

THE GLOBAL REACH OF A FASHIONABLE COMMODITY: A MANUFACTURING
AND DESIGN HISTORY OF *KANGA* TEXTILES

By

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To James, for everything

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GLOSSARY

*All terms in Swahili unless otherwise noted.

BANDHANI	Gujarati word for tie-dye, used to refer to the process and the resulting designs on cloth (based on the Sanskrit words <i>bandhana</i> and <i>bandha</i>)
DUKA	shop (Swahili word borrowed from Hindi)
DUKAWALLAHS	shopowners (Swahili word borrowed from Hindi)
JINA	name; here refers to the Swahili text printed on <i>kanga</i> textiles
HANJARI	curved dagger
KANGA (KHANGA)	type of printed cotton cloth worn by women throughout east Africa; composition usually conforms to central motif with surrounding border, completed by Swahili text
KANGA ZA MERA	the first of <i>kanga</i>
KANIKI	dyed blue-black cloth
KANZU	type of tunic-like shirt, usually white in color, worn primarily by men throughout coastal east Africa
KEMBEN	Malay word for Indonesian batiked “breast-cloth,” commonly has elongated diamond shape across the expanse of a narrow, rectangular cloth
KISUTU	type of early <i>kanga</i> design commonly associated with marriage; usually printed in red and black ink on white cloth; design features crosses and tangerine flowers in the interior
KITAMBI	type of imported cloth
KITENGE	printed cloth with all-over design and no borders; often resembles the crackling designs common to imitation wax- and fancy-prints worn widely throughout west and central Africa
KOFIA	hat
LESO	handkerchief
LESO YA KUSHONA	lit: “sewn of handkerchiefs,” refers to cloth sewn from six handkerchiefs to create a wrapper worn by women in east Africa ca. 1860-1890

MERIKANI	unbleached cotton cloth, originally imported from the United States of America
MJI	town; here refers to central design of <i>kanga</i> textiles
PINDO	hem, edge, border; here refers to border design of <i>kanga</i> textiles
SHALI	shawl, here likely in reference to the paisley design popular on mid nineteenth-century shawls
SLENDANG	Dutch word borrowed from the Malay meaning “wrapper” or cloth worn wrapped around the body
TUMPAL	Malay word referring to the elongated isosceles triangle motif common to the edges of Indonesian batik textiles

Abstract of Dissertation Presented to the Graduate School
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THE GLOBAL REACH OF A FASHIONABLE COMMODITY: A MANUFACTURING
AND DESIGN HISTORY OF *KANGA* TEXTILES

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This study examines the global forces and variety of players involved in the creation, design, and manufacture of a particular textile genre, *kanga*, popular throughout east Africa. The history of *kanga* textiles brings together a wide range of players, who work variously together and compete to create, market, sell, and consume this industrially manufactured textile. I illustrate how this regionally popular cloth, often worn as wrap garments by east African women, actually evolved from expanding trade networks and an enlarging global economy centered in nineteenth-century Zanzibar. Throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the manufacture and design of these textiles continued to be affected by both global and local politics. Based on colonial government reports, archival materials, published travelogues, import statistics, historical postcard photographs, interviews, hand-drawn designs, dozens of sample pattern books and thousands of extant *kanga* textiles, I argue that this genre of printed cloth was created through the interactions between a global network of players, who converged in Zanzibar in the nineteenth century and subsequently centered in Dar es Salaam following World War I.

Kanga textiles, in their history as well as visual impact, reproduce traces of the various players involved in their creation and subsequent manufacture. As political realities changed, so too did demands for graphic representations printed on these inexpensive, fashionable textiles. By emphasizing the changing dynamics of not only the historical moment but also the convergence of players involved in the *kanga* trade, this dissertation posits that *kanga* textiles are a reflection of the global forces that compete to capture the market in this regionally popular cloth. As the primary research presented in this work demonstrates, the history of this commodity points to global competition played out first in Zanzibar and subsequently in Dar es Salaam in women's fashionable consumption during the colonial era.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

This study examines the global forces and variety of players involved in the creation, design, and manufacture of a particular textile genre, *kanga*, popular throughout east Africa.¹ Today, *kanga* are easily recognizable due to their relatively standardized size and composition. They are sold in uncut pairs and each cloth when cut usually measures around 46" x 66." Each cloth generally features a central graphic image (*mji* or "town") surrounded by a wide, continuous border (*pindo* or "hem, edge, or border"), completed by a Swahili phrase (*jina* or "name"), which is located just above the bottom border along the long edge, centered beneath the central image (Fig. 1-1).² The Swahili phrase marks the cloth's intended orientation, and because *kanga* are printed on only one side, generally a "right" side is discernible from an underside. Despite their somewhat fixed composition, the combinations of different colors, Swahili phrases, and designs make *kanga* textiles the subject of constant innovations. Designs range from decorative floral motifs to everyday objects and commemorative themes, such as the "*Hongera* (Congratulations) Barack Obama" *kanga*, popular in 2008 (Fig. 1-2).³ The Swahili phrase can take many forms, including familiar proverbs, provincial wisdom, benevolent blessings, or defensive warnings. Women often carefully select each pair of *kanga* textiles for their applicability in saying, desirable motif, flattering color combination, and quality of material and printing.

¹ Today this textile is commonly spelled *kanga*, but for much of its history, *khanga* was more common. Most favor the spelling *kanga* today, as it is correct in the Swahili language. Regarding east Africa, the term "East Africa" is often used to refer to the three countries of Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda. As this study primarily deals with nineteenth-century Zanzibar and twentieth-century Dar es Salaam, I use "east Africa" to avoid any confusion when referring to the geographic area described in this study.

² *Yote yatendwayo namkabidhi Mola* translates as "I surrender all that is done to God."

³ *Upendo na amani ametujalia Mungu* translates as "God has given us love and peace."

The history of *kanga* textiles brings together a wide range of players, who work variously together and compete to create, market, sell, and consume this industrially manufactured textile. I illustrate how this regionally popular cloth, often worn as wrap garments by east African women, actually evolved from expanding trade networks and an enlarging global economy centered in nineteenth-century Zanzibar.⁴ Throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the manufacture and design of these textiles continued to be affected by both global and local politics. Based on colonial government reports, archival materials, published travelogues, import statistics, historical postcard photographs, interviews, hand-drawn designs, dozens of sample pattern books and thousands of extant *kanga* textiles, I argue that this genre of printed cloth was created through the interactions among a global network of players, who converged in Zanzibar in the nineteenth century and subsequently centered in Dar es Salaam following World War I.

The broader aim of this project is to locate cultural and economic networks and examine their effect on a regionally popular commodity. Rather than focusing on the cultural specificity of this textile genre, or the meaning invested in the cloth through use, this study explores the convergence of interests that led to the creation and subsequent manufacture of this textile genre—in essence, the history of the cloth up until the moment of purchase by the final consumer, rather than the life of the cloth following that purchase. As this dissertation argues, many disparate groups worked together, and

⁴ *Kanga* textiles are worn throughout present-day Kenya and Tanzania, including the islands of Zanzibar and Pemba. They are also worn in the northern (Swahili-speaking) portion of Mozambique, and extend to Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Malawi, eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, and to Oman on the Arabian Peninsula. Oman and Zanzibar have been linked since the early nineteenth century, when the Omani sultan moved to Zanzibar to better control a portion of the Indian Ocean trade. *Kanga* textiles were formerly worn in southern Somalia, and related cloths are worn throughout the Comoros Islands, Madagascar, and Mozambique.

competed with one another, to create and subsequently manufacture these textiles to capture the burgeoning market in fashionable cloth consumption across east Africa.

Kanga textiles, in their history as well as visual impact, reproduce traces of the various players involved in their creation and subsequent manufacture. As political realities changed, so too did demands for graphic representations printed on these inexpensive, fashionable textiles. By emphasizing the changing dynamics of not only the historical moment but also the convergence of players involved in the *kanga* trade, this dissertation posits that *kanga* textiles are a reflection of the global forces that compete to capture the market in this regionally popular cloth. As the primary research presented in this work demonstrates, the history of this commodity points to global competition played out first in Zanzibar and subsequently in Dar es Salaam in women's fashionable consumption.

Theorizing Global Exchange through Networks and Commodities

By focusing on the history of one specific commodity, I offer an historical case study in line with Africanist historian Jeremy Prestholdt's "domestication"⁵ vignettes that "challenge notions of discrete sociocultural spaces and limited interactions that shape our understanding of the past and give rise to our wonder at a 'globalized' present ... [and offer] a reflection on the seemingly out of place, on the social lives of people and objects well beyond the boundaries of nation, continent, or sea that we regularly imagine to have been historically restrictive."⁶ My theoretical framework draws from the growing literature on "things" and exchange through network relationships. By

⁵ Jeremy Prestholdt, *Domesticating the World: African Consumerism and the Genealogies of Globalization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 8.

⁶ Prestholdt, *Domesticating the World*, 1.

embarking on extended analysis of one type of thing, its change throughout space and time can be chronicled; and by looking to a network of relationships that gave rise to and continue to affect the thing itself, its creation cannot be attributed to one ultimate “creator.” Specifically, the relations between manufacturers, distributors, sellers, and consumers are thrown into stark relief, as the “creation” can only be attributed to the interactions within this network.

By delving into the manufacturing and design history of this industrially produced commodity, I uncover global networks of trade that readers familiar with the discourse surrounding *kanga* textiles today might find surprising, as the subject of my study is often assumed to be the product of local traditions steeped in cultural meaning. While perhaps put to that use, the history of this commodity’s development tells a different tale. As Prestholdt so eloquently articulates, “Forgotten histories of mutuality in global encounter can, moreover, re-member patterns of global interdependence, which, while seemingly counterintuitive in hindsight, are nevertheless our inheritance.”⁷

Historian of science Lorraine Daston’s comments on “things” can equally apply to the subject of my research; she remarks, “All these banal certainties begin to unravel when the processes by which things come into being are scrutinized more closely...”⁸ By looking to things, as the growing literature on “thing theory”⁹ attests, “things exhibit a

⁷ Prestholdt, *Domesticating the World*, 4.

⁸ Lorraine Daston, “Speechless,” in *Things That Talk: Object Lessons from Art and Science*, ed. Lorraine Daston, 9-24 (New York: Zone Books, 2004), 21.

⁹ The following sources are crucial to the developing literature on “thing theory;” see Arjun Appadurai, “Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value,” in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Bill Brown, ed., *Things* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004); Lorraine Daston, ed., *Things that Talk: Object Lessons from Art and Science* (New York: Zone Books, 2004); and Wim van Binsbergen and Peter Geschiere, eds., *Commodification: Things, Agency, and Identities: The Social Life of Things Revisited* (Münster: Lit Verlag, 2005).

certain resistance to tidy classification.”¹⁰ In examining the design and manufacturing history of this commodity, we can begin to grasp the power relations inherent to, but ever-changing within, global trade.

I explore creation and exchange of a commodity through network relationships, and the range of global players involved in this study is crucial.¹¹ Like Atlantic historian David Hancock’s work, my research “transgresses a traditional division of labor among scholars: economists and economic historians emphasize production...while social and cultural historians concentrate on consumption, diet, and meaning. ... A history that focuses on a single commodity can highlight more easily the linkages among economic roles...”¹² The especial exchange between the spheres which are often perceived as separate—the industrialized vs. non-industrialized, the West vs. the non-West—particularly describe this study.¹³ As an art historian, I pay particular attention to the visual in writing the history of this cloth. Specifically, I combine critical analysis of documented visual sources¹⁴ with more traditional historical sources to reconstruct a

¹⁰ Daston, “Speechless,” 10.

¹¹ This theoretical approach is taken up after Atlantic historian, David Hancock, in his book, *Oceans of Wine: Madeira and the Emergence of American Trade and Taste* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009). Another notable example comes from Sidney W. Mintz, who focuses on both production and consumption in his book, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* (New York: Penguin Books, 1985). Others limit their analysis to the culture of a commodity; see Thomas Brennan, *Public Drinking and Popular Culture in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988) and Jordan Goodman, *Tobacco in History: The Cultures of Dependence* (London: Routledge, 1993).

¹² Hancock, *Oceans of Wine*, xiv.

¹³ Of especial help in thinking through the perceived separation but actual fluidity in realms were Mary D. Sheriff, “Cultural Contact and the Making of European Art, 1492-1930,” and Claire Farago, “On the Peripatetic Life of Objects in the Era of Globalization,” in *Cultural Contact and the Making of European Art since the Age of Exploration*, ed. Mary D. Sheriff (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 1-16 and 17-42.

¹⁴ In this case study, I employ turn-of-the-century photographs from east Africa, hand-drawn designs, dozens of dated cloth samples in manufacturers’ record books, and thousands of dated *kanga* cloths to pen this manufacturing and design history of *kanga* textiles.

history of *kanga* design and textile manufacture. The commodity comes full circle today, as the global networks that united to give rise to this cloth are turned on their head. The commodity that was once manufactured in industrialized centers and distributed to consumers in unindustrialized locales travels back to those same industrialized centers as a value-added commodity. But in this reversal of supply, *kanga* textiles are often reductively described as products of “African” origin, omitting the complicated global relations bound up in the history of this textile genre.

The Study of African Textiles

Broadly speaking, cloth in Africa has functioned in a multitude of ways over the centuries, including as a sign of wealth, a keepsake, of cultural functions, as well as the raw material for both wrapped and tailored clothing. The art historical study of African textiles began in the early 1970s, when scholars began investigating technical modes of production, cultural and use value, influence of trade routes and cultural exchange, and their use as clothing and items of prestige.¹⁵ The vast majority of early research conducted on African textiles was limited to textiles that are hand-woven, dyed, or painstakingly created or decorated by some other means.

¹⁵ See Justine M. Cordwell and Ronald A. Schwarz, eds., *The Fabrics of Culture: The Anthropology of Clothing and Adornment* (The Hague: Mouton, 1979); Dale Idiens and K. G. Ponting, *Textiles of Africa* (Bath: Pasold Research Fund, 1980); Venice Lamb and Judy Holmes, *Nigerian Weaving* (Roxford, Hertfordshire: H. A. & V. M. Lamb, 1980); Venice Lamb and Alastair Lamb, *Au Cameroun: Weaving* (Roxford, Hertfordshire: H. A. and V. M. Lamb, 1981); Venice Lamb and Alastair Lamb, *Sierra Leone Weaving* (Hertingfordbury, Hertfordshire: Roxford Books, 1984); Venice Lamb, *West African Weaving* (London: Duckworth, 1975); John Picton and John Mack, *African Textiles: Looms, Weaving and Design* (London: British Museum, 1979); Claire Polakoff, *Into Indigo: African Textiles and Dyeing Techniques* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Press/Doubleday), 1980; Imtraud Reswick, *Traditional Textiles of Tunisia and related North African Weavings* (Seattle: Craft & Fold Art Museum, 1985); and Roy Sieber, *African Textiles and Decorative Arts* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1972).

One early essay on industrially produced textiles appears in Cordwell and Schwarz's edited volume, *The Fabrics of Culture*.¹⁶ Instead of technical artistry or cultural use value, Nielsen focuses on the development, trade, and widespread adoption of wax-print cloth in Africa. Her contribution was followed by Christopher Steiner's efforts in 1985, in an essay that delved into the textile trade between Western European merchants and manufacturers and West Africans consumers.¹⁷ Although individually produced textiles continued to garner more research than mass-produced varieties, these two early essays paved the way for future scholars to discuss more specific aspects of these widely popular, industrially printed cloths.¹⁸

Existing Research on *Kanga* Textiles

Kanga textiles have long been a staple item of women's attire and household use in east Africa. In fact, the average retail price of *kanga* textiles has been documented throughout the past fifty years, as an example of a typical east African consumer good.¹⁹ Known as *kanga* in Tanzania and *leso* in Kenya, these textiles display colorful, graphic designs and are most often worn by women as wrap garments throughout east Africa. *Kanga* are sold in pairs, and as mass-produced, industrially printed textiles, they have retained a century-long adherence to a standard composition: a central graphic

¹⁶ Ruth Nielsen, "The History and Development of Wax-Printed Textiles Intended for West Africa and Zaire," in *The Fabrics of Culture: The Anthropology of Clothing and Adornment*, eds. Justine M. Cordwell and Ronald A. Schwartz (The Hague: Mouton, 1979), 467-98.

¹⁷ Christopher B. Steiner, "Another Image of Africa: Toward an Ethnohistory of European Cloth Marketed in West Africa, 1873-1960," *Ethnohistory* 32, no. 2 (Spring 1985): 91-110.

¹⁸ Kathleen E. Bickford, *Everyday Patterns: Factory-Printed Cloth of West and Central Africa* (Kansas City: University of Missouri, 1997); Susan Domowitz, "Wearing Proverbs: Anyi Names for Printed Factory Cloth," *African Arts* 25, no. 3 (1992): 82-87, 104; John Picton, ed. *African Textiles: Technology, Tradition and Lurex* (London: Barbican Art Gallery), 1995; and Anne M. Spencer, *In Praise of Heroes: Contemporary African Commemorative Cloth* (Newark: The Newark Museum, 1983).

¹⁹ See Appendix C: "Average Retail Price of *Kanga* in Dar es Salaam, 1951-1996."

image surrounded by a wide, continuous border, completed by a Swahili phrase. Despite their somewhat fixed composition, the combinations of different colors, Swahili phrases, and designs make *kanga* textiles the subject of constant innovations. Designs range from decorative floral motifs to everyday objects and commemorative themes, such as the “Hongera (Congratulations) Barack Obama” *kanga*, popular in 2008. The Swahili phrase is usually centered just above the lower border and can take many forms, including familiar proverbs, provincial wisdom, benevolent blessings, or defensive warnings. Women often carefully select each pair of *kanga* textiles for their applicability in saying, desirable motif, flattering color combination, and quality of material and printing.

Much interest in *kanga* textiles to date has been characterized by anthropological, sociological, and linguistic approaches. At their most basic level, *kanga* textiles are relatively affordable, mass-produced, industrially printed cotton cloths used for a wide variety of purposes throughout east Africa.²⁰ Most research to date agrees that *kanga* textiles are ubiquitous throughout coastal east Africa and consumed more widely for a variety of reasons. One particular aspect of *kanga* textiles subject to the most research is how wrapped *kanga* garments possess meanings deployed by the wearers—east African women.²¹ Wrapped *kanga* textiles are worn by east African women and often

²⁰ *Kanga* textiles are also consumed wherever east Africans find themselves in the ever-increasing diaspora, from central and southern Africa, Oman, the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States, to name just a few.

²¹ For examples of general writings on *kanga* textiles, see Deborah Amory, “The *Kanga* Cloth and Swahili Society: *mke ni nguo*,” Manuscript, Scholar of the House Program, Yale University, New Haven, CT, 1985); “*Kanga* textiles from Tanzania,” *African Textiles: The Magazine for the African and Arab Markets* (August/September 1984): 24-27; Richard J. Trillo, “Fashion and Fabrics: The Symbolic Use of Cloth in Swahili Society” (master’s thesis, School of Oriental and African Studies, 1984); Marloes van der Bijl, “*Kangas*: The voice of Zanzibari women? Its present importance among young women in Zanzibar Stone Town, Tanzania,” *Khil’a: Journal for Dress and Textiles of the Islamic World 2* (2006): 1-22; and Sharifa Zawawi, *Kanga: The Cloth that Speaks* (Bronx, NY: Azaniya Hills, 2005).

seen as culturally appropriate, respectful clothing; as such, they are required modes of dress when visiting elders, in-laws, and attending funerals. Women throughout east Africa culturally invest in these textiles by using them at critical junctures in their lives: a new *kanga* cloth is the first thing a newborn child is swaddled in and the last thing a deceased woman is shrouded in. These textiles also protect adolescent girls while undergoing initiation ceremonies and are given to new brides at kitchen parties on the occasion of their upcoming weddings. A few brief essays provide helpful insight into the textile's cultural importance, but they do not locate the cloth in a particular place or time, or provide sustained analysis.²² Others make initial strides into establishing the cloth's early history.²³

²² Farouque Abdela, "Mimi Kama Kanga, Nafa na Uzuri Wangu, I am like a Kanga Cloth, I Die in all my Beauty," in *Art in Eastern Africa*, ed. Marion Arnold, 99-104 (Dar es Salaam: Mkuki na Nyota Publishers, 2008); Anthony John, "The Kanga Struts in Style," *Weekend Standard* (Kenya), 2 July 1982; "Kanga," *Rainbow* (October 1984): 7; Elizabeth Kavuli and Jan Wittenberg, "The World of the Khanga," *NMK Horizons* 4 no. 2 (2000): 19-21; Ndesumbuka Lamtane Merinyo, "Costume Design in Tanzania: Historical Perspective and its Implications for Contemporary Design Practice," in *Art in Eastern Africa*, edited by Marion Arnold, 105-122 (Dar es Salaam: Mkuki na Nyota Publishers, 2008); Robert Nwiga, "Be it Love or Sorrow, Say it with Khangas," *East African* (Nairobi) 2000; Khadija Riyami, "Kanga vazi bora la kupendeza," *Sauti ya Siti: A Tanzanian Women's Magazine* 1 (March 1988): 18-19; Eleonore Schmitt and Rose-Marie Beck, "Leso: Spiegel islamischer Frauentracht in Mombasa," in *Die Garten des Islam*, edited by Hermann Forkle, 315-16 (Stuttgart: Linden-Museum, 1993); Thadeus Shio, "Snapshot: Kanga," in *Africa*, ed. Joanne B. Eicher and Doran H. Ross, vol. 1 of *Encyclopedia of World Dress and Fashion*, ed. by Joanne B. Eicher, 441-42 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Christopher Spring, "Kangas," in *Angaza Africa: African Art Now* (London: Laurence King, 2008), 11-13; Sue Willows-Raznikov, "Swatches, Information and Illustration: Wearing Kangas in Kenya," *Fiber Arts* 21, no. 3 (November/December 1994): 7; and Zawawi, *Kanga: The Cloth that Speaks*.

²³ Nasra M. Hilal, "Khanga: A Medium of Communication among Women," *Sauti ya Siti: A Tanzanian Women's Magazine* 6 (June 1989): 16-19; Julia Hilger, "The Kanga: An Example of East African Textile Design," in *The Art of African Textiles: Technology, Tradition and Lurex*, ed. John Picton, 44-45 (London: Barbican Art Gallery, 1995); "Kanga Textiles from Tanzania," *African Textiles: The Magazine for the African and Arab Markets* (June/July 1984): 5; Elisabeth Linnebuhr, "Kanga: Popular Cloths with Messages," in *Readings in African Popular Culture*, ed. Karin Barber, 138-141 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997); Elisabeth Linnebuhr, *Sprechende Tücher: Frauenkleidung der Swahili (Ostafrika)* (Stuttgart: Linden-Museum, 1994); Christopher Spring, "Not Really African? Kanga and Swahili Culture," in *East African Contours: Reviewing Creativity and Visual Culture*, ed. Hassan Arero and Zachary Kingdon, 73-84 (London: Horniman Museum, 2005); and Tony Troghear, "Khangas Bangles and Baskets," in *Kenya Past and Present* 16 (1984): 11-19.

Others discuss the printed Swahili sayings on these textiles that enable women to communicate beyond the bounds of appropriate verbal discourse—literally wearing their opinions rather than voicing them.²⁴ Two linguists in particular have written extensively on this function, through worn and gifted *kanga* textiles.²⁵ Within the past few decades, *kanga* textiles have also carried political and socially active messages.²⁶ One scholar has discussed the textile's role in displaying a particular identity when worn by lower-class women in Zanzibar and the place of *kanga* textiles in the changing fashions of the early decades of the twentieth century.²⁷ Most scholars have chosen to explore the use value of *kanga* textiles following the design, manufacture, distribution, and sale,

²⁴ Christine J. Hongoke, "The Effects of Khanga Inscription as a Communication Vehicle in Tanzania," Research Report no. 19 (Dar es Salaam: Women Research and Documentation Project, 1993); Saida Yahya-Othman, "If the Cap Fits: *Kanga* Names and Women's Voice in Swahili Society," *Afrikanistische Arbeitspapiere* 51 (1997): 135-149. A recent dissertation on the subject combines analysis of *kanga* with *makawa* proverbs, Swahili poetry and *taarab* music; Rose Ong'oa-Morara, "One Size Fits All: The Interplay of *Kanga*, *Makawa*, Swahili Poetry, and *Taarab* in the Communication of Zanzibari Women" (PhD diss., Arkansas State University, 2009). Often exhibitions and informal publications on *kanga* provide translations of these printed sayings. Erie Art Museum, "*Kanga* & Kitenge: Cloth and Culture in East Africa," exhibition at Erie Art Museum, Erie, Pennsylvania, 27 September 2008 – 5 April 2009; Hassan O. Ali, "*Kanga* Writings," Swahili Language and Culture, www.glcom.com/hassan/kanga.html (accessed 17 May 2013).

