genuinely attractive to them.

³² See Chapter II, p.65-66.

³³ Mbaruku Mwachamvua at Kiteje (possibly the first resident Digo convert) may have been a Muslim by the late 1840s (see Chapter II, pp.63-64), and Ali Ganyuma at Pungu by 1855 (see Chapter IV, p.109); Abdallah Mwapodzo at Diani became a Muslim in 1885 (see Chapter V, p.147). Other Digo elders, including the senior elders of such villages as Shonda, Waa, Tiwi, Galu, Kinondo and Muhaka, were converted during the intervening years (see Chapter IV, pp.106,112,117-118, and Chapter V, pp.154-156. Because resident conversions occurred earlier in some places than in others, circumstances varied greatly. For example, second-generation Digo Muslims were already resident at Kiteje by 1870, and at Pungu by 1880, before the first Digo elders at Kwale had become Muslim.

³⁴ See Chapter II, p.63, and Chapter IV, pp.101,105-108,112,117-118.

³⁵ See Chapter V, pp.155-156.

³⁶ See Chapter V, p.167.

³⁷ Alpers has noted that the spread of Islam in the southern interior of East Africa at the end of the 19th century was greatest among the Yao, where territorial chiefdoms were more prevalent. According to Alpers, the Yao chiefs, engaged in a power struggle with the headmen, sought to enhance their ritual authority by becoming Muslim. (Edward A. Alpers, 'Towards a History of the Expansion of Islam in East Africa: the Matrilineal Peoples of the Southern Interior', in T.O. Ranger & I. Kimambo (eds), *The Historical Study of African Religion*, London 1972, 181-188.)

³⁸ See Chapter IV, p.110.

³⁹ The appeal of virtues as lived by other persons is universal. This point came home to me quite forcefully through the testimony of a Mijikenda Muslim woman who stated that she was attracted to become a Muslim by the way she saw Muslim women living the virtue of modesty.

Ambivalence and commensality

The attitude of converts was equivocal: they saw no contradiction (and for them, in fact, there was none) between Digo and Muslim practices. Muslim elders continued to participate, and even to take the lead, in Digo ceremonies. They lived their communal religious life as Muslims in town, away from their pagan fellow elders. The communal dimension of Islam (that is, their relations with other Muslims in town) was clearly important for the resident converts. Other aspects of Islam (the doctrinal, legal and institutional)⁴⁰ were perhaps less meaningful. In general their life as Muslims bore little relevance to their daily village life.

They showed no inclination to promote Islam among their fellow Digo, nor did they introduce Muslim elements into Digo life. They were, to the extent that this is possible, men of two worlds and men of two religions.⁴¹ Their Digo mode of religious behaviour sufficed for their life as Digo, but not for the Muslim world in which they also took part.⁴² The converts accepted Islam selectively, as they perceived it, and practised it on their own terms. In a way, they knew what they were doing; they did not want or intend to follow their Muslim converters in everything. But at the same time they seemed hardly aware of the social repercussions or long-range consequences of their conversion.

Muslim Digo elders seem to have carried on for several years in this ambivalent state, and might have done so even longer, had it not been for the cumulative effect of a slow steady increase in the number of converts. Now perhaps we come to the crux of the matter. For the conversion of Digo elders was not just an adhesion to new beliefs that left their old way of life intact. One seemingly innocuous precept required a true and immediate conversion (that is, a turning-away from previous

⁴⁰ The subsequent growth of Islam among the Digo can be viewed as the development of these three dimensions.

⁴¹ The Digo elders were clearly in what Fisher calls the 'mixing' stage. They had not switched religious allegiance, but had simply adhered to some aspects of Islam, while retaining most of their former beliefs. (Cf. Humphrey J. Fisher, 'Conversion Reconsidered: Some Historical Aspects of Religious Conversion in Black Africa,' *Africa*, 43, 1 (1973): 27-40.) In a recent paper, Richard Gray has pointed out that this kind of 'theological pluralism' (in which apparently incompatible beliefs co-exist) characterizes much of religious change in Africa, and should not be mistaken for syncretism. (Cf. Richard Gray, 'Conversion, syncretism and religious development among African Christians,' paper presented at the Workshop on Conversion, Center for the Study of World Religions, Harvard University, May, 1988.)

⁴² The behaviour of these Muslim Digo elders, who were straddling the Digo and the Muslim worlds, does not fit into Horton's model of religious change. Horton has proposed that the emphasis within African cosmology shifted, that the lesser spirits of African religion became less important and the concept of a Supreme Being more important, as local communities (microcosms) came more into contact with the wider world (macrocosm). Thus, the acceptance of Islam (or Christianity) was due as much to the evolution of African cosmology in response to other features of the modern situation as it was to contacts with Muslims (or Christians). (Cf. Robin Horton, 'African Conversion,' *Africa*, 41, 2 (1971): 85-108.) At the time the first Digo elders were converted, however, well before the end of the 19th century, there is no evidence that Digo cosmology was evolving to explain and control the macrocosm. The converts continued to give deference to lesser spirits as they had before becoming Muslim. It could be argued that some Digo converts may have acquired a deeper personal understanding of a Supreme Being, but if so, this was happening at an individual level and was not a general social pattern. On the other hand, from the evidence we have, recognition or worship of a Supreme Being does not seem to play a significant role in motivating the first conversions. In the final analysis, however, we must admit that we do not have sufficient evidence either about Digo cosmology at that time or about the personal beliefs of the first Digo converts to reach firm conclusions in this matter.

behaviour): the precept to abstain from unclean meat. The other new features (acceptance of the *shahada*, Muslim dress, prayer, and fasting) were practices that could in some way be reconciled with Digo customs. But to abstain from unclean meat (a precept whose importance was stressed to early converts) was a change that struck at commensality, and in so doing touched the core of Digo social life.⁴³

There is unanimous testimony that this issue created problems and tensions between Digo Muslims and pagans.⁴⁴ As long as the number of converts was small, and each ate with his own family, their behaviour was tolerated as a kind of deviant individualism. But as the number of converts increased, they tended to form their own group. They began to eat apart at weddings and funerals; and some declined altogether to partake of food with pagan relatives, even within the same homestead.⁴⁵ They were encouraged in this by their Muslim friends in town.⁴⁶ Since most of the Muslim converts were elders and men of wealth, they were influential enough to challenge the system and to resist criticism. Their behaviour even induced some pagan relatives and friends to become Muslim.⁴⁷ The break-down of commensality between Digo Muslims and pagans gave the nascent Muslim community its own identity long before Muslim institutions existed among the Digo.

Influential elders and informal education

By the 1880s, the number of Digo Muslim converts had risen, albeit slowly. A few women had become Muslim, but most early converts were men.⁴⁸ The attitude of the first Digo converts towards their families and children varied. Many did not bring up their children as Muslims, or make any attempt to convert their wives; others not only raised their children as Muslims, but sent away wives who refused to become Muslim.⁴⁹ The villages with the highest proportion of Digo Muslims were

⁴³ Meat was the essential ingredient of all major Digo (and Mijikenda) feasts. For one reason or another, Muslims would have considered most meat eaten by pagan Digo to be unclean, either by reason of its essence (for example, the meat of wild pigs, monkeys and mice), its manner of death (animals that had died a natural death were eaten), or the method of slaughtering it (not in accordance with prescribed Muslim ritual). And there were other problems such as the cleanliness of cooking utensils. See Chapter V, p.148.

⁴⁴ See Chapter III, pp.82,92, and Chapter IV, p.127.

⁴⁵ See Chapter IV, pp.118,127. In this light, one can better understand the comment of Ali Abdallah Tsori, that Kauma Muslims and pagans would have come to scorn each other if they had lived together. (See Chapter III, p.92.) Though the northern Mijikenda Muslims and pagans lived apart, on occasion they would eat together; the Digo Muslims and pagans lived together but ate apart.

⁴⁶ See Chapter IV, p.127. To understand this insistence on not eating unclean food, one needs to remember the broader underlying principle of ritual cleanliness. The seriousness with which the first converts were counselled (and obeyed) in this matter shows how important it was. Though they were men of two worlds, this Muslim notion at least had already begun to affect their life as Digo.

⁴⁷ See Chapter IV, p.127.

⁴⁸ See Chapter IV, pp.117-118,122-123, and Appendix VI.

⁴⁹ See Chapter IV, pp.110,118.

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There is unanimous testimony that this issue created problems and tensions between Digo Muslims and pagans.⁴⁴ As long as the number of converts was small, and each ate with his own family, their behaviour was tolerated as a kind of deviant individualism. But as the number of converts increased, they tended to form their own group. They began to eat apart at weddings and funerals; and some declined altogether to partake of food with pagan relatives, even within the same homestead.⁴⁵ They were encouraged in this by their Muslim friends in town.⁴⁶ Since most of the Muslim converts were elders and men of wealth, they were influential enough to challenge the system and to resist criticism. Their behaviour even induced some pagan relatives and friends to become Muslim.⁴⁷ The break-down of commensality between Digo Muslims and pagans gave the nascent Muslim community its own identity long before Muslim institutions existed among the Digo.

Influential elders and informal education

By the 1880s, the number of Digo Muslim converts had risen, albeit slowly. A few women had become Muslim, but most early converts were men.⁴⁸ The attitude of the first Digo converts towards their families and children varied. Many did not bring up their children as Muslims, or make any attempt to convert their wives; others not only raised their children as Muslims, but sent away wives who refused to become Muslim.⁴⁹ The villages with the highest proportion of Digo Muslims were

⁴³ Meat was the essential ingredient of all major Digo (and Mijikenda) feasts. For one reason or another, Muslims would have considered most meat eaten by pagan Digo to be unclean, either by reason of its essence (for example, the meat of wild pigs, monkeys and mice), its manner of death (animals that had died a natural death were eaten), or the method of slaughtering it (not in accordance with prescribed Muslim ritual). And there were other problems such as the cleanliness of cooking utensils. See Chapter V, p.148.

⁴⁴ See Chapter III, pp.82,92, and Chapter IV, p.127.

⁴⁵ See Chapter IV, pp.118,127. In this light, one can better understand the comment of Ali Abdallah Tsori, that Kauma Muslims and pagans would have come to scorn each other if they had lived together. (See Chapter III, p.92.) Though the northern Mijikenda Muslims and pagans lived apart, on occasion they would eat together; the Digo Muslims and pagans lived together but ate apart.

⁴⁶ See Chapter IV, p.127. To understand this insistence on not eating unclean food, one needs to remember the broader underlying principle of ritual cleanliness. The seriousness with which the first converts were counselled (and obeyed) in this matter shows how important it was. Though they were men of two worlds, this Muslim notion at least had already begun to affect their life as Digo.

⁴⁷ See Chapter IV, p.127.

⁴⁸ See Chapter IV, pp.117-118,122-123, and Appendix VI.

⁴⁹ See Chapter IV, pp.110,118.

Mtongwe (including *kayas* Mihongani and Kiteje) and Tiwi. Half of the Digo elders of Mtongwe may have been Muslim by that time,⁵⁰ and possibly one-fifth of the elders in Tiwi.⁵¹ The proportion of Muslim elders in other Digo villages was less, but in places like Pungu⁵² and Likoni⁵³ the conversion of powerful senior elders compensated for lack of numbers. Remote areas, such as Kwale⁵⁴ and Kikoneni,⁵⁵ were still on the fringe of Muslim influence, and had at most a handful of resident Muslims. By all accounts, many of the first converts were men of outstanding character whose status and prestige attracted others, thereby giving Digo Muslims a disproportionate influence.⁵⁶

Though most of the early Digo converts had no formal education, they gained a practical knowledge of Islam through constant association with other Muslims. Digo and town Muslims (including Digo Muslim immigrants to town) traded with each other and helped each other in innumerable ways. Muslims from town married the sisters of converts, and would visit Digo villages.⁵⁷ Such dealings were a continuation of earlier Muslim-pagan relations, but a common faith elicited greater mutual trust, and a Digo's relations with town Muslims usually grew stronger after he had become a Muslim.⁵⁸ Continuing contacts between town Muslims and Digo converts were undoubtedly important, at times possibly crucial, in sustaining the faith of converts (for example, in the matter of abstaining from unclean meat).

In the 1880s, the religious life of Digo Muslims was still centred primarily on towns. They attended Friday prayer in the mosques of Mombasa, Gasi, Wasin and Vanga. During the month of Ramadhan, converts would go into town daily to break the fast or might even reside in town, and they would celebrate the 'Id festivals in town.⁵⁹ Though relations with town Muslims were generally beneficial to Digo Muslims, as time passed the relations perpetuated a state of religious dependence. Lacking their own religious institutions, the Digo were junior partners in the Muslim world, 'religious dependants' who had not yet come of age.

⁵⁰ See Chapter IV, pp.103-104.

⁵¹ This is a rough estimate based on oral evidence and working back from records of thirty years later. See Chapter IV, p.123.

⁵² See Chapter IV, p.109.

⁵³ See Chapter IV, p.106.

⁵⁴ See Chapter IV, pp.125-127.

⁵⁵ Chapter V, pp.160-161.

⁵⁶ See Chapter V, p.167-168.

⁵⁷ See Chapter IV, p.118.

⁵⁸ See Chapter IV, p.106.

