

Textual sources on an Islamic African past: Arabic material in Zanzibar's National Archive

Anne K Bang

The Zanzibar National Archives (ZNA) in the Kilimani district outside Zanzibar Stone Town is home to a rich collection of material in Arabic and also a number of documents in Swahili in the Arabic script.¹ This material dates from the Omani era of East African history (c.1800–90) as well as from the period of the British protectorate (1890–1963). Among these is a large collection of Arabic manuscripts originating from Zanzibar itself, from East Africa, Oman as well as the Middle East. There is also a rich collection of Arabic correspondence deriving from the sultans of Zanzibar with contemporaries in Africa, the Middle East and Europe, as well as *qadi* (*shari'a*) court records, title deeds and *waqf* files. The Islamic presence in East Africa has been both extensive and diverse, and this is reflected in the collection held in the ZNA. The richness and variety of the collection recently led it to be nominated for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation's Memory of the World Register.² In the past decade, several researchers – African, western and Omani – have started to use this wealth of material as direct sources for historical research. The nature of the manuscripts and documents is almost exclusively Islamic, that is, a combination of manuscripts deriving from all Islamic sciences, legal handbooks and rulings, poetry and correspondence.

Challenging statements by earlier scholars of Islamic Africa, Scott Reese has pointed out that texts of a religious nature are in themselves of historical value, in so far as they demonstrate a level of knowledge, interconnectedness and technology at a certain place at a certain point in time. Secondly, the texts themselves do contain valuable historical information given that social and political issues of the day frequently tended to be played out precisely within religious discourse.³ In other words, the documents housed in the ZNA provide not only phenomenological knowledge about Islam, but also concrete and direct historical evidence on a range of issues pertaining to East

Opposite: An East African Arabic manuscript dated 7 June 1905. It is interesting to note how much the calligraphic styles vary between East and West African manuscripts.

African society. Finally, as archive files, they constitute not only a piece of Islamic heritage but also a substantial part of the East African literary corpus.

What will be presented here is thus a broad overview of the content and recent research conducted on the non-colonial records held at the ZNA. I draw on the work of several of my colleagues as well as that of the staff at the ZNA who have, at times against heavy odds, managed to preserve a collection which adds greatly to the literary heritage of sub-Saharan Africa.

This chapter will outline the historical background to the existing collection, and discuss historical topics and themes that have been studied and may be pursued further with reference to the material. Finally, a note is added on the state of preservation in the ZNA, including suggestions for its improvement.

Background: the Omani (Bu Sa'idi) rulers of East Africa, c.1830–90

The new sultan of Oman, Sayyid Sa'id b. Sultan al-Bu Sa'idi turned his attention towards East Africa upon his ascent to power in 1804. At that time, Omani (and general South Arabian) migration to East Africa had been an ongoing process for centuries, dating back to at least the twelfth century. Clans of South Arabian origin, such as the Mazruis and the Nabhanis, the al Shaykh Abi Bakr b. Salim and the Jamal al-Layl had spread throughout the coast and merged with the existing population to form a coastal urban aristocracy, centred on cities like Lamu, Mombasa and Kilwa. Ties with their clansmen in South Arabia may have been weakened but were nevertheless called upon in times of distress, such as during the Portuguese era.

Sayyid Sa'id turned to Zanzibar, which he made his new capital in 1832. This shift was not only a reactivation of previous and long-standing trade and tribal relations. It was also a completely new form of direct Omani rule, which was aimed primarily at creating a trade depot for the vast riches of the African mainland (slaves, spices, ivory and copra, to name but a few).⁴ The 'new Oman', as represented by its new rulers, the Bu Sa'idis, was maritime and mercantile, and able to subjugate the previous leaders of the coastal towns. Direct Omani overlordship was not always welcomed, not even by clans of Omani origin – hence, for example, the long-standing feud between Sayyid Sa'id and the Mazrui clan of Mombasa during the 1820s and 1830s. Nevertheless, upon the death of Sayyid Sa'id in 1856, the Omani Empire included all of Oman, as well as the coast of Africa from Guardafui to Cape Delgado.