²⁵ Rose Marie Beck, "Aesthetics of Communication: Texts on Textiles (Lesoo) from the East African Coast (Swahili)," *Research in African Literatures* 31, no. 4 (Winter 2000): 104-124; Rose Marie Beck, "Ambiguous Signs: the Role of the *Kanga* as a Medium of Communication," *Afrikanistische Arbeitspapiere* 68 (2001): 157-69; Rose Marie Beck, "Text auf Textilien in Ostafrika," (PhD diss., Universität zu Köln, 2001); Rose Marie Beck, "Texts on Textiles: Proverbiality as Characteristic of Equivocal Communication at the East African Coast," *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 17, no. 2 (December 2005): 131-60; David J. Parkin, "The Power of Incompleteness: Innuendo in Swahili Women's Dress," in *Pour une Anthropologie de l'interlocution: Rhetoriques du Quotidien*, ed. Bertrand Masquelier and Jean-Louis Siran, 155-82 (Paris: Harmattan, 2000); and David J. Parkin, "Textile as Commodity, Dress as Text: Swahili *kanga* and Women's Statements," in *Textiles in Indian Ocean Societies*, ed. Ruth Barnes, 44-61 (New York: Routledge Curzon, 2003).

²⁶ Simon Clarke, "An Analysis of a Commemorative *Kanga* Design," *Azania: Archaeological Research in Africa* 38, no. 1 (2003): 166-167; Simon Clarke, "The Politics of Pattern: Interpreting Political and National Iconography on *kanga* cloth," in *East African Contours: Reviewing Creativity and Visual Culture*, ed. Hassan Arero and Zachary Kingdom, 85-97 (London: Horniman Museum, 2005).

²⁷ Laura Fair, "Dressing Up: Clothing, Class and Gender in Post-Abolition Zanzibar," *Journal of African History* 39, no. 1 (1998): 63-94; Laura Fair, "Remaking Fashion in the Paris of the Indian Ocean: Dress, Performance, and the Cultural Construction of a Cosmopolitan Zanzibari Identity," in *Fashioning Africa: Power and the Politics of Dress*, ed. Jean Allman, 13-30 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004).

whereas this project instead seeks to document the development, manufacture and design history of this textile genre.²⁸ Extended research into the history of this textile genre—documenting change over time, precedence for design elements and the coalescing of a standard composition—will augment and deepen understandings of not only this textile genre, but all of the cooperating and competing forces involved in its century-and-a-half history. My research is intended to compliment the interest already garnered from a broad range of scholars. By exploring the forces behind the development of this textile genre and the continued innovations in design, a more complete history can be written, accounting for the entire life of the cloth, including both before and after the moment of purchase.

The Fashionable Urban Settings: Zanzibar and Dar es Salaam

This project spans over one hundred years in tracing the history of a fashionable commodity. Within that time, many economic, political, and social changes occurred that affected the east African region and history of *kanga* textiles; significantly, the major urban centers shifted. As such, the urban backdrop of this project changes, too. Following the historical trend, the nineteenth-century portion of this project is focused on Zanzibar, while the twentieth (and twenty-first century) portions shift focus to Dar es Salaam.

In the nineteenth century, the city and island of the same name, Zanzibar, was the coastal entrepôt for the region. Around the turn of the twentieth century when European colonialism was formally taking root, Zanzibar's regional importance waned as mainland

²⁸ Two dissertations have tried to blend these approaches; the first focuses mostly on the textile's communicative function and the second offers a personal response to the design and manufacturing process. Rose Marie Beck, "Texte auf Textilien in Ostafrika" (PhD diss., Universität zu Köln, 2001); and Simon A. Clarke, "Motif, Pattern, Colour and Text in Contemporary *Kanga* Cloth: An Analysis and Personal Response" (PhD diss., University of Central England in Birmingham, 2005).

ports increased in significance; mainland ports were more conveniently located to supply the colonial expansion westward. From the late nineteenth century, east Africa, like the rest of the African continent, was carved up amongst European colonial powers. Colonial powers drew borders dividing previously cohesive areas and began administering newly defined regions guided by their own priorities. The Swahili coastal region, made up of a string of settlements along the east coast of Africa, both on the mainland and throughout coastal islands, was divided among British East Africa (present-day Kenya), German East Africa (present-day mainland Tanzania, Rwanda, and Burundi), and Portuguese East Africa (present-day Mozambique).

Each colony developed its own port and capital city; in the case of German and Portuguese East Africa, the growing urban centers were one in the same: Dar es Salaam for the former, and Lourenço Marque (renamed Maputo following Independence) for the latter. In the case of British East Africa, Mombasa became the main port, but a new capital city, Nairobi, was founded in the south-central region of the British colony. In the early twentieth century, Zanzibar's regional importance was eclipsed by the growing city of Dar es Salaam, located just 45 miles from the island on the coast of the African mainland. The island of Zanzibar was first made a British protectorate in 1890 and was administered by the British until the island gained its independence in 1963. Meanwhile, Germany lost its colonies following defeat in World War I, and their east African holdings were renamed Tanganyika Territory, a free-trade colony administered by the British. Tanganyika gained its independence in December 1961. In April 1964, the island of Zanzibar joined with independent Tanganyika to form the present nation of Tanzania, following the violent Zanzibar Revolution in January

1964. Throughout all of the changes in administration, Dar es Salaam continued to grow in size and importance.

Initially, *kanga* textiles developed as a popular cloth worn as a wrap garment by women in the two urban centers of the nineteenth-century Swahili coast, Zanzibar and Mombasa. The demand for *kanga* textiles spread freely throughout east Africa, and trade in this commodity was centered in the coastal commercial center of the day. Around World War I, Zanzibar saw its relative importance decline as an urban center, while Dar es Salaam ascended in the region. Accordingly, the *kanga* trade followed this shift in urban centers. In this project, Chapters 2 and 3 explore the nineteenth-century developments centered in Zanzibar, whereas Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7 discuss twentieth-century aspects of *kanga* design and manufacturing as they converge in Dar es Salaam, a city variously located in German East Africa (1885-1919²⁹), Tanganyika Territory (1922-1961), independent Tanganyika (1961-1964) and Tanzania (1964-present).

Research Methodology

For this project, I conducted fieldwork in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, and archival work in London and Manchester, the United Kingdom, and Helmond, the Netherlands. As an art historical project, I combined critical analysis of documented visual sources with more traditional historical sources to reconstruct a design and manufacturing history of *kanga* textiles.

In Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, I interviewed local women, textile educators and practitioners, fashion designers, textile designers, manufacturers, and sellers of *kanga*

²⁹ The British occupied Dar es Salaam and German East Africa from 1915 and administered the colony informally until the League of Nations Mandate was made official in 1922.

textiles. I visited factories that manufacture cotton cloth and print *kanga* textiles, interviewed their designers, and explored samples of their textile production. I collected *kanga* textiles and hand-drawn designs; I photographed markets, stalls selling textiles, fashion shows, and women wearing wrapped *kanga* and tailored *kanga* garments. I analyzed archival sources, including governmental, manufacturing and import records, at the Tanzania National Archives and National Bureau of Statistics. I consulted materials such as Tanganyika Blue Books, Tanganyika Consular and Trade Reports, travelogues, local magazines and newspapers in the East Africana Collection at the Library of the University of Dar es Salaam and the National Library of Tanzania.

In Europe, I traced the manufacturing and design history of *kanga* textiles back to the United Kingdom and the Netherlands. I consulted manufacturers' business records and design pattern books at the Manchester Archives and Local Studies collection, the special collection holdings at the Manchester Metropolitan University, the textile collections at the Whitworth Gallery and Platt Hall of Costume, the Museum of Science and Industry in Manchester, and the London Metropolitan Archives. I consulted the unmatched collection and company archives of Vlisco, formerly P.F. van Vlissingen & Co., a Dutch textile printer from Helmond, the Netherlands. Vlisco possesses over 5,000 historical *kanga* textiles, dating between 1895 and 1974, as well as priceless sample pattern books from the turn of the twentieth century, documenting its own production as well as the productions of its closest competitors, LKM (*Leidsche Katoenmaatschappij* or Leiden Cotton Company) and HKM (*Haarlemsche Katoen Maatschappij* or Haarlem Cotton Company), both now defunct.

I have made use of the unmatched collection of historical photographs, postcards, and East Africana visual material in the Humphrey Winterton Collection of East African Photographs at the Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies, Northwestern University, the British National Archives, and the African Collection at the Library of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. I have also consulted published accounts, including nineteenth-century travelogues, British and American trade reports, and company histories at the British Library. By consulting and analyzing numerous research materials, I seek to document the design and manufacturing history of *kanga* textiles. I look to facts and figures in import statistics, governmental and colonial reports on manufacturing commodities for sale to colonies, business records from companies involved in the textile trade, firsthand descriptions written in travelogues, historical photographs widely circulated as postcards, full textiles and earlier samples in the archives of manufacturers, to assess color, design, and production methods. I draw on interviews with textile designers, textile professionals, practitioners, and educators to inform my arguments and provide empirical evidence to support my claims.

The Case of *Kanga*: Dissertation Overview

The emergence of the *kanga* textile genre finds its roots in a long history of trade in the Indian Ocean littoral. In Chapter 2, I briefly trace global networks of trade that rapidly expanded in the nineteenth century to incorporate east Africa. These trade links led to a commercial dominance of the island of Zanzibar, which sought to feed a rising demand for luxury goods worldwide. Both distributors in the guise of merchant converters and sellers embodied by local Indian traders in east Africa profited and manufactured cottons flooded into the region, acquired in exchange for slaves, ivory,

and spices. Chapter 2 sets the stage for Chapter 3 and provides the historical background that paved the way for the creation of this textile genre.

Players as diverse as east African women, local Indian merchants, European, American, and British Indian traders, and manufacturers the world over contributed to the development of this textile genre. Their influences are examined in Chapter 3, where I have utilized European travelogues, colonial government reports, historical photographs, cloth samples, Swahili language handbooks and local accounts from the nineteenth century to reconstruct the series of textile precursors that led to the creation and immediate popularity of these textiles. Evolved from a lineage of American cotton cloth, Indian indigo-dyed cloth, European printed handkerchiefs, Indian woodblock and tie-dyed designs, and Indonesian batik designs, the familiar composition of *kanga* textiles came into being around 1886. Records indicate European manufacturers began producing manufactured textiles for export to east Africa at least as early as 1874, by which point local hand-stamping must have existed. The earliest *kanga* textiles in existence today were manufactured in Europe and date from 1886.³⁰ The earliest extant examples of locally hand-stamped designs from east Africa date from 1901.³¹

Chapter 4 examines early popular *kanga* textiles designs. I begin with a discussion of *kisutu*, which is variously defined as a *kanga* precursor or very early design of the newly popular cloth. It is a design that does not conform to conventional *kanga* compositions and is still popular throughout east African today. I then present a handful of early popular *kanga* designs, relying on textile samples, number and frequency of

³⁰ See Volume 6: Vlisco *Slendangs* 1886, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands.

³¹ See Volume 16: LKM No. 230 *Stalen OA Sarongs* 1900-1932 and LKM No. 260 *Stalen Slendangs O Afrika*, HKN vVL 1898-1915; both volumes in the Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands.

orders and late nineteenth-century studio photographs showing women wearing these designs. I continue to explore the plethora of designs popular after the turn of the century, using textile samples, order records, photographs, and European observations, written in travelogues and government reports.

Chapters 5 and 6 are two parts of a greater whole, and one informs the other. These chapters focus on the *kanga* textile's manufacturing history, itemizing first the players involved and second the chronology of production. In these two chapters, where I seek to chart the history of *kanga* from circa 1895 to the late 1960s, I limit my parameters to the creation of European-imported *kanga* cloth *before* it goes on sale. As previously stated, scholars to date have almost exclusively focused on the history of this textile *after* it is sold, especially the use the cloth is put to by successive generations of women in east Africa. By and large, I have chosen to demarcate my study to before the point of sale. In these chapters, I have relied on company archives, import and export records, governmental and manufacturing reports, and interviews to reconstruct the players and chain of production of this textile genre, roughly corresponding to the colonial era.

Chapter 5 discusses each node in the *kanga* textile network, comprising of manufacturers and printers, merchant converters, and sellers and designers locally in east Africa. By looking to twentieth-century manufacturing and import records, I show that *kanga* have been imported to east Africa by a surprisingly large number of British, Dutch, British Indian, and Japanese manufacturers throughout the past century. Generally speaking, at least three different groups were involved in the creation of a new *kanga* design: manufacturers (including textile printers), distributors (merchant

converters), and sellers/designers (local Indian merchants). Merchant converters functioned as middlemen: they purchased designs from local designers/sellers in East Africa and then commissioned the printing of the new textile design back in industrialized countries. With each new country of production, competition increased, affecting the quality and variety of designs of *kanga*. Locally manufactured *kanga* textiles joined imported *kanga* textiles beginning in the late 1960s. Clearly, *kanga* textiles prove to be good business, as they have held their value as a commodity and have been in constant demand by a substantial consumer base for the past century and a quarter.

Building the networks of players involved in the *kanga* trade as well as the chronology of manufacturing charted in Chapters 5 and 6, Chapter 7 focuses exclusively the artistry of *kanga* textile designs. The chapter first briefly mentions technological advances that visibly manifest in *kanga* design and production. Changes in printing methods and cloth material are concisely chronicled so that their effects can be referenced in relation to changing designs throughout the twentieth century.

Based on over 5,000 full-cloth examples in the Vlisco archive, Chapter 7 explores the artistry involved in *kanga* designs. Crucially, the securing of a conventional *kanga* composition will be chronicled, as well as how designs mirror the confluence of global forces active in east Africa. Although this dissertation centers on *kanga* in Zanzibar in the nineteenth century and shifts to *kanga* in Dar es Salaam in the twentieth century, designs destined for the east African cities of Zanzibar, Dar es Salaam, and Mombasa will all be considered. This chapter argues that *kanga* textiles, as imported commodities, featured designs that mirrored political realities, modern additions, and desirable

commodities, in addition to long standing geometric and floral design elements. As *kanga* textiles were fashionable consumer items, printed designs on the cloths were subject to change and innovate to accommodate passing trends. Early design influences include Indonesian batiks, Indian woodblock-printed and tie-dyed designs, and familiar objects, whether local, Omani- or European-inspired in origin. Later designs re-use these early motifs, and also expand to incorporate commemorative themes, advertisements, and independence or nationalistic symbols. Following Tanzania's embrace of socialism, protectionist policies were put in place that effectively spelled the end of European *kanga* production.

Chapter 7 concludes with an introduction to four *kanga* designers: Mr. K. G. Peera, a colonial-era designer, Professor Hashim A. Nakanoga, an independence-era designer, Mr. Furahe Kasika, a liberalizing-era designer, and Mr. Vijay Patankar, a contemporary designer. Each designer was informed by the time, place, and period in which he designed; each showcases a distinctive approach, outlook, and preference in design. Each designer conceived of his craft in different ways, predicated on the historical moment each experienced and the training each received, whether formal, informal, or self-taught. They chronicle the changing design emphasis and design practice of *kanga* textiles throughout the past seventy years, and their experiences bring the design of *kanga* textiles up to the present day.

The historical development, manufacture and design of *kanga* textiles, involving global networks of trade, comes full circle in the contemporary moment, which shows that global markets and imports continue to directly affect local *kanga* production and sales. The conclusion hints at another thread in the history of *kanga* textiles: the cloth's

role in women's tailored fashions, especially today in the burgeoning fashion industry based in Dar es Salaam. Today, *kanga* textiles are being claimed as distinctly east African; this textile genre is being hailed as the savior to the Tanzanian cotton, cloth, and clothing industries, while gaining greater recognition outside of the region.

Through this case study of the manufactured and printed *kanga* textile, we can advance our knowledge of global trade networks, including the dynamics of foreign and local manufacture, competing imports, fluctuations in the global economy due to wars and changes in national political policies. More generally, this project contributes to the disciplines of economic history, cultural anthropology, linguistics, design history, and scholarship on dress and fashion. Within economic history, this project demonstrates how numerous players fought to capture a small but important market: German, British, Dutch, British Indian, Japanese, and Indian merchants have competed for predominance in east African women's fashions since the turn of the twentieth century. Within cultural anthropology, this project builds on anthropological research on local use, both in the everyday and within culturally significant moments in women's lives: women wear *kanga* textiles as daily apparel and use them in celebrations of birth, adolescence, marriage, and death. The Swahili sayings that adorn these textiles also have linguistic implications: women select *kanga* that display provincial knowledge, admonishments, and blessings to communicate a specific sentiment. Art history, fashion and costume history, and others interested in the implications of dress can find significance in this textile's changing designs and perception as national or cultural dress, while noting a contemporary turn towards its use in global fashions.

This dissertation shows how a printed cotton textile encounters agents, designs, manufacturers and consumers from across the globe. Research on this regionally popular textile's history brings into sharp focus the global nature of trade, from Western Europe to Japan, Indonesia to east Africa, and India to the United States. This project on the design and manufacturing history of *kanga* textiles encapsulates the interconnected nature of economies, commodities, design, and fashion.

Figures



Figure 1-1. Example of a *kanga* textile. Final production, Friendship Textile Mill (*Urafiki*), Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, 20 October 2011. Photograph by James Ryan.



Figure 1-2. Obama *kanga*. Collection of James and MacKenzie Ryan. Photograph by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.

CHAPTER 2 GLOBAL NETWORKS OF TRADE AND THE EAST COAST OF AFRICA

The history of *kanga* textiles suggests a complex interconnected nature of global networks of trade in the nineteenth century. *Kanga* textiles developed and succeeded due to two major developments: on a macro level, east Africa's participation in the global economy brought increased wealth and manufactured commodities to the region; on a micro level, demands for manufactured commodities that met with specific requirements increased among common, working class, and very often, slave and ex-slave women.

First, background on the Swahili Coast will be provided, to establish the region's long participation in global networks of trade. Next, the rise of Zanzibar and the central role the small island played in international trade during the nineteenth century will be presented. I will then survey the demand for luxury goods, both throughout east Africa and around the world, documenting the emergence of *kanga* textiles from increased wealth, and demand for imported articles and manufactured goods. To meet these demands, international trading houses and local Indian merchants clamored to provide access to—and generate income from—these transactions. Additionally, the tripartite “Christianity, commerce and civilization” mission of many late-nineteenth century Europeans will be described, as abolitionists, capitalists, and colonialists (sometimes one and the same) united agendum in the name of “progress.” All of these forces set the stage for increased consumption of imported manufactured goods during the late nineteenth century, when *kanga* textiles first emerged and enjoyed widespread popularity.

Emerging Global Networks of Trade

For over two millennia the coast of east Africa has been involved in long-distance trade with the greater Indian Ocean littoral. The trade winds and seasonal monsoons enabled Indian, Arab, Persian and other merchants to sail southwesterly from the months November through March. They traveled to the coast of east Africa to exchange their goods during March and April. They then returned via the summer, northeasterly trade winds, from April through September.¹

Indian Ocean Trade

The earliest recorded trade is mentioned in the *Periplus Maris Erythraei*, written by an Egyptian Greek merchant between 40 and 70 CE. This handbook for merchants outlined the trade between Roman Egypt and the Indian Ocean world, from the coast of East Africa, through southern Arabia to the coasts of the subcontinent of India.² The author mentions that trade extended as far south as Rhapta on the east African coast, posited to be somewhere near Dar es Salaam.³ The east African coast is referred to as “Azania,” and early commodities from near Rhapta included ivory, rhinoceros horn,

¹ Lionel Casson, “Trade in the Indian Ocean,” in *The Periplus Maris Erythraei*, trans. Lionel Casson (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 11; Michael N. Pearson, *Port Cities and Intruders: The Swahili Coast, India, and Portugal in the Early Modern Era* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 51-52; Abdul Sheriff, *Dhow Cultures of the Indian Ocean: Cosmopolitanism, Commerce and Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 20-23.

² Lionel Casson, “Text and Author,” in *The Periplus Maris Erythraei*, trans. Lionel Casson (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 7-8.

³ The location of Rhapta is based on the location of the large island called Menuthias. Scholars have debated which island Menuthias refers to—Pemba, Zanzibar, or Mafia. General consensus slightly favors Pemba, on the assumption that the writer would have mentioned passing Pemba, if recording Zanzibar, an island to its south. On the assumption that Menuthias correlates with Pemba, the metropolis of Rhapta then corresponds to the area between one degree north and one degree south of Dar es Salaam. Casson, “Trade in the Indian Ocean,” 12; Casson, “General Commentary,” in *The Periplus Maris Erythraei*, trans. Lionel Casson (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 140-41.

tortoise shell, and nautilus shell.⁴ Principle luxury goods from Arabia included frankincense, myrrh, and aloe, but the widest array of trade items came from India and included spices, gems, ivory, pearls, tortoise shell, and textiles.⁵ Although its main purpose was to outline the foreign luxury goods traded into Roman Egypt, the *Periplus* also records Roman Egyptian goods traded throughout the Indian Ocean world as well as a trade in commodities between Indian Ocean ports, quite distinct from Roman Egypt.⁶

Rhapta is listed as the only Azanian port of substantial size in the first century CE, a fact confirmed by Ptolemy in his *Geography*, written a century after the *Periplus*.⁷ The next firsthand, written account of the east Africa coast comes from Ibn Battuta, the famous Arab traveler from Tangiers, in 1331, over a millennium later. By medieval times Kilwa, a small island south of Pemba and Zanzibar off the east African coast, had become one of the most important Indian Ocean ports.⁸ This city-state, known also as Kilwa Kisiwani—or by the Portuguese spelling, Quiloa—was founded around the ninth century CE and became a major trading site from the twelfth to the early sixteenth centuries.⁹ Commodities from the African interior, including gold, ivory, iron, and coconuts were traded for cloth, jewelry, and porcelain from India and China,

⁴ Casson, "Trade in the Indian Ocean," 16.

⁵ Casson, "Trade in the Indian Ocean," 17.

⁶ Casson, "Trade in the Indian Ocean," 21.

⁷ Casson, "General Commentary," 141.

⁸ Pearson, *Port Cities and Intruders*, 43.

⁹ See G. S. P. Freeman-Grenville, *The Medieval History of the Coast of Tanganyika* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962).

respectively. Ibn Battuta of Tangiers described Kilwa as “one of the most beautiful and best built towns.”¹⁰

The Portuguese arrived in 1498, and both Pedro Alvares Cabral and Vasco da Gama visited Kilwa soon thereafter. Cabral reported seeing houses of stone and found Indians trading cotton.¹¹ In 1505, the Portuguese attacked the trading port and da Gama forced Kilwa to pay tribute to the King of Portugal.¹² That same year, the Portuguese arrived in Mombasa, a coastal town to the north located in present-day Kenya, and found an even larger trading center.¹³ Consequently, before 1500 the east African coast was linked to a larger trading world, while after it was linked to a larger political world, as the Portuguese attempted to exert control over both the area and its trade.¹⁴ For the next two centuries, the Portuguese maintained nominal control of the east African coast, but their attempts to retain actual political and economic control of the coastal region led them to repeatedly burn Mombasa (no less than eight times), raze Pate and Lamu, and ravage Kilwa.¹⁵ The Portuguese proved susceptible to tropical diseases, and trade along the coast dwindled over the next two centuries.