⁵⁹ See Chapter IV, p.106,126, and Chapter V, p.156.

Foreign Muslim immigrants and teachers

Beginning in the 1880s, various foreign (that is, non-Digo) Muslims came to reside in Digo villages. Some were or had been slaves; the others were an assorted group, and included Arab, Chonyi, Gunya, Comorian and Segeju Muslims.⁶⁰ They tended to settle in villages such as Tiwi, Diani, Uk:unda and Tsimba, some distance from the main towns. Some of the new immigrants came to trade, others to fish or farm; in one way or another, most were starting a new life. The immigration of foreigners was possible only because local Digo Muslims acted as hosts,⁶¹ a role they evidently acquired and accepted after associating with a broad range of foreign Muslims in urban centres. Digo Muslims welcomed and sponsored the new arrivals. They were given land to cultivate.⁶² Some took Digo wives, and were received into Digo clans.⁶³ Towards the end of the 19th century, Baluchi immigrants settled farther inland at Kikoneni.⁶⁴

The coming of foreign Muslims to Digo villages was an important development for Digo Islam. For the first time, Digo villages were attracting Muslim immigrants in a way similar to Muslim towns. Though few in number, the new Muslim residents gave impetus to the Digo Muslim community. Some began to proselytise⁶⁵ and to do some teaching,⁶⁶ and in at least one case the Muslim wife of a foreign immigrant is known to have proselytised among Digo women.⁶⁷

At approximately the same time as foreign Muslim immigrants started to settle in Digo villages, second-generation Digo Muslims from south of Mombasa began to learn the Qur'an.⁶⁸ Some Digo converts sent their children away to study, to Mombasa or Muslim villages such as Mtanganyiko or Pongwe;⁶⁹ others, particularly the more influential elders, invited foreign Muslim teachers to come to their village to teach.⁷⁰ Many of the foreign teachers were Gunya or Segeju.⁷¹ They were not scholars (it would be incorrect to call them *'ulama*⁷²), nor did they represent Sufi

⁶⁰ See Chapter IV, pp.118-119,126, and Chapter V, pp.149,154.

⁶¹ See Chapter IV, p.126, and Chapter V, p.149.

⁶² See Chapter IV, p.118.

⁶³ See Chapter V, p.149.

⁶⁴ See Chapter V, pp.162-163.

⁶⁵ See Chapter IV, p.119.

⁶⁶ See Chapter V, pp.168-169.

⁶⁷ See Chapter IV, p.122.

⁶⁸ That is, the children (or in at least one case, the grandchildren) of the first resident Digo converts. The Digo in Muslim villages north of Mombasa began schooling before the Digo south of Mombasa, and some were already teaching by the 1890s. See Chapter IV, pp.120-121.

⁶⁹ See Chapter IV, pp.108,110-111.

⁷⁰ See Chapter IV, p.111, and Chapter V, p.163.

⁷¹ See Chapter IV, pp.111,122, and Chapter V, pp.163,168-169.

⁷² The Arabic word *'alim* (plur. *'ulama*) is used for a learned Muslim who is well versed in *'ilm* (higher Islamic religious knowledge).

brotherhoods (which came later).⁷³ But the teachers were more than qualified for their task, which was to impart basic literacy and the ability to read the Quran by rote.⁷⁴ The foreign teachers began by teaching the children of their host families; but children of other converts were attracted and allowed to learn as well.⁷⁵

The first Digo teachers and the rise of Muslim institutions, 1890-1910

Until 1890, much of the energy sustaining Digo Islam had come from foreign Muslims.⁷⁶ In the 1890s, the situation changed remarkably: second-generation Digo Muslims completed their Qur'an studies and began to teach;⁷⁷ and Digo teachers from northern Muslim villages migrated to Digo villages south of Mombasa.⁷⁸ By the end of the 19th century, at least six Digo Muslims were teaching among the Digo,⁷⁹ where they had become a potent proselytising force. More remarkable still was the construction of Digo mosques at that time. In 1890, there were no Digo mosques. By 1900, Digo Muslims had built five mosques,⁸⁰ and during the next decade they built fourteen more.⁸¹

The apparently sudden appearance of indigenous Digo mosques and teachers -a kind of flowering of Digo Islam- was the outcome of several decades of slow internal growth nurtured by outside agents of Islam. To reach this state, Digo

⁷³ See Chapter IV, pp.104-105.

⁷⁴ There is no record of the first village teachers teaching higher religious knowledge, nor in general were the teachers themselves highly educated; but of the devotion and effectiveness of their teaching there is no doubt. In addition to basic literacy and Qur'an reading, the first teachers probably instructed Digo Muslims in such matters as prayer, food regulations, etc., which do not appear in the Qur'an. Higher levels of scholarship came early in the 20th century, when Digo who had studied advanced Islamic knowledge in such places as Lamu, Barawa, and Mombasa returned to their home villages.

⁷⁵ See Chapter V, p.163.

⁷⁶ A few urbanized Digo Muslims may have returned to Digo villages earlier and done some elementary teaching, for example, Mwalimu Mnena of Kikoneni (see Chapter V, p.160). According to Bungler, the return of urbanized Pokomo Muslims to their home area played a key role in the islamization of the upper Pokomo. Cf. Robert L. Bungler Jr., *Islamization among the Upper Pokomo* (Syracuse 1973), 68.

⁷⁷ See Chapter IV, pp.110-111.

⁷⁸ See footnote 66 above, and Chapter IV, pp.106,120-121.

⁷⁹ The teachers were Amri bin Abeid at Likoni (Chapter IV, p.106); Sulayman Mwanyemi at Bombo (Chapter IV, p.111); Mwalimu Ali at Pungu (Chapter IV, p.110); Mwalimu Saidi at Matuga (Chapter IV, p.114); Juma Matungale and Makarani Fadhili at Tiwi (Chapter IV, pp.120-121). In this development can be seen the impact of the village of Mtanganyiko: four of the six Digo teachers had either learned or taught there. (See Chapter III, pp.91-92). The subsequent decline of Mtanganyiko, which was calamitous for northern Mijikenda Muslims, was at the same time a severe loss for the whole of Mijikenda Islam.

⁸⁰ The mosques were the Pungu Mosque (Chapter IV, p.110-111), Kingwede Mosque (Chapter IV, pp.110-111), Riyadhha Mosque (Chapter IV, p.106), Mkoyo Mosque (Chapter IV, pp.120-121) and Jego Mosque (Chapter V, p.169). Also see Appendix XII.

⁸¹ Namely, from north to south, Bomani Mosque (Chapter IV, p.108), Bombo Ganjoni Mosque (Chapter IV, p.111), Bujuni Mosque (Chapter IV, p.114), Kitsanga Mosque (Chapter IV, p.121), Mwaroni Mosque (Chapter V, p.151), Mwabweni's Mosque (Chapter V, p.154), Mtambwe Mosque (Chapter V, pp.156-157), Mwanyaza Mosque (Chapter V, p.157), Mophe Mosque (Chapter V, pp.163-164), Gandini Mosque (Chapter V, p.164), Mtakuja Mosque (Chapter V, p.169), Chuini Mosque (Chapter V, p.169) and Gonja Mosque (Chapter V, p.170).

Muslims had progressed through successive stages: initial contacts with town Muslims, intense rural-urban relations facilitating conversion, the first resident Digo conversions, continuing association with town Muslims, the participation of resident converts in urban religious life, the immigration of foreign Muslims to Digo villages, the return of urbanized Digo Muslims, and the teaching of Digo pupils by foreign teachers. Collectively, these events embodied dealings with hundreds of foreign Muslims, and constituted a massive injection of external Muslim influence into Digo society. The growth of Islam took place so gradually and so naturally that the transition from one stage to another⁸² was perhaps hardly perceptible even to the Digo themselves, just as the daily growth of a child is imperceptible to parents until one day they find he is a man.

With the building of Digo mosques and the opening of Digo Qur'an schools -the beginning of indigenization- the focus of Digo Islam shifted from Muslim towns to Digo villages. Though the role of foreign Muslims was still important, the transition from foreign to Digo leadership had begun. Friday prayer now took place in Digo mosques, and was led by Digo Imams. Digo villages where mosques were first built, such as Pungu and Tiwi, radiated Muslim influence to neighbouring Digo villages,⁸³ and assumed an islamizing role among the Digo similar to that played by Muslim towns. In this, Digo Muslims had the advantage over foreign Muslims of being indigenous; the leaven of Islam could be expected to work more effectively from within.

Education and internal momentum, 1910-1933

By 1910, Islam had taken root among the Digo, and acquired a certain internal momentum.⁸⁴ There was little doubt Islam would continue to spread; it was a question of how slow or how fast, and to what extent. Much of the subsequent drive and strength of Digo Islam must be attributed to the active propagation of the first Digo teachers and Imams.⁸⁵ They were a different kind of Muslim from their fathers and grandfathers. From youth they had been more intensely exposed to Islam, and at school they usually acquired a stronger devotion and dedication to religious practices. Those who schooled in Muslim towns or villages away from home underwent a deeper transformation than those who were taught in their

⁸² There was, of course, overlapping between stages, and uneven growth; some areas were only just entering a period of resident conversion when others were welcoming the first educated school-leavers. See p.174, footnote 33.

⁸³ See Chapter IV, pp.120-121, and Chapter V, pp.148,154.

⁸⁴ The same may have been true among some of the coastal peoples of Tanganyika. See John Iliffe, *A Modern History of Tanganyika* (Cambridge 1979), 212-213.

⁸⁵ See Chapter IV, pp.110,114, and Chapter V, p.157-158.

home villages.⁸⁶ Thus, inadvertently perhaps, the early Digo converts who educated their children had brought about a deepening of Muslim influence.⁸⁷ By raising the standards of knowledge and devotion, education had an enduring impact, and played a major role in consolidating and furthering the growth of Islam.

The uncentralized nature of Digo society⁸⁸ helped to spur the development of Muslim institutions. Initially Digo Muslim villagers were content to attend Friday prayer in a Digo village not their own, but it was not long before a sense of village identity (based on clan and lineage), and an element of rivalry and competition between neighbouring villages, prompted a flurry of mosque-building.⁸⁹ Thus Islam began to spread through the natural framework of society. For a village to have a mosque became a matter of prestige and a measure of progress. It was not uncommon for Muslim villagers to build a mosque as soon as someone of the village had reached a sufficiently high standard to be Imam.⁹⁰ As more young men finished their studies, more mosques were built, and eventually most Digo villages with Muslim communities came to have their own mosques.

During these years, the influence of foreign Muslims continued, at a higher level: they instructed Digo in advanced Islamic knowledge (*'ilm*)⁹¹, trained them for Imamship,⁹² and promoted *maulid*.⁹³ But Digo Muslims, preoccupied with local matters of land⁹⁴ and inheritance,⁹⁵ and growing tension within Digo society,⁹⁶ were largely oblivious of the contemporary issues, such as reform and mahdism, that concerned the wider Muslim world in Africa.⁹⁷

⁸⁶ A good example would be Muhammad Mbwana, who promoted the Qadiriyya among the Digo. (See Chapter IV, pp.104-105.) He is said to have spent three years in Lamu followed by thirteen years in Somalia. He was away from home and out of contact for such a long time that his parents, thinking he had died, went to check with the Chief Qadhi whether they should hold mourning ceremonies for him or not. (Shakombo Ali, Mtongwe, 22/9/87.) Digo Muslims who lived in a Muslim community away from home for a prolonged period, clearly underwent what Turner calls a "liminal transition", separated from their own society "with abundant opportunity to learn and speculate on ultimate things." (Cf. Victor Turner, *Dramas, Fields and Metaphors*, London, 1974: 259.) During this time, their previous status was destroyed and they emerged prepared for "new responsibilities and privileges." (Cf. Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process*, London, 1969:103.)

⁸⁷ In contrast, Muslim institutions failed to develop in northern Mijikenda villages where the younger generation of Muslims were not educated. See Chapter III, pp.86,99.

⁸⁸ See Chapter I, pp.29-32.

⁸⁹ See, for example, Chapter IV, pp.124-125,129, and Chapter V, p.157.

⁹⁰ See Chapter IV, pp.124-125.

⁹¹ See Chapter IV, pp.111-112.

⁹² See Chapter IV, p.124.

⁹³ See Chapter V, pp.152-153.

⁹⁴ See Chapter IV, pp.130-135.

⁹⁵ See Chapter IV, pp.135-143.

⁹⁶ See Chapter IV, pp.115-116.

⁹⁷ For a summary and analysis of these issues, see C.C.Stewart, 'Islam,' in A.D.Roberts (ed), *The Cambridge History of Africa*, vol.7 (from 1905 to 1940), 191-222. The different circumstances in East Africa and West Africa are clear when one considers, for example, that Islamic law (*shari'a*) became the legal code for Senegalese Muslims in 1857. Cf. Stewart, 'Islam,' p.206.

The early years of colonial rule, 1895-1933

The growth of Islam among the Mijikenda during the first decades of colonial rule is best understood as the continuation of processes already underway. By the time Britain assumed colonial power in 1895, Mijikenda Muslim communities existed north and south of Mombasa, and the broad outlines of Mijikenda Islam had been traced. Colonial rule did not so much establish the course of Islam as modify and influence its direction.