Despite its massive commercial expansion, the Omani transoceanic empire stood little chance of surviving the emergence of Great Britain as the main naval power in the Indian Ocean. Internal Bu Sa'idi rivalry and direct British involvement led to a division of the Omani Empire in 1861. The East African part of the possessions were headed by Sayyid Sa'id's son Majid, while his brother Thwayni became sultan of the Omani mainland.

In political and economic terms, the Bu Sa'idi Empire of East Africa was already in decline by the time Sayyid Barghash b. Sa'id was pronounced sultan in 1870. British influence was mounting and the abolition of slavery led to a shortage of manpower and eventually to the impoverishment of the landowners. By the 1880s, the Arab plantation owners were in reality deeply indebted to the Indian merchant class. Nevertheless, the era of Sayyid Barghash (r. 1870–88) has been called the 'golden age' of the Zanzibari Bu Sa'idi sultanate. The 'golden age', however, must be understood in cultural terms. Material innovations were many during the reign of Barghash: palaces were built, electricity introduced to Zanzibar Town, and water supply systems constructed. Finally, and most importantly from the point of view of scriptural heritage, Barghash's reign saw a steep rise in scholarly activities. *Ribats* (religious schools) were endowed by *waqf* funds, scholars were supported and books from overseas were imported to Zanzibar at an unprecedented rate.

Last but not least, Barghash brought a printing press from Syria along with experienced printers, very much inspired by the spirit of reform then current in the Arab world. The press was active from 1879 and launched an extensive programme of printing key Omani legal texts written in North Africa and preserved as manuscripts in Oman.⁵ Its most ambitious project was the printing of the 90-volume *Kitab qamus al-shar'iyya* (Book/Dictionary on *shari'a*) by the Omani scholar Jumayyil b. Khamis al-Sa'idi. Unfortunately, printing ceased after 19 volumes. As far as can be ascertained on the basis of the holdings in Zanzibar, the only work printed by a contemporary Zanzibari was by the *qadi* and major intellectual Nasir b. Salim (known as Abu Muslim) al-Rawwahi (d.1920). In 1898 the Sultanic Press published an account of a tour by the young crown prince in East Africa.

Interestingly, the Sultanic Press is also listed to have published a travel account by al-Rawwahi concerning a journey to South Africa. This is one of the publications that cannot be found.

The issue of scripturalism: Omani rule and the production of text

While earlier scholars such as JS Trimmingham⁶ tended to view East African Islam as mainly a function of oral transmission within the urban aristocracy, more recent research has tended to emphasise a combination of two strands: an oral poetic tradition transmitted in KiSwahili and a tradition of Islamic learning transmitted in writing and in Arabic.⁷

The emergence of the Omani sultanate in the nineteenth century tipped the scale in favour of the written, Arabic-based strand of the tradition. By the 1850s, state-appointed *liwalis* (appointed executive of law and order) made Omani power apparent on the local level, and *qadis* were appointed by the state rather than brought forth locally within the community. In addition, the economic powerbase of the Bu Sa'idis was new-style plantation owners rather than a redistributive, local aristocracy. They

could afford to sponsor scholars, establish schools and encourage literacy, the prime example being Sayyid Barghash's founding of a printing press in Zanzibar Town.

The Omani sultanate also meant that access to authority came to be regulated by the central government rather than by the traditional patricians. In the same process, Islamic knowledge was reinterpreted to mean a set of literary tenets that could be checked, controlled and debated according to books.⁸ It can be argued that the process opened up East African scriptural Islam to the wider Islamic world, in so far as writings deriving from other parts of the Islamic world (of all Islamic sciences, including Sufism) became known, copied and, in turn, discussed in writing by the new corps of highly literate East African scholars. There emerged a new class of *'ulama* whose outlook transcended the local to an extent which had not been the case in the eighteenth century. The body of material today kept in the ZNA is evidence of this process.

Although the Barghash era was marked by a strong emphasis on the Ibadi sect (the dominant school of Oman),⁹ the Shafi'i Sunni community of East Africa was also marked by the same upsurge in scriptural learning. This was a surge most decisively linked to the emergence of organised Sufism on the coast, associated with the orders of the Shadhiliyya, Qadiriyya and the 'Alawiyya. Sufi manuals and poetry were copied from their Middle Eastern originals and in turn commented upon by scholars fully versed in scriptural Islamic scholarship. This development, too, is very much in evidence in the Zanzibar archives.