Power over the east African coast fell into Arab hands from 1698-1885. In March 1696 Omani Arabs attacked the Portuguese Fort Jesus in Mombasa, finally taking it in

¹⁰ H. William Rodemann, “Tanganyika, 1890-1914; Selected Aspects of German Administration” (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 1961), 117.

¹¹ Rodemann, “Tanganyika, 1890-1914,” 140.

¹² Edward A. Alpers, *Ivory and Slaves: Changing Pattern of International Trade in East Central Africa to the Later Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), 42.

¹³ Dana Seidenberg, *Mercantile Adventurers: The World of East African Asians, 1750-1985* (New Delhi: New Age International, 1996), 3.

¹⁴ Pearson, *Port Cities and Intruders*, 45.

¹⁵ Rodemann, “Tanganyika, 1890-1914,” 118; Seidenberg, *Mercantile Adventurers*, 4, 6.

December 1698.¹⁶ Commercial relations between coastal populations and those nearer to the lake regions increased rapidly during these two centuries, as the demand for slaves and other natural resources rose.¹⁷ Slaves were required throughout the Indian Ocean world, in places like Ile de France (Mauritius) and Bourbon (Reunion) to tend sugar and cotton plantations in the late eighteenth century, and in Zanzibar, to tend coconut and clove plantations in the nineteenth century.¹⁸ This demand paved the way for the rapid commercialization that enveloped the Swahili Coast during the nineteenth century. Coastal towns provided a convenient place in the exchange of goods—manufactured goods flowing inland from coastal islands like Zanzibar, and natural resources flowing outward from the mainland. Commercial networks flowed through these coastal towns, and the increased economic activity aided growth of places like Bagamoyo and Zanzibar, which developed into trading hubs.¹⁹

The Dominance of Zanzibar

From 1828, the Omani Sultan, Seyyid Said bin Sultan, began dividing his time between Oman in the Arabian Peninsula and the island of Zanzibar, off the coast of east Africa in the Indian Ocean.²⁰ The Omani Sultan desired more control over Indian Ocean trade, and the island of Zanzibar was well-placed for this purpose. As an island,

¹⁶ Pearson, *Port Cities and Intruders*, 46.

¹⁷ Pearson, *Port Cities and Intruders*, 160.

¹⁸ Pearson, *Port Cities and Intruders*, 162; Rodemann, "Tanganyika, 1890-1914," 120; Abdul Sheriff, *Slaves, Spices and Ivory in Zanzibar: Integration of an East African Commercial Empire into the World Economy, 1770-1873* (London: James Currey, 1987), 2, 41-42.

¹⁹ James R. Brennan and Andrew Burton, "The Emerging Metropolis: A history of Dar es Salaam, circa 1862-2000," in *Dar es Salaam: Histories from an Emerging African Metropolis*, ed. James R. Brennan, Andrew Burton, and Yusuf Lawi (Dar es Salaam: Mkuki na Nyota Publishers, in association with the British Institute in Eastern Africa, Nairobi, 2007), 15.

²⁰ Sheriff, *Slaves, Spices & Ivory in Zanzibar*, 50.

Zanzibar was more easily guarded than mainland ports. Zanzibar functioned as the entrepôt for coastal east Africa, and by extension the caravan routes to the interior. The Sultan helped jumpstart plantation farming on the island, especially in cloves, as the abolition of the slave trade adversely affected revenue at Zanzibar.²¹ Although cloves were reportedly introduced to Zanzibar from Mauritius in 1818,²² Sultan Seyyid Said encouraged other landowners to clear coconut trees and plant cloves, developing a landed aristocracy whose wealth was dependent on the international demand for cloves and on the local slave population's labor.²³ In 1840, the Omani Sultan moved permanently to Zanzibar, to better control trade in slaves, ivory, and other natural resources from the mainland, and to cultivate clove plantations tended by slave labor on the island.²⁴ By mid-century, land formerly used for foodstuffs was given over to the more lucrative clove trees, which necessitated imports of cereals and other staple items of food.²⁵ At the same time, clove production on Zanzibar and neighboring island Pemba had saturated the market, driving down clove prices and overall profitability. The landowners spiraled into debt to moneylenders.²⁶

²¹ Sheriff, *Slaves, Spices & Ivory in Zanzibar*, 48; William O'Swald and Company, *The Story of the House of O'Swald: 1831-1931* (Hamburg: Broschek & Co., 1931), 44.

²² William Samuel W. Ruschenberger, *Narrative of a Voyage round the World, during the years 1835, 36, and 37*, 2 vols. (London: Richard Bentley, 1838), 1:73.

²³ Sheriff, *Slaves, Spices & Ivory in Zanzibar*, 50-51.

²⁴ Alpers, *Ivory and Slaves*, 234; David Henry Anthony III, "Culture and Society in a Town in Transition: A People's History of Dar es Salaam: 1865-1939" (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1985), 1-2; Pearson, *Port Cities and Intruders*, 160.

²⁵ Sheriff, *Slaves, Spices & Ivory in Zanzibar*, 54-55.

²⁶ Sheriff, *Slaves, Spices & Ivory in Zanzibar*, 64-65.

These moneylenders formed a middle class primarily of Indian merchants, who provided the necessary credit and through whose hands the goods physically passed.²⁷ Indian merchants migrated to east Africa in the second decade of the nineteenth century, to escape the economic downturn of their homeland. This downturn in the early years of the nineteenth century can be attributed to a destruction of cotton manufacturing in northwest India, as a result of British cloth imports supplanting Indian-made varieties.²⁸ Indian migrants came to Zanzibar as merchants and established themselves in the import and export trade. Although some Arab merchants also comprised the mercantile class, by midcentury the class was predominantly Indian.²⁹ As clove profitability dropped around mid-century, this Indian merchant class gained economic control of a system that united the wealthy Arab plantation owners and African slave laborers.³⁰ Trade in slaves, cloves, ivory and other natural resources was centered in Zanzibar until European colonial powers began to carve up the continent of Africa and develop the interior, beginning around 1888.³¹ In 1890, Omani dominance in Zanzibar came to a close when the island became a protectorate of the United Kingdom, though it had long been undermined by their indebtedness to the Indian

²⁷ Seidenberg, *Mercantile Adventurers*, 42; Sheriff, *Slaves, Spices & Ivory in Zanzibar*, 3.

²⁸ Sheriff, *Slaves, Spices and Ivory in Zanzibar*, 86.

²⁹ Sheriff, *Slaves, Spices and Ivory in Zanzibar*, 104-105. However, the term "Indian" gives the veneer of a cohesive group of people with commonalities. In reality, these immigrants came from different parts of present-day India and Pakistan and practiced different religions. In the nineteenth century, the term "Banaians" was often used to refer to those who practice Hinduism, and the term "Khojas" referred to Ismailis, who practice Shia Islam. Karim Kassam Janmohamed, "A History of Mombasa, c. 1895-1939: Some Aspects of Economic and Social Life in an East African Port Town during Colonial Rule" (PhD diss., Northwestern University, 1978), 67-68.

³⁰ Sheriff, *Slaves, Spices and Ivory in Zanzibar*, 108-109.

³¹ *The Story of the House of O'Swald*, 41.

merchant class.³² This Indian merchant class also handled much of the imported goods for sale within east Africa and played a vital role in the manufactured textile trade.

Demand for Luxury Goods

Global networks of trade in the nineteenth century were fueled by both supply and demand for natural resources and manufactured goods worldwide. The international economy in the nineteenth century, of which east Africa was a part, was largely dependent on slaves, the fruits of their unpaid labor, and the production of natural resources into manufactured goods. These value-added goods were sold worldwide, but of especial interest here, back to east Africa—one of the places where natural resources were hunted, mined, gathered, or harvested. This system of importing value-added goods while exporting raw materials kept protectorates and colonies—places like east Africa—in constant debt to suppliers. By creating a market for value-added goods, industrial manufacturers and trading firms were assured of constant demand for fresh supplies of imported objects. To add to the imbalance, whereas natural resources from east Africa maintained or rose steeply in value and should have benefitted the entire east African populace, the imbalance instead contributed to large profit margins for middlemen: local Indian merchants and merchant-converter firms.³³ The manufactured goods sent back to east Africa for sale to locals, on the other hand, declined in price,

³² Pearson, *Port Cities and Intruders*, 162; Smith, Mackenzie and Company, Limited, *The History of Smith, Mackenzie and Company, Ltd.* (London: East Africa, Ltd., 1938), 35-36.

³³ The European trading houses are more often referred to as merchant converters. The term “merchant converter” refers to their role played, which is one of a savvy distributor. Indeed, merchant converters neither manufactured nor consumed commodities; rather, they played effective middlemen, bringing together the specific demands of consumers worldwide and the manufacturing abilities of industries located in metropolitan countries. It was through their presence in colonies (through branch offices) and close communication with their headquarters in industrialized centers that successful orders could be placed, delivered, distributed, and eventually sold for profit. For further discussion on the role merchant converters played in the *kanga* trade, see Chapter 3.

and whereas manufacturing commodities was relatively sustainable, and actually fell in cost during the nineteenth century, supplies of natural resources continued to dwindle and were depleted by rising demand. The reliance on international trade left places like east Africa extremely vulnerable to unpredictable market forces.³⁴

Imports to east Africa were comprised of items like cloth, beads, muskets, metal wire, and gun powder, and later rock salt, bicycles, umbrellas, metals, machinery, and other materials necessary for road building, railroad construction, and other infrastructure developments.³⁵ A British Commercial Report from 1863 states, “The ivory is all brought from the interior of Africa, in exchange for American cottons, Venetian beads, and brass wire.”³⁶ Consumption of these and other goods only increased throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and demand could only be met through imports, as manufacturing was discouraged by colonial powers. East Africa’s integration into the world economy effectively created a population of disadvantaged consumers, open to the swings in the international economy; however the population was not entirely disenfranchised, and they made their preferences known, as will be shown with the *kanga* trade.

Natural resources such as ivory, copal, cloves, skins, copra, sesame and sugar were exported to create luxury goods by other populations across the globe. Copal is hardened tree resin and was used in preparing varnish or lacquer. It was especially

³⁴ Sheriff, *Slaves, Spices and Ivory in Zanzibar*, 128.

³⁵ According to Sheriff, Zanzibar supplied the east African coast in these five staple items (cloth, beads, muskets, metal wire, and gun powder) that account for 90% of the total value of goods in 1859. Sheriff, *Slaves, Spices and Ivory in Zanzibar*, 129.

³⁶ “Muscat. Zanzibar,” by C. P. Rigby, *Commercial Reports received at the Foreign Office from Her Majesty’s Consuls between July 1st, 1862 and June 30th, 1863* (London: Harrison and Sons, 1863), 240.

popular with American merchants because copal was used to finish American-made wood furniture and carriages. Skins or hides of animals were tanned to create leather goods. Other natural resources, such as cloves, copra, sesame, and sugar depended on slave labor in plantation farming. Profit was made from selling the spice, oil, or natural product, but cultivation of the cash crop relied on the system of slavery, maximizing profits through the use of cheap or unpaid labor.³⁷

Throughout the nineteenth century, trade with the interior of Africa was predicated on caravans. Arabs traders secured imported goods on credit from Indian merchants in Zanzibar, Bagamoyo, and later, Dar es Salaam.³⁸ Because of the tremendous profitability of trade throughout the nineteenth century, Indian merchants could extend increasing amounts of credit to Arab caravans.³⁹ Natural resources, in the form of slaves and ivory, were generally expected to be delivered in the months following.⁴⁰ The trading firm, Wm. O'Swald & Co., describes the chain of sale:

Before 1888 few Indians and very few European traders lived on the coast, trade with the interior being a sort of monopoly of the Arabs. They obtained credits from big Indian merchants domiciled at Zanzibar, which they repaid when they returned from their safaris (raids). The goods taken on credit—such as americani, beads, Manchester goods, flintlock rifles, powder and shot (the latter probably often after being first inserted in their rifles)—were exchanged by them for ivory and slaves. Slaves were a convenient substitute for modern motor lorries and could be sold by the Arabs at a good profit on arrival at Zanzibar—which you generally cannot do with a second-hand motor lorry.⁴¹

³⁷ Copra is the kernel of the coconut, from which coconut oil can be extracted. Similarly, sesame was cultivated to produce oil. Sheriff, *Slaves, Spices & Ivory in Zanzibar*, 205.

³⁸ *The Story of the House of O'Swald*, 39, 41.

³⁹ Sheriff, *Slaves, Spices and Ivory in Zanzibar*, 106, 108.

⁴⁰ *The Story of the House of O'Swald*, 39.

⁴¹ *The Story of the House of O'Swald*, 41-42.

The closing line of this description affirms the dual-use slaves could play on their travels to coastal centers. The slaves were sold as commodities themselves and could function as porters for valuable natural resources, such as ivory.

The increase in leisure time and pursuits of the upper class and growing middle class around the world led to higher demands for luxury items. Some of these luxury items were carved or crafted from ivory, the raw material of animal tusks, most commonly from elephants. Ivory can be divided into two types: the softer, more expensive ivory was used to make European and American combs, pool balls, and piano keys, whereas the harder, less flexible ivory was used in canes, knife handles and fans.⁴² Demand for ivory in India in the form of wedding bangles and art objects in China and Japan only added to caravan trade in central and eastern Africa.⁴³

As one of the most sought-after export items from the interior of east Africa, the demand for ivory, along with slaves, gave impetus to the caravan trade.⁴⁴ The softer, more expensive ivory came from elephants in plateau regions of East Africa. The harder, less flexible ivory came from elephants in the rain forest regions of central Africa.⁴⁵ Ivory has long been prized as a luxury good, but its trade before the nineteenth century was undertaken more as a supplemental pursuit, as elephants were valued locally in east Africa for the vast amounts of meat they provided.⁴⁶ Increasingly throughout the nineteenth century, however, the demand for ivory grew sharply. The

⁴² Alpers, *Ivory and Slaves*, 234; Pearson, *Port Cities and Intruders*, 161; Rodemann, "Tanganyika, 1890-1914," 126; Sheriff, *Slaves, Spices & Ivory in Zanzibar*, 87.

⁴³ Sheriff, *Slaves, Spices and Ivory in Zanzibar*, 78; Anthony, "A People's History of Dar es Salaam," 35.

⁴⁴ Rodemann, "Tanganyika, 1890-1914," 126.

⁴⁵ Rodemann, "Tanganyika, 1890-1914," 126.

⁴⁶ Pearson, *Port Cities and intruders*, 162.

Industrial Revolution in Europe and America fueled a new middle class who had excess capital and the ability to demand and buy luxury goods. Once east Africa was indelibly involved in the global capitalist economy, the local economy transformed.⁴⁷ The promise of valuable sales of tusks, fueled by the insatiable demand for ivory internationally, shifted employment away from subsistence production in east Africa.⁴⁸ Suppliers were compelled to undertake more extreme and extractive measures to secure this raw material, ever increasing in price. As demand rose, supply fell; elephants along the coast were decimated, and hunters had to venture farther inland to track the dwindling pachyderms. The cost of traveling greater distances and transporting the ivory tusks back to the coast rose in turn as the tsetse fly inhibited the use of pack animals for transport.⁴⁹ The rising costs of ivory, however, did not equate to rising profitability or increased prosperity for the majority of east Africans. In fact, it may have had the opposite effect, contributing to the underdevelopment of east Africa, and the concentration of large profits in the hands of a few.⁵⁰

Second only to ivory, slaves sent to Zanzibar from the east African mainland were highly profitable. Although price and profitability of slaves decreased throughout the nineteenth century, the fruits of their unpaid labor continued to be in demand.⁵¹ Zanzibar transformed its economy from one reliant on the slave trade to one reliant on the trade

⁴⁷ Sheriff, *Slaves, Spices & Ivory in Zanzibar*, 109.

⁴⁸ Sheriff, *Slaves, Spices & Ivory in Zanzibar*, 3-4.

⁴⁹ Sheriff, *Slaves, Spices & Ivory in Zanzibar*, 103-104.

⁵⁰ Alpers, *Ivory and Slaves*, 264-267; Sheriff, *Slaves, Spices & Ivory in Zanzibar*, 3-4.

⁵¹ Sheriff, *Slaves, Spices and Ivory*, 67-69.

of lucrative agricultural products, cultivated by slave labor.⁵² Although the international slave trade was progressively barred, slaves continued to be bought and sold and were put to work on clove, coconut, sesame and sugar plantations.⁵³ Indeed, Zanzibar, as the entrepôt for trade in east Africa, became the largest slave market in the region from 1840.⁵⁴ Without a doubt, the institution of slavery contributed to rapid economic development in east Africa. As international trade in slaves became more limited, slavery continued to be a powerful and profitable institution within east Africa. The economy simply transitioned from making profits on the sale of individuals, to the sale of those individuals' labor.⁵⁵ Furthermore, plantation owners not only benefitted from their slaves' labor, but also from the social stature garnered by owning slaves.⁵⁶

The Rise of Trading Houses

Trading houses, shippers, and merchant converters also played a large role in the rapid development of global networks of trade in the nineteenth century. The arrival of American, German, and British interests dates to the 1830s and 1840s. Zanzibar's first treaty with a foreign power was the Treaty of 1833 (ratified in 1835) with the United States of America. Described by missionary Charles New, "America negotiated an advantageous treaty with the Sultan [Omani Sultan Sayid Said], and a consular and

⁵² Sheriff, *Slaves, Spices and Ivory*, 48-49.

⁵³ The anti-slavery movement will be discussed in greater depth shortly.

⁵⁴ Anthony, "A People's History of Dar es Salaam," 38.

⁵⁵ Sheriff, *Slaves, Spices and Ivory*, 228.

⁵⁶ Anthony, "A People's History of Dar es Salaam," 41.

commercial establishment was forthwith commenced.”⁵⁷ In 1835, a surgeon to an American expedition, W. S. W. Ruschenberger noted while visiting Zanzibar, “At present the commerce is very considerable, and, as Zanzibar will become the great commercial depot of the eastern coast of Africa, is destined to increase. The Americans obtain here gum copal, ivory, and hides, for which they give American cottons and specie. (The American trade is chiefly from Salem, Massachusetts.)”⁵⁸ The American treaty became the model for later treaties with other nations.⁵⁹ In 1841 the British followed, and swiftly thereafter the French and Germans joined the trading nations. Charles Ward explained the importance of Zanzibar to American trading interests in a letter to the State Department, Zanzibar, dated February 12, 1846, just a month after he assumed the position of the second American Consul to Zanzibar:

Zanzibar is a depot for all the products of trade on the East coast of Africa; the great bulk of the American Cottons sold at Zanzibar, are brought by the natives for the coast trade, and in return all the Ivory, Gum Copal, Tortoise Shell, Hides &c are brought to Zanzibar. Therefore you will at once see that Zanzibar is an important place of trade.⁶⁰

This mention of “American Cottons” will be discussed at length in the next chapter, as American-manufactured unbleached cotton sheeting is one type of cloth that contributed to the development of *kanga* textiles.

⁵⁷ Charles New, *Life, wanderings, and labours in eastern Africa: with an account of the first successful ascent of the equatorial snow mountain, Kilima Njaro, and remarks upon east African slavery*, 3rd ed. (1873; London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1971), 31.

⁵⁸ Ruschenberger, *Narrative of a Voyage round the World*, 1:65.

⁵⁹ Norman R. Bennett and George E. Brookes, Jr., eds., introduction to *New England Merchants in Africa: A History through Documents, 1802-1865*, (Boston: Boston University Press, 1965), xxvii.

⁶⁰ “Letters Concerning Eastern Africa: 21. Charles Ward to State Department, February 21, 1846, Zanzibar,” *New England Merchants in Africa: A History through Documents, 1802-1865*, eds. Norman R. Bennett and George E. Brookes, Jr. (Boston: Boston University Press, 1965), 355.

The prominent Hamburg firm, Wm. O'Swald & Company, established an office at Zanzibar in 1849 after fortuitous exploratory mission.⁶¹ The subsequent voyage confirmed the lucrative market at Zanzibar, and the vessel, *Africa*, even carried a few different types of cloth for export in 1846, including "woolen cloth; *textiles*; prints; shawls; muslins [*italics in original*]." ⁶² By 1873, the majority earnings of both O'swald & Co. and Hansing & Co. were owed to their trade in "grey and coloured cotton goods," edging out sundry manufactured goods, and dwarfing profits in glassware, beads, arms and ammunition, sundry hardware, iron, sundry small ware, and sundry merchandise.⁶³

O'Swald & Co. exchanged cloth, beads, guns and gunpowder for hides, palm oil for copra, gum myrrh (myrrh), cloves, ivory, chilis, sesame seeds, copal, and other natural resources from east Africa and dominated commercially before World War I.⁶⁴ Indeed, as the company claimed in its centennial anniversary publication, "Messrs. O'Swald have always been foremost as shippers of *native produce*, because they realise that—without such purchases—imported goods could not be sold [*italics in*

⁶¹ "In 1844 Captain Hans Albert Rodatz, the captain of the schooner Alf, ran out of money at Suez, the northern terminal port of the Red Sea. William O'Swald and Company underwrote Captain Rodatz and instructed him to explore the trading possibilities in East Africa and the Red Sea area. On his second voyage in 1846 to 1848 Rodatz took along the commercial officer, William Scheisser. Together they confirmed the earlier report that Zanzibar offered the most promising trading prospect in East Africa." Rodemann, "Tanganyika, 1890-1914," 7.

⁶² *The Story of the House of O'Swald*, 36.

⁶³ "Zanzibar, Report by Captain Prideaux on the Trade and Commerce of Zanzibar for the Years 1873 and 1874," *Commercial No. 2 Trade Reports (1876): Reports from Her Majesty's Consuls on the Manufactures, Commerce Ec. Of the Consular Districts*, Part 1 (London: Harrison and Sons, 1876), 181. Four other trading houses were active in Zanzibar at this time: the American firms of Messrs. John Bertram and Co., Messrs. Arnold, Hines, and Co., and Mr. John Ropes, as well as the French firm based in Marseille of Roux de Fraissinet and Co. No specific values of their trade goods are given. "Zanzibar," 182.

⁶⁴ *The Story of the House of O'Swald*, 38-39, 41-42.

original].”⁶⁵ Other European mercantile houses, such as the Hamburg-based Hansing & Co., and later the British firm of Smith, Mackenzie & Co., encouraged trade in rubber, copal, and palm oil.⁶⁶ These European trading houses spawned a network of local agents and regional “godowns” (storehouses for trade goods) that expanded up and down the coast and throughout the hinterlands, effectively displacing the centuries, if not millennia-old, dhow trade.⁶⁷

Growth of Indian *Dukawallahs*

In addition to the rise of European trading houses, the growth of Indian-run shops, or *dukas*, across east Africa paved the way for increased trade and consumption of manufactured goods. As was stated previously, Indian merchants first migrated to east Africa in the second decade of the nineteenth century to escape the economic downturn in their homeland. This downturn can be attributed to a decline in cotton manufacturing in northwest India, as a result of British cloth imports supplanting Indian-made varieties.⁶⁸ Indians came to Zanzibar as merchants and established themselves in the import and export trade.

One factor in particular helped merchants establish themselves as a successful class of middlemen. Until the mid-1830s, most transactions were conducted in cash, which required traders from around the world to anchor for several months while their cargo was sold and replaced with local commodities. American traders began to advance both goods and cash to local merchants as credit, who were then contracted to

⁶⁵ *The Story of the House of O'Swald*, 38.

⁶⁶ Rodemann, “Tanganyika, 1890-1914,” 8, 121.

⁶⁷ Seidenberg, *Mercantile Adventurers*, 47.