The advent of colonial rule coincided with the Rising of Shaykh Mbaruk bin Rashid, who attempted to rally anti-colonial fervour under the banner of Islam.⁹⁸ The Mijikenda response was mixed. Secular relations and common economic interests seem to have been more important than religious ideology in creating an anti-colonial bond. Many of the northern Mijikenda, pagans and Muslims alike, who had long-standing relations and close economic ties with the Mazrui,⁹⁹ supported Shaykh Mbaruk. Most Digo south of Mombasa, whose links with the Mazrui were tenuous, if not hostile,¹⁰⁰ showed little inclination to join the Rising.

Islam has sometimes emerged as a by-product in the aftermath of similar risings,¹⁰¹ but no such link is evident between the spread of Islam and the Rising of Shaykh Mbaruk. After the Rising, conditions north of Mombasa were not favourable to the growth of Islam, and the northern Mijikenda, mainly pagan before the Rising, did not turn to Islam in large numbers thereafter. The town of Mtanganyiko, the main centre of northern Mijikenda Islam, never fully recovered after being destroyed in 1895.¹⁰² The Rising did not benefit the northern Mijikenda Muslims. Rather, by disrupting the plantation economy the Rising disabled the Muslim communities that were sustaining Islam among the northern Mijikenda, and debilitated the very Islam it purported to promote.¹⁰³

In spite of being under strong Muslim influence by 1895, the Digo displayed little anti-colonial feeling, perhaps because of their long-standing ties with the Busaidi Arabs of Zanzibar, who were seen as acquiescing to, if not supporting, British rule. Digo Muslims were sensitive, however, to Christian influence, and opposed colonial educational initiatives in which they perceived a Christian bias.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁸ See Chapter III, pp.94-95.

⁹⁹ See Chapter III, pp.95-96.

¹⁰⁰ See Chapter V, p.145.

¹⁰¹ For example: "In German East Africa, the savage repression of the Maji Maji revolt in 1905-07 induced the Ngindo and other peoples in the south-east to espouse Islam as a modern belief-system which owed nothing to Europeans." Stewart, 'Islam', p.198.

¹⁰² See Chapter III, pp.97-98.

¹⁰³ See Chapter III, pp.95-96.

¹⁰⁴ See Chapter IV, p.88.

At the same time they readily accepted government schools that included Muslim religious education in the curriculum.¹⁰⁵

In theory, the British colonial administration maintained a position of official neutrality towards Islam.¹⁰⁶ In practice, neutrality was impossible, for colonial policies and practices had a direct effect on the lives of Muslims. When struggling to establish control during the early years of colonial rule, the British relied heavily on Muslim officials in the coastal region. From positions of authority, Muslim officials were able to promote Islam;¹⁰⁷ at other times they used their influence with Mijikenda Muslims on behalf of the colonial government.¹⁰⁸ The policy favouring European agriculture (and the development of Mombasa as a port for upcountry goods) stunted the economic growth of the coastal hinterland¹⁰⁹ and weakened Muslim society, Mijikenda Muslims included, north of Mombasa.¹¹⁰ On the other hand, the legal judgment of 1928 that the Islamic law of inheritance should apply to Digo Muslims favoured the growth of Islam among the Digo.¹¹¹ The appeal of Digo elders, Muslim and pagan together, against this judgment, on the grounds that it forced the pace of change too rapidly,¹¹² exemplifies the accommodating nature of Digo Islam and the democratic manner in which Islam had spread during the preceding sixty or seventy years.¹¹³

The effect of the First World War on Islam among the Mijikenda is difficult to gauge. Many Mijikenda were displaced, permanently or temporarily,¹¹⁴ and others were exposed to outside influences (including other African Muslims) through contacts with refugees or work in the Carrier Corps.¹¹⁵ Some Muslim refugees from German East Africa remained in Kenya after the War,¹¹⁶ and one foreign Muslim ex-soldier is known to have settled among the Mijikenda and undertaken Qur'an school teaching.¹¹⁷ The part of Mijikenda country where Islam grew most vigorously

¹⁰⁵ In 1931, the District Officer noted that the Digo are "not adverse to education but they are very insistent on the Koranic teaching being included in the curriculum of the bush schools." Annual Report 1931, Digo District, KNA, DC/KWL/1/17.

¹⁰⁶ See Chapter IV, p.138.

¹⁰⁷ See Chapter IV, pp.116-117,129.

¹⁰⁸ As for example when the British asked the Liwali to exhort Digo Muslims to withdraw their applications for land titles. See Chapter IV, p.134.

¹⁰⁹ See Chapter III, p.75.

¹¹⁰ See Chapter III, pp.96-97.

¹¹¹ See Chapter IV, p.142, and Appendix VII.

¹¹² See Chapter IV, p.142.

¹¹³ The Digo elders who first became Muslim had hardly propagated Islam. Though second-generation and third-generation Digo Muslims were more assertive, their behaviour was never coercive. Now, as late as 1928, many Muslim Digo elders were doing all they could to assuage their pagan colleagues.

¹¹⁴ See Chapter V, pp.145-146.

¹¹⁵ See Chapter III, p.99, footnote 166.

¹¹⁶ See Chapter V, p.146, footnote 18.

¹¹⁷ See Chapter IV, pp.123-124.

after the War, from Msambweni north to Mombasa, was not directly affected by the fighting. South of Msambweni, the War was more disruptive; some villages with Muslim communities were abandoned and never reoccupied.¹¹⁸ The broadening character of the First World War is usually considered a catalyst of social change in Africa. In this the Mijikenda were not excluded. It is likely that a number of Mijikenda became Muslim, or changed from being nominal to practising Muslims, because of their War experiences. But there is little evidence that they strengthened Mijikenda Islam in the rural areas in anything more than a general way.

By the end of this period, clear distinctions in status existed within the Digo Muslim community. Literate Imams and teachers had emerged as a new elite in Digo society, and a hereditary tradition of learning had begun.¹¹⁹ Early access to schooling had been the key determinant in establishing this tradition. The children of the first generation of educated literate Digo had an enormous advantage over their age-mates whose parents were still illiterate. What was true in the rest of the Muslim world of East Africa was beginning to be true among the Digo: "The best qualification for becoming a learned man was to be the son of another learned man."¹²⁰ But the standard of Islamic scholarship among Digo teachers was still relatively low, and Digo Muslims remained isolated from the greater Muslim world. The first Digo did not go on the pilgrimage (Ar. *hajj*) to Mecca until the 1940s.¹²¹ Few teachers had done any advanced religious studies, and most teachers relied on these returning few for contact with the Muslim tradition of higher learning.¹²² The vast majority of Digo remained illiterate, or were only just beginning the struggle to acquire literacy while adjusting to the basic claims of their faith. In the early 1930s, Quranic education was still more widespread than secular education, though this advantage was soon to be lost.

Members of the new class of religious clerics, some of whom were successful entrepreneurs in their own right, were among those best prepared to take advantage of the new conditions of the cash economy¹²³ and of "the enlarged scale of political and economic life under colonial rule."¹²⁴ And at that time, before the effects of

¹¹⁸ See Chapter V, p.146, footnote 17.

¹¹⁹ The tradition continues. For example, Uthman bin Shaykh Mwinyi bin Mwalimu Ali bin Muhammad bin Ali Ganyuma is the present Imam of Pungu Mosque. See Chapter IV, pp.109-111. There are many similar examples.

¹²⁰ B.G.Martin, 'Notes on Some Members of the Learned Classes of Zanzibar and East Africa in the Nineteenth Century,' in *African Historical Studies*, 4 (1971): 525-46. The quotation is on page 530.

¹²¹ Few were able to afford the cost. As far as is known, the first Digo (and the first Mijikenda) pilgrim to Mecca was Sulayman Abdallah Mwakuaza, the Imam of the Mkunguni Mosque. (See Chapter IV, pp.125,129.) Sulayman Abdallah was seen disembarking from the ship in Jidda, but then disappeared and never returned home. (Juma Salim Pati, Kitsanga, 16/10/87.) This incident discouraged others. To this day, the *hajj* is not a strongly established custom among the Digo.

¹²² See Chapter IV, pp.111-112, footnote 50.

¹²³ See Chapter IV, p.110, footnote 38; Chapter V, pp.160-165.

¹²⁴ See Chapter IV, p.133. The quotation is from Andrew Roberts, 'Introduction', in A.D.Roberts (ed), *The Cambridge History of Africa*, vol.7 (from 1905 to 1940), (Cambridge 1986), 21.

secular education had been fully felt, they were the modernisers,¹²⁵ and Islam was indeed a "modernising force."¹²⁶

There is evidence that the rate of conversions increased steadily after the War and reached a kind of crescendo by the end of the 1920s.¹²⁷ At that time, Muslim culture and criteria were clearly permeating deeper into Digo society and beginning to affect Digo life in more basic ways.¹²⁸ By 1927, the Digo in some areas had begun to give up drinking palm-wine.¹²⁹ And by 1935, many Digo men were wearing Swahili dress.¹³⁰ The rise in Muslim feeling among the younger generation of Digo after 1920 seems to have stemmed more from a rejection of the values and authority of pagan Digo society than from a revolt against colonial rule.¹³¹ Nevertheless, to put the spread of Islam among the Digo in the 1920s into perspective, we should remember that it was based on several decades of prior foundational growth. After all, by 1920 the Digo had built thirty-seven mosques. The building of thirty-three more during the decade 1920-1930¹³² represented a quickening and consolidation of Islam, not a new development.

External crises are often postulated to explain religious change among peoples. The growth of Islam among the Digo seems to have taken place not as a precipitous response to a crisis, but over time as the deliberate and measured acceptance of a way of life. Much of the early growth of Islam in the 19th century had been inconspicuous and unobserved. What appeared as new to colonial observers had in reality first sent down roots in pre-colonial times. Contact with the wider world in the 20th century accelerated religious change along paths that had already been charted long before the beginning of colonial rule.

¹²⁵ See Chapter IV, p.141, and Chapter V, p.163.

¹²⁶ Roberts, 21.

¹²⁷ See Chapter IV, p.140. The Annual Reports of 1927 and 1928 both refer to this tendency. "Islam appears to be spreading amongst the coastal Wadigo." (Digo District Annual Report 1927, KNA, DC/KWL/1/13.) "Islam continues to spread among the Wadigo of the coast...The Digo are generally speaking losing their tribal characteristics and are rapidly adopting the Mohammedan religion." (Digo District Annual Report 1928, KNA, DC/KWL/1/14.)

¹²⁸ See Chapter V, p.150.

¹²⁹ This change, which is evidently attributable to the Muslim precept forbidding the consumption of alcoholic drink, first appears in colonial records in February 1927, when the District Commissioner wrote: "To Muhaka, Msambweni..Pongwe, Kikoneni, Mkongani..saw no signs anywhere of excessive drinking or Iembo [palm-wine] tapping." (Digo District Diary, February 1927, KNA, MP/47/1156.) At Kiteje, the next month, he observed: "Found no signs of tapping, and people say they have given up the practice." The next day, at Magojoni (eight miles from Kiteje), he found something similar: "Inspection of the coconut shambas revealed no signs of tapping. This is extraordinary considering that the Magojoni people were in the past a very hard-drinking crowd. It is encouraging to find that so many of the Wadigo have given up tapping for tembo [palm-wine]." (Digo District, Safari Diary, entries for 16th and 17th March 1927, KNA, MP/47/1156.)

¹³⁰ In that year, commenting on the "average Digo family budget", the District Commissioner wrote: "The average poor man owns two *kanzus* (Swahili-style gowns), one for special occasions and one for daily use." District Commissioner, Digo District, to Medical Officer, Msambweni, 26 October 1935, "Papers of Economic interest", KNA, DC/KWL/10/1.

¹³¹ In 1924, H.B.Sharpe, the District Commissioner, wrote that among the Digo "religious feeling is running strongly in some locations in the Mombasa vicinity. It is taking the form of objecting to all Native Tribal authority and in requests for village Kadhis instead of native councils...a reaction of youth to the authority of age as represented by the elders." Station Diary, Vanga District, entry for 19th March 1924, KNA, DC/KWL/5/1.

¹³² See Appendix X.

Glossary

The Glossary contains Arabic, Swahili and Mijikenda words that appear more than once in the text or that appear without explanation. Foreign words that appear only once with an accompanying explanation in the text are not included. In printing out the text of the thesis, it has not been possible to distinguish between the short and long vowels of Arabic words or to print out special Arabic consonants; the closest possible English transliteration has been used.