The ZNA collection: overview of the Arabic material

Books and treatises

The manuscript collection of the ZNA consists of about 800 manuscripts, the majority originally held by the sultanic palace and transferred following the revolution of 1964. In addition, about 100 items were added in 1999, transferred from the collection gathered under the auspices of the now defunct Eacrotonal.¹⁰ The earliest documents date from the late 1700s, while the latest date from the early twentieth century. The collection reflects the penchant of the East African scholarly class for collecting, copying, commenting upon and writing books.

Part of the collection consists of copies of works of non-East African origin, in some cases with commentaries added by local scholars, thus adding a local point of view on matters of Islamic scholarship. The majority of works, however, are of Omani/East African provenance and thus make a very substantial contribution to the literary heritage of the region, as well as serving as a demonstration of Zanzibar's important role as a seat of learning.

The collection includes treatises on Islamic disciplines such as law, theology, *hadith*, *fiqh*, grammar, poetry and rhetoric. In addition, the collection includes valuable works

Letter dated 10 January 1911
to the Sultan Sayyid 'Ali b.
Hammud al Bu Sa'idi in
Zanzibar.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
الى جناب سيدينا ورفينا المالك المالك السلطان الاعظم في جزيرتنا محمد سعيد

رحم الله ذاته واتعد ايامه وواقاته سلام عليك ورحمة الله وبركاته على الدوام محمد
يحمي الله ويشكره على ادوام فضله وزيد كرمه لانك في عز وجلال وصحة دائمة واقبال
مادامت الايام والليال ولا زاد على الامم ابدا بل فكم من المناسبات التي وقعت بين اهل بيتي
والانكليز والعاقبة الى خير ان شاء الله وكسبت لاسمته وهي المناداة في جمعهم عليهم
على حين غفلة ليلا وكان مما كان وبلغنا اليوم وقع الاتفاق بينهم نسطل الله السلامة
وقد شرفنا بوصول قيماكم الكريم وتر في مافية وشكركم كثيرا وقد عرفتم انفا اني على
عز من يملككم ولم تفيدوني في جواب واستلفت انظاركم العلية ان تفيدوني في الازال
ظني فيكم حسن بسن وارجوكم قبول شكراي وعليكم جزيل السلام سلامنا على الاولاد
العزيز وهذا الماخ السلطان فيصل واولاده

١٣٢٩
٩ محرم

محمد المور علي بن سالم زويدي

on medicine (herbal and prophetic medicine), magic, astronomy, navigation and travel accounts (*rihlat*).

In terms of authors, the collection includes many Omani authors, especially within the field of *fiqh*. In addition, the collection includes original copies by famous East African scholars as well as by lesser-known authors. Several of the works of the famous *qadi* and Qadiri Sufi ‘Abd al-‘Aziz b. ‘Abd al-Ghani al-‘Amawi (1832–96)¹¹ are included in the collection.

The sultanic correspondence

An important part of the collection is the body of correspondence deriving from the Bu Sa‘idi sultans of Zanzibar. Although the letters are generally dated more recently than the manuscripts, as a total they make up a cohesive and substantial historical source for the era of Bu Sa‘idi rule, both before and after the British colonial intervention. The collection consists of approximately 2 600 letters, the earliest dating back to the 1840s and the reign of Sayyid Sa‘id b. Sultan and the latest to the 1940s and the reign of Sayyid Khalifa b. Harub.

Roughly one-sixth of the collection derives from Sayyid Sa‘id, one-sixth from his successors Majid and Khalifa, and one-sixth from Sayyid Barghash. The bulk – approximately half – of the collection¹² derives from Sayyid Hammud b. Muhammad and his son and successor ‘Ali b. Hammud, that is, from the period 1896–1911. This part of the collection is also the most varied, containing everything from details on expenditure on dinner parties, letters from editors in the Middle East, and notes on the plague to wedding cards and family letters from the Omani branch of the family (including letters from female family members). All in all, the collection is an invaluable source which gives insight into the Bu Sa‘idis’ relations with their East African cadre of bureaucrats and landowners, their subjects, their Indian money lenders, their family in Oman and, not least, with rulers, intellectuals and reformers in Africa, Arabia and the Middle East. It thus constitutes a vital source for both East African and Omani history. It has yet to be fully used as a source for historical research.