⁶⁸ Sheriff, *Slaves, Spices and Ivory in Zanzibar*, 86.

repay the debt in specific local products. This short-term credit system continued interest-free until the 1860s, and it was this system that enabled merchants to accumulate large amounts of capital. With ready capital, Indian merchants were able to finance both the plantation economy in cloves and the caravan trade in slaves and ivory, thus establishing themselves as an indispensable class of middlemen.⁶⁹

Beyond Zanzibar, many Indian entrepreneurs settled at coastal trading centers, including Mombasa, Bagamoyo and later, Dar es Salaam. Arab slavers and plantation owners, asset-rich but cash-poor, required ready credit to continue their business and lavish lifestyles. Indian merchants set up shops, or *dukas*, and supplied the inhabitants of east Africa with manufactured goods such as cloth, beads, brass wire, umbrellas, bicycles, and food stuffs such as rock salt, sugar, and tea.⁷⁰ Many of these new luxury items were associated with wealth and status, and acquiring such goods marked the owner as prosperous and refined. A trade report from 1860 summarizes the network of Indian merchants:

There are about 5,000 British Indian subjects residing in the Zanzibar dominions, and nearly the whole of the foreign trade passes through their hands. The ivory is consigned to them from the interior; the gum copal is purchased from the diggers by Indian Banians residing on the coast, and the entire cargoes of American and Hamburg vessels are purchased by them. All the shopkeepers and artizans [*sic*] at Zanzibar are natives of India; they have settlements at all the towns on the east coast of Africa, as far south as Mozambique, at the Comoro Isles, and on the west coast of Madagascar. The number of settlers from India has greatly increased during the last few years, and they have obtained possession from the

⁶⁹ Sheriff, *Slaves, Spices and Ivory in Zanzibar*, 96, 105.

⁷⁰ Jeremy Prestholdt, *Domesticating the World: African Consumerism and the Genealogies of Globalization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 63-87; Seidenberg, *Mercantile Adventurers*, 35.

Arabs, by purchase or mortgage, of a considerable number of landed estates in Zanzibar.⁷¹

By the beginning of the twentieth century, Indian *dukawallahs* (the term was originally Hindi but was adopted into Swahili, and translates to “shopowners”) had spread throughout the hinterland, aided in large part by the newly completed railroads.⁷² Small, upcountry stores were supplied by coastal wholesalers in a chain of transfer, profitable for all of the sellers involved. Most importantly for the study at hand, Indian merchants became the main importers and distributors of manufactured cotton textiles, including *kanga*.⁷³ Beyond shopkeeping, Indian immigrants to east Africa also came with a variety of vocational skills, from weaving cloth, to tailoring, cobbling shoes, printing reading materials, carpentry, and gold- and blacksmithing.⁷⁴ They often also had familiarity with trade, literacy in English and their native language (often Gujarati), and frequently became clerks and accountants for the colonial administration.⁷⁵

Anti-Slavery Movement

The British anti-slavery movement had at its core a “civilizing mission” and interests to expand the empire, which also meant expansion in commerce. Specifically, the opening up of new markets for industrially produced British goods, such as printed *kanga* textiles, was paramount. The tripartite “Christianity, commerce and civilization” mission of many late-nineteenth century Europeans will be described, as abolitionists,

⁷¹ “Muscat. Zanzibar,” by C. P. Rigby, *Commercial Reports received at the Foreign Office from Her Majesty’s Consuls between July 1st, 1862 and June 30th, 1863* (London: Harrison and Sons, 1863), 241.

⁷² Seidenberg, *Mercantile Adventurers*, 35.

⁷³ Seidenberg, *Mercantile Adventurers*, 47.

⁷⁴ Sheriff, *Slaves, Spices & Ivory in Zanzibar*, 147.

⁷⁵ Seidenberg, *Mercantile Adventurers*, 38-39.

capitalists, and colonialists (sometimes one and the same) united agendum in the name of “progress.” The movement was predicated on the replacement of the slave trade with free trade (called “legitimate trade”), as much as it was concerned with liberating slaves themselves. And within this free trade system, the British sought to gain economic footholds in the western Indian Ocean world. The anti-slavery movement was fueled by three differently motivated groups: those who wished to increase economic power through free trade, those who wished to bring civilization to what they saw as backward lands, and those who wished to spread Christianity as an antidote to Muslim regions that permitted slavery.⁷⁶ This tripartite of “Christianity, commerce, and civilization,” favored by David Livingstone, was often repeated by some who truly believed in the effectiveness of replacing the slave trade with legitimate trade, and others who paid lip service to the cause while clearly advancing only their commercial interests.⁷⁷ In east Africa, well-known British figures, such as the explorer and missionary David Livingstone and explorer John Kirk, actively worked towards the abolitionists’ cause.⁷⁸ Others, such as the capitalist William Mackinnon, sympathized but maintained their focus on commercial success.⁷⁹ Therefore, the movement harnessed three separate groups and united them to work toward a similar if not complimentary goal.

⁷⁶ Anthony, “A People’s History of Dar es Salaam,” 50.

⁷⁷ See Edith F. Hurwitz, *Politics and the Public Conscience: Slave Emancipation and the Abolitionist Movement in Britain* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1973) for a discussion of the British abolitionist movement, Jenny S. Martinez, *The Slave Trade and the Origins of International Human Rights Laws* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012) for a general discussion on the slave trade, and Suzanne Miers and Martin Klein, eds., *Slavery and Colonial Rule in Africa* (Portland: Frank Cass, 1999) for particular case studies across the continent of Africa.

⁷⁸ See Alastair Hazell, *The Last Slave Market: Dr. John Kirk and the Struggle to End the African Slave Trade* (London: Constable, 2011).

⁷⁹ John S. Galbraith, *Mackinnon and East Africa 1878-1895: A Study in the ‘New Imperialism’* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 15.

The Slave Trade Act of 1807 outlawed the slave trade within the British Empire, but slavery itself was not abolished until the Slavery Abolition Act of 1833. As British imperial interests swelled, these acts affected policies in east Africa. The following treaties were introduced by the British and eventually capitulated to by the Omani Sultan in Zanzibar. The Moresby Treaty of 1822 outlawed the export of slaves south of Cape Delgado, the coastal point on the present-day border between Tanzania and Mozambique. The Hamerton Treaty of 1845 outlawed the export of slaves north of Lamu, the coastal town near the present-day border of northern Kenya and southern Somalia. An 1864 proclamation forbid all slave trade during the monsoon season in an attempt to curb the flow of slaves to the Arabian Peninsula.⁸⁰ The 1873 Treaty, which banned the slave trade within the dominion of the Sultan of Zanzibar, was signed into law only after the British naval force threatened to blockade Zanzibar; the Sultan had little choice but to acquiesce when threatened with the might of the British Empire.⁸¹ A quarter century later a succession dispute, fueled in part by the divisive opinions on slavery, led to the shortest war in history (forty minutes), when the British bombarded Stone Town in Zanzibar on August 27, 1896.⁸² The entire system of slavery was abolished in 1897, when a British-supported, if impotent, Sultan was enthroned at Zanzibar.⁸³

⁸⁰ Sheriff, *Slaves, Spices & Ivory in Zanzibar*, 223.

⁸¹ Sheriff, *Slaves, Spices & Ivory in Zanzibar*, 236-238.

⁸² *The History of Smith, Mackenzie & Co, Ltd.*, 51.

⁸³ Seidenberg, *Mercantile Adventurers*, 10.

Manufactured Cottons as Trade Goods in East Africa

Textiles have long been luxury goods on the Swahili Coast.⁸⁴ But with the intensification of the slave trade in the late eighteenth century, cotton textiles began to be imported in large quantities first from India, then from Europe and North America to serve as currency in east Africa. These textiles were in turn traded along the caravan routes from the coast to the interior of east Africa, along with beads and rifles, as payment for slaves or free passage. A publication from 1931 celebrating the centennial of the Hamburg trading house Wm. O'Swald & Co. stated, "Beads played an important part in trading with the natives; but when the latter became more civilised, they started to wear cotton cloth."⁸⁵ Despite the colonial-era "civilizing" discourse this quotation reflects, the trading house Wm. O'Swald & Co. records the increase in demand for manufactured cloth. Cotton cloth was associated with elites throughout east Africa—the Swahili, the Arabs, and chiefs of the hinterland. Textiles were luxury goods, cited in the earliest known sources, but the shift to trade in the increasingly affordable industrially produced textiles opened up the market to people with more limited means, and therefore directly contributed to the development of *kanga*.

Throughout the nineteenth century, as in earlier centuries, cloth was used as currency throughout east Africa, as it was prized by all.⁸⁶ The physical attributes of cloth made it useful: because cloth was wearable, those who possessed it could display their

⁸⁴ For a more sustained examination of textile and other material consumptions in the Early Modern era on the Swahili Coast, see Jeremy G. Prestholdt, "As Artistry Permits and Custom May Ordain: The Social Fabric of Material Consumption in the Swahili World, circa 1450-1600," Program of African Studies Working Papers 3 (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University, 1998).

⁸⁵ *The Story of the House of O'Swald*, 37.

⁸⁶ Pearson, *Port Cities and Intruders*, 48.

wealth on their bodies. Cloth was also portable, relatively durable, and easily tradable. Both local accounts and European travelogues frequently refer to cloth. In his book, *Customs of the Swahili People*, originally published in 1901, Mtoro bin Mwinyi Bakari explains that cloth was regularly charged as taxes or tolls in his hometown of Bagamoyo, a coastal town in what is today Tanzania. The genesis of the book came in the 1890s when Dr. Carl Velten, the German linguist, asked Mtoro to record traditions and customs.⁸⁷ Mtoro explained that in the past, probably in the decades before German colonialism began in 1885, taxation frequently involved “presents” of cloth made to the *jumbe* (headman) and his wives. These gifts of cloth ensured safe passage for caravans, allowed passing trade for “Hindus and Indians” or ivory collection “by strangers such as Nyamwezi” in his region of jurisdiction.⁸⁸ Taxation at the time of writing, around the turn of the twentieth century, was regulated by the German colonial government and extracted in the local currency, rupees.⁸⁹

Travelers were advised to keep ready stock of both cloth and beads for payment of tolls. One such example comes from missionary Arthur W. Dodgshun, who traveled from Zanzibar due west across what is today Tanzania to Ujiji, located on the banks of

⁸⁷ Noel Q. King, preface to *The Customs of the Swahili People*, by Mtoro bin Mwinyi Bakari, ed. and trans. J. W. T. Allen (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), viii. Velten then compiled and published the original volume in 1903, in German and Swahili. Mtoro was employed by the Germans as a clerk in charge of house tax collection in Bagamoyo before becoming a professor of Arabic in Berlin. While in Berlin, he married a German woman. When he returned to Tanganyika to work in Dar es Salaam, the Germans disapproved of Mtoro's interracial marriage. Mtoro refused to be parted from his wife, and he elected to live out his days in Germany with his wife.

⁸⁸ Mtoro bin Mwinyi Bakari, *The Customs of the Swahili People*, ed. and trans. J. W. T. Allen (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1981), 153.

⁸⁹ Mtoro bin Mwinyi Bakari, *Customs*, 154.

Lake Tanganyika, from 1877-1879.⁹⁰ Early on in his journey, Dodgshun itemized his “outfit”: “50 pcs. Of Gamti, 24 of Koniki [*kaniki*], 6 each of Dubwani, Kikoi, Sahari, Kitambi, Javi, 85 lbs salt, and 75 lbs of beads—(35 Same Same, and about 40 of fancy beads).”⁹¹ Dodgshun specifically lists each particular type of cloth. Similarly, Mtoro described the supplies a Swahili traveler might purchase before embarking on a journey. The Swahili traveler first asks an Indian merchant to lend him goods. After some haggling,

they go to the government to write a bond for 1,000 dollars, and this is officially stamped. They go to the shop, and he asks him what goods he wants, and he tells him—“Twenty bolts of Bombay, thirty bolts of sun, fifteen bolts of majigam, and ten bolts of gamti.” All these are varieties of white cloth. Then, “Cloth for turbans.” “What sort?” “Kareati, buraa, rehani, sturbadi, barawaji, kikoi mzinga, pasua moyo.”⁹² And one barrel of beads, and four sacks of cowries, seven boxes of sugar, six coils of brass wire, and a tent.”⁹³

Like Dodgshun, Mtoro referred to different types of cloth by name, each differing in appearance, quality, country of origin, and of course, price.

Explorer Richard Burton also commented on east Africans’ general preference for brightly colored cloths. Although his opinions confirm he was a product of his time, his comments do underscore the usefulness of cloth as trade goods in the mid-nineteenth century:

⁹⁰ Dodgshun was part of a team comprised of members of the London Missionary Society, who were attempting to solve the problem of transportation across what is today mainland Tanzania. The London Missionary Society planned to open a mission in Ujiji, on the eastern banks of Lake Tanganyika, and Dodgshun and company attempted to make the journey with oxen and wagons, until the wagons were abandoned, and both the animals and Dodgshun expired on route.

⁹¹ Arthur W. Dodgshun, *From Zanzibar to Ujiji; the Journal of Arthur W. Dodgshun, 1877-1879*, ed. Norman Robert Bennett (Boston: African Studies Center, Boston University, 1969), 78.

⁹² Defined as “Various types of cotton cloths, mostly originally from Indian looms, but mill-made materials from Lancashire and New England were competing and taking over as European domination grew.” “Notes,” Mtoro bin Mwinyi Bakari, *Customs*, 297.

⁹³ Mtoro bin Mwinyi Bakari, *Customs*, 158-159.

The principal of the minor items are coloured clothes, called by the people “cloths with names:” of these, many kinds are imported by every caravan. In some regions, Ugogo for instance, the people will not sell their goats and more valuable provisions for plain piece-goods; their gross and gaudy tastes lead them to despise sober and uniform colours. The sultans invariably demand for themselves and their wives showy goods, and complete their honga or blackmail with domestics and indigo-dyed cottons, which they divide amongst their followers. Often, too, a bit of scarlet broadcloth thrown in at the end of a lengthened haggle opens a road and renders impossibilities possible.⁹⁴

Burton inflected his description with his own pejorative opinion of the brightly colored imported cloths, but nonetheless accurately recorded east Africans’ general color and design preferences. He also alluded to the value of cloth and its ability to sweeten a deal or function as currency for tolls. The continued demand for brightly colored and increasingly patterned cloth eventually resulted in the development of *kanga* textiles.

Late nineteenth-century Europeans travelers mentioned demands for cloth and beads at almost every turn in their published accounts. Dodgshun, however, specifically mentioned how many pieces of cloth were demanded to ensure safe passage at least weekly in his travels between 1877 and 1879. For example, Dodgshun’s party accidentally left a toy at their campsite after meeting the Wagogo. The Wagogo believed it was a charm and declared war on the caravan. To ease the misunderstanding, the Wagogo demanded eighty pieces of cloth. Dodgshun’s party sent forty cloths but was forced to send an additional thirty cloths and some brass wire to escape unharmed.⁹⁵

A similar trip was undertaken just a few years later, again by members of the London Missionary Society attempting to find an economical way of transporting

⁹⁴ Richard Francis Burton, “The Lake Regions of Central Equatorial Africa.” *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society* vol. XXIX (1859); 1st electronic ed. 2007, <http://burtoniana.org> (accessed 6 May 2011), 428.

⁹⁵ Dodgshun, *From Zanzibar to Ujiji*, 89-90.

Europeans and their supplies across what is today Tanzania. The journey was recorded by Annie Hore, who accompanied her husband Edward with their infant son from Zanzibar to Ujiji. They set off in May 1882, with Hore riding in a wicker bath chair. She mentioned tolls paid via bundles of cloth among other commodities:

On the fifth day we were assured we should reach Irundi, the first village of Uhha. ... We found however, that we were yet short of Irundi, but were too tired to go further. Edward sat up late at night doing up little bundles of cloth ready for the toll next day. In the morning, one hour of march brought us to the ruins of an old village where a tent was pitched for a temporary halt, while the toll was arranged with the local chief. The business took about an hour and a half to transact, and we were left with many protestations of lasting friendship, a pair of new guides, the chief now sported a brightly polished gun and a yellow umbrella; and our own stores lighter by 20 good cloths.⁹⁶

Cloth was clearly a very valuable commodity in nineteenth century east Africa.

Used as currency and as a display of wealth, imported cloth also symbolized access to foreign markets.

The Swahili Coast has long been connected to larger networks of trade throughout the Indian Ocean world. In the nineteenth century, the island of Zanzibar played a central role in the regions' trade with the wider world, and the larger east African region was indelibly linked to global trade. Natural resources from the region, such as slaves, ivory, and cloves were exported, while manufactured goods, such as beads, rifles, and most importantly for this study, textiles, were imported for local consumption. Global demand for luxury goods spawned larger trade networks, and to meet these demands, trading houses and local Indian merchants clamored to provide access to—and generate income from—these transactions. The tripartite “Christianity, commerce and

⁹⁶ Annie Hore, “To Lake Tanganyika in a Bath Chair,” in *Not all Bonnets and Bustles: Victorian Women Travellers in Africa*, ed. Yvonne Barlow (London: Bookline and Thinker, 2008), 144.

civilization” mission of many late-nineteenth century Europeans also played a part in opening the region to manufactured goods, such as textiles, as abolitionists, capitalists, and colonialists (sometimes one and the same) united agendas in the name of “progress.” All of these forces set the stage for increased consumption of imported manufactured goods during the late nineteenth century, paving the way for industrially printed *kanga* textiles.

CHAPTER 3 THE HISTORICAL EMERGENCE OF *KANGA* TEXTILES

While today *kanga* textiles are commonly thought of as bearers of east African or Swahili culture, this textile emerged from a complex history of global trade networks serving local consumer demands. *Kanga* textiles developed from a host of design influences and a lineage of industrially manufactured textiles. These textile precursors were manufactured overseas but often underwent local changes to suit the east African market in increasingly affordable machine-produced textiles. Indeed, *kanga* textiles cannot be said to be wholly imported, nor indigenous, making them a prime example of the interconnected nature of global networks of trade in the late nineteenth century.

The historical emergence of this textile involved many actors and a series of textile precursors. The development of *kanga* can be traced to a distinctly local and particular series of events, triggered by international factors but maneuvered by local players. This chapter employs Swahili poetry and language handbooks, European travelogues and business documents, consular and governmental trade reports, local accounts, studio photography and postcard photographs, and extant examples of nineteenth-century manufactured cloth for sale in east Africa, to reconstruct the development of *kanga* textiles from a lineage of factory-produced cloths. It has already been established that a variety of factory-produced cloth was available for sale in east Africa in the nineteenth century. Although many of these textiles may have generally influenced the development of *kanga* textiles, a particular lineage of *kitambi*, *merikani*, *kaniki*, *shali*, *leso*, and *leso ya kushona* directly contributed to the creation of the *kanga* textile.

Textile Precursors to *Kanga*

Mombasa poet Muyaka (ca. 1776 – 1840) indicated the importance of cloth in a handful of his poems, dating from roughly 1810 to 1840. The first Swahili poet whose work was predominantly secular, Muyaka often utilized humor to discuss people's daily activities.¹ One of his works, entitled *Cloth comes from India*, reminds readers that cloth is the privilege of the wealthy, but cloth and wealth can come and go.² The final stanza of the poem reads,

When I look about me and see people in fine clothes,
I know it is just their luck, they are the lucky ones;
And when my turn comes, I'll be as good as them!
Cloth comes from India and yet there some go naked!³

Muyaka also recorded the fact that much cloth was imported from India and was likely hand-woven in the early nineteenth century.⁴ Gujarat, on the northwest coast of India, was responsible for producing highly prized, hand-woven cloth, which was subsequently exported to the Persian Gulf and east Africa.⁵ Large amounts of cloth in varying qualities were imported from India in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.

Captain Thomas Smee listed Indian cloth among the principle imports on a visit to Zanzibar in his travelogue, dated 6th April, 1811: "Of imports the following are the chief:

¹ Jan Knappert, *Four Centuries of Swahili Verse* (Nairobi: Heinemann, 1979), 141; Mohamed H. Abdulaziz, *Muyaka: 19th Century Swahili Popular Poetry* (Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau, 1979), ix.

² The poem's title in Swahili is *Hindi nidko kwenyi nguo*, Abdulaziz, *Muyaka*, 166-167.

³ The original Swahili reads:

Maninga yangu chi'vua chi'iona wanyi mavao

K'wamba ni majaaliwa, ndio wajaaliweo

Nami nimwapo kupewa nalingamana na wao

Nindi ndiko kwenyi nguo, na wendao tupu wako. Abdulaziz, *Muyaka*, 168-169.

⁴ Kaoru Suigihara, Om Prakash, Giorgio Riello, and Roy Tirthankar, eds., *How India Clothed the World: The World of South Asian Textiles, 1500-1850* (Leiden: Brill, 2009).

⁵ Dana Seidenberg, *Mercantile Adventurers: The World of East African Asian, 1750-1985* (New Delhi: New Age International, 1996), 33, 42.

Surat and Dungaree cloth from Cutch. ...We were told that the demand for European goods on the continent was very great; and if the natives had any returns to make besides ivory and slaves, I have little doubt but we might here find an extensive and lucrative vent for numerous articles of our manufacture.”⁶ On the following page, a table lists the exports and imports of Zanzibar; of particular interest here are the “Surat cloth” and “Dungaree cloth” from Cutch and the “Cloths, cotton” from Surat.⁷ He made note that “English woollens are in no demand, consequently not imported.”⁸ He also described the dress of coastal people: “The dress of the people in general is a coloured wrapper round their loins. The better sort have, in addition, a loose white cloth over their shoulders, and round their body. The Arabs wear turbans, while the Souallies, Soomallies, and negroes go bareheaded.”⁹ In the first decade or so of the nineteenth century, much of the cloth in east Africa came from India and was hand-woven.

***Kitambi*: Transition from Hand-Woven to Machine-Woven Imported, Colored Cloth**

One popular imported cloth from the early nineteenth century is the *kitambi*. It is difficult to apprehend what *kitambi* actually looked like given its dominance before the advent of photography; however it seems clear that *kitambi* was an imported cotton cloth that often featured either blue or red printed or dyed embellishments. It also seems likely *kitambi* was a type of cloth that was originally handwoven in India, and

⁶ Captain Thomas Smee, “Observations during a Voyage of Research on the East Coast of Africa, from Cape Guardafui to the Island of Zanzibar, in the H. C.’s cruiser *Ternate*, (Captain T. Smee,) and *Sylph* schooner (Lieutenant Hardy),” in *Zanzibar: City, Island, and Coast*, by Richard F. Burton (1811; London: Tinsley Brothers, 1872), 2:493.

⁷ Surat and Cutch are both areas in present-day Gujarat, on the western coast of India near the border with Pakistan. Smee, “Observations during a Voyage,” 494.

⁸ Smee, “Observations during a Voyage,” 512.

⁹ Smee, “Observations during a Voyage,” 513.

subsequently replaced with machine-woven imports from the United Kingdom or British India.

Another of Muyaka's poems is entitled *Give me back my Kitambi*, in which the protagonist rebuffs a lover for wearing his gift of cloth for the benefit of others.¹⁰ The third stanza reads:

May be I have bought it on the tick, I will pay for it eventually;
Debts should be paid, you know this yourself.
A grasping woman comes to a bad end.
There is no dispute between us, all I want is my piece of cloth.¹¹

By using the name of the type of cloth, *kitambi*, Muyaka refers to the fashionable cloth of the day. In the poem, Muyaka also mentions the protagonist buying the *kitambi* in question on credit at the Fort, referring to Fort Jesus. A further poem recounts how the protagonist buys a *kitambi* for one Maria Theresa dollar, which was at least four times the normal price at that time.¹² Paying higher than normal prices together with utilizing credit suggests increased demand for the current fashionable cloth. Indeed, Muyaka often lamented the cost of "looking smart" in his poems.¹³ He also satirized the unending quest for women to be highly fashionable in early nineteenth-century Mombasa, an observation that was shared by late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century visitors to the region.

¹⁰ Abdulaziz, *Muyaka*, 175.

¹¹ The original Swahili reads:
Ikiwa nimekikopa thamani mwisho tatoa
Ada ya deni hulipwa nawe haya wayajua
Mt'umke mwenyi pupa daima huvundikiwa
Minawe hatuna dawa, nataka kitambi changu. Abdulaziz, *Muyaka*, 174-175.

¹² Abdulaziz, *Muyaka*, 179.

¹³ See Abdulaziz, *Muyaka*, 180-181, 244-245, 252-253, and 276-277.