'alim (pl. *'ulama*) (Ar.) - a learned person, particularly in the religious sciences

clzuo (pl. *ryuo*) (Sw.) - a Qur'an school

'ibn (Ar.) - Islamic religious knowledge

Imam (Ar.) - a Muslim prayer-leader, often in charge of a mosque

jihad (Ar.) - the holy war waged by Muslims against infidels

kaya (Miji.) - one of the ten original Mijikenda settlements; also used for secondary and subsidiary villages arising out of those settlements

Liwali (Sw. from the Arabic *wali*) - Governor

maulid (Ar.) - birthday, particularly of the Prophet Muhammad; in some places the word is used to refer to the celebrations associated with that day

mganga (Sw.) - one who practises healing and divination, not following written traditions

mu'allim (Ar.) - a teacher of advanced Islamic religious knowledge (sometimes written as *ma'allim* and pronounced in Swahili as *maalim*)

mwalimu (Sw.) - a teacher (also used for a *tabibu*)

mwanatsi (Digo) - the senior elder of a *kaya*, who normally leads ritual ceremonies

ngambi (Digo) - the council of elders of a Digo *kaya*

Qadi (Ar.) - a Muslim judge (also written as Qadhi in English) *Ramadhan*

(Sw. from the Arabic *ramadan*) - the Muslim month of fasting

shamba (Sw.) - a plot of agricultural land

sharif (Ar.) - a person who claims descent from the Prophet Muhammad

tabibu (Sw. from the Arabic *tabib*) - one who practises healing, divination, etc., usually in accordance with a written tradition

tariqa (Ar.) - a Sufi order (sometimes called a brotherhood)

Migration from the original kayas

Beginning as early as the 17th century, the Digo migrated from their two original *kayas* (Kwale and Kinondo) to found new, secondary *kayas* (Map 6). The secondary *kayas* came to assume primary importance for members of the founding clans. Political institutions grew up within the secondary *kayas*, and elders of the secondary *kayas* would no longer return to their *kaya* of origin for religious or burial ceremonies.⁴

The northern Mijikenda tended to remain more centralized. They founded other *kayas*, but these are more aptly described as subsidiary rather than secondary (Map 5), for the inhabitants of the new northern Mijikenda *kayas* usually acknowledged dependence on their *kaya* of origin. The founders of some of the new *kayas* are said to have buried protective charms from an original *kaya* in the new *kayas*. In the second half of the 19th century, dispersal and extensive migration (for example, of the Duruma southwards and the Giriama northwards) brought the *kaya* system of the northern Mijikenda under stress.⁵

The following table shows some secondary and subsidiary *kayas* and the *kayas* from which they originated:

<i>Original kaya</i>	<i>Secondary/subsidiary kayas</i>
Giriama	Kidzini
Rabai	Fimboni, Chijembeni
Chonyi	Chilulu
Kambe	Bate, Bura
Duruma	Chonyi, Kulu
Kwale	Mtaye, Longo, Waa
Kinondo	Diani, Muhaka

Among the Digo, further dispersal and migration from secondary *kayas* led to the founding of tertiary *kayas*, some of which are shown in the following table (see Map 6):

<i>Secondary kayas</i>	<i>Tertiary kayas</i>
Longo	Kiteje, Timbwani
Jombo	GonJa, Chwaka, Jego
Diani	Vikongeni

⁴ See Chapter I, pp.29-31.

⁵ See Map 9, p.77, and Map 14, p.217.

Some secondary and tertiary Digo *kayas* grew to prominence, but they have never had the same historical importance as the two original Digo *kayas*, Kwale and Kinondo.

Few persons live in the *kayas* today. In spite of efforts by Mijikenda elders to preserve the *kaya* sites, the existence of some *kayas* is threatened by fuel gatherers who are cutting back the *kaya* forests. Other *kaya* sites have been included in forest reserves, and are relatively safe from destruction. The National Museums of Kenya has recently sponsored an ecological study of the *kayas*, possibly with a view to declaring some of them protected sites or national monuments.⁶

⁶ See SA. Robertson, "Preliminary Floristic Survey of Kaya Forests of Coastal Kenya," Malindi 1987.

Appendix II: The Nine Tribes and their Relations with the Mijikenda

The Confederation of the Nine Tribes

The earliest known list of the Nine Tribes (Swa. *Miji Tisia*), recorded by Guillain in 1848, shows the following Swahili peoples: the Mvita, Mtwapa, Kilifi, Malindi, Jomvu (including the Ozi, said to have become too few to constitute a separate group), Shaka, Pate, Faza, and Gunya.¹ Another early list, compiled by Taylor in the 1880s, shows eight of the nine peoples in Guillain's list, but gives the Katwa instead of the Malindi as the ninth member.²

From a comparison of the lists of Guillain and Taylor, it would seem that either the Katwa took the place of the Malindi some time after the middle of the 19th century, or one of the writers has given the wrong information. Guillain's comment about the change of status of the Ozi may help to explain the apparent error or change, and give an answer to the question, "What happened to the Malindi?" At the time Taylor wrote, the Malindi probably still formed part of the Nine Tribes, but had been relegated (like the Ozi before them) to the status of a sub-group. If so, the emergence of the Katwa as one of the named members of the Nine Tribes, in place of the Malindi, would reflect more a change in status within the confederation than a change in confederation membership.

The list recorded by Hollis in 1899 seems to confirm this.³ He shows the same nine members as Taylor, and includes the Malindi as a sub-group of the Mvita. In giving details about other sub-groups, Hollis mentions how the Jomvu (formerly a sub-group of the Mvita) had "been made a separate 'mji' [lit.= 'town']... owing to the increase in numbers of its members, whilst Ozi, which was formerly an 'mji', has now been included in [among the] Shaka." Hollis's remarks show that within the Nine Tribes, numbers (and presumably, influence) and status were related. Hollis's inclusion of the Ozi as a sub-group of the Shaka, whereas Guillain had earlier included the Ozi as a sub-group of the Jomvu, may indicate that groupings within the confederation, like status, were flexible and liable to change. We should bear in mind, too, that Guillain, Taylor, and Hollis depended for their information on Swahili informants, who would themselves have perceived the make-up of the Nine Tribes each in a particular way.

¹ Guillain, *Documents*, Vol II, 237-38.

² Taylor Papers, Vol VII, p.75. SOAS, MS 47757. To my knowledge this is the second earliest written list of the Nine Tribes.

³ "Mombasa and Kilindini" (file memo by A.C.Hollis, 19th July 1899). KNA, DC/MSA/8/2. Hollis translates the Swahili word *kabila* as "clan", but more properly *kabila* is a larger grouping than a clan, for which the usual Swahili word is *mbari*. See Hyder Kindy, *Life and Politics in Mombasa* (Nairobi 1972), 50.

The Swahili use two different terms for the Nine Tribes: *Miji Tisia* (Swa. *tisia*= "nine", from Arabic. *tis'a*) and *Tisa Taifa*. In this context, the Swahili use the word *taifa* (derived from the Arabic *ta'ifa*) to mean a 'group', whereas the Swahili word *mji* (plural. *miji*) has a geographical connotation and is more correctly translated as 'town'. Both these terms are usually translated into English as "Nine Tribes", but the translation "Nine Towns" (for *Miji Tisia*) is equally correct, and more accurately conveys the fact that the members of the confederation were originally each from a different coastal town.

The main members of the Nine Tribes (as shown by Taylor and Hollis) can be divided into southern and northern according to their place of origin, as follows:

<i>Southern</i>	<i>Northern</i>
Mvita	Shaka
Mtwapa	Pate
Jomvu	Faza
Kilifi	Gunya
	Katwa

The four southern Swahili peoples, resident in Mombasa (as immigrants) or in towns near Mombasa, are considered the senior members. Their names are usually given first when enumerating the Nine. According to oral traditions, Mtwapa may have been founded as early as the 10th or 11th century, at approximately the same time as Mombasa.⁴ Preliminary archaeological findings do not support such an early date, but suggest rather that Mtwapa was founded in the late 14th or early 15th century, at the same time as the nearby settlements of Kinuni and Jumba la Mtwana.⁵

What is clear is that from earliest times the inhabitants of Mtwapa were closely allied with the Mvita of Mombasa, and with others such as the Ng'ombeni and the Nyali (also spelled Nyale) who are now not named among the Nine.⁶ It is possible that the origin of the four senior members of the Nine Tribes goes back to

⁴ One tradition, recorded in the early 20th century, even suggests that the Mtwapa settled in the Mombasa region before the Mvita. See "The Memoirs of Bwana Shehe wa Stambuli wa Bala" (English translation of the original Swahili text), KNA, DC/MSA/3/2. For details about the earliest known remains of Mombasa, see Hamo Sassoon, "Excavations at the Site of Early Mombasa," *Azania*, XV, 1980:1-42.

⁵ See Map 3, p.17. James Kirkman, "Kinuni- An Arab Manor on the Coast of Kenya," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, (October 1957): 145-150; Wilson, *Monumental Architecture*, 52-77; Ilamo Sassoon, *The Coastal Town of Jumba la Mtwana* (Mombasa 1981). Excavations at Mtwapa are continuing, and it is premature to assign a definite foundation date to the town.

⁶ There is strong evidence that in the past the Ng'ombeni and the Nyali were important members of the Nine Tribes. The Ng'ombeni, who used to lead the celebrations of the Swahili New Year (Swa. *siku ya mwaka*), have now entirely disappeared. See "The story of four towns," an account written down by Mbwana bin Mbarafundi Elbaurie on the 29th January 1914. KNA, DC/MSA/3/2.

an earlier alliance between the Mvita, the Mtwapa, the Ng'ombeni and the Nyali, which later expanded to include the Jomvu and the Kilifi.

The northern members of the Nine Tribes, as their names indicate, were immigrants to Mombasa from northern towns. Some must have taken refuge in Mombasa during the troubles of the 16th and 17th centuries/ but others may have migrated to Mombasa in earlier or later centuries. Some immigrants were individuals or family groups from northern towns that still exist to this day (Faza and Pate). In the case of towns that no longer exist, such as Shaka (and Ozi), whole populations may have moved, and large numbers may have migrated to Mombasa.

Through intermarriage with resident Swahili, new immigrants acquired civic status as Mombasans. In this way the number of allied peoples of Mombasa increased. With the passing of time, what began as an alliance of the Swahili peoples of the Mombasa area came to include northern Swahili peoples as well, and became the confederation of the Nine Tribes.

At some point the number of members of the confederation may actually have been nine, but which tribes constituted the original nine is unknown. As soon as more than nine peoples belonged to the confederation, some members were accommodated as sub-groups, in order to keep the stated number at nine. The significance of the number is obscure, as is the reason why the number of full (named) members has been fixed at nine. Evidently, membership was flexible, and a group that had increased in numbers could be given full membership by conveniently relegating a smaller group to the status of a sub-group, as happened to the Malindi and the Ozi.

In addition to the eleven different Swahili peoples mentioned by Guillain, Taylor or Hollis, four other Swahili peoples are regarded as belonging, or having belonged, to the Nine Tribes either in their own right or as sub-groups of another people: the Siu (sub-group of the Katwa), the Junda (sub-group of the Jomvu), the Nyali (sub-group of the Mtwapa or the Gunya),⁸ and the Ng'ombeni (sub-group of the Nyali).⁹ Writers of the 20th century have drawn up lists of the Nine Tribes, but none has added appreciably to the information given in the 19th century lists.¹⁰ On the contrary, imprecise references have rather led to confusion in the literature

⁷ See Chapter I, pp.22-23.

⁸ When testifying in 1912, Tabit bin Muklara stated, "I am *mzee* [senior elder] of the Nyale tribe, a sub-section of the Bajun [Gunya] tribe. I have sold most of the Nyale land." "Testimony of Tabit bin Muklara Bajuni," Tangana Land Case, Application Cause No.15 of 1912, Land Office Archives, Provincial Land Office, Mombasa.

⁹ For Junda and Nyali traditions, I am grateful to Uthman Mwinyiusi, who granted me various interviews during July, August, and September, 1987.

¹⁰ For other lists, see "Memorandum on Coast Federations" (file memo by O.F.Watkins), Mombasa, 31 December 1909. KNA, DC/MSA/3/2; H.E. Lambert, *Chi-Jomvu and Ki-Ngare, Sub-dialects of the Mombasa area* (Kampala 1958), 10; Hyder Kindy, *Life and Politics*, 47, 50-51; A.I.Salim, *The Swahili-speaking Peoples of Kenya's Coast, 1895-1965* (Nairobi 1973), 27.

about which groups make up the Nine and which Swahili peoples have special relations with the Mijikenda.

Relations of the Nine Tribes with the Mijikenda

Only the four southern members (the Mvita, Mtwapa, Jomvu and Kilifi) of the Nine Tribes developed special relations with the Mijikenda. How the relations originated is unknown, but the Mtwapa, Jomvu, and Kilifi were resident on the mainland and it is likely that such relations began soon after the Mijikenda arrived in the neighbouring hinterland.^U

The fact that the Kilifi came to have special relations with three Mijikenda peoples, the Ribe, Kambe, and Kauma, can be understood in the light of the close historical connection between the three. According to tradition, the Ribe and Kauma migrated from Shungwaya as one people, and only separated from each other after the founding of *kaya* Ribe; and the Kambe lived at *kaya* Ribe, before moving to found *kaya* Kambe.^U The Kauma may even have moved north from *kaya* Ribe to *kaya* Kauma because they had already established relations with the Kilifi. After the Kilifi moved from Kilifi to Mombasa in the 17th century; their relations with the Ribe, Kauma and Kambe, continued from the town of Mombasa (Map 7).