Legal records, *sijillat*, deeds and *waqf* documents

During the Bu Sa‘idi era, a corps of specially appointed *qadis* would hear cases and record deeds and *waqfs* according to the system prevailing in most Islamic societies. It is likely that each *qadi* kept his own record rather than there being a central state system where all cases were kept. For this reason, we have only very few legal records deriving from the pre-colonial Bu Sa‘idi era. There are, however, some exceptions. The ZNA is also home to a number of *sijillat* dating from the 1880s to the 1920s, ‘record books’ where brief summaries of each case were noted. Some 42 books have been preserved and these contain detailed information on each case, including its outcome.

In addition, *waqf* records pre-dating the British Protectorate can be found in cases where they were safeguarded in anticipation of later disputes over the *waqf*, or reproduced as

evidence in cases where problems arose concerning its administration or distribution.¹³ Several such cases are held in the ZNA, with original *waqfiyyas* dating back to the time of Sayyid Barghash, which was a particularly active period for *waqf* endowments. Some of the more substantial *waqfs*, endowed by the Zanzibar sultans, were published by the Sultanic Press and are presently held by the ZNA. As for title deeds and sale contracts, about 200 are included in the sultanic correspondence.

However, from the period after the British Protectorate, the picture is very different. The ZNA houses a large collection of criminal and civil cases¹⁴ that date from the period following the legal reform of 1908. In this collection, the outline of the cases is in English but the *qadi*'s deliberation is in Arabic, at least up to the 1940s or 1950s.

Also for *waqf* records, the collection is very substantial from the period after the establishment of the British Wakf Commission.¹⁵ These records have been thoroughly indexed and fed into a database.

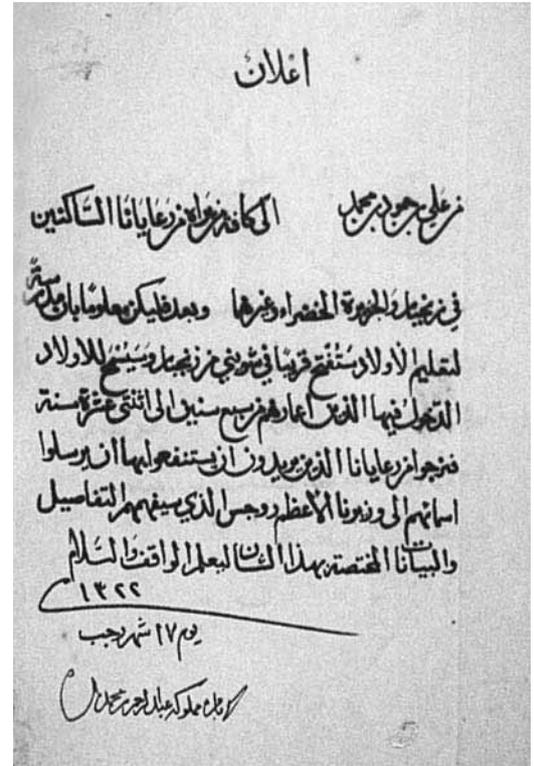
The scriptural–literary heritage of East Africa and the collection of the ZNA: issues and fields of study

Setting aside the academic debate as to whether transmission of knowledge in East Africa has been primarily oral (understood as ‘African’) or scriptural (understood as ‘Middle Eastern’), it seems clear that the corpus of text held by the ZNA demonstrates an at least 200-year-old tradition of production of text as a medium for transmission. The fact that the texts are primarily in Arabic does not detract from their importance as a part of the scriptural heritage of the region. As historical sources, the ‘Arabness’ of the material rather illustrates that the East African *‘ulama* of the day were conversant with intellectual developments overseas and able to express their opinions in a language that could also be read outside the region. Furthermore, it does not mean that oral transmission in the vernacular did not take place, continuously and on all levels, from the most basic Qur’anic schools to learned exegesis among the advanced scholars.¹⁶

Rather, our focus should be on what these documents can tell us about the intellectual tradition evolving on the coast and the political and social circumstances in which it emerged. Here, a number of interesting issues can be explored.