By the 1830s and 1840s, machine-woven cloth was widely available, manufactured in competing industrial centers such as the United Kingdom and the United States of America.¹⁴ These less expensive alternatives displaced many hand-woven varieties. Their names, though once likely referred to a hand-woven cloth, may subsequently have been applied to machine-woven cloths.¹⁵ For example, British explorer Richard Burton described *kitambi* in his 1859 publication, *The Lakes Regions of Central Equatorial Africa*:

Of the second division [cotton cloths] the cheapest is the Barsati, called by the Africans kitambi; it is a blue cotton cloth, with a broad red stripe extending along one quarter of the depth, the other three-quarters being dark blue; the red is either of European or Cutch dye. The former is preferred upon the coast for the purchase of copal. Of this Indian stuff there are three kinds, varying in size, colour, and quality...¹⁶

The late date—1859—suggests the *kitambi* Burton describes was machine-woven. Burton also references the printed border designs of some *kitambi* in his 1859 publication, “Of late years the Wanyamwezi have taken into favour the barsati of kitambi banyani; it is a thin white long cloth, called in Bombay kora (Corah, or cotton piece-goods), with a narrow reddish border of madder or other dye stamped in India or

¹⁴ Pedro Machado, “A wash in a Sea of Cloth: Gujarat, Africa, and the Western Indian Ocean, 1300-1800,” in *The Spinning World: A Global History of Cotton Textiles, 1200-1800*, ed. Giorgio Riello and Prasannan Parthasarathi (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 178; Prasannan Parthasarathi and Ian Wendt, “Decline in Three Keys: Indian Cotton Manufacturing from the Late Eighteenth Century,” in *The Spinning World: A Global History of Cotton Textiles, 1200-1800*, ed. Giorgio Riello and Prasannan Parthasarathi (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 397; and Giorgio Riello, “The Globalization of Cotton Textiles: Indian Cottons, Europe, and the Atlantic World, 1600-1800,” in *The Spinning World: A Global History of Cotton Textiles, 1200-1800*, ed. Giorgio Riello and Prasannan Parthasarathi (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 286.

¹⁵ Abdul Sheriff, *Slaves, Spices & Ivory in Zanzibar: Integration of an East African Commercial Empire into the World Economy, 1770-1873* (London: James Currey, 1987), 84.

¹⁶ Richard Francis Burton, “The Lake Regions of Central Equatorial Africa,” *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society* vol. XXIX (1859); 1st electronic ed. 2007 <http://burtoniana.org> (accessed 6 May 2011), 429.

Zanzibar.”¹⁷ As a colored cloth, first handwoven and subsequently machine-woven, *kitambi* marks the first transition in a line of manufactured cloth predecessors of *kanga*.

***Merikani*: A Crisis in Supply of Imported, Unbleached, White Cotton Cloth**

The next type of cloth in the lineage of *kanga* textiles is *merikani*, an unbleached, white cotton cloth, machine-woven in factories near Salem, Massachusetts. *Merikani* became popular throughout east Africa from the late 1820s, even serving as currency in some areas. The interruption of *merikani* imports during the American Civil War from 1861-1865 may have prompted east African women to alter their inferior substitutes. The American Civil War, half a world away, may in fact have led to the innovation of locally produced, dyed and printed designs on imported cloth. These local alterations likely set the stage for woodblock printed designs, the earliest form of *kanga* textiles.

American trading interests in east Africa began in 1823 with the first recorded American trading visit to Zanzibar by Captain Johnson. In 1827, Captain Millet brought a cargo that was comprised of nearly one-third American cotton goods, produced in mills near Salem, Massachusetts.¹⁸ By 1832, trade with America had proved lucrative, prompting the Treaty of 1833, Zanzibar’s first commercial treaty with a foreign power.¹⁹ By 1834, American merchants began to devote about one-third of all cargoes to their unbleached, machine-produced cotton cloth.²⁰ Famed for its naturally bright white color and durability, this white cloth came to be known as *merikani*, the Swahili word for

¹⁷ Burton, *The Lake Regions*, 429.

¹⁸ Sheriff, *Slaves, Spices & Ivory in Zanzibar*, 92.

¹⁹ Sheriff, *Slaves, Spices & Ivory in Zanzibar*, 93-94.

²⁰ Sheriff, *Slaves, Spices & Ivory in Zanzibar*, 95.

America still used in Tanzania today. In 1835, Ruschenberger noted while visiting Zanzibar,

At present the commerce is very considerable, and, as Zanzibar will become the great commercial depot of the eastern coast of Africa, is destined to increase. The Americans obtain here gum copal, ivory, and hides, for which they give American cottons and specie.* The American cotton manufactures have taken precedence of the English, not only at this place and in many parts of the East, but on the Pacific coast of America. The English endeavour to imitate our fabric by stamping their own with American marks, and by other means assimilating it; but the people say the strength and wear of the American goods are so superior, that, lest they be deceived, they will no longer even purchase from Englishmen.

*The American trade is chiefly from Salem, Massachusetts.²¹

Ruschenberger mentions three key points in this short passage: first, Zanzibar was the center of trade for the whole of coastal east Africa. The commerce centered at Zanzibar made it the most prominent location for the exchange of goods, including the arrival of imported products. Because of this commercial dominance, which grew throughout the nineteenth century, Zanzibar became the center of the regional east African fashion world in printed textiles during that century. Second, Ruschenberger states that American cotton piece goods, primarily from Salem, Massachusetts, displaced English varieties, and subsequently the English attempted to hoodwink east African consumers by stamping their cotton cloths with marks to imitate American manufacture. A variety of manufacturer's marks illustrate how cloth was stamped with recognizable images to indicate the company, and by extension country of origin, of goods. Although dating somewhat later, white cotton samples from an LKM (*Leidsche Katoenmaatschappij* or Leiden Cotton Company) sample book illustrate examples of Dutch manufacturers'

²¹ William Samuel W. Ruschenberger, *Narrative of a Voyage round the World, during the years 1835, 36, and 37* (London: Richard Bentley, 1838), 1:65.

marks (Fig. 3-1). English manufacturers must have been quite desperate to regain their dominance and compete in the cloth trade if they resorted to such measures.

Third and finally, Ruschenberger references local opinion, which favored American cotton cloth because of the superior “strength and wear.” Later trade reports and anecdotal evidence confirm that American-manufactured *merikani* competed little with inferior imposters from either the United Kingdom or British India in the course of the nineteenth century. American cotton cloth was stronger and thicker; British and British Indian manufacturers added a white substance to bolster the perceived weight and quality of imposter *merikani*. Of course, this added “gruel” simply washed away upon the first launder, and east Africans were savvy consumers in differentiating true *merikani* from lesser-quality imposter *merikani*.

A British official, writing of the preferences in cloth among the Bendair Coast (present-day Somalia) in an 1891 trade report for Zanzibar, explains, “It appears that the English and Indian stuffs known in trade as ‘grey shirtings,’ although a good deal cheaper than the American, are not liked by the Somalis and Gallas on account of their smell of ‘grel’ or ‘size,’ and because their texture is too flimsy. The natives seem to prefer to give the higher price for the American goods.”²² Slave and lower class men and women who wore *merikani* were neither fooled nor impressed with the substitute. I

²² “Zanzibar: Report for the Year 1891 on the Trade of Zanzibar,” by G. H. Portal, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports on Trade and Finance*, Foreign Office No. 982 (London: Harrison and Sons, 1892), 11. This point is elaborated upon later in the report: “[T]he gruel which is used in the preparation of British-Indian shirtings is absent from the American article; the natives also say that the latter lasts the longer, whilst the former becomes thin in the process of washing. The test which is applied is that of smell, so that if some odourless substance were to be used in the preparation of the gruel, the British goods would command as ready a sale as the American.” “Inclosure 3: Extracts from a Report on the Trade of the Benadir Ports,” in “Zanzibar: Report for the Year 1891 on the Trade of Zanzibar,” 32. A fuller account of the difference between American *merikani* and British imposter *merikani* and British Indian *membai* is given in “Zanzibar: Report for the Year 1897 on the Trade and Commerce of Zanzibar,” by Cave, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports*, Foreign Office No. 2129 (London: Harrison and Sons, 1898), 12-14.

will quote one telling anecdote at length to demonstrate women's expertise in discerning cloth quality. Frederick Jackson recalled an incident from 1896 when he was paymaster of the No. 6 Company of the Uganda Rifles (note that payments at this time were made in trade goods):

We officials in out-stations were notified that a consignment of *merikani* manufactured in England, was being sent out and we were instructed to 'push it,' in substitution for the American article manufactured in Massachusetts. In due course it arrived, and I took a proportion of the bales, and passed the remainder on the headquarters. Then came pay-day, when all my goods, brass, copper and iron wire, a variety of beads, coloured shawls, etc., etc., and the *merikani* were all laid out, in *duka*-like (shop) fashion, so that every one could take their choice.

On most occasions the men sent their wives to receive payment, and there was always a large contingent of Sudanese women present, and to my great satisfaction there was a run on the new importation. A few days later, however, I received a deputation of infuriated Sudanese viragoes, and I shall never forget it. The spokeswoman, a very voluble creature, could have said what she had to say, and the whole lot could have retired within five minutes; but she was so frequently interrupted by her co-deputies, that it was half an hour before I could get rid of them. Twice it was necessary to call three of them to order by a threat of ejection; and that started a cross-fire between them and the dear old Sergeant-major, who was always present on such occasions.

Finally, they ceased gabbling, and then began to produce evidence of their complaint in the form of what at one time had been beautifully white calico, but now looked more like dish-cloths, both wet and dry; and as Baraka would have said, "I felt ashamed." Then one of the three interrupters stepped forward with a piece just as issued, and with a vigorous rubbing between her hands, as is done in washing, shook out a white powder, and then held it up for me to look at and *through*. That time I felt more than ashamed, and would have thrown up my job rather than be a party to foisting such rubbish on to natives whether under my immediate charge or otherwise. It was flimsy, and its flimsiness was hidden by a superabundance of dressing; a ramp and nothing less.

The result was that every bit of it was exchanged for the vastly superior American product and the remainder was used for food bags; all it was fit for.²³

From the early 1830s to the early 1860s, *merikani* continued to be America's strong, staple export to East Africa. Throughout the 1850s, two to three dozen American vessels carrying between 7,000 and 10,000 tons of goods docked each year in Zanzibar.²⁴ The vast majority of imports came in the form of domestic unbleached cotton sheeting from the cotton mills near Salem, Massachusetts. Two examples from a sample book from LKM in the Vlisco archives illustrate this type of cloth, both labeled "Americani" (Fig. 3-1).

This inexpensive American cotton sheeting was worn by lower class men and women in east Africa (Fig. 3-2). Burton mentioned this cloth, noting, "On the coast it is a favourite article of wear with the poorer freemen, slaves, and women."²⁵ A photograph by A. R. P. de Lord shows a group of women and children, mostly dressed in the bright white *merikani* in Zanzibar (Fig. 3-3). The image was disseminated as a late nineteenth-century postcard entitled, "Zanzibar: Natives of East Africa." They appear to be sitting in a boat, with sacks of goods wrapped in plaid or spotted cloth. A few women wear minimal jewelry, but all have their heads uncovered and wear short hairstyles, typical of slaves in the late nineteenth century.

As production improved and competition increased throughout the 1850s, profits in American white cotton sheeting declined; however, the decisive blow for American cloth

²³ Frederick Jackson, *Early Days in East Africa* (1930, repr., London: Dawsons of Pall Mall, 1969), 177-178.

²⁴ Richard F. Burton, *Zanzibar: City, Island, and Coast* (London: Tinsley Brothers, 1872), 2:408.

²⁵ Burton, *The Lake Regions*, 429.

came between 1861 and 1865 when the American Civil War disrupted the productivity of the United States and its trade in cotton.²⁶ Letters from American merchants bemoaned the disruption in trade and profits:

This is the first Quarter for Several years that there has been no arrivals & departures of American vessels at this port. This is not only owing to the enormous price of Domestics at home but also owing to the extreme low price of Ivory & Gum Copal. The former articles being the only imports into and the latter the only exports from Zanzibar to any am't in Am'n vessels after the crushing of the Rebellion Zanzibar business must revive. It is now comparatively speaking dead...²⁷

American merchants went on to articulate the dire nature of their predicament, "Before the present war there has been twelve thousand Bales of Manufactured Cotton Goods exported to Zanzibar per annum. I think since the war not more than one thousand Bales in all have been sent."²⁸ The gap in the market was quickly filled by merchants from the United Kingdom and British India who provided cloths woven from lesser quality Indian cotton.²⁹ According to an 1864 British Commercial Report, "At one time the market was largely supplied with piece gods of American manufacture, but since the way English cloth has taken its place, and American merchants have even imported Manchester goods from America."³⁰ This, too, irritated the American merchants:

²⁶ Sheriff, *Slaves, Spices and Ivory in Zanzibar*, 102; Burton, *Zanzibar*, 2:414.

²⁷ "Letters Concerning Eastern Africa: 50. William W. Goodhue to William H. Seward, June 30, 1862, Zanzibar," *New England Merchants in Africa: A History through Documents, 1802-1865*, eds. Norman R. Bennett and George E. Brookes, Jr. (Boston: Boston University Press: 1965), 521. William W. Goodhue served as American representative from November 1862 to November 1863.

²⁸ "Letters Concerning Eastern Africa: 51. Daniel H. Mansfield to William H. Seward, May 4, 1863, Salem," *New England Merchants in Africa: A History through Documents, 1802-1865*, eds. Norman R. Bennett and George E. Brookes, Jr. (Boston: Boston University Press: 1965), 521-522.

²⁹ Sheriff, *Slaves, Spices & Ivory in Zanzibar*, 134-135.

³⁰ "Muscat. Zanzibar," by Playfair, *Commercial Reports received at the Foreign Office from her Majesty's Consuls between July 1st, 1863 and June 30th, 1864* (London: Harrison and Sons, 1864), 180.

Before the war, nearly two thirds of the Cotton goods (which form one of the principal articles of import) were imported from the U.S., but for the past four years the market has been supplied chiefly with goods of English manufacture from Bombay & England. In ordinary times, however, these can hardly be brought to compete with American Cottons.³¹

During the American Civil War (1861-1865) when trade in unbleached, white cotton sheeting was interrupted, east African consumers had to make do with inferior imports from other countries. In time, these foreign substitutes came to be known by their country of origin too, helping to distinguish the highest quality *merikani* from cheaper imposters. In a British report on the trade and commerce of Zanzibar in 1897, these distinctions were clarified:

The most important class of piece-goods for which there is great demand in East Africa is a species of unbleached cloth which is in universal request throughout the interior, and forms in some parts of the country the only currency. It is known as “grey cloth” and is made in two qualities, the better kind being called “Americani,” from the fact that America was the first country to introduce it, and the inferior quality being recognised by the name of “Membai.”³²

Although trade in American cotton cloth resumed in later decades, the gap in supply due to the American Civil War may well have contributed to the chain of events that led to the creation of *kanga* textiles. To mask the inferior color and quality of British Indian cotton cloth imports, slave women resorted to dyeing their British Indian “*merikani*” with locally produced indigo.³³ The cloth changed from a dingy white to a deep blue or black, from imposter *merikani* to what came to be called *kaniki*.

³¹ “Letters Concerning Eastern Africa: 61. Edward D. Ropes to William H. Seward, October 5, 1865, Zanzibar,” *New England Merchants in Africa: A History through Documents, 1802-1865*, eds. Norman R. Bennett and George E. Brookes, Jr. (Boston: Boston University Press: 1965), 538.

³² “Zanzibar: Report for the Year 1897,” 12.

³³ Laura Fair, *Pastimes and Politics: Culture, Community, and Identity in Post-Abolition Zanzibar, 1890-1945* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2001), 67.

***Kaniki*: The Turn to Indigo-Dyed Cloth, Subsequently with Printed Designs**

Although references to *kaniki* can be found before the American Civil War led to shortages of *merikani* in East Africa, I propose the widespread adoption of *kaniki* dates to this interruption in supply. The indigo-dyed cloth is easily identifiable in extant cloth sample books. For instance, two LKM sample books include cuttings of *kaniki* imported to locations along the east African coast by various European merchant converter firms. One LKM sample book possesses three examples of *kaniki* (Fig. 3-4). The first sample in the left-hand bottom corner is hand-labeled as *kaniki*, dates from 30 December 1895, and was imported by the Hamburg-based firm, Hansing & Co. Although the subsequent samples are not individually dated, the volume possesses samples from between 1884-1900, so they must date from before the turn of the century. Both samples display the printed exultation in German: “Kanikis Prima-Qualitat ... Hamburg 36 Yards.,” which translates to “Prime Quality Kanikis.” The first full-page sample also has a printed block-letter “B” and both feature a signature, which if recognized, would likely indicate the merchant-converter firm that imported the cloth to east Africa. Two more samples of *kaniki*—hand-labeled as such—appear in another LKM volume held in the Vlisco archive. These cuttings were imported by the merchant converter firm Hansing & Co. on 26 August 1901; the top sample also bears the insignia of a striding lion atop the firm’s name. The indigo-dyed cloth is also readily apparent in late nineteenth-century photographs and postcards, such as the mother who wears and wraps her child in *kaniki* from Zanzibar (Fig. 3-5). Although these examples date from some years later than the 1860s, the dyed-blue cloth did not cease to be worn, used, or purchased with the introduction of other types of cloth.

Burton mentions *merikani*, *kaniki*, and *shali* together in his appraisal of the prices and types of cloth on sale in 1859. He confirms *merikani* was worn by lower class coastal dweller, and goes on to compare *kaniki* to *ukaya*, “The *ukaya* somewhat resembles the *kaniki*, but it is finer and thinner. This jaconnet, manufactured in Europe and dyed in Bombay, is much used by female slaves and concubines as head veils.”³⁴ Missionary Charles New also described the *ukaya* as a blue cotton cloth used by women as a head covering, observed from his travels in Mombasa and Zanzibar in the 1860s. “In some places the *ukaya* is preferred. This is, generally speaking, a long piece of blue calico or gauze, fastened over the forehead by a piece of cord round the chin, and falling over the head down the back.”³⁵

Dr. Christie, who served as personal physician to the Omani Sultan of Zanzibar from 1865-1874, wrote about the dress of Zanzibaris in his 1874 publication, *Cholera Epidemics in East Africa*:

In Zanzibar some article of dress is always worn by the natives, though it be, in some instances, of a very slight description. The simplest dress of the males is a piece of blue cotton cloth, tucked round the loins, and the female dress is of the same material, but of greater breadth, passing under the arm pits, covering the breasts, and extending to the knees. Material of a better description is used when it can be procured, but the fashion is the same. ... There are also various modifications of the female dress. With a taste for dress, the Zanzibar slaves have taken the initial step in civilization, and, as may be surmised, there is always a strong desire for the possession of such articles, although they may be considerably the worse for wear. Bleached cotton cloth of the purest white is the fashionable material in Zanzibar, and ...they are generally kept scrupulously clean...but when the loin-cloth is of coloured material, and there is always one of this description, there is much less attention as to its cleanliness, and it is apt to be used for a great variety of purposes. ... Soap is largely used for washing material of a white colour;

³⁴ Burton, *The Lake Regions*, 431.

³⁵ New, *Life, wanderings, and labours*, 41.

much more sparingly for articles of a coloured texture, but seldom or never for washing the body.³⁶

In this passage Christie mentions “bleached cotton cloth of the purest white,” likely imposter *merikani*, bleached to achieve the desired whiteness, and “blue cotton cloth,” likely *kaniki*, dyed with indigo. He also makes special note of “cleanliness,” as his purpose in describing modes of dress is to comment on hygiene and the likelihood of spread of diseases. Certainly a product of his times, Christie judged Zanzibari slaves on a perceived “civilizing” scale, but Christie also recorded detailed mention of the cleanliness of different types of cloth; in looking to these details, one might infer that white cotton cloth—*merikani*—was more highly prized than blue cotton cloth—*kaniki*. This would certainly help account for the shift in the demand for printed cotton textiles: without access to authentic *merikani*, Zanzibaris and other east Africans had to make do with unsatisfactory substitutes. This dissatisfaction may then have led them to alter the cloth in some way or demand altered cloth—either in the form of indigo-dyed cloth, *kaniki*, or bleaching the originally grey British Indian (imposter) *merikani* to a brilliant white. These local alterations (from *merikani* to *kaniki*), together with imported printed and dyed cloth (*kitambi*), may have led to the addition of hand-stamped designs.

Returning to the LKM pattern book from 1884-1900, five further cuttings of potential *kaniki* warrant discussing. They appear on facing pages in this volume. The left illustrates two indigo-dyed cloths; the middle sample dates to 24 April 1894, and was manufactured by Heuer & Co., and imported to east Africa by Hansing & Co (Fig. 3-6). The lower sample bears a Heuer & Co. identification sticker. Both samples end in a

³⁶ James Christie, *Cholera Epidemics in East Africa: An account of the several diffusions of the disease in that country from 1821 till 1872, with an outline of the geography, ethnology, and trade connections of the regions through which the epidemics passed* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1876), 309-310.

tasseled fringe, and the bottom sample has a printed white border, parallel to the fringe. The border is comprised of two solid, outer white lines that flank a central, meandering dotted zig-zag pattern. The right-hand page has an identical sample, labeled with a Hansing & Co. sticker, dating from 14 November 1894. The bottom sample on the left-hand side is labeled as *kaniki*, made for Hansing by van Vlissingen & Co. (Vlisco), and dates to January 1895. Is it possible these fringed, indigo-dyed cloths with printed white borders are ornamented forms of *kaniki*? Or perhaps the more expensive *ukaya* Burton mentioned, which was worn by freeborn women over their heads? In his two-volume, 1872 publication devoted to Zanzibar, Burton clarified that a “freeborn, however, is distinguished out-of-doors by her rude mantilla, and ‘ladies’ affect an Ukaya, or fillet of indigo-dyed cotton, or muslin...”³⁷ Either way, these decorations show tentative steps towards printed designs on indigo-dyed cloth. By the late nineteenth century, these simple ornamentations gave way to a multitude of printed designs, both locally printed as well as imported varieties. Printed cloths became increasingly affordable in the late nineteenth century and were in great demand, and brought the development of printed textiles design one step closer to *kanga* textiles.

Design Influences and the Development of *Kanga*

In his 1873 publication, drawn on his previous decade’s residence in east Africa, Charles New noted the chief imports to Zanzibar, including “Americani (unbleached calico), sheeting, blue indigo stuffs, coloured pocket-handkerchiefs, prints, coral beads of every colour, brass and iron wire, crockery, etc.”³⁸ His list confirmed the coexistence

³⁷ Burton, *Zanzibar*, 434.

³⁸ New, *Life, wanderings, and labours*, 41.

of these types of cloth; therefore, “Americani” (*merikani*) and “blue indigo stuffs” (*kaniki*), along with pocket-handkerchiefs (either *leso* or *kisutu*, which will be discussed below), and pear-patterned cotton shawls (*shali*), were imported and used simultaneously.³⁹ He also tantalizingly mentions “prints,” but without further description it is difficult to conjecture about the specific type of textile, its method of production, or its patterns; however, the concurrent mention of *merikani*, *kaniki*, handkerchiefs (*leso* or *kisutu*) and prints points to the immediate forerunners and contemporaries of *kanga* textiles. Furthermore, this confluence of bold printed designs, bright colors, handkerchiefs, and paisley combined to produce the *kanga* textile’s most direct predecessors, the *leso ya kushona* and *kisutu*.

***Kanga*: Product of Local Demands, Indian Woodblock and Tie-Dyed Designs, and Indonesian Batik Designs**

Dar es Salaam-based informants assert that *kanga* designs were first created locally and only subsequently manufactured and imported from abroad.⁴⁰ Credit for this innovation is divided between two groups: most people agree that Indian merchants in either Zanzibar or Mombasa stamped designs on imported cloth, but a few insist that Indian merchants only improved upon the innovation of women in either Zanzibar or Mombasa. Some people I interviewed suggested women were the first to hand-stamp designs onto imported imposter *merikani* cloth, embellishing the mediocre cloth available to them. A potential date may be in the early 1860s when imports of true *merikani* were interrupted, but when pressed for a likely date, my interviewees simply stated “a long time ago.” These female innovators were said to have created stamps by

³⁹ New also defines *kaniki* as “indigo-dyed stuffs,” explaining together with *visutu*, both “are common articles of dress.” New, *Life, wanderings, and labours*, 60.