Unlike the other Swahili groups, the Mvita (resident on Mombasa island) had no mainland residence near the Mijikenda, but it is not surprising that the Mvita affiliated with the Giriama, when we remember that in the 18th century (and possibly earlier) the Giriama controlled trade with the interior in such items as ivory and cattle.^B Krapf found the same situation (except that the Busaidi, not the Mvita, were the dominant power), when he arrived at Mombasa in the 1840s: "Most of the articles of trade brought from the interior are disposed of in the Keriama [Giriama] country where the Mombasans resort to buy them." Like the Mombasans of the 19th century, the Mvita of the 17th and 18th centuries sought the economic benefits of special relations with the Giriama.¹⁴

¹¹ See Map 7, p.33.

¹² Spear, *The Kaya Complex*, 30-32.

¹³ For details of early Giriama trade, see Brantley, 12-14.

¹⁴ Krapfs Journal, entry for 17 February 1845, CMS, CAS/016/168.

Appendix III: The Digo and the Kilindini

The close ties between the Digo and the Kilindini (of Mombasa) are a part of the living traditions of the two peoples.¹ Though the traditions say nothing about the earliest contacts between the Digo and the Kilindini, we can postulate three ways in which such contacts began.

It is possible that the Digo and the Kilindini were known to each other in Shungwaya. They both have traditions of migration from Shungwaya. Some Digo and Kilindini may even have migrated from Shungwaya together.

If the Digo and the Kilindini were not in contact in Shungwaya, it is likely that they first established contact with each other in the southern hinterland of Mombasa. According to one tradition, preserved among the Digo of Kikoneni, the Digo who were fleeing from Shungwaya managed to shake off their Galla pursuers by camping one night on the outskirts of a Muslim town south of Mombasa. The Galla, on hearing several muezzins calling to prayer in the town the next morning, considered themselves outnumbered and decided to move on.² Though questionable history, the story makes good drama, and does raise the intriguing possibility that the first Digo to arrive on the southern Kenya coast found Muslim (and other) peoples settled there. Did the Digo perhaps settle at *kaya* Kinondo because there were other persons in the area? If so, who were these persons, and what relations did the Digo have with them?

Various peoples could have been living on the southern Kenya coast at that time. The Bondei (of northeastern Tanzania) were once living north of the Uмба river and are said to have moved south when the Digo arrived, but the Bondei were certainly not Muslims at that time.³ The Shirazi may have been in the Kinondo area, as well as in such towns as Tumbe, Munge, and Kifundi, in the 15th and 16th centuries (Map 2), or may have moved to the Kinondo area from the Shirazi towns farther south after being defeated by the Vumba early in the 17th century.⁴

The Kilindini may also have been living near *kaya* Kinondo. According to their traditions, they were at Ukunda before moving to Mombasa.⁵ From

¹ Saidi bin Khalfan, Bomani, 28/10/85, Muhammad Ahmad Matano, Kibokoni, 4/12/86, and numerous other informants. The earliest European account of Digo-Kilindini relations is in C. Guillain, *Documents*, Vol II, 244. Also see A.H.J. Prins, *The Coastal Tribes of the Northeastern Bantu* (London 1952), 40-41, 46.

² Omari Muhammad Masemo, Kikoneni, 16/1/76.

³ Testimony of Saidi Pimwe, Dar es Salaam, July 1948, and elders of Mkinga, 4th October 1948, ref. Rhodes House, MSS. Afr.r.84, E.C. Baker, "Wanyika and Wadigo notebook, pp.43 and 73.

⁴ In a 1917 report, the Acting District Commissioner Thompson (who made extensive enquiries about the Shirazi) noted that the remains of settlements around Galu were possibly of Shirazi origin. File Memorandum "Immigration from Shiraz", KNA, DC/KWL/3/5.

⁵ Guillain was the first to record Kilindini traditions in detail. C. Guillain, *Documents*, Vol II, 237-245; F.J. Berg, "Mombasa under the Busaidi Sultanate: the City and its Hinterlands in the Nineteenth Century; Ph.D. thesis (University of Wisconsin 1971), 40-41.

Portuguese records we know that the Kilindini moved to Mombasa island (where they founded the village of Kilindini) sometime after 1593, but it is not certain that they all moved to Mombasa island at the same time. They may have been scattered in several groups, some moving to live on Mombasa island, while others remained on the mainland around Ukunda, or between Ukunda and Likoni.

In 1634, De Rezende wrote: "Many Arabians live both to the north and to the south along the coast belonging to the fortress of Mombasa. They are like prisoners of the Mozungulos Caffres, because they have to pay them a large tribute in cloth in order to be allowed to live in security." The "Arabians" whom De Rezende referred to as living north of Mombasa would have been the Malindi, the Kilifi and the Mtwapa, and possibly other peoples such as the Ng'ombeni.⁶

Some of the "Arabians" living south of Mombasa were almost certainly Kilindini. And some, at least, of the "Mozungulos Caffres" with whom they were in contact were probably early Digo settlers at *kaya* Kinondo. Rezende's 1634 map of Mombasa shows an unnamed mainland settlement in the Likoni area immediately south of Mombasa.⁷ The inhabitants of Likoni at that time were probably Kilindini (who eventually abandoned their mainland settlements later in the 17th century⁸). The people who settled (and built stone mosques) at Tiwi, Diani, Kongo and Ukunda, have not been identified,⁹ but they too could have been Kilindini, who are known to have built a stone mosque in the village of Kilindini on Mombasa island.¹⁰

A third possibility is that relations between the Digo and the Kilindini were first established in the Mombasa area. This assumes that the Digo arrived at Kinondo after the Kilindini had moved north from Ukunda. As migration brought the Digo of *kaya* Kinondo steadily northwards, they would have entered into contact with the peoples of Mombasa, especially with those living in the village of Kilindini on the south of the island.

In the 17th and 18th centuries, the Digo and the Kilindini drew closer in many ways. They began to trade more regularly, and to intermarry. The Kilindini are said to have welcomed Digo visitors, immigrants and refugees in Mombasa. A

⁶ See Appendix II.

⁷ C.R. Boxer and Carlos De Azevedo, *Fort Jesus and the Portuguese in Mombasa, 1593-1729* (London 1960), 26. Rezende's map, which first appeared in the *Livro do Estado da India* in 1636, is reproduced in Boxer and De Azevedo, opposite p. 81.

⁸ Gray, 12.

⁹ Ruins of Muslim settlements are found at Tiwi, Diani, Kongo and Ukunda (Map 2). (Wilson, *Monumental Architecture*, 41-48.) Ceramics have been found near Tiwi dating to the 14th century (Barno Sassoon, *Fort Jesus Newsletter*, May 1974), and collections of pottery from the other sites indicate that the settlements may have started in the 15th or 16th centuries, but this is uncertain, as is the date when they were abandoned. For information about pottery found on the other sites, I am indebted to Richard Wilding, the Coast Archaeologist of the National Museums of Kenya. According to Kirkman the mosques of these settlements may be as recent as the 18th century. (James Kirkman, *Men and Monuments on the East African Coast* (London 1964), 166-167.)

¹⁰ James Kirkman, *The Juma'a of the Three Tribes at Mombasa, a Swahili Mosque*, Malindi 1957.

Digo fugitive fleeing from his countrymen would be given refuge among the Kilindini, and occasionally a Kilindini would take refuge among the Digo. The relationship was one of mutual benefit, a kind of unwritten mutual assistance treaty. In 1848, Guillain spoke of the Kilindini as having "suzerainty" over the Digo. "The Digo," he wrote, "depend on the Kilindini shaykhs" (without elaborating what that dependency entailed).¹¹ But by the time Guillain visited Mombasa, Busaidi rule had already given the town greater military and political ascendancy over the surrounding hinterland, and it would be incorrect to apply Guillain's assessment to Digo-Kilindini relations of the 17th and 18th centuries.U

¹¹ Guillain, *Documents*, Vol II, 244.

¹² See Chapter I, pp.32-34.

Appendix IV: The Mijikenda, the Swahili, and the Muslim Tradition of Healing

The word *mganga* (pl. *waganga*) is used in Swahili, Mijikenda and many other Bantu languages. It is often translated into English as 'medicine-man', but the translation fails (aside from its primitive connotations) to convey the attributes and scope of *uganga* (the practice or art of being an *mganga*). The translation 'witch' or 'witch-doctor' (formerly in vogue, but now dying out) is even less accurate than 'medicine-man', and is more appropriate for the Swahili word *mchawi* (pl. *wachawi*), which means one who practises sorcery or black magic (Swa. *uchawi*). An *mganga* is respected and sought after, and promotes his cures openly; an *mchawi* is feared and avoided (if he is known or suspected), and casts his spells in secret.¹

A Mijikenda *mganga* practises healing on a broader scale than a Western-trained general practitioner. An *mganga* is as much a seer and consultant as a healer. He treats misfortune as well as illness, and undertakes to cure or advise about circumstances that a Western medical doctor might normally refer to a psychiatrist or social counsellor. In this regard, an *mganga* can be considered a general therapist who treats bodily, mental and social disorders.

Most *waganga* are generalists, able to deal with a wide range of complaints, from toothaches to rheumatism to infertility. Treatment can be preventive as well as restorative. Just as an *mganga* senses the past causes of present ills, he is able to foresee the future consequences of present behaviour. He has special insight into the moral and spiritual dimension of human acts. This is particularly important in a society where disease and misfortune are not always attributed to natural or human causes. And so an *mganga* is consulted about such matters as the propitious day and hour for one's wedding, or why one's marriage is going wrong, or what one should do to succeed in one's business. This dimension of therapy is, of course, present in the Western world (with a different approach) in the field of social or vocational counselling, but is not considered medicine in the strict sense.

The tradition of healing among the Swahili is referred to as *utabibu wa kitabu*, that is, "the art of healing by the book." "The book" in this case does not refer to the Qur'an, but to the fact that the healer is working from written medical texts, some of which may have been handed down from father to son, or within the same family, for generations. A Swahili healer is called *tabibu*, or out of respect he might be called *mwalimu* (lit. teacher). The Swahili would not call him an *mganga*,

¹ The dividing line between *uganga* and *uchawi* lies more in intentions than in methods. An *mganga* using his power for evil purposes becomes an *mchawi*. Cf. Farouk Topan, "Oral literature in a ritual setting: The role of spirit songs in a spirit-mediumship cult of Mombasa, Kenya," Ph.D. thesis (University of London 1971): 127-28. For an extensive commentary on sorcery (on the Tanzania coast), see Peter Lienhard (ed and trans), *77te Medicine Man, Swifa ya Nguvumali* (Oxford 1968): 51-80.

because an *mganga* is an unlettered person (no matter how efficacious his treatments may be), whereas a *tabibu* has had to study and read in order to learn his skills.

Within the Swahili tradition of healing, there is much that belongs to the legacy of classical Muslim medicine² (in large part derived from the Greek belief in the four humours that determine, by their relative proportions, a person's health and temperament), but Swahili practice has been modified by local beliefs. For example, Muslim healers in Mombasa use anonymous Arabic texts (printed overseas) that have clearly been written on the East African coast, for they contain Swahili words, and references to local medicines.³

Use of the written word is perhaps the main feature that distinguishes the Swahili *tabibu* from the Mijikenda *mganga*. A Swahili *tabibu* may prescribe potions and medicines prepared from roots and herbs (Swa. *miti shamba*), just as a Mijikenda *mganga* might, but the Swahili *tabibu* will do so following techniques described in written texts, whereas the Mijikenda *mganga* will do so following methods he has been taught without texts. Another difference is that a Swahili *tabibu* uses herbs imported from India, whereas an *mganga* uses local roots and herbs. The *mganga* has been influenced by Islam, however, to the extent that, like his Muslim counterpart, he will use pieces of written text (of the Qur'an) to prepare amulets (Swa. *hirizi*; Arabic. *hirz*).⁴ A Muslim *tabibu* fashions many kinds of protective charms, whose power is recognized, by Muslim and non-Muslim alike, as being especially efficacious.⁵

The difference between Swahili and Mijikenda medicine is clearly seen, for example, in the practice of geomancy (Swahili. *kupiga ramli*; Mijikenda. *kupiga bao*),⁶ the use of protective charms, and the interpretation of dreams. In Swahili

² As Browne has pointed out, the Muslim tradition of medicine is quite different from the Western tradition: "Of the Prophet's own ideas about medicine and hygiene, we can form a fairly accurate idea from the very full and carefully authenticated body of traditions of his sayings and doings, which, after the Quran, forms the most authoritative basis of Muslim doctrine. If we take the *Sahih* of ai-Bukhari, we find at the beginning of the 4th volume, two books dealing with medicine and the sick, containing in all 80 Chapters. This looks promising; but when we come to examine them more closely we find that only a small proportion deal with medicine, surgery or therapeutics as we understand them, and that the majority are concerned with such matters as the visitation, encouragement and spiritual consolation of the sick, the evil eye, talismans, amulets and protective prayers and formulae." Edward G. Browne, *Arabian Medicine* (Cambridge 1921): 11-12.

³ One of the better known books is *Sa'at ul Khabar* printed in Cairo, Egypt. Local handwritten texts in Arabic (with Swahili words and phrases) are also used.

⁴ Parkin notes how some (non-Muslim) Giriama *waganga* increase their repertoire by buying charms from Swahili (Muslim) *matabibu* in Mombasa or Malindi. David Parkin, *Palms, Wine and Witnesses* (London 1972), 40.