East African Islam in context

Although, as stated at the outset of this chapter, several studies have now been conducted on the basis of Islamic writings of East Africa, much still remains to be done. The corpus of documents held at the ZNA constitutes a very important source in this regard. How was Islamic reform formulated? How did it interact with other reformist movements of the age? What did the *‘ulama* read and who did they refer to in their own writing?



Public announcement dated 27 September 1904 announcing the opening of public schools for children in Zanzibar aged between 7 and 12.

How were Islamic practices of a more popular nature (divination, astrology, spirit possession remedies, dream interpretation) fused with the more *shari'a*-based aspects of the faith?

Inter-African intellectual ties

The correspondence of the Zanzibar sultans and the output of the Sultanic Press demonstrate not only the close ties between East Africa and Arabia but also between Zanzibar and other parts of Islamic Africa. One example can be found in the network of Ibadi scholars, closely connected on the axis Algeria–Zanzibar. The greatest reformer of Ibadism in the late nineteenth century was Muhammad b. Yusuf Attafayyish (1820–1914) of Wadi Mizab in southern Algeria. His works on *tafsir*, *fiqh*, *hadith*, logic and literature were influential both in Oman and in Zanzibar. Attafayyish's long-standing ties with the Zanzibari sultanate can be cited as an example of inter-African intellectual relations. For a period, Attafayyish was financially supported by Sayyid Barghash himself and later kept up close connections with his successors. Several of his works were printed by the Sultanic Press in Zanzibar and distributed widely in Algeria, Egypt and Libya, as well as Oman.¹⁷

Corresponding evidence of intellectual ties for the Shafi'i Sunni population is likely to be found among the documents held in the ZNA.

The study of East African medicinal history

A not insignificant proportion of the manuscripts held by the ZNA deals with issues of medicine in one form or another. Little academic work has been conducted on these documents, which constitute a rich source on the history of medicinal practices.¹⁸

There are books on herbal recipes and on magic, and books outlining the tradition known as *tibb nabawwi* (prophetic medicine). At least three copies of classics are included in the collection, indicating that there was awareness and usage of them in East Africa.¹⁹ The book *Kitab al-rahma fi al-tib wa al-hikma* (Book on the Mercy in Prophetic Medicine and Wisdom) by Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti (d.1505) may be placed in the latter category. The copy in Zanzibar dates back to 1728 and is thus the oldest copy manuscript in the archive and an example of the awareness of the Zanzibari scholars of previous knowledge. The *Shajarat al-arsh* (The Tree of the Throne) is an example of a locally produced treatise on medicine, the copy in the archives dating from 1936. This treatise was written by the adviser of Sayyid Sa'id b. Sultan, Nasir b. Ja'id al-Kharusi (1776–1847). It describes roots, plants and herbs used for medicine and magic.

Most of the books, however, date from the mid-to-late 1800s and have yet to be surveyed beyond their index entries.

Astronomy/navigation

Not surprisingly, given East Africa's close dependence on long-distance seafaring, a number of the manuscripts in the collection deal with issues of astronomy and

navigation. Many of Zanzibar's most renowned Islamic scholars devoted at least one of their works to this topic. Earlier scholars like RB Serjeant have done some work on the navigational poetry and methodology of South Arabia, but much has yet to be done on the material deriving from East Africa.

The study of Muslim–Christian relations

The period from which most of the documents of the ZNA derives was also the time of missionary expansion into the Bu Sa'idi dominions. Where Islam formerly had been the sole point of cultural and civilisational reference for the educated population, Christianity made numerous converts among the slave (and later ex-slave) population and could not be disregarded.

Among the documents most directly dealing with Muslim–Christian relations is a *risala* dating from 1891 in defence of Islam by 'Ali b. Muhammad al-Mundhiri (1866–1925). The Mundhiri family were Ibadis of Omani origin and were closely connected with the Bu Sa'idis as scholars and *qadis*. When the missionary presence became paramount in Zanzibar during the 1880s, the 'ulama engaged in debate – both verbally and, like al-Mundhiri, in the form of writing. The text itself is a response to a document known as 'The Apology of al-Kindi in Favour of Christianity over Islam', originally composed around 830 by a Christian Arab upon an invitation to embrace Islam. In the nineteenth century, the document (although clearly not in its original form) was used by missionary organisations working in Islamic societies.²⁰ In his response, which is preserved in original in the ZNA,²¹ al-Mundhiri displays considerable familiarity with Christian tenets and the historical context of the Christian gospels as he refutes the arguments of al-Kindi by discussing such topics as the Trinity and the divinity of Christ.