⁴⁰ Summarized from interviews with women in Dar es Salaam, Fall 2011.

cutting shapes and designs into starchy vegetables like cassava.⁴¹ The vegetal stamps were then dipped in locally produced dye, likely indigo. Basic geometric, repeating designs could then be stamped across imported grey cloth.

Local Indian merchants, potentially inspired by these women's innovation began to hand-stamp designs onto imported *merikani*-like cloth. Without further documentation or local records, the date of this innovation is impossible to confirm. These local Indian merchants, however, used carved woodblocks to create their printed designs, which resulted in more complex, orderly designs. Back on the subcontinent, Indian artisans had long used carved woodblocks to stamp paisley, floral, vegetal and other small, intricate and sometimes geometric designs on locally produced cotton cloth to create inexpensive garments for women, known today as *saris*.⁴² This decorative technique of stamping or less frequently drawing designs on cloth is known as *kalamkari* in India. It produces less expensive patterned textiles than those that are hand-woven.⁴³ Tie-dyeing is also a common method for decorating *saris*, called *bandhani* in Gujarat. Many small spots are common features of this patterning.⁴⁴ Along the east Coast of Africa, local Indian merchants may have adapted one or both techniques to create patterned cloth.

Fortuitously, a dozen or more samples of locally embellished cloth exist in an LKM sample book in the Vlisco archives. Eight are white machine-woven cloth, with

⁴¹ Fatma Shaaban Abdullah, "Reflection on a Symbol," *Africa Now* (February 1984), 51.

⁴² Linda Lynton, *The Sari: Styles, Patterns, History, Techniques* (London: Harry N. Abrams, 1995), 25-27. See page 34 for examples of printed *saris*.

⁴³ See *Indian Kalamkari* (New Delhi: All India Handicrafts Board, Government of India, Ministry of Industry, 1978).

⁴⁴ Lynton, *The Sari*, 28. See pages 38-39 for examples of *bandhani*. See also John Gillow and Nicholas Barnard, *Indian Textiles* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2008), 92-96.

simple, repeating, black stamped designs (Fig. 3-7). These cloths were collected in Mombasa and likely all date to 1901. Affixed alongside four of the samples is a letter from the Hamburg-based merchant converter Hansing & Co., on behalf of the Hamburg firm J. H. A. Heuer, dated 27 February 1901. The letter discussed competition in the textile trade, specifically mentions locally finished cloth: "...the quantities of native finished product are small and for various reasons the manufacturing of which is not expected to increase." Two feature stamps and woven designs along the edges of the samples, and all of the samples list the current selling price (10–14 rupees). These eight locally stamped examples conform to accounts of the earliest *kanga* designs: simple black repeating patterns printed on machine-woven, imported white cloth.

Two other samples of locally embellished cloth purchased in Mombasa in 1901 are more complex. The first reproduced a bordered cloth, which conforms to an established *kanga* composition (Fig. 3-8). The second more complex Mombasa-embellished cloth combines two methods of surface decoration—tie-dyed and block printing (Fig. 3-9). Other samples were collected in Zanzibar also make use of these two methods, such as one tie-dyed red with black woodblock-printed designs. The edges of the presumed woodblock are made evident by the break in the undulating wave and the thickness of the black dye, when compared against the entire length of the design. Nineteenth-century Gujarati block-printed cloth resembles the bordered cloth with small, intricate and repeating designs favored by the cloth.⁴⁵ Hand-stamping in east Africa is thought to have continued until the mid-twentieth century. Woodblocks with decorative *kanga* designs or individual Swahili words, used to hand-print *kanga* borders, central

⁴⁵ See John Gillow, "Block Printing," *Indian Textiles* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2008), 84-87.

motifs, and text have been collected at various places along the Swahili Coast (Fig. 3-10). The floral design on one woodblock was created by nailing thin brass strips into the wood, whereas the paisley design on the other woodblock was carved directly into the wood. Both floral blocks were acquired in Zanzibar, and they may have been made locally or imported from India.⁴⁶ Other printing blocks were acquired on Lamu Island, in northern coastal Kenya. These blocks were found at the bottom of a disused well and have tentatively been dated to the 1940s. One possesses the crosses and tangerine flower design, common to the central ground of *kisutu*, a particular type of *kanga*.⁴⁷ Another displays the word, *mfungo*, which can be translated to fasting, a tie (as in to tie for first place), or a conclusion.

Another method perhaps more closely underscores the direct influence between Gujarati cloth and *kanga* textiles. Tie-and-dye techniques were used in both Gujarati- and east African-embellished cloths. Two similar examples from Zanzibar have tie-dyed circular shapes in red and white on a background of deep indigo blue (Fig. 3-11). They date to 13 January 1901 and commanded a higher price: 17 rupees. The final example has both large and small tie-and-dye decoration (Fig. 3-12). It is hand-labeled “Bombay,” further linking the design with its likely origins, for the small, closely aligned

⁴⁶ Christopher Spring, “Curator’s comments” section for “printing-block” entry, object AN162098001, British Museum, Research, http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/search_the_collection_database/search_object_details.aspx?searchtext=kanga+block&orig=%2fresearch%2fsearch_the_collection_database.aspx&numpages=10¤tpage=1&partid=1&objectid=1401639 (accessed 17 June 2011).

⁴⁷ *Kisutu* will be discussed at length in Chapter 4, “Popular Early *Kanga* Textiles in Sample, Image, and Word.”

circles used to create larger motif was a common method of embellishment for cloth in Gujarat in the nineteenth century.⁴⁸

European production of *kanga*, on the other hand, dates back to at least 1876, based on archival material from the textile printer, P. F. van Vlissingen (Vlisco) in Helmond, the Netherlands. The vast majority of Vlisco's early records were lost in a fire that devastated the Dutch textile printer in 1883, information salvaged from one record book from 1876 lists a blue and white *slendang* or wrapper (54" x 79") and a reddish and blue handkerchief (30" x 30") printed for the Zanzibar market.⁴⁹ Photographs of the *slendang* and handkerchief are included in the records; both cloths closely resemble Indonesian designs (Fig. 3-13 and 3-14).⁵⁰ Although woodblock printed by hand, they both attempt to recreate the crackling present in hand-dyed wax-resist methods.

The 1876 *slendang* printed for the Zanzibar market could arguably be the earliest extant *kanga* design, but it displays motifs more common to Indonesian batiks than the large, crisp, graphic designs more familiar to *kanga* textiles. If the *slendang* incorporated *tumpal*, the elongated triangular repeating designs common to borders of Indonesian sarongs, nothing save the destined market listed on the record would connect it with

⁴⁸ See John Gillow, "Tie-and-dye work," *Indian Textiles* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2008), 92-96; Linda Lyton, *The Sari: Styles, Patterns, History, Techniques* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1995), 38-39.

⁴⁹ The date of Vlisco's devastating fire comes from H. W. Lintsen, ed., "Part III: Textiles," in *History of Technology in the Netherlands: The Genesis of Modern Society 1800-1890* (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 1993), 71.

⁵⁰ Dutch companies often referred to *kanga* by the more general term "slendang," which translates as "sarong." Because the Netherlands first colonized what is today Indonesia, the general term for a wrap garment (which applies equally to sarongs and *kanga*) was used indiscriminately. The intended market defines the type of cloth, until markets become more discerning and developed regionally specific tastes. For as textile printers, Vlisco had little interest in local names for their printed cloths—only in their successful sales. The record book's textual information survives in photocopied form, and the samples survive in photographed form.

east Africa.⁵¹ The Vlisco *slendang* displays a repeating design of small white posy flowers with five petals, flanked on all four corners by white flowers comprised of six dots surrounding a central dot. Between each five-flowered grouping are four white dots arranged in a square, all set apart from the dark blue background. This design repeats to create a harmonious composition, overall dark in color. Below is a six-part border. In the first register, a bold white design plays across a dark blue background. It is abstracted yet resembles a flower, complete in stem, leaf, and bud. In the second register is a decidedly floral design in dark blue on a white background. The third register repeats the first, and is followed by a fourth register of a solid white line broken by thin, crackled blue lines. These crackles are reminiscent of the dye bleeding that occurs in wax print and have become a signature design element of Dutch wax print cloth popular throughout West and Central Africa as well as imitation fancy print. Both of these styles of cloth were originally based on Indonesian batik, the manufacture of which was pioneered by Dutch and British textile printers, including van Vlissingen. The fifth register has white, curling v-shaped designs on a dark blue ground, which bleed into the sixth and final register of slim, vertical lines in alternating colors. These small, intricate and repeating designs are typical of Indonesian batik.

Although woodblock printed by hand, the designs on the handkerchief attempt to recreate the crackling present in hand-dyed wax-resist methods. The composition closely follows *kain panjang* or “long cloth” design, featuring *tumpal*, elongated isosceles triangles placed in rows facing each other, in the *kepala*, head or border (Fig.

⁵¹ See the cloths illustrated on pages 58-59, 90-97, 130, 142-143, particularly noting edge and border designs; Isa Fleischmann-Heck, Rudolf G. Smend, Donald J. Harper, and Maria Wronska-Friend, *Batik: 75 Selected Masterpieces: Rudolf G. Smend Collection* (Cologne: Verlag, 2006).

3-15).⁵² The 1876 handkerchief design appears to be wholly Indonesian, even though the record states this handkerchief was intended for the Zanzibar market. One late nineteenth-century photograph from an unknown photographer confirms that *tumpal* once featured on early *kanga* textiles (Fig. 3-16). The three young girls here pose holding mangoes; the two flanking girls wear cloth with printed *tumpal* designs. Records from the Dutch textile printer, Vlisco, indicate how Indonesian designs found their way to cloth printed for the east African market.

Vlisco initially printed textiles for domestic consumption and for export to Dutch colonies, namely, to the Dutch East Indies (present-day Indonesia) from the 1840s.⁵³ From 1874, exports of printed batiks to the Dutch East Indies declined, due in part to competition from locally produced batiks as well as Dutch political changes in export policies to colonies.⁵⁴ Van Vlissingen & Co.'s managing director, P. F. van Vlissingen realized that to stay in business, a shift in production or destined market was necessary. To that end, he began investigating potential exports to east Africa already in 1875.⁵⁵ In a letter date 18 March 1875, van Vlissingen wrote to his associate, Mr. C.H. Deutsch, who was the technical director of the company from 1869-1874 and then Commissioner, "Now on I will go to England within a short time to see if there is something can be done

⁵² Fleischmann-Heck, et. al., *Batik: 75 Selected Masterpieces*, 167, 169.

⁵³ A brief history of Dutch textile printer P. F. van Vlissingen and Co., today known as Vlisco, will be chronicled in the following chapter.

⁵⁴ M. G. P. A. Jacobs and W. H. G. Maas, *Een leven in kleur: Textieldrukkerij Vlisco, 1846-1996* (Helmond: Uigeverij Historion, 1996), 25; "A Life in Colour Summary," in M. G. P. A. Jacobs and W. H. G. Maas, *Een leven in kleur: Textieldrukkerij Vlisco, 1846-1996* (Helmond: Uigeverij Historion, 1996), 154.

⁵⁵ Jacobs and Maas, *Een leven in kleur*, 26.

with Zanzibar through Hartwright, in order to be made less dependent on the East.”⁵⁶

The Dutch printer tried to sell existing designs—initially intended for one market—to a new market, in hopes of increasing their production.

It is already well-documented that Vlisco supplied wax-printed cloth to the Scottish trader, Ebenezer Brown Fleming, in the last years of the nineteenth century.⁵⁷ Brown Fleming sold this manufactured and printed cloth inspired by Indonesian batik to consumers along the Gold Coast (present-day Ghana) of West Africa, and it became very popular and spread widely throughout west and central Africa.⁵⁸ A similar attempt was made in east Africa, almost two decades earlier. Vlisco and their European merchant converters that imported and sold their printed textiles, tried out existing designs and compositions to see what might spark east African tastes. As Vlisco was already producing designs meant for the Dutch East Indies, they tried to sell similar designs to east Africa from 1875, with earliest records of exports to Zanzibar dating to

⁵⁶ Letter from Mr. P. F. van Vlissingen to Mr. C. H. Deutsch, 18 March 1875, as quoted in Gerritt Vollaard, “Vlisco Memories and Manufacturing,” my translation of manuscript, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands, October 1972, 1.

⁵⁷ John Picton, “Technology, Tradition and Lurex: The Art of Textiles in Africa,” in *African Textiles: Technology, Tradition and Lurex*, ed. John Picton (London: Barbican Art Gallery, 1995), 27. Others have proposed that merchants preceded Fleming, dating the introduction of wax-printed cloth to the Gold Coast of West Africa to the 1870s. It seems that most agree wax-prints were introduced to the west coast of Africa in the 1890s. See Kathleen E. Bickford, “Knowing the Value of Pagne: Factory-Printed Textiles in Cote D’Ivoire” (PhD diss., Indiana University, 1995), 32-33.

⁵⁸ Kathleen E. Bickford, *Everyday Patterns: Factory-Printed Cloth of West and Central Africa* (Kansas City: University of Missouri, 1997); Ruth Nielsen, “The History and Development of Wax-Printed Textiles Intended for West Africa and Zaire,” in *The Fabrics of Culture: The Anthropology of Clothing and Adornment*, ed. Justine M. Cordwell and Ronald A. Schwarz, 467-98 (The Hague: Mouton, 1979); and Christopher B. Steiner, “Another Image of Africa: Toward an Ethnohistory of European Cloth Marketed in West Africa, 1873-1960,” *Ethnohistory* 32, no. 2 (Spring 1985): 91-110.

1876. This accounts for the inclusion of Indonesian batik motif and designs in early *kanga*, some of which have been retained in *kanga* designs to the present day.⁵⁹

The oldest extant pattern book dedicated to east Africa in the Vlisco archives shows other cloths of decidedly Indonesian design influence (Fig. 3-17). Possessing designs dating between 1886 and 1889, the composition of this cloth closely resembles half of a Javanese breast-cloth, *kemben*.⁶⁰ The sample includes a narrow isosceles triangle, filled with black and red crackle patterns on a white background. Though printed, these crackle patterns imitate cracks in hand-dyed wax batik designs. Four large jagged diamond-shapes, red in color but with a white eight-pointed star in the middle, flank the central triangle on a black ground. A further two small red eight-pointed stars grace the point of the triangle, before the cloth ends in a tripartite border next to a band of alternating red, black and white narrow stripes. Handwritten notations at the edge of the sample confirm this cloth was imported to Zanzibar by Hansing and Co. on 26 June 1886. Batik *kemben* of the same age are defined by their narrow, rectangular shape and use as breast cloths. A design typical of *kemben* is the flattened, elongated central diamond with ink-like design within (Fig. 3-18). Note the narrow border along the length of the cloth, and the compounded, wider borders at the sides, as this approach to border designs characterize one type of *kanga* composition.

A sample of a similar cloth, reproduced in its entirety, is affixed to the following pages of the 1886 sample book (Fig. 3-19). The sample displays the narrow cloth with a central, elongated diamond shape, common to Indonesian *kemben*. In the center of the

⁵⁹ The influence of Indonesian batik designs will be a reoccurring theme throughout Chapter 7, "The Artistry of *Kanga* Textiles: A Design History."

⁶⁰ See Fleischmann-Heck, et al., *Batik: 75 Selected Masterpieces*, 76-77, 167, 169; and Fiona Kerlogue, *Batik: Design, Style and History* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2004), 66-67, 82-83, 154-155, 158-159.

red diamond, Arabic-script text appears, with a similar black crackling design. Six large white designs with red and black eight-point stars appear above and below the large diamond, and the cloth finishes in the same tripartite border and alternating red, black and white narrow stripes. When seen from a distance, these narrow stripes on the edge of the cloth resemble fringe, as if mimicking hand-woven cloth. The inclusion of text here, too, provides early precedent for Arabic-script Swahili sayings.

Thanks to a recorded event in east Africa, contemporaneous photography, and hand-drawn designs in a Dutch textile sample book, it is possible to precisely date the inclusion of particular Indonesian batik design elements to *kanga* textiles. First, a LKM sample book possesses hand-drawn designs that borrow motifs from Indonesian batiked *kemben* or breast-cloths. The elongated diamond shape with eight-pointed stars appears in a hand-drawn and colored design dated 20 November 1886 (Fig. 3-20). A drawing of a circular horn is affixed alongside the sketched design of eight-pointed stars and elongated diamond shapes. This borrowing of Indonesian batik design elements by Dutch textile designers had immediate effect, as these same shapes, and indeed, compositions, appear on printed textiles worn by women in Zanzibar just two years later. After this time, such design elements are commonly included on *kanga* textiles, suggesting long-term influence on the printed cloths known as *kanga*.

Second, an anecdote from the 1931 publication produced in celebration of Wm. O'Swald & Co.'s centennial recalls an event that spawned an early *kanga* design:

Between 1885 and 1890 a big German and a big British squadron came to Zanzibar. They did their best to stop the remnants of the slave trade still practiced [*sic*] on a retail basis, with the aid of canoes, between the mainland and the islands of Zanzibar and Pemba. The German men-of-war bombarded Bagamoyo and frightened the natives. An Indian trader subsequently ordered from Messrs. Wm. O'Swald & Co. a new style of

khangas (native wear) with cannons printed on it, which became very popular with the natives under the names of “Bagamoyo Bum Bum.” So everybody was satisfied.⁶¹

The event in question is the bombardment of December 5-7, 1888, as chronicled in the House of Commons Parliamentary Papers from 1888.⁶² This letter describes a rebellion by Arab slave traders centered in Bagamoyo. The ringleader, Bushiri, along with some 2,000 armed men, engaged in

a considerable amount of desultory and resultless fighting between the Germans and native insurgents, the latter, as usual, sustaining heavy loss of life, while the former escaped practically unhurt. ... During this time the German men-of-war appear to have bombarded the town on more than one occasion, and a large garrison of sailors was landed nightly from the German ships. ... Before leaving, [Bushiri] and his followers completed the destruction of the town of Bagamoyo, which had been begun by the fire from the German ships. ... [Bushiri] left the town of Bagamoyo absolutely ruined and deserted, without a single remaining inhabitant. The terror-stricken natives had fled from the town, and had all taken refuge within the walls of the French Mission, distant some 3 miles...⁶³

Today *kanga* are often commissioned for special events or commemorations. This tradition of commissioning designs capitalizing on contemporary events appears to have begun with a savvy Indian merchant in relation to the December 1888 bombardment of Bagamoyo.

Third, a photograph illustrates these Indonesian-inspired designs worn by an east African woman (Fig. 3-21). The original photograph was taken in December 1888 by J.

⁶¹ *The Story of the House of O'Swald*, 30.

⁶² No. 34, Colonel Euan-Smith to the Marquis of Salisbury, letter dated 14 December 1889, Zanzibar. *Africa. No. 6: Correspondence respecting Suppression of Slave Trade in East African Waters, British and Foreign State Papers, 1888-1889*, vol. 81 (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 1888) 101-103.

⁶³ No. 34, Colonel Euan-Smith to the Marquis of Salisbury, letter dated December 14, 1889, Zanzibar. *Africa. No. 6: Correspondence respecting Suppression of Slave Trade in East African Waters, British and Foreign State Papers, 1888-1889*, vol. 81, 102-103.

B. Coutinho.⁶⁴ An engraving based on the photograph was published in *The Graphic*, a London periodical, on 11 March 1889 (Fig. 3-22). The title indicates this is a grouping of “Domestic Female Slaves who coaled the H.M.S. Agamemnon at Zanzibar.” Note the kneeling woman in the center of the image; her printed wrap garment displays eight-pointed stars and diamond shapes. A photograph from the same era captures the elongated diamond and eight-point star motif clearly (Fig. 3-23). This group portrait of seven seated east African women shows a variety of printed cloths. Eight-pointed stars can be seen at several places on the cloth worn by the young woman in the center, and the star and elongated diamond motif common to Indonesian batik *kemben* is shown clearly on the cloth of the woman to right. The woman second from the right wears a printed cloth with the circular horn motif, accounting for all three elements in the 20 November 1886 sketch. Therefore, this photograph taken by an unknown photographer in Zanzibar likely dates to 1888. Thanks to Dutch textile designers and their familiarity with Indonesian design elements, *kanga* textiles absorbed these elements, likely adopted by east African women without knowledge of the original design influences. Although Indonesian compositions fail to become standard to later *kanga*, these design elements—the eight-pointed star and the elongated diamond—do suggest some lasting batik influences on *kanga* textiles for astute observers.

⁶⁴ The Coutinho Brothers, J. B. and Felix, were active ca. 1870s-1905. They established one of the first commercial photography studios in Zanzibar. Little is known of their lives, but they were probably Goan or Portuguese. They initially worked together for a little over ten years, ceasing when J. B. Coutinho partnered with A. C. Gomes & Sons ca. 1890 until 31 July 1897. The Coutinho Brothers began working together again, producing photographic picture postcards sold individually and in albums. The brothers again parted ways around 1905, when Felix relocated to Mombasa. John Hannavy, “Coutinho Brothers,” *Encyclopedia of Nineteenth-Century Photography*, vol. 1, ed. John Hannavy (London: Routledge, 2007), 342-43.

Shali: Introduction of the Paisley Pattern to East African Printed Cloth

A discussion of *kanga* precursors and design inspirations would be amiss without mention of the now familiar paisley-pattern, commonly seen on *kanga* textiles throughout their history. Today the paisley pattern has been indigenized, with Tanzanians calling the tear-drop shape “korosho,” Swahili for cashew nut. The similarity in shape is undeniable, and the local cash crop is associated with wealth, making the shape a popular motif in design and meaning. However, the origin of the paisley shape and pattern is from Kashmir.⁶⁵ The name, paisley, comes from the Scottish town that based its local economy on producing imitation woven and printed paisley shawls during the fashion craze of the early- to mid-nineteenth century, when the paisley motif was in high demand for shawls in both Britain and France.⁶⁶ In the 1852 publication that reported on The Great Exhibition at Crystal Palace of 1851, reporter Charles Wentworth Dilke devoted two pages to a descriptive history of the “Kashmir Shawls: Antiquity and Beauty of These Fabrics.”⁶⁷ Shawls encompassed an entire subclass and over five pages were dedicated to listing manufacturers of the popular woven shawl from around the world, as opposed to only three pages each on cotton goods and printed or dyed textiles.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Jeffrey Spurr, “The Allure of Luxury: The impact of the Kashmir shawl on dress and design in Persia,” (paper presented at international conference, Textile Trades and Consumption in the Indian Ocean, from Early Times to the Present, Indian Ocean World Centre, McGill University, Montreal, Quebec, November 2, 2012), np.

⁶⁶ See Valerie Reilly, *The Official Illustrated History: The Paisley Pattern* (Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith Books, 1987).

⁶⁷ Charles Wentworth Dilke, *Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations, 1851: Reports by the Juries on the Subjects in the Thirty Classes into which the Exhibition was Divided* (London: Printed for the Royal Commission by William Clowes & Sons, 1852), 377-382.

⁶⁸ See “Class XI: Cotton Manufactures,” “Class XV: Mixed Fabrics, including Shawls, but exclusive of Worsted Goods,” and “Class XVIII: Woven, Spun, Felted, and Laid Fabrics, when shown as Specimens of

The paisley pattern likely came to east Africa initially in the form of *shali*, an inexpensive printed cloth that featured paisley designs. Burton described it as such in 1859: “The shali, a corruption of the Indian shal (shawl), is a common English imitation shawl pattern of the poorest cotton. Bright yellow or red grounds, with the pear-pattern and similar ornaments, are much prized by the chiefs of the Unyamwezi.”⁶⁹ The “common English imitation shawl pattern” and “the pear-pattern with similar ornaments” must refer to the paisley pattern. To my knowledge, this is the first mention of the paisley-like patterns very common to *kanga* textiles, both early in their history and continuing today. Throughout its history paisley has been referred to by many names, including pine, cashew, mango, tear drop, kidney, Indian pine, Persian pickles, and Welsh pears, Burton’s description of the design as “pear-pattern” also roughly describes the shape of paisley.⁷⁰

***Leso ya Kushona*: Handkerchiefs and the Turn Toward Fashionable Printed Cloth Intended for East African Consumption**

Kanga textiles also developed out of an innovative use of *lenço*, printed handkerchiefs the Portuguese first traded to East Africa in the sixteenth century. By the latter half of the nineteenth century, *leso*, as the handkerchiefs came to be known in

Printing or Dyeing,” Dilke, *Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations, 1851*, 347-349, 374-382, and 456-459. Unfortunately, printed goods of the lowest class, such as those intended for export, were not displayed at the 1851 exhibition. “The English printers have naturally exhibited such articles as they thought would look best in an Exhibition, and be best appreciated by the public. This in a great degree accounts for the absence of the large variety of those cheaper printed goods which form, after all, the great bulk of the English print trade—the staple one, by which she commands almost exclusively all neutral markets, and maintains her position for superiority and cheapness of produce.” Dilke, *Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations, 1851*, 457.