⁵ Such charms usually contain Quranic texts in one form or another. They can be made out of a piece of wood, metal, leather, or other durable matter, which becomes the material resting-place of the vital essence of the spell used to create the charm. A charm is basically protective, but its magic force can also be productive. See A.H.J. Prins, "Islamic Maritime Magic: a Ship's Charm from Lamu," in H.J. Greschat and H. Jungrathmayr (eds), *Wort und Religion: Kalima na Dini* (Stuttgart 1969): 294-304.

The Digo are said to consider some amulets so powerful that one is protected by them even when breaking a taboo. See L.P. Gerlach, "Some Basic Digo Conceptions of Health and Disease," pp.9-34 in Proceedings of a Symposium on "Attitudes to Health and Disease among some East African Tribes" held at Makerere College, Kampala, December 1959.

⁶ The Swahili word *ramli* is derived from the Arabic word *raml*, meaning "sand"; geomancy in Arabic is *'ilm ul-ramli*, literally, "knowledge (or science) of the sand."

geomancy, there are texts to be consulted, and figures to be drawn and interpreted. The Mijikenda diviner (Mijikenda. *mbumga*) has no texts to consult. Instead he uses natural objects, seeds from trees, sticks, etc. whose manipulation (allowing them to fall onto the ground, measuring them, etc.) gives him an effective means for interpreting the future. The work of a diviner is in the nature of consultancy about future options, but he also prescribes cures for patients whose sickness is the result of wrong actions in the past.

The interpretation of dreams is not considered part of the work of a Swahili geomancist. Nor is the interpretation of dreams strictly the work of a Swahili *tabibu*. Some old Swahili persons are known to have knowledge about the meaning of dreams. One might consult an old man or woman, or a friend, about a dream, but this would usually be done without payment of a fee. Among the Mijikenda, on the other hand, an *mganga* is consulted about dreams and their meaning.

Among the Swahili, women tend to specialize in dealing with spirit possession and in exorcism. Some men might do this work, but it is seen as something separate and outside the mainstream of the work of a *tabibu*.⁸ And women specialize in other fields. For example, one can find women in Mombasa who set broken bones, or who are mid-wives (Swa. *mikunga*), but a woman who does such work is not considered a *tabibu*. The exorcism of Muslim spirits is sometimes conducted by a Muslim *mwalimu* (teacher), and can involve the recitation of the *fatiha* (opening verse of the Qur'an), the burning of incense, and the reading of religious texts, in addition to dancing and singing.⁹

Some Muslim teachers, notably Shaykh Al-Amin in more recent times, have spoken out and written against the evils of believing in spirits and consulting *waganga*, but this does not seem to have changed popular practice.

⁷ The text that is usually consulted is the *Ta'bir ar-Ru'ya* by ibn Sireen.

⁸ See Topan, "Oral literature in a ritual setting," 134-177.

⁹ G.E.T. Wijeyewardene, "Swahili Conceptions of Health and Disease," pp.83-94 of the Proceedings of a Symposium on "Attitudes to Health and Disease among some East African Tribes" held at Makerere College, Kampala, December 1959.

Appendix V. Ten Biographical Sketches

(The following biographical sketches give some idea of the variety of motives that led Mijikenda to migrate to Takaungu and nearby Mazrui villages, the relations of Mijikenda with Muslims in the area, and the circumstances of Mijikenda conversion to Islam. Some names have been altered to preserve anonymity, but the facts remain unchanged. I am grateful to Muhammad Salim Baya for his assistance in doing field work in this area.)

i) My father was a Giriama farmer at Kakoneni. The reason he came to Takaungu was because both his mother and his father had died, and he and his brothers had no one to look after them, so they decided to go to the coast and look for work. My father worked for a Gunya by the name of Muhammad, doing housework and work in the fields. My father's brothers went elsewhere. One went to Gunya country up north where he became a Muslim, and another brother went to Gongoni where he got married and stayed. Another brother got work with a Mazrui at Takaungu, and later went to Mtondia. My father became a Muslim, but he never got a chance to study the Qur'an.

My mother was a Giriama from Ganze. My father converted her before marrying her. When word reached her father back in Ganze that she had been converted to Islam, he wasn't at all pleased. He immediately sent back the dowry payment and told his daughter to come back to Ganze. My father didn't accept the dowry payment back, but he then promised that he wouldn't force my mother to follow Islam. In fact, by the end of his life he wasn't following Islam either. He left off fasting and he even stopped praying.

ii) My grandfather on my father's side was born at Chonyi. When he was a young man, he came to Takaungu as a mercenary to fight for the Mazrui in the Mazrui-Giriama war [1883]. There at Takaungu my grandfather became a Muslim, and married my grandmother who came from Duruma during the Mwakisenge famine [1884]. He converted her to Islam when she was still a young girl. My grandmother never learned about religion, the only thing women were taught then was how to cultivate.

My other grandfather was a Kauma. He learned at a Qur'an school in Mavueni at Mambo's. He had come to Takaungu because his brothers wanted to kill him. At Takaungu Salim bin Rashid gave him land to farm at Mavueni. There at Mavueni my grandfather married a Kauma Muslim woman. After she died, he married a Giriama woman from Kaloleni who had come to Takaungu. She wasn't a Muslim, but he converted her.

iii) My grandmother was born in Kauma. Her parents weren't Muslim, but she became a Muslim because of her mother's sickness. Her mother was so sick she couldn't go for water or firewood or anything, she couldn't even cook. So my grandmother's father decided to marry off his oldest daughter, the older sister of my grandmother, at Mkomani so he could get money to marry a second wife. My grandmother was only four years old then, but she went to stay with her older sister at Mkomani. There were some Muslims at Mkomani, but my grandmother and her sister weren't staying with Muslims, they were staying with Chonyi.

My grandmother saw that if she left Mkomani and went to Takaungu, things might be better. So she ran away to Takaungu and was taken in there by a Mazrui family. Besides, she had decided to become a Muslim. When she told the wife of the household that she wanted to become a Muslim, she was taken to Abdallah bin Hemed who was the one who converted her. A woman can't be converted by a woman, because then whose daughter would she be? Later my grandmother had to hide because her Chonyi in-laws came looking for her, but Abdallah (who had converted her) helped her. He took her into his own house. There she learned how to cook, and Abdallah looked for a husband for her.

iv) My father was living together with two brothers and a sister in Giriama. Their older brother started catching and selling people, and they got worried that they might be sold, so they decided to run away to Mtanganyiko. There, a Gunya by the name of Mzee Mwinyi took them in, and looked after them. He was the one who converted them to Islam. Later my father started trading at Mtanganyiko.

v) When my grandfather came to Takaungu from Chonyi during the Magunia famine [1899], he was already a mature man. He was one of eleven children (ten brothers and one sister), the rest of whom all died of smallpox. When he saw he was alone, he decided to come to Takaungu to start a new life. At Takaungu he was taken in by Muhammad Abdallah bin Nasir, a Mazrui, and he began cultivating for Muhammad until finally Muhammad gave him his own land to farm. He grew maize and planted coconut trees, some of which you can still see at Takaungu. My mother was a Duruma, whose mother had come to Takaungu during the Mwakisenge famine [1884-5] with her two children, one on her back and the other in her arms. When my grandmother reached Takaungu she was taken in by Abdallah bin Nasir. She became a Muslim, but she didn't get married at Takaungu; she just stayed with her children until she died. She began growing maize and cassava -in those days if you asked for land, you would be given some. My father had a farm at Mkongani.

I didn't learn the Qur'an, nor did my father or mother. Even though people became Muslims, they didn't take their religion seriously. I never saw my mother pray. She just used to fast during Ramadhan.

vi) My mother was a Zaramo and my father a Yao. My father was caught by his own people when he was a young boy and sold to Said Uthman at Takaungu. His master brought him up as if he were his own son. My father died when I was a young boy and Said continued to look after me. I remember one day I was walking through the market with him, and he asked me, "Do you want a *kikoi* [a kind of loin-cloth]?" I said, "Yes," and he bought it for me. I stayed with him, and when I was ready to marry, he paid the dowry for me. Then I started working as a porter carrying sacks of rice and grain. The grain was coming from Giriama. We would load it on the dhows to be sent to Arabia. The people coming from Arabia to trade would bring clothes, and food like dates to sell to the people here.

vii) My great-grandfather Ali was a Digo living at Tiwi. He left Tiwi to come to Mkongani because he had been asked to pay a heavy fine for his son who had run off with someone's daughter. My great-grandfather asked to be given two days to raise the fine, but then decided to leave instead of paying it. The next day he took his wife and five children, together with his brother and his brother's family, and made his way to Likoni, where he crossed to Mombasa. In those days, one could walk across at low tide, with water up to one's chest. Though Ali knew no one at Takaungu, he had heard about the place, and he decided to go there. His brother decided to settle at Mkomani (Kisauni). When Ali reached the outskirts of Takaungu, he was spotted by one of the soldiers who brought him before Salim bin Khamis. Salim asked him where he was from and why had come to Takaungu, and then made him stay in Takaungu while he checked with other villages to see whether any slaves had escaped. When Salim was satisfied that Ali was not an escaped slave, he ordered him to be given land to cultivate at Mkongani.

My great-grandfather was already a Muslim when he came to Mkongani, but I don't know how he was converted. My grandfather on my mother's side was a Duruma who came to Mkongani looking for a place to stay. Ali gave him land, and he married one of Ali's daughters (my grandmother). Other Digo came to Mkongani, people like Abdulrahman Mwamcharo, Amri bin Omar, and Ali Mwakopa. Omar Mwamcharo built a small mosque out of mud and poles, but it fell down later.

viii) My grandfather, a Giriama, had a Mazrui friend living at Konjora. I don't know how their friendship started, maybe they were neighbours. When my father was born, he was given as a small boy to the Mazrui to be brought up. So my father never had to become a Muslim, he was just raised a Muslim from childhood. When he was still a young boy, he started helping out in the shop of this Mazrui. When the Mazrui died, my father moved from Konjora to Tezo and turned to farming. My mother was the daughter of a Giriama Muslim convert and a Ribe woman. My mother never went to Qur'an school, but her brother did.

ix) My grandfather was a Yao. He was captured as a slave when he was a small boy and taken to Kilwa. There he was bought by Arabs and brought to Mombasa. After living in Mombasa for some time, trouble broke out between the Mazrui and other tribes, and the Mazrui went to Takaungu and Gasi. My grandfather came to Takaungu with the first Mazrui. When my grandfather was taken as a slave, he wasn't a Muslim, but later he was converted by his master, not only that, he was circumcised there in Mombasa.

After reaching Takaungu, my grandfather met my grandmother, a Chonyi, who had come to live at Takaungu. My grandfather never got any religious education, because it wasn't easy for someone like him. At that time there was only one slave in the whole of Takaungu who was given a chance of education by his master, a slave by the name of Khamis Chande. He was so favoured by his master that he was even taken on the pilgrimage to Mecca.

There was one Mazrui, Ali bin Sulayman, whose mother was an Ngindo. Ali always treated the Ngindo kindly. He used to attend their spirit dances and would ask them to bring him some of the gruel (Swa. *uji*) that was cooked for such occasions. The doings of the Mazrui were amazing. For example, once Rashid bin Salim's sister was sick and needed special medicine from the forest. The town-crier went around blowing his horn and announcing that all the people of the town had to go out into the forest to look for the medicine, whoever ignored this call did so at his own risk.

x) My father was born at Tsangalaweni (Giriama). He came to Takaungu during the Magunia famine [1899] to stay with a sister of his who was married there. He was given work in an Arab's shop measuring oil and scaling fish. Then he got a job with a Barawa trader who had a shop at Mtanganyiko and was taking good to Vitengeni. They used to take soap and oil and cloth to sell there. And later he came to work for a Hadhrarni Arab at Takaungu. He had lived with Muslims for over ten years, but he still hadn't become a Muslim. His Hadhrami master kept telling him to become a Muslim, which he finally did. The Hadhrami paid his marriage dowry for him, and would buy him and his children new clothes for feastdays.

Appendix VI: Letters of Charles Dundas

1) *Charles Dundas, District Commissioner, Mombasa, 1st July, 1915,
to Charles Robley, Han. Provincial Commissioner, Mombasa*

Sir,

I have the honour to submit the following for your consideration:-

It seems in the past to have been assumed that a great portion of the Wadigo of this District are to be regarded as Mohamedans and therefore administered as such. It is true that to the East of Shimba Hills the greater number of Wadigo profess to adhere to the Moslem Faith, but in practise this is really only a newly acquired portion of their religious beliefs and usages. It reminds me much of the headman in Nyika District who said he was a Mohamedan but if the government did not approve he was "Islamua kwa kikwetu" [a local-style Muslim] and could always exchange his kanzu [Muslim dress] for a blanket. Mohamedan and Pagan Wadigo alike join in offering sacrifices, and worship at their family graves and ancestral Kayas; one of the few who objects to Digo law is the active guardian of a Kaya, and as such the principal functionary at the pagan religious services there. They make offerings at ancient ruins and freely resort to charms, medicines, magic and tribal dances for the curing of sickness. If the Mohamedan religion were more than skin deep with these people, it might tend to reduce the excessive consumption of liquor which together with the above practises are opposed to Mohamedanism. If the men are mostly Mohamedans, their wives for the most part are not, and this is also contrary to Mohamedan religion.