The state of preservation at the ZNA

It is important to note that a substantial proportion of the Arabic material in Zanzibar still remains in private hands, as collections in private homes or as *waqf* property in mosques or religious associations. Due to mistrust of the government or for other reasons, individuals have been reluctant to part with originals for storage in the archives.

Concerning the private collections, it is of some urgency that these be registered and restored. They are in danger of rapid deterioration due to exposure to humidity and ants, and of being sold to wealthy buyers arriving from Gulf states.

Special case: the collection of sultanic correspondence

Despite being both substantial and unique, the sultanic correspondence collection held at the ZNA is not preserved in a manner optimal for its safe keeping, or for use by the public. This is due partly to a lack of funds for material improvement and partly to a lack of skills among the staff, such as knowledge of Arabic and competence in modern conservation methods. In other words, it is important that the sultanic correspondence

collection at the ZNA be catalogued and conserved in such a manner that it may be a fully functional research collection. This effort should include both material conservation as well as efforts to raise skills among the staff.

Given the finite size of the collection and its nature (mostly one- or two-page documents), it should ideally be stored as a database where the documents are scanned and accessible online, either on-site or from anywhere in the world. This would save the documents from the wear and tear of handling. An urgent project would thus be the indexing, scanning and material conservation of the correspondence. In addition, such a project would have to include competence-raising components, especially on the part of the archive staff.

At present, the archives do not have staff qualified in Arabic, Swahili and English. If funding could be found, staff could be recruited from the State University of Zanzibar or from private colleges such as the Muslim Academy, which produces candidates knowledgeable in all three languages. Secondly, the conservation staff at the ZNA have not received training in conservation since the 1980s. It is thus proposed that they receive in-house training on the most recent conservation methods from an expert from either India or Europe. It is also proposed that one of the staff members responsible for indexing receive training in either Khartoum or Bergen. This is necessary because although the person may be conversant in Arabic, Swahili and English, they are unlikely to be familiar with the process of transliteration of Arabic script into Latin characters. In order to create an index useful to researchers, this is absolutely essential. Finally, the technology necessary for the project would have to be provided, including scanners, digital cameras and computers sufficiently powered to run a large database.

NOTES

- 1 Gratitude for information presented in this chapter is due to the staff of the ZNA, its director Hamadi Omar, its former senior archivist Khamis S Khamis and its Arabic reader Omar Shehe, and to Professor Abdul Sharif, Director of the Department of Museums, Zanzibar. Furthermore, thanks are extended to Lorenzo Declich and Friedhelm Hartwig, both of whom have worked extensively on the collection.
- 2 See http://portal.unesco.org/ci/ev.php?URL_ID=12543&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201&reload=1062662650.
- 3 Reese (2004).
- 4 For the economic background to the Omani expansion, see Sharif (1987).
- 5 On the impact of the *Matba'a al-Sultaniyya* (Sultanic Press) founded by Barghash, see Sadgrove (2004).
- 6 Trimmingham (1964).
- 7 Purpura (1997) has argued that the two strands of the East African intellectual tradition formed part of an integrated whole until the emergence of the Omani sultanate in the nineteenth century. Only then, she argues, did the tradition split into two distinct parts: an oral one associated with Kiswahili and a written one associated with the Omani state.
- 8 This process also opened up new avenues of social mobility, especially for recent arrivals from Arabia who were already fluent in Arabic and conversant with the literary tradition of Islam. A clear example of this was the scholar and *qadi* Ahmad b. Sumayt, portrayed in Bang (2003).
- 9 As a distinctive branch of Islam, the Ibadiyya traces its roots to the Kharijyya secessionists of early Islam, from which it eventually broke in 685. As the founding element of the Omani imamate – and later the Bu Sa'idi dynasty – it has been marked by a tendency towards tolerance of other sects. By the nineteenth century, the main areas of Ibadism were Oman, Zanzibar (and, by extension, the Omani/Bu Sa'idi strata of East Africa), southern Algeria and pockets of Libya.