⁶⁹ Burton, *The Lake Regions*, 431.

⁷⁰ See Reilly, *The Paisley Pattern*. Dilke, “Supplementary Report on Design,” *Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations, 1851*, 746.

Swahili,⁷¹ were printed in the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and Switzerland and had become a common import article.⁷² Missionary Charles New mentions them among a variety of goods sold at bazaar stalls in the 1860s: “Each stall contains a collection of the most incongruous articles, such as soap, cotton, lamp-oil, spices, pocket-handkerchiefs, candles, flour, medicinal drugs, plantains, fish, etc.; and all are found strangely heaped together, as if intended to repel, rather than to invite customers.”⁷³ Local knowledge asserts that Swahili women from either Mombasa or Zanzibar first sewed together six *leso* (three by two) to create a women’s wrap garment that displayed printed designs. This transformation of printed handkerchiefs to fashionable wrap garment for women must have occurred around 1860,⁷⁴ because between 1863 and 1872, when New visited Mombasa and subsequently Zanzibar, the new *leso ya kushona* or “sewn handkerchief” garment was considered highly fashionable among the majority of Swahili women.⁷⁵ In his description of Swahili women’s dress, New divides

⁷¹ Zawawi challenges this assumption—that the Swahili borrowed from the Portuguese—and posits that the Portuguese word *lenço* may have in fact come from the Swahili *leso*. Sharifa Zawawi, *Kanga: The Cloth that Speaks* (Bronx, NY: Azaniya Hills, 2005), viii.

⁷² Christopher Spring, *Angaza Afrika: African Art Now* (London: Laurence King, 2008), 13; Christopher Spring, “Not Really African? *Kanga* and Swahili Culture,” in *East African Contours: Reviewing Creativity and Visual Culture*, ed. Hassan Arero and Zachary Kingdon (London: Horniman Museum, 2005), 74.

⁷³ New, *Life, wanderings, and labours*, 29.

⁷⁴ Fair, by contrast, cites Hanby’s and Linnebuhr’s date of the late 1870s for the creation of *leso ya kushona*. Fair, *Pastimes and Politics*, 79-80. Elisabeth Linnebuhr, “*Kanga*: Popular Cloths with Messages,” in *Readings in African Popular Culture*, ed. Karin Barber (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1997), 87; Jeannette Hanby, *Kangas: 101 Uses* (Nairobi: Ines May, 1984), 2-3.

⁷⁵ Charles New arrived in east Africa in January 1863 and departed in May 1872. Alison Smith, “Introduction to the Third Edition,” in *Life, wanderings, and labours in eastern Africa: with an account of the first successful ascent of the equatorial snow mountain, Kilima Njaro, and remarks upon east African slavery*, Charles New, 3rd ed. (1873; London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1971), 8.

his observations into two categories, the “better class” and “majority” of women.⁷⁶ The latter is of particular interest in relation to the development of *kanga*. According to New,

Visuto square coloured cloths, and kaniki, indigo-dyed stuffs, are common articles of dress; but lesu, large coloured cotton handkerchiefs, are much affected. Six of the latter, cut into two parts of three each, are sewn together so as to make one square cloth and the dress is complete. This is drawn round the body under the arms, and is secured by gathering the ends together and rolling them into a ball at the chest. A similar article is worn over the shoulders, or is hung from the head like a veil. ... Dressed in this style, particularly when the material is new and the colours are bright, the Msuahili woman is in her glory, and appears to admire herself prodigiously.⁷⁷

His final line may speak to the pride and fashionable sensibilities conveyed by lower-class women who wore this new sewn handkerchief garment. Examples of these *leso* or handkerchiefs reside in a sample book in the Vlisco archive. The volume’s label translates to “Samples of scarves to inland East Africa, 1890-1897” and contains samples from a few different Dutch textile printers, including van Vlissingen (Visco), LKM, KKM (*Kralingsche Katoen Maatschappij*), Roesing & Zoon, and de Vries & Co. The first image displays a dozen cuttings from red, black and white handkerchiefs dating to 29 May 1893 (Fig. 3-24). The six samples that have spotted interiors and striped borders foreshadow popular early *kanga* designs. The second image shows only four samples, likely one-quarter of each design; these designs date from 1896. All of the handkerchiefs are primarily red in color, and most possess crisp, repeating geometric or floral designs. Combined with five others of the same motif, sewn three-by-two, this type of handkerchief would comprise the garment *leso ya kushona*.

⁷⁶ New, *Life, wanderings, and labours*, 59.

⁷⁷ “Visuto” is the plural of “kisuto,” more commonly spelled “kisutu” (singular) and “visutu” (plural); a discussion of *kisutu* cloth will follow in the next section. “Msuahili” is the Swahili word for an individual Swahili person, more commonly spelled “Mswahili;” to refer to multiple Swahili people, the term is “Waswahili.” New, *Life, wanderings, and labours*, 60.

A late nineteenth-century photograph from the Winterton Collection presents a variety of patterned wrap garments (Fig. 3-25). Although the photographer is unknown, the photograph is of particular importance because it comes from the O'Swald photo album, which was likely compiled to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the merchant-converter firm Wm. O'Swald & Co.'s branch office in Zanzibar, celebrated in June 1899; therefore, this photograph must have been taken between 1849 and 1899. The title of the photograph, "Swahili women carrying pots," provides little more than the obvious, but upon closer examination, much information can be garnered about styles of printed cloth. The photograph was likely taken in Zanzibar; as main trading port in the late nineteenth century, it served as the urban fashion center for newly imported printed cloth. Zanzibar Stone Town was also the branch headquarters of the O'Swald & Co. trading firm. As this photograph belongs to the O'Swald photo album, one might conclude that these three women were modeling an array of new graphic, printed cloth fashions. They pose in front of a stone wall, a familiar feature of Stone Town but less common in other growing coastal settlements at this time.

The woman in the center wears a bold print of repeating registers of leaves on vines and parallel zig-zags. The two women flanking this central figure unmistakably wear *leso ya kushona*. The square designs of the handkerchief are discernible, with contrasting border designs and central motifs. Borders between each square handkerchief mark the edges of the separate pieces of cloth. On the right, this border is dark and solid, and corresponds to the central panel of the handkerchief, which is also dark and solid. The border on the left is light and solid, which effectively stands out from

the busily patterned border and central motif designs of the handkerchief. When examined closely, a stitched hem can be discerned, uniting the upper two *leso* and the lower two *leso* on both young women's garments. (The final two handkerchiefs are obscured from view, as they are wrapped underneath those visible.) However, no such stich is present on the vertical border, indicating two pairs of uncut handkerchiefs were purchased to create these *leso ya kushona* garments.

As Charles New explained, the original innovation occurred when women sewed six handkerchiefs together to form a wrap garment.⁷⁸ Women could have easily purchased six single handkerchiefs or two sets of three continuous handkerchiefs that were sewn together to create the *leso ya kushona* garment. After the makeshift wrap garment had become a popular style, European manufacturers attempted to print *leso ya kushona* designs whole (three-by-two) to meet the demand for this garment. Indeed, the same merchant-converter firm, Wm. O'Swald & Co. tried to print "handkerchiefs" for the east African market in Manchester in 1877.⁷⁹ A year later, the Dewhurst firm in Manchester politely refused the O'Swald order, requesting either a "normal size" of cloth or a higher production run.⁸⁰ Clearly, the abnormal size and print patterns would not secure a market outside of Zanzibar. It appears the Dewhurst firm was unwilling to accommodate the size of cloth to please only a relatively small market, as the return on

⁷⁸ New, *Life, wanderings, and labours*, 60.

⁷⁹ Linnebuhr, "*Kanga: Popular Cloths with Messages*," 140.

⁸⁰ Manuscript from *Firmenarchiv O'Swald* 621-1/3-21, 1878; as quoted in Lutz J. Schwidder, "Das Hamburger Kolonialhandelshaus Wm. O'Swald & Co. und die Einführung von 'Techniken' in die Kolonien 1890-1914" (PhD diss., Universität Hamburg, 2004); cited in Linnebuhr, "*Kanga: Popular Cloths with Messages*," 140.

investment could simply not be guaranteed. The Manchester manufacturer's complaints indicate the distinctive tastes and demands of the coastal market in east Africa.

Karl Wilhelm Schmidt arrived in Zanzibar in late 1885, and recorded his observations of the island in his 1888 book, *Sansibar: Ein ostafrikanisches Culturbild*. He notes the fashion-conscious Zanzibari women and provides considerable detail on the "Lezos," the sewn handkerchief garment created from *leso*, which I quote at length:

The female part of the population remains loyal to her role here in Africa. Everything is expended in order to surpass in clothes and jewelry. From the chest to the ankles, the "dashing" Zanzibar native is wrapped in colorful cloth, and around the head, also wrapped in clever turns, if she wants to be "mardadi."⁸¹ These cloths are generally real, cotton handkerchiefs, which six or twelve pieces make up one contiguous piece; they are produced in Europe for the Zanzibar market. The colors, patterns and sayings printed on have to be carefully considered by the manufacturers or the customers. There is a fashion in Zanzibar as here in Europe. This type of cloth has become a "fashionable fabric," and may be sold by the supplier in dozen of thousands. The supplier makes no higher price, but the Indian small traders sell the cloth for maybe two, yes three times the price of an unnoticed pattern, which must be sold under its value. But fashion here is a fickle goddess. Early in the next post perhaps a different pattern captures the favor of the people, and the old one is forgotten. Bright, yellow and red colors are especially popular. Nothing about the desired pattern can be said, however; they must be quite large and conspicuous.⁸² ...

We come now to the colorful cloths, printed handkerchiefs, the Lezos or Kitambis. They are already signs of a greater luxury and therefore are mainly sold in Zanzibar and the coastal ports. The Lezos, six in a row comprise a piece, a Doti⁸³ in the native measure, find their use as hip and breastcloths. The allowable sizes of the individual cloths vary between 30 by 30 and 26 by 23 cm. As mentioned elsewhere, this is the actual fashion article in Zanzibar. Every four weeks, new patterns come to the market, and

⁸¹ "Mardadi" is more commonly spelled "maridadi" and is Swahili for stylish, modern, or elegant.

⁸² My translation of Karl Wilhelm Schmidt, *Sansibar: Ein ostafrikanisches Culturbild* (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1888), 83-84.

⁸³ One *doti* is the about the equivalent of four yards, although Schmidt provides a useful "rule of thumb" when measuring *doti*: "A Doti contains 4 Mikono, i.e. four times the length of the tip of the forefinger to the elbow joint. This is the common measure; everyone expects a Doti and will watch with eagerness to be assured the fact that he is not deceived by a wide finger when metering." My translation of Schmidt, *Sansibar*, 143.

depending on whether customers like them or not, the handkerchiefs achieve higher or lower prices. The European houses present the Indian wholesalers with newly designed patterns, and after they examined them and agreed on color, size and price, the design is sent to the factories in Manchester, or even to Holland or Switzerland.⁸⁴

Schmidt confirms *leso ya kushona*'s popularity in the mid-1880s, its European manufacture, and women's constant demand for new patterns. In fact, many hallmarks of *kanga* textiles are already in place: the careful consideration colors, patterns, and sayings must receive to meet consumer demands, "large and conspicuous" motifs are sought after, and European trading houses work together with local Indian wholesalers. By 1885, European production of *leso ya kushona* garments was in full swing.⁸⁵

Schmidt's written descriptions of the "lezos" find visual confirmation in contemporaneous photographs and postcards.

A photograph circa 1880-1900 from the Winterton Collection of East African Photographs shows three young women wearing three different types of cloth (Fig. 3-26). The recorded title describes refers to the photograph's subjects and props, "Three native women, two carrying baskets on their heads." When carefully considered, however, this photograph reveals much more in light of the transformations in machine-produced cloth and their accompanying designs. Three young girls stand, two facing the camera and the third seen in profile, in front of a backdrop cloth, clearly posed for this studio photograph. None wear shoes, although all three wear different types of cloth

⁸⁴ My translation of Schmidt, *Sansibar*, 144-145.

⁸⁵ Numerous extant examples of printed cloth intended for the east African market are held in the Vlisco archives. Vlisco not only retained their own late nineteenth-century sample books, but acquired those of their vanquished competitors, HKM (*Haarlemsche Katoen Maatschappij* or Haarlem Cotton Company) and LKM (*Leidsche Katoenmaatschappij* or Leiden Cotton Company). All three Dutch textile printing firms produced cloth, commissioned by European merchant converters, designed by local Indian merchants in the trading centers of east Africa, intended for east African consumers.

(dark, patterned, or light), in differing ways (draped, wrapped, or sewn). The girl on the right wears *merikani*, or machine-produced cotton cloth, which could either be sheeting from Salem, Massachusetts, or “imposter” *merikani* imported from Britain or British India after American imports slowed in 1861.⁸⁶ The *merikani* is tailored into a long shirt, called *kanzu*, with accompanying fitted trousers. The young girl on the left wears *kaniki*, or indigo-dyed, machine-produced cotton cloth presumably from British India.⁸⁷ She appears to be wearing two pieces of cloth: one worn around her body and secured under her arms by rolling the top edge over, while a second piece of matching cloth is draped under her right arm and thrown over her left shoulder. The young girl in the center wears the patterned garment described by Charles New, featuring large colored and patterned handkerchiefs called *leso ya kushona*. The manner in which this young girl wrapped and secured the garment conforms to New’s description: “This is drawn round the body under the arms, and is secured by gathering the ends together and rolling them into a ball at the chest.”⁸⁸

Further information can be garnered from this photograph, which suggests the *leso ya kushona* style was already entrenched. First, none of these girls wear shoes. Second, they do not cover their heads with cloth, and they wear their hair in short styles. Their lack of shoes, their uncovered heads and short hairstyles are all markers of servitude. Mtoro bin Mwinyi Bakari observes these physical signifiers and contributed to

⁸⁶ For a lengthy discussion on the varieties, varying qualities, and competition among suppliers of *merikani* in the late nineteenth century, see “Zanzibar: Report for the Year 1895 on the Trade of Zanzibar,” by A. H. Hardinge, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports on Trade and Finance*, Foreign Office No. 1765 (London: Harrison and Sons, 1896), 8-9.

⁸⁷ “For indigo-dyed cottons (“Kaniki”)...there is a certain demand; they all come from Bombay, and are probably turned out cheaper in India than they could be in England.” “Zanzibar: Report for the Year 1895, 10.

⁸⁸ New, *Life, wanderings, and labours*, 60.

Carl Velten's 1901 book, *The Customs of the Swahili People*. Mtoro himself owned slaves, and thus could speak from firsthand knowledge of the difference between slaves in the 1890s and previously:

In the past slaves were given no consideration by freemen on the coast. A slave was known by his dress, for never in his life did he wear a cap, whether a jumbe (headman) lived or died. He never wore sandals nor a kanzu long enough to cover his legs. ... Female slaves accompanying free women do not wear a veil or a headcloth.⁸⁹

Their lack of shoes, together with their uncovered heads, marks these young women as part of the servile class. Very often, members of the servile class were not afforded the latest trends in wrapped, sewn, dyed, or printed garments, especially if they were manual laborers. Sometimes household servants were dressed to reflect the luxury and prestige of their masters, but very often they were then dressed in a more Arab-influenced style.⁹⁰ Because the young woman in the center wears *leso ya kushona*, the style must already have been widely popular to be adopted by this young woman of modest means in the years 1880-1900, the approximate date of this photograph.

Second, although all three girls wear different types of cloth draped, wrapped, or sewn in various fashions, all three garments show unmistakable signs of wear. The girl on the right has a hole in her *kanzu*, which is dingy and wrinkled. The designs of the *leso ya kushona* are less than pristine and crisp, confirming much wear and many

⁸⁹ Mtoro bin Mwinyi Bakari, *The Customs of the Swahili People*, ed. and trans. J. W. T. Allen (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 173. Carl Velten original published *Desturi za Wasuaheli na khabari za desturi za sheri'a za Wasuaheli* in 1903, compiled from material provided by Mtoro bin Mwinyi Bakari and other Swahili people. John Willoughby Tarleton Allen edited and translated the original material to publish an edition in 1981 that credits Mtoro bin Mwinyi Bakari as original author of the text.

⁹⁰ Prita Meier, "Trading Places: Transcultural Desire and Studio Photography in Coastal East Africa," (paper presented at triennial meeting of the Arts Council of the African Studies Association, Los Angeles, CA, March 24, 2011), np.

washings. This photograph may have been taken to showcase the variety of cloth and garment designs worn by women of a lower class in the late nineteenth century.

Another revealing detail demonstrates that the *leso ya kushona* style must already have been fairly commonplace by the time this photograph was taken: no seams are obvious on the central girl's wrap garment. Instead, the square handkerchief design appears to have been rolled off the bale whole. In fact, the handkerchief-inspired design is not even reproduced in equal squares. Therefore, this *leso ya kushona* could not have been sold as individual handkerchiefs and must have originally been designed, manufactured, and sold as a wrap garment.

Leso ya kushona garments were created using six or twelve handkerchiefs, as described by New and Schmidt. Since cloth was often worn by women in pairs, it is likely that six handkerchiefs were combined to create each cloth. Twelve handkerchiefs were then necessary to create two large cloths, each made up of six handkerchiefs, sewn three-by-two. One early extant example of a single handkerchief made for sale in Zanzibar dates to 1886.⁹¹ A sample from the Dutch textile printer van Vlissingen & Co. preserves an entire large handkerchief and part of the accompanying square composition (Fig. 3-27). Two details suggest its original function was a *leso ya kushona* textile, and not just a simple handkerchief. First, the volume contains printed textiles in recognizable compositions: *kisutu* and *kanga*, which will be discussed at length below, are textiles worn as wrap garments almost exclusively by east African women.

⁹¹ This handkerchief sample comes from the sample pattern book entitled "Vlisco Slendangs, 1886." "Slendang" is Dutch for "wrapper" and is applied to many types of cloth produced for the export market. However, individual samples throughout this volume are noted with the destined market (Zanzibar) and a precise date, as well as other information regarding commissioner and amount ordered. The samples affixed to the preceding pages date from 1886; the samples affixed to the following pages date between 1887 and 1889.

Secondly, printed square handkerchiefs are designed with an intended “cut” line, so retailers may cut apart bales of printed handkerchiefs without damaging the intended design, so they are able to sell them individually.⁹² This printed design features no cut line; rather, the square design repeats without clear distinction. Finally, the fact that the sample includes more than one rectangle (intended to repeat in printing), it includes closer to one and one-third, suggests this may in fact be *leso ya kushona* dating from 1886.

But perhaps most significant is Schmidt’s mention of “the sayings printed on [these cloths].”⁹³ Schmidt, writing in the mid-1880s, describes a hallmark of the *kanga* textile. Although it is difficult to discern whether or not Arabic-script sayings adorn printed cloth worn by east African women in nineteenth-century photographs, handkerchiefs displaying text or script were fairly common in the late nineteenth century. A sample book from the Calico Printers’ Association archive illustrated printed handkerchiefs in a variety of sizes with a variety of texts, scripts, and designs, presumably intended for a variety of markets around the world. One commemorates Queen Victoria’s diamond jubilee in 1897, others show calendars, in Roman and Arabic scripts, and others have alphabets, in Roman and Hindi scripts. One 1887 example even shows bank notes—legal tender in the British Empire.

Even more crucially, extant samples from Vlisco suggest *leso*, and by extension *leso ya kushona* garments, did indeed contain printed Arabic-script Swahili sayings. The sample from 1886 mentioned above, which I argue is a portion of an extant *leso ya*

⁹² Much like *kanga* today, *doti* or pairs are cut from the bale for individual sale. Customers themselves cut apart the *doti* when home.

⁹³ Schmidt, *Sansibar*, 83.

kushona, has four different Swahili sayings printed in Arabic script, placed around the central rectangular design. Therefore, the presence of a printed Swahili saying in Arabic script may have originated with either *leso ya kushona* or *kanga*. It clearly featured on both from a very early date. The inclusion of text on these printed cloths, whether intended as handkerchiefs or wrap garments, is not a later addition then, but original to the cloths themselves. While the majority of *leso ya kushona* and early *kanga* designs do not display printed text, text is included on many extant examples. The date of this *leso ya kushona*, 1886, and Schmidt's observation, between 1885 and 1887, is decades earlier than most estimates for the appearance of printed sayings on cloth, so common on *kanga* today.⁹⁴

Schmidt's observation of printed sayings posits a further crossover between *leso ya kushona* and *kanga*. Four photographs may further illustrate the direct linkage between these two types of cloths popular among east African women for use as wrap garments in the late nineteenth century. Schmidt illustrates a photograph, likely dated between 1885 and 1887, to accompany his text (Fig. 3-28); this photograph taken by an unknown photographer shows a woman wearing the *leso ya kushona* garment.⁹⁵ It is

⁹⁴ Existing literature is far from conclusive on the matter of text on *kanga* textiles. Two camps seem to exist: one credits the Kaderdina family, a textile trading firm in Mombasa, and the other credits women from either Zanzibar or Mombasa with this innovation. The shift from text appearing in Arabic script to Roman script is also disputed. Archival samples found at the Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands, point to a much earlier date (pre-1900) in *both* Arabic and Roman script. These features will be discussed at length in Chapters 4 and 7.

⁹⁵ Christopher Spring reproduces this photograph, courtesy of the Zanzibar National Archives, in his article on *kanga*. His caption is as follows: "Photograph taken in the 1880s showing a Somali woman wearing a printed cloth, the design of which derives from the practice of sewing together six *leso*. Cloth of this pattern, known as *guntino*, is still popular in southern Somalia." Spring, "Not Really African?" 76. The woman is likely from the Benadir Coast, as an 1891 trade report on Zanzibar, with specific mention of trade with the Benadir Coast describes typical Somali dress: "The amount of stuff required to make a dress for Somalis is one piece of 8 yards long by 27 inches broad, which they cut into two equal parts and sew together again: the women wear in addition a "bhowagar," or silk handkerchief. The kanekis [*sic*] and other print goods are used by the slaves, and these find the readiest market at Kismayu." "Inclosure

captions *Geputzte Negerin*, which translates to “Dressed Black Woman.” Much like the photographs from the Wm. O’Swald & Co. album, four handkerchiefs unite at the front of this woman’s body to form a white cross, the design addition created by sewing square handkerchiefs together. Note the three dark stripes of each square handkerchief, which enclose a budding paisley-like shape in each corner. This specific design composition—budding paisley-like shapes in each corner surrounded by a multi-lined border—is a widely popular early *kanga* design.

Compare this *leso ya kushona* pattern with a studio photograph likely from Zanzibar (Fig. 3-29). This photograph by an unknown photographer was taken between 1880 and 1900 and is entitled “Three native women seated.” All three women wear *kanga*, printed cotton cloth wrapped around their bodies, reaching from their armpits to their ankles. The wrap garments can be identified as *kanga* cloth due to their compositions: wide, graphic border enclosing a central motif of differing pattern. Each cloth’s printed composition extends to and mirrors the cloth’s rectangular shape.