2. On this veneer of Moslem faith has been based the argument that those professing it should be subject to Mohamedan Law. It seems in fact to be very generally supposed that a change of religion is identical with a change of law, but I can see no foundation for the argument. There are various Mohamedan natives who have their own laws and as regards Christians, there is no Christian law, but every Christian native has his own laws. Nor is it reasonable to suppose that African ideas and African usage will cease by a mere change of religion. It may be noted that at Freretown after more than 30 years of mission activity the practice of dowry payment is still maintained.

In the meantime the solution of this question should lie with the Wadigo themselves, for it is undesirable, not to say impossible, to force Mohamedan or Digo Law upon them.

3. Despite many obstacles in their way the Digo tribal authorities continue to settle their own affairs and excepting where we have destroyed it, their councils are constituted on the original model which is also the best I have met with in any of the tribes I have had to deal with. They judge entirely according to Digo custom as the only one which is comprehensible to them. Seeing all this and having been assured by the Mudir and many Wadigo that they object to Mohamedan Law, I assembled every Ngambi of the Mohamedan Communities, and having pointed out that they had adopted Mohamedan religion, which implied that they subjected themselves to

5. I have previously dealt with the position of the Tribal authorities, but this is so inseparable from the above subject and is of such consequence that I desire again to call attention to the necessity of recognising and supporting them. Nothing can be gained by the deposal of authorities whose positions rest on the whole tribal organisation, but if encouraged they are bound to be very useful. By their loyalty the Wadigo of Vanga have been valuable allies in Vanga District; solely by the aid of the elders I got the Tiwi road made for motor traffic and obtained from the tribe

150 porters. They may still be of great assistance in more important directions but they may be of equal assistance to the enemy, one headman was hanged for assisting the enemy but if we had been more in touch and confidence with the Wadigo this regrettable incident might never have occurred.

I cannot at any rate conceive that this is a time in which to alienate tribal authorities, and having no desire to participate in the responsibilities of such a policy, I respectfully request that something may be done to rectify the undesirable system which the administration of these people has drifted into.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

your obedient servant,

(signed) C.Dundas

DISTRICT COMMISSIONER

2) *Charles Dundas, Moshi, 15 April 1916, to Mr. Charles Hobley (extracts)*

The practice to be followed is apparently that suggested in the Chief Justice's letter 38A/16 of 25/3/16, and this letter is well and good until you get to paragraph 4 according to which, and subsequent paragraphs, the genuine Mohamedan convert is not subject to the native courts but may go to the Mohamedan Kathi [Judge] in matters of status, marriage, religion, inheritance and divorce. This means that certain persons are not subject to the jurisdiction of the Councils, and moreover it is open to anyone when it so suits his purpose, to declare himself a pure Mohamedan on which point the Kathi will decide.

But the chief trouble arise in mixed cases and the most frequent of such cases will be those of inheritance. The question then crops up, can a pagan be deprived of his inheritance by a Mohamedan. For instance, A a Mohamedan dies and his property according to native custom should go to B his pagan brother, but his Mohamedan son C will claim it under Mohamedan law and the Kathi will award it to him, although the probability is that A inherited the property from *his* brother according to native custom. My own opinion is that so long as two laws may be applied within one and the same tribe, we shall never have satisfactory conditions and that the only proper course is to adopt for one and all the Law claimed by the majority. I cannot see why because a man chooses to become a Mohamedan, he should be entitled to exemption from the laws of his country.

Appendix VII: Ruling of the Court of Appeal for Eastern Africa¹

Court of Appeal for Eastern Africa

CA. 27/1927: Ali Ganyuma v. Ali Mohamed

Held: that Mohammedan Law applies and the estate descends patrilineally.

Sir Charles Griffin, Chief Justice (Uganda)

The suit was first heard and decided by a native tribunal which decided that the estate descended by Wa-Digo custom, that is, matrilineally. There was an appeal to a British Court, the Second Class District Court at Kwale, and before that court an attempt was made to prove that in the clan of the Wadigo tribe to which the deceased belonged, the customary law of inheritance was patrilineal. The Court decided against this contention. From this judgment there was an appeal to the Supreme Court of Kenya (His Honour Mr. Justice Stephen).

This is an appeal from the District Commissioner of Kwale on the question whether the property of a native of the Wadigo tribe, who is a Mohammedan, should on his decease be distributed according to the rules of Native Law and Custom... Where natives are Mohammedans, the Mohammedan Law, in my opinion, applies to them. I therefore allow the appeal with costs both here and in the court below.

The Judgment can be supported on the provisions of the Mohammedan Divorce and Succession Ordinance enacted in 1920. Section 4 of that Ordinance is as follows:

Where any person contracts marriage as a Mohammedan, and such person dies, the law of succession applicable to the property...of any such person shall be in accordance with the principles of Mohammedan law.

It is curious to note that throughout the whole of the proceedings in the Lower Courts, no reference has been made to the Mohammedan Divorce and Succession Ordinance which governs the case.

The appeal is dismissed.

¹ The Appendix includes extracts of the ruling of the Court of Appeal for Eastern Africa, taken from the *East Africa Protectorate LAW REPORTS (1927-28)*, Volume 11 (1929): 30.

him, "When you go to town, don't you see the people gathered together inside the buildings every day?" His nephew answered, "I see them." He told his nephew, "Well, those people are praying to God, and they get many good things, food, clothes, that's why you see people in town don't have any work to do. Tomorrow I want you to get all the people to go to the forest to cut down trees so we can build a house of God."

They went off together, they cut the trees and brought them. In the afternoon they began to dig some holes. On the second and the third day the work went on apace, until on the fourth day it was finished. They waited for it (the mosque) to dry. While they were waiting for the mosque to dry, the man himself, Hamisi Mchinondo, went to Mombasa to see what was happening. He asked his sister again what the people who pray actually get. His sister answered him, "They get rewards and rest. And you, the way you are, you're not a Muslim, you should become a Muslim, then your affairs will prosper." So he agreed to become a Muslim. Someone was called to pour ceremonial water over him, to convert him, and he gave him the name Salehe bin Omari. His sister bought him a white gown, a sleeveless waistcoat, a hat, a walking-stick and shoes. After putting on these things, he went back home.

When he got back home, he called the people and told them that he is no longer Harnisi Mchinondo, but Salehe bin Omari, that is, he had become a Muslim. He made a big feast, slaughtered a cow, and invited all the people. Then he told them, "Brothers, as I see it, there's no reason why we should be losing out. Do you see the Swahili, they just worship God, and then they get everything they need, we should do the same. I will be in front, whatever I say, you all answer, Amen."

The first day Salehe bin Omari came in his white gown, he stood there at the front of the mosque, and he began to lead the prayers, and the words he said were the following: "Nchisali nasalia tumwa, chinuka chibiru china nluma." Which means, "When I pray, I pray to be served, when I rise up, my groin hurts me." And everyone answered, "Amen." As they were bowing down and rising up, these were the words that were said.

The mosque prospered, people kept coming to fill it. They went on praying like this for years. Until one year, the rains were particularly heavy, so heavy that the side of the mosque near the front had fallen down and left an opening. When it came time for evening prayers, the Imam went to his place at the front and began to lead the prayers with the very same words as usual, "Nchisali, nasalia tumwa, chinuka chibiru china nluma." The people answered, "Amen," as usual. They prayed

the first time, then as they were saying the prayer a second time, a leopard came in through the opening and grabbed the Imam. There near the front it was small and rather dark, being evening-time, and the people were occupied with praying and didn't see the leopard. The Imam started to shout, "Alumee!" The people thought it was part of the prayer and answered, "Amen!" "Alumee!" They answered, "Amen!" "Alumee, I'm going!" "Amen!" "Alume, I'm going with a leopard!" "Amen!" "Alume, don't think this is a joke!" "Amen!" "Alume, I'm dying!" "Amen!" "Alume, help!" "Amen!"

That was the way Imam Salehe bin Omari was carried away by a leopard. When the people looked towards the front they didn't see anyone, the Imam wasn't there. They went to check and only saw blood. Then they followed where he had passed, but because it was night they couldn't go far. They slept until the next morning. In the morning they followed (the tracks) and found his body, with only the head left. They took the head, brought it into town and buried it.

Appendix IX. Shaykh Mbaruk bin Rashid al-Mazrui of Gasi

Shaykh Mbaruk bin Rashid, the son of Rashid bin Salim (the last Mazrui Liwali of Mombasa), was born in Mombasa in c.1828-30. When the Mazrui left Mombasa in 1837, Shaykh Mbaruk (whose father was captured and died in Busaidi hands) went with his mother, who is said to have been a Duruma, to Takaungu. There he grew up and lived his early years of manhood. In 1865, after unsuccessfully contesting the leadership of the northern Mazrui at Takaungu, Mbaruk moved to Gasi. Abdallah bin Khamis, the leader of the southern Mazrui, agreed to give Shaykh Mbaruk the leadership of Gasi.¹ In this capacity Shaykh Mbaruk was paid a monthly subsidy by Sayyid Majid, the Sultan of Zanzibar. Relations between Shaykh Mbaruk and Sayyid Barghash, who succeeded Sayyid Majid in 1870, were strained. During the 1870s and 1880s, Mbaruk quarrelled constantly with Sayyid Barghash, who cut off Mbaruk's monthly subsidy, and used armed force against him on several occasions (1872-3, 1875, 1882, 1886). After Barghash's death in 1888, Mbaruk went to Zanzibar to see Sayyid Khalifa, the new Sultan of Zanzibar, and for a time relations between Mbaruk and the Sultanate improved. Mbaruk undertook to assist the Imperial British East Africa Company (which paid him a monthly stipend) in maintaining order,² and refrained from open opposition to Zanzibar and the British during the next seven years. In 1895, however, Shaykh Mbaruk supported the claims of his distant cousin and namesake, Mbaruk bin Rashid of Takaungu, to the leadership of Takaungu. Together they fomented armed opposition to the Sultan of Zanzibar and the British. Shaykh Mbaruk's forceful character made him the natural leader of the Rising, which continued until April 1896 when Shaykh Mbaruk took refuge with many of his followers in German East Africa.³

¹ Abdallah bin Khamis bin Hemed [Ahmed] ruled Gasi from its foundation in 1837 until 1865, when he handed over to Shaykh Mbaruk bin Rashid. Hardinge estimated that Mbaruk bin Rashid took over as leader at Gasi in "about 1860." ("Genealogical Tree and List of Chiefs," Inclosure in A.Hardinge, Zanzibar, 28 August 1895, to Marquess of Salisbury, "Correspondence respecting the Recent Rebellion, 18%, Africa No.6 (1896), in *Accounts and Papers* (Parliamentary Papers), LIX (1896): 34.) Chiraghdin, however, in his authoritative study of the life of Shaykh Mbaruk bin Rashid, associates Mbaruk's move to Gasi with the succession dispute that took place at Takaungu in 1865 between Rashid bin Khamis, the son of Khamis bin Rashid, and Abdallah bin Rashid, the brother of Khamis bin Rashid: Shaykh Mbaruk bin Rashid supported Abdallah bin Rashid, who was unsuccessful, after which Mbaruk went to Gasi. In the same year 1865, Abdallah bin Khamis bin Hemed agreed to give Mbaruk bin Rashid the Shaykhdom of Gasi, on the condition that Mbaruk rule in Abdallah's name until Abdallah's death. See Shihabuddin Chiraghdin, "Maisha ya Sheikh Mbaruk bin Rashid ai-Mazrui," *Swahili*, 31 (1960):150-79. Cashmore correctly gives the date of Mbaruk's accession to power at Gasi as 1865, but states that this took place after Abdallah bin Khamis's death. T.H.R.Cashmore, "Sheikh Mbaruk bin Rashid bin Salim el Mazrui," Norman Bennett (ed), *Leadership in Eastern Africa* (Boston 1968): 109-137. The reference is on p.114. Cashmore states that in 1837 Shaykh Mbaruk bin Rashid went to Gasi with Abdallah bin Khamis, but colonial sources and oral evidence indicate that Mbaruk went to Takaungu and resided there until moving to Gasi in 1865.

² "When the Imperial British East Africa Company took over the Coast strip, Sheikh Mbaruk bin Rashid, who had constantly rebelled against the reigning Sultans of Zanzibar, was at peace with the reigning Sultan Khalif; the late General Mathews made an arrangement with the Company to employ him [Sheikh Mbaruk] at a large salary to control the Coast District between the GEA [German East Africa] frontier and Tiwi." File Memo, "Two early histories of the District," KNA, DC/KWL/3/1.

³ Details about the Rising can be found in "Correspondence respecting the Recent Rebellion, 1896" *Accounts and Papers* (Parliamentary Papers), Vol LIX (1896): 10-112; see also File Memos "Wasin and Vanga" and "Political History" (1912), KNA, DC/KWL/3/5; and "Notes on the Arab Clans of East Africa" by R.Skene (1917), KNA, DC/MSA/3/1. Mbaruk's militant character

In 1908, the colonial government agreed to allow Shaykh Mbaruk to return to live in Mombasa. Mbaruk requested that he be allowed to return to Gasi, a request which was granted, but he then decided to remain in Dar es Salaam.⁴

(continued)

was evident even before he assumed leadership at Gasi; he is said to have kept daggers from Yemen at his Takaungu homestead, which he appropriately called Sana'a. I am grateful to Muhammad Abdallah Mazrui for this information, and for showing me the site of Mbaruk's homestead in Takaungu on the 4th March 1987.