- 10 Eastern African Centre for Research on Oral Traditions and African National Languages. See the original checklist of the Eacrotonal collection completed in 1988. Apparently, some 30 of the manuscripts were lost before or during the transfer. This, however, will be clear once the collection is fully indexed within the ZNA. For an overview of the Eacrotonal collection, see Khamis (2001) (Archives, Manuscripts and Written Historical Sources, Oral history, Archaeology).
- 11 Originally hailing from Brawa, 'Abd al-'Aziz al-'Amawi was appointed *qadi* of Kilwa at the tender age of 16. After a few years there, he returned to Zanzibar where he served as *qadi* until his retirement in 1894. A study of the works of 'Abd al-'Aziz is presently being prepared by Professor Valerie Hoffmann, University of Champagne-Urbana, USA.
- 12 Files AA5/8 and AA5/9.
- 13 This is the reason why the texts of the original *waqfiyyas* of Sayyid Hammud b. Ahmad al-Bu Sa'idi were reproduced in court. He was a close companion of Sayyid Barghash who endowed a number of very substantial *waqfs* in the 1870s. His endowments were subject to the efforts of the British-established Wakf Commission to regulate proceeds from the *waqfs*, and in this case the original documents were reproduced and are kept with the court records: ZA-HD6/55 and ZA-HD3/12.
- 14 Records indicated as HC.
- 15 Records indicated as HD.
- 16 Abdallah Saleh Farsy (1989), our most direct source on the life of the East African 'ulama, repeatedly refers to sessions of *tafsir*, etc. taking place orally in the various classes of the shaykhs.
- 17 For an overview of Attafayyish's works printed at Zanzibar, see Sadgrove (2004).
- 18 One exception is Declich (2001, 2004).
- 19 Declich (2001, 2004).
- 20 For background on the al-Kindi apology and al-Mundhiri's response, see Hoffmann (2004). See also O'Fahey & Vikør (1996).
- 21 ZA 8/10. The version held by the ZNA is 316 pages long but, according to V Hoffmann, apparently incomplete.

REFERENCES

- Bang AK (2003) *Sufis and scholars of the sea, family networks in East Africa, 1860–1925*. London/New York: RoutledgeCurzon
- Declich L (2001) The Arabic manuscripts of the Zanzibar National Archives: Sources for the study of popular Islam in the island during the 19th century. In BS Amoretti (Ed.) *Islam in East Africa: New sources*. Rome: Herder
- Declich L (2004) Zanzibar: Some nineteenth-century Arabic writings on healing. In S Reese (Ed.) *The transmission of learning in Islamic Africa*. Leiden: Brill
- Farsy AS (1989) *Baadhi ya wanavyoni wa kishafi wa mashariki ya Afrika/The Shafi'i Ulama of East Africa, ca.1830–1970: A hagiographical account*. Translated, edited and annotated by RL Pouwels. University of Wisconsin, African Primary Text Series, III
- Hoffmann V (2004) al-Mundhir and the defence of Ibadism in Zanzibar. Unpublished paper, MESA, San Francisco
- Khamis KS (2001) The Zanzibar National Archives. In BS Amoretti (Ed.) *Islam in East Africa: New sources*. Rome: Herder
- O'Fahey S & Vikør K (1996) A Zanzibari *waqf* of books: The library of the Mundhiri family. *Sudanic Africa* 7: 5–23
- Purpura P (1997) Knowledge and agency: The social relations of Islamic expertise in Zanzibar Town. PhD thesis, City University of New York
- Reese S (2004) Introduction. Islam in Africa: challenging the perceived wisdom. In S Reese (Ed.) *The transmission of learning in Islamic Africa*. Leiden: Brill
- Sadgrove P (2004) From Wadi Mizab to Unguja: Zanzibar's scholarly links. In S Reese (Ed.) *The transmission of learning in Islamic Africa*. Leiden: Brill
- Sharif A (1987) *Slaves, spices and ivory in Zanzibar*. London: James Currey
- Trimingham JS (1964) *Islam in East Africa*. New York: Books for Libraries