⁴ Mbaruk bin Rashid, Dares Salaam, 9 May 1908, to the Governor; Provincial Commissioner, Mombasa, 3 June 1908, to Sheikh Mbaruk bin Rashid. (KNA, Coast Province, MP/21/76.) In 1909, the Governor wrote: "All the surviving leaders of the Mazrui rebellion have gratefully accepted the terms of the free pardon and, with the exception of Sheikh Mbaruk bin Rashid, they have now settled peacefully in this Protectorate. Sheikh Mbaruk bin Rashid has preferred to remain in Dares Salaam." (His Excellency the Governor to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 23 September 1909, KNA, Coast Province, MP/21/76.)

Appendix X. Digo Mosques

Mosques built by Digo Muslims south of Mombasa (up to 1970)

Place	1891- 1910	1901- 1910	1911- 1920	1921- 1930	1931- 1940	1941- 1950	1951- 1960	1961- 1970	Total
Mtongwe/Kiteje			1	1	2	1	1	1	7
Likoni	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	9
Ng'ombenij Pungu/Bombo	2	1	1	3	2	1	1	1	12
Waa/Matuga		1	4	7	1	1	2	3	19
Tsimba (Kwale)			1	2	2	1	1	1	8
Tiwi	1	1	1	2	5	2	2	1	15
Diani/Ukunda		3	2	3	3	2	3	4	20
Kinondo/Muhaka		2	1	3	1	1	1	1	10
Msambweni			3	6	7	5	5	6	32
Mwaluphamba				1		1		2	4
Mkongani				1	1		2	1	5
Kikoneni		2	2	2	2	5	3	1	17
Lungalunga/ Pongwe-Kidimu	1	3	1		2	2	1	2	12
Total	5	14	18	33	29	23	23	25	170

The above table gives a summary, by location and decade, of mosques built by the Digo south of Mombasa during the eighty-year period 1890-1970. The rising number of mosques being built during the first four decades is graphic confirmation of the steady growth of Islam during that period.

The idea of a mosque survey (a kind of geographical history of institutional Islam) evolved quite naturally in gathering information about the earliest Mijikenda mosques. People remembered, and in some cases had witnessed, the building of many of the first mosques. Thus the date of the construction of mosques became one of the more reliable ways of fixing, if not an absolute, at least a relative chronology, of early Mijikenda Islam.

Nevertheless, it was difficult to fix the exact date of construction of most mosques built before 1933. Informants were uncertain about dates, even when they had seen the mosque being built; and informants from different villages often gave different information about the order of building of mosques in an area. Since various mosques were sometimes built within months of each other, uncertainty was more often than not the natural consequence of trying to remember a close sequence of events more than half a century ago. Sometimes, there was a clear wish to assert the precedence of one mosque over another.

Part of the initial difficulty of the survey lay in defining the nature of a mosque. Confusion arose because one informant would give the date of construction of the first temporary mud-and-thatch structure, whereas another informant would give the date of construction of the first permanent mosque (which was often the second or third building on the same site). The question "When was such-and-such a mosque built?" proved to be too imprecise. Useful information was forthcoming only after asking many clarifying questions, such as "Was that the first building?", "Was there a temporary structure there before?" etc. Eventually a general consensus emerged for most mosques, whose dating can be said to be accurate within a margin of error of five years. The sites of mosques built up to and including 1933 are shown on Maps 11A, 11B, 12 and 13. I decided to use the opportunity of the survey to get information about mosques built after 1933, but these mosques are not shown on the Maps.

My original intention was to do a survey of all Mijikenda mosques, including those north of Mombasa, but it soon became clear that in spite of being the pioneers of Mijikenda mosque building (the first two Mijikenda mosques were built north of Mombasa, at Mji Mre and at Mtanganyiko), the northern Mijikenda tended to use mosques built by other Muslims, and in the long run built few mosques of their own. For this reason the above table only shows mosques built by the Digo.

The survey of mosques would have been impossible without the help of student and teacher research assistants who worked in their home areas during school holidays. I would occasionally visit them in the field, and we would sometimes go together to see more knowledgeable Muslim elders in the area. I would like to record my thanks to all those who took part in the survey. It is not possible to mention all by name, but I would like to thank in particular Husayn Mwadzaya, Abdallah Kugula, Mwamlole Wanakah, Mwanaisha Zani, Khamis Mwandaro, Rashid Mwazimu, Khamis Hare Omar, Rashid Kurera, Khamis Tsumo, Mwanamkuu Ndaro, Furaha Amani, Mwanamomo Mdzomba, Sofia Saggaf, Khalid Salim, Alawy Zein Alawy, Abdallah Tsumo, Sulayman Madzengo, Ali Mfuru, Juma Musa Juma, Masud Haji Kigona and Musa Mwadunia for their work.

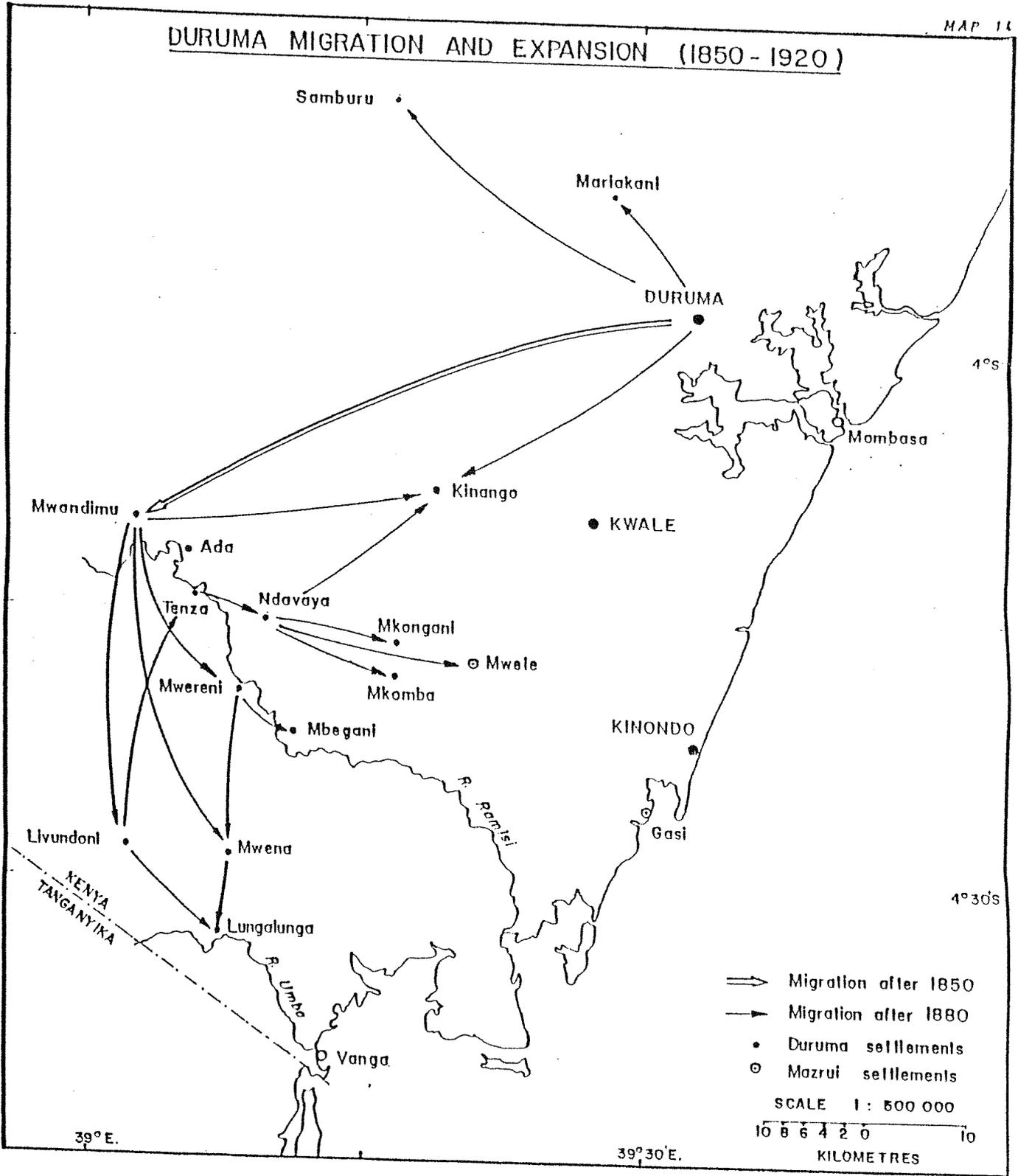
Ma'allim Muhammad Ahmad Matano, Kuze
Muhammad bin Matano Mwakutanga, Mtongwe
Rashid Khamis, Mkomani
Muhammad Mbarak, Mtongwe
Saidi bin Khalfan Mwabundu, Bomani (Likoni)
Shakombo Ali, Mtongwe
Sharif Aziz bin Husayn, Kibokoni
Ma'allim Yahya Ali Omar, Mombasa
Swalehe Abdallah, Kisauni
Swalehe Muhammad, Kisauni
Uthman Mwinyiusi, Mkomani

KWALE DISTRICT

Abdallah Ali Mwakulonda, Shamu
Abdallah Hamisi Mwariale, Msambweni (interviewed by Abdallah Tsumo)
Abdallah Makanzu, Diani
Abdallah Mbwana, Chigongoni
Abdallah Mwatari, Diani
Abdallah Sulayman Zingizi, Vuga (interviewed by Musa Mwadunia)
Abdurrahman Mwakutanga, Mvureni (interviewed by Sulayman Madzengo)
Ali Mwavua Mwatebwe, Kibundani
Bakari Mwampagazi, Chwaka
Bakari Salim Gambiri, Ukunda
Bakari Shehe Mwakoja, Kivuleni
Fatuma Said, Tiwi
Haji Sudi Miki, Bumbuni
Hamad Mwachirenje, Kinondo (interviewed by Sulayman Madzengo)
Hamisi Hilali Mwatumwa, Chigongoni (interviewed by Musa Mwadunia)
Hamisi Muhammad Mwakuwamia, Chigato
Hamisi Mwachirenje, Kinondo
Hamisi Mwakalato, Diani
Hamisi Mwamtunda, Lungalunga
Hamisi Mwatuwano, Waa
Hamisi Sulayman Bugu, Bongwe
Hamza Kasim Ndaro, Kigombero (interviewed by Masoud Haji Kigona)
Ibrahim Makarani, Tiwi
Jerumani Chawiya, Jego (interviewed by Khalid Salim)
Juma Nyevu, Makwenyeni
Juma Peremende, Mvumoni
Juma Salim Pati, Kitsanga
Juma Zani, Kundutsi
Kassim Kinjoi, Diani
Kicheko Mwakiko, Jego
Maalim Uthman bin Shaykh Mwinyi, Pungu
Mbarakali Mwapodzo, Msukoni
Mkulu bin Abdallah, Mwaluvanga Eshu
Muhammad Ali Garongo, Denyenye
Muhammad Ali Mwajinga, Mkwakwani
Muhammad Hamza Hasan Tsari, Msambweni (interviewed by Abdallah Tsumo)
Muhammad Husayn Omari Mwakilalo, Mwaembe
Muhammad Matano Mwashauti, Ukunda Kilolapwa (interviewed by Hamis Tsumo)

DURUMA MIGRATION AND EXPANSION (1850 - 1920)

MAP 11



KILIFI DISTRICT 1987 (showing Locations.)



SCALE 1: 500 000
KILOMETRES 0 2 4 6 8 10

KWALE DISTRICT 1987 (showing Locations)



Abbreviations

ADM	Admiralty Records
CMS	Church Missionary Society Archives
<i>IJAHS</i>	<i>Intemational Journal of African Histmical Studies</i>
<i>JAH</i>	<i>Journal of Aflican History</i>
<i>JEAUNHS</i>	<i>Journal of the East African and Uganda Natural History Society</i>
<i>IRA!</i>	<i>Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute</i>
KNA	Kenya National Archives
PRO	Public Record Office, Kew
RGS	Royal Geographical Society
<i>TNR</i>	<i>Tanzania (formerly Tanganyika) Notes and Records</i>
<i>UMFCM</i>	<i>United Methodist Free Churches Magazine</i>

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B. University of Birmingham Library

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Correspondence and Journals of Krapf, Rebmann, Erhardt and Binns

C. Rhodes House, Oxford

Manuscript Collection, Colonial Records Project: notebooks of E.C.Baker,
Richard Thornton, Charles Hobley's "Kenya Diaries"

D. Library, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London

William Mackinnon Papers
W.E.Taylor Papers

E. John Rylands Library, University of Manchester

Methodist Mission Archives: including collection of
the *United Methodist Free Churches Magazine* (UMFCM)

F. Royal Geographical Society, London (RGS)

Emery Papers
Thornton Manuscripts (including Journal)
Erhardt Manuscripts

G. Royal Anthropological Institute

The Archives of the Institute are closed to researchers, and it has not been possible to consult the papers of Charles Hobley and Sir Alfred Claud Hollis.

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