Take special note of *kanga* worn by the woman seated in the middle. The six light stripes alternate with the darker background, creating a wide, striped border. This striped border encloses four budding paisley shapes in each corner. The design is very similar to the *leso ya kushona* worn by the woman in Schmidt’s book from 1885-1887. The large, repeating square composition has effectively been elongated, so that the garment is now rectangular in shape (rather than square) and budding paisley-like shapes in the corners have been diminished in number though enlarged in size. The

3: Extracts from a Report on the Trade of the Benadir Ports,” in “Zanzibar: Report for the Year 1891 on the Trade of Zanzibar,” by G. H. Portal, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports on Trade and Finance*, Foreign Office No. 982 (London: Harrison and Sons, 1892), 32.

colors (dark to light) have been reversed and the border has been increased from three to six lines, but the similarities overall are undeniable. The woman has draped a contrasting light-colored cloth around her shoulders.

A second studio photograph from an unknown photographer shows a Zanzibari woman wearing a similar *kanga* around 1886 (Fig. 3-30). This cloth reaches the length of her body; the bright, striped border is thicker, but the budding paisley shape is still located in the corner. The Zanzibari woman has paired this early popular *kanga* design with a thick, horizontal striped cloth around her torso. The final example comes from a photograph published in German ethnographer Karl Weule's 1909 book, *Native Life in East Africa* (Fig. 3-31). Weule spent only six months in east Africa in 1906, mostly inland, about two decades after Schmidt recorded his observations in Zanzibar. In his image of "Makonde Women from Mahuta," the right central woman wears a very similar *kanga* composition around her waist. The six border lines have been maintained, and the central motif, when examined closely, appears to be identical. Even though the photographs may be a decade or more removed in date, the identical *kanga* patterning can easily be accounted for: as a British colonial report from 1900 on the island of Pemba clarifies, "*Kangas* which have begun to be out of fashion in Zanzibar will in their turn, constitute the height of fashion in Pemba and on the coast, where they will sell at a premium until superseded by a later consignment from Zanzibar, and so on."⁹⁶ This early paisley design likely first was shipped to Zanzibar, where it fetched high prices when the design was new. After the market was saturated or a new design displaced its

⁹⁶ "Report on the Island of Pemba for the Year 1900," by O'Sullivan-Beare, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports: Africa*, No. 2653 (London: Printed for His Majesty's Stationary Office by Harrison and Sons, 1901), 15-16.

popularity, the *kanga* was likely peddled to Pemba, Dar es Salaam, and finally further inland. The photograph was taken in Mahuta, which is located just north of the border of present-day Mozambique in southern Tanzania, almost three hundred miles from Dar es Salaam. It is likely this style of *kanga* reached far-removed locales such as Mahuta some years after the design was first introduced to urban centers, such as Zanzibar.⁹⁷

Furthermore, some designs retained their popularity and enjoyed reprinting in different colorways and in variations for decades. The black and white photographs that display this *leso ya kushona* and early *kanga* design provide little indication of each cloth's original, vibrant colors. Fortunately, samples from European textile printers, likely the original manufacturers of these *leso ya kushona* and *kanga*, shed some light on the colors of early designs.

This design in varying incarnations appears in at least a dozen examples from the archive of the Dutch textile printer, Vlisco.⁹⁸ The sample book from 1886, which possesses Indonesian *kemben*-inspired designs, *leso*, and other early *kanga* cloths, preserves very large portions of yet larger cloths and compositions. One example

⁹⁷ The terms *leso* and *kanga* clearly referred to different types of textiles by 1907, when Carl Velten writes that one *korja* (twenty items) of *kanga* sold for eight *riale* (dollars) while one *korja* of *leso* sold for five. The variation in term as well as price indicates that by 1907, *kanga* textiles were firmly established as something separate to *leso* (handkerchiefs) or the garment *leso ya kushona*. The term *leso* is still used in Kenya today to refer to *kanga* textiles, though the original *leso* simply referred to handkerchiefs. Carl Velten, *Prosa und Poesie der Suaheli* (Berlin: Im Selbstverlag des Verfassers, 1907), 221.

⁹⁸ Van Vlissingen & Co.'s collection is important for three reasons: the longevity of their production (1830s-present day), the geographical regions to which their printed textiles catered (Europe, Indonesia, Rangoon, East Africa, West and Central Africa, to name only a few), and most especially in this instance, because they bought their bankrupt competitors' equipment, records, and sample pattern books when those firms closed. In the East African market, HKM (*Haarlemsche Katoen Maatschappij* or Haarlem Cotton Company) and LKM (*Leidsche Katoenmaatschappij* or Leiden Cotton Company) both printed *slengdangs* or *kanga*. When HKM went bankrupt in June 1918, LKM acquired their machinery. When LKM folded in 1936, their equipment and pattern books (and the equipment and pattern books acquired from HKM) were bought by van Vlissingen & Co. H.W. Lintsen, ed., "Part III: Textiles," in *History of Technology in the Netherlands: The Genesis of Modern Society 1800-1890* (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 1993), 81; and Jacobs and Maas, *Een leven in kleur*, 42.

illustrates a corner of the early paisley *kanga* design (Fig. 3-32). It is a cutting from a larger *kanga* cloth, as the sample in question is the equivalent size to one *leso* or handkerchief. The budding paisley-like shape, seen here, has identical curves and highlights to the *kanga* worn in both the Winterton and Wuele photographs. The imperfection in the six border lines due to hand-stamping appear in both this sample and the Winterton photograph, most apparent near the seated woman's right shin. They likely come from different runs or different years, however, because the weave differs. The sample is printed on a checkerboard weave, while the Winterton *kanga* is printed on a diagonal weave. Hand-written lettering and notes that appear just to the right of the sample suggest the cloth was commissioned by the German merchant-converter firm Hansing & Co. on 1 October 1887.

In addition to the differing weaves, another variance may lie in the colors. Although the photographs are in black and white and thus only communicate darker and lighter portions of the composition, the textile samples are preserved in their full-color, original state. Only two shades are discernible in the Winterton photograph: light and dark. In the sample, however, three colors are present: rose, outlined by pink, completed by bright white stripes and highlights. Other samples in the Vlisco archive show this design printed in two-color varieties. Four are especially noteworthy, as they are preserved in their full-cloth size. Although they are undated, it is likely they are early versions of this design and date to circa 1886. Three have a border comprised of six plain stripes and budding paisley shapes in the corners of the interior, though the paisley shapes' outlines are broken. One full-cloth sample also incorporates eight-pointed stars across its center (Fig. 3-33). This example incorporates motifs likely borrowed from Indonesian

batiks (eight-pointed stars) and Indian or European shawls (paisley shapes) to create a new and widely popular early *kanga* design, based on the design of an earlier *leso ya kushona*.

Over a dozen samples of this design are preserved in the Vlisco archives to further demonstrate the popularity of this early design. The samples date from 1886 to 1925 and appear in different colorways and all are variations on this popular early bordered paisley design. For example, one cloth was ordered no less than twelve times between March 1891 and August 1892 (Fig. 3-34). It retains the striped border and the budding paisley inner-corner motifs and adds repeating spots to the central ground. Another Hansing & Co. commission, this time printed by LKM and dated 15 March 1899, shows the tail-edge of the paisley motif bordered by six plain white lines on a field of black, while the sample on the facing page is similar to the 1886 sample (Fig. 3-35). A commission by Hansing & Co. from 25 May 1899 displays another two-color variety: rose and white on similar checkerboard weave (Fig. 3-36). A red and black full-cloth printed example by Vlisco for the British merchant-converter firm, Smith, Mackenzie & Co. dates to 29 May 1925 (Fig. 3-37).

Leso handkerchiefs and the garment *leso ya kushona* were popular among east African women from at least the 1860s through the 1880s. Charles New wrote about the new garment in the 1860s, Karl Wilhelm Schmidt describes the popular style in the mid-1880s, and late nineteenth-century photographs and extant examples of *leso* bear witness to this somewhat short-lived design.⁹⁹ The similarity in design and characteristic elements, including paisley, Arabic-script Swahili sayings, borders, and crisply printed

⁹⁹ Christopher Spring mentions the *leso ya kushona* garment is still worn in southern Somalia, where it is called *guntino*, and in the Comoros Islands. Spring, "Not Really African?" 75.

designs, unite *leso* and the garment *leso ya kushona* with early *kanga*. Indeed, *leso ya kushona* and *kanga* likely co-existed for some time. Around 1888, however, *kanga* textiles overtook this type of cloth to become the most popular and widespread wrap garment for women in east Africa.

In this chapter, I have shown how the *kanga* developed from a host of design influences and a lineage of industrially manufactured textiles. Factors as widespread as the American Civil War, British interests, Dutch enterprise, and Indian expertise all coalesced in Zanzibar in the late nineteenth century to create the textile known today. Textile predecessors, including *kitambi*, *merikani*, *kaniki*, *shali*, *leso*, and *leso ya kushona*, together with Indian woodblock designs, Indonesian batik motifs, and locally demanded crisp, bold, repeating designs, contributed to the creation of *kanga* textiles, still popular throughout east Africa today.

Figures

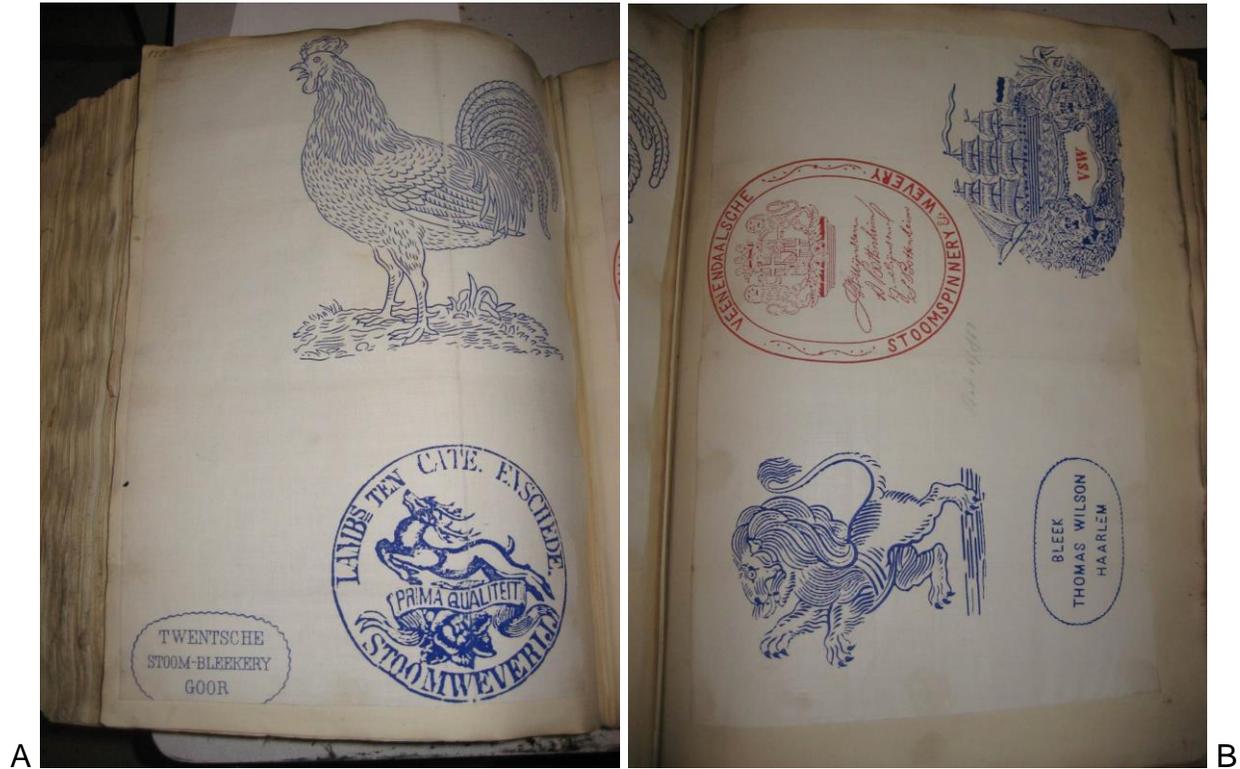


Figure 3-1. Examples of Dutch manufacturers' marks stamped on cloth. Located in *LKM Oost Ind. Ruwe en Witte Stalen 1860-1886* sample book. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photographs by Mackenzie Moon Ryan.

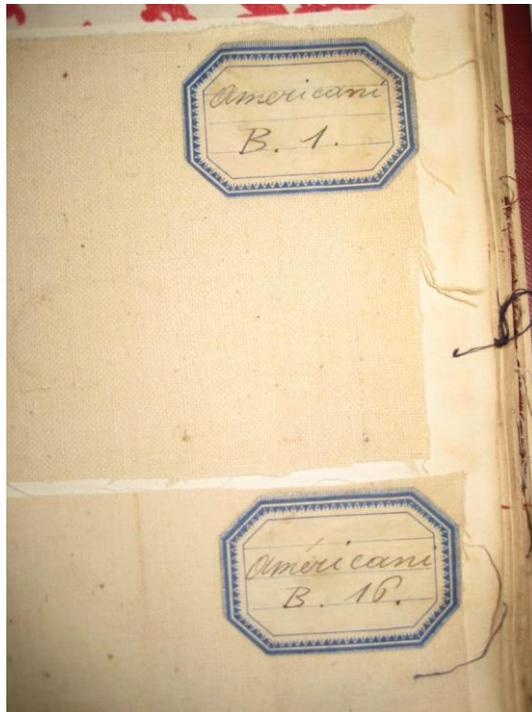


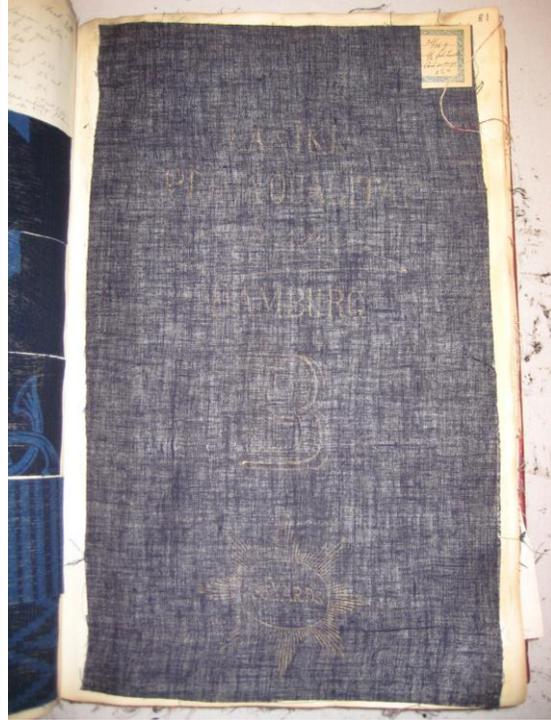
Figure 3-2. *Merikani*. Located in *LKM 274 Stalen voor Afrika Slendangs Etc. 1884-1900* sample book. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photograph by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.



Figure 3-3. A. R. P. de Lord, “Zanzibar. Natives of East Africa,” postcard #75, women wearing *merikani*. Zanzibar. Late nineteenth century. Photograph courtesy of Torrence Royer.



A



B



C



D

Figure 3-4. *Kaniki*. A, B, and C) Located in *LKM 274 Stalen voor Afrika Slendangs Etc. 1884-1900* sample book. D) Located in *LKM 1901-1902* sample book. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photographs by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.



Figure 3-5. Unknown, “Mother and Child, Zanzibar,” woman wearing *kaniki*. Zanzibar. Late nineteenth century. Photograph courtesy of Torrence Royer.

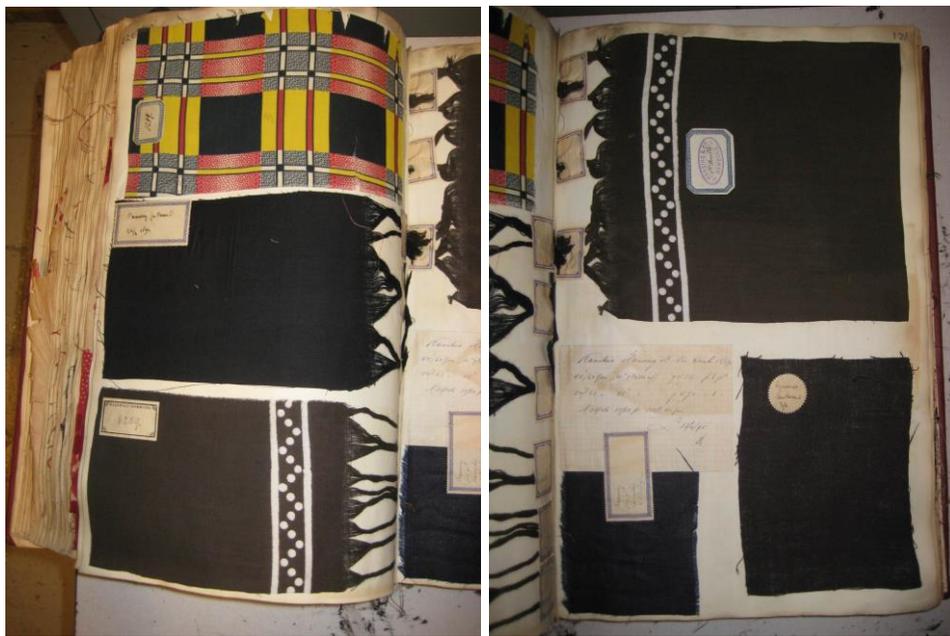
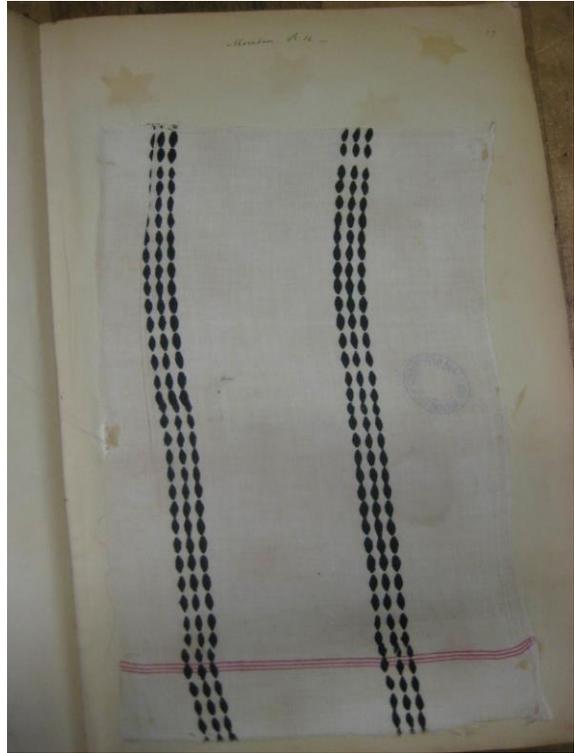


Figure 3-6. *Kaniki* with fringed edges and printed white border. Located in *LKM 274 Stalen voor Afrika Slendangs Etc. 1884-1900* sample book. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photographs by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.



C



D

Figure 3-7. Eight locally embellished cloths with basic, all-over, stamped designs, collected in Mombasa, 1901. Located in *LKM 16 No. 230 Stalen OA Sarongs 1900-1932* sample book. Visco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photographs by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.



Figure 3-8. Locally embellished cloth with stamped designs and a bordered composition, collected in Mombasa, 1901. Located in *LKM 9 No. 260 Stalen Khangas Sarongs Echte Batiks 1901-1902* sample book. Visco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photographs by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.



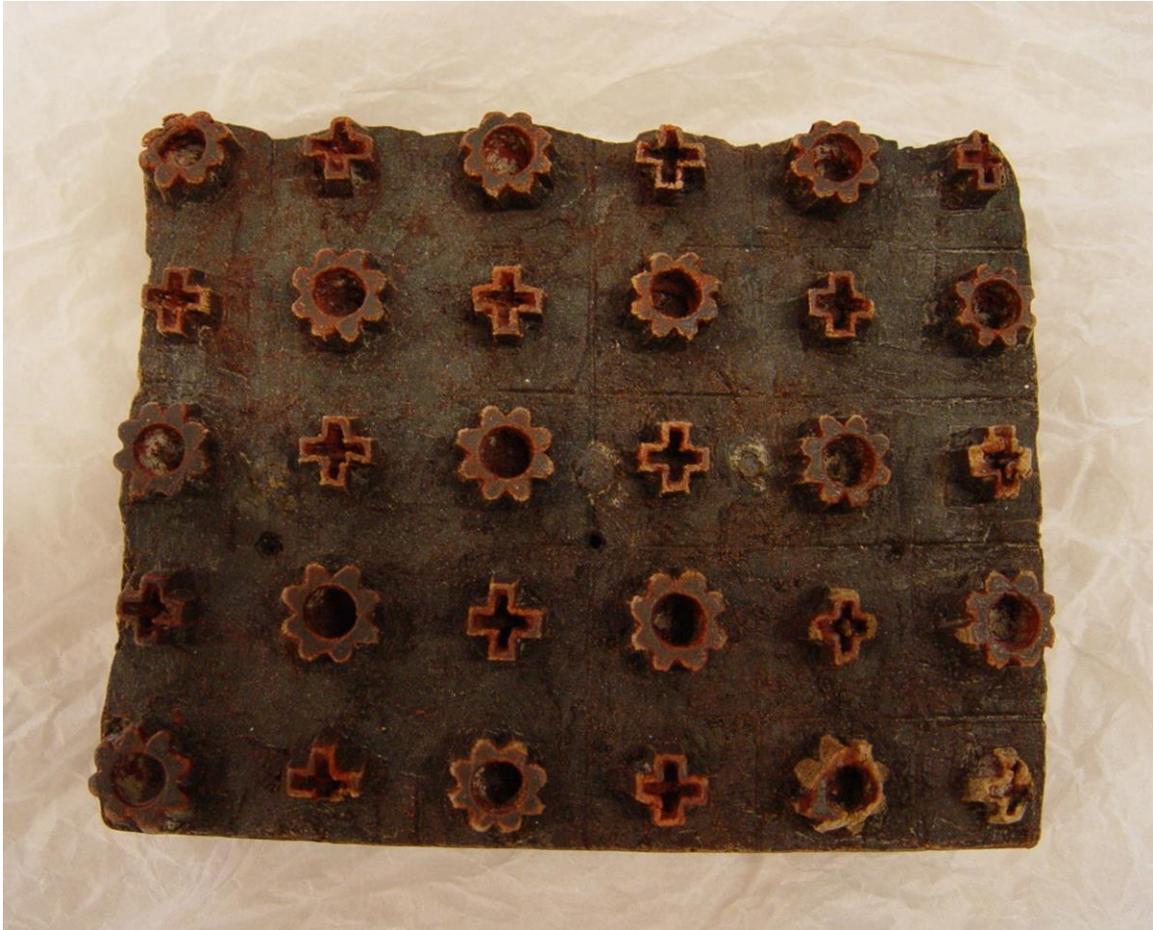
Figure 3-9. Locally embellished cloth with stamped border and inner-corner designs on tie-dyed ground, 1901. A) Collected in Mombasa. Located in *LKM 9 No. 260 Stalen Khangas Sarongs Echte Batiks 1901-1902* sample book. B) Collected in Zanzibar. Located in *LKM 16 No. 230 Stalen OA Sarongs 1900-1932* sample book. C) Collected in Zanzibar. Located in *LKM 260 Stalen Slendangs O Afrika-HKN vVL 1898-1915* sample book. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photographs by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.



A



B



C



D

Figure 3-10. Woodblock stamps used for printing designs on industrially manufactured cloth to create *kanga*. A) Floral design created with thin, brass strips nailed into woodblock. Acquired in Zanzibar. Af2002,09.15. B) Paisley design created by carving directly into woodblock. Acquired in Zanzibar. Af2002,09.14. C) Cross and tangerine flower design common to *kisutu*. Acquired in Lamu. Af2003,21.8. D) *Mfungo*, Swahili word for “fasting.” Acquired in Lamu. Af2003,21.10. © Trustees of the British Museum.



Figure 3-11. Locally embellished cloth with tie-dyed designs, collected in Zanzibar on 13 January 1901. Located in *LKM 16 No. 230 Stalen OA Sarongs 1900-1932* sample book. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photographs by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.



Figure 3-12. Locally embellished cloth with tie-dyed designs, hand-labeled “Bombay,” collected in Zanzibar on 20 August 1901. Located in *LKM 9 No. 260 Stalen Khangas Sarongs Echte Batiks 1901-1902* sample book. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photograph by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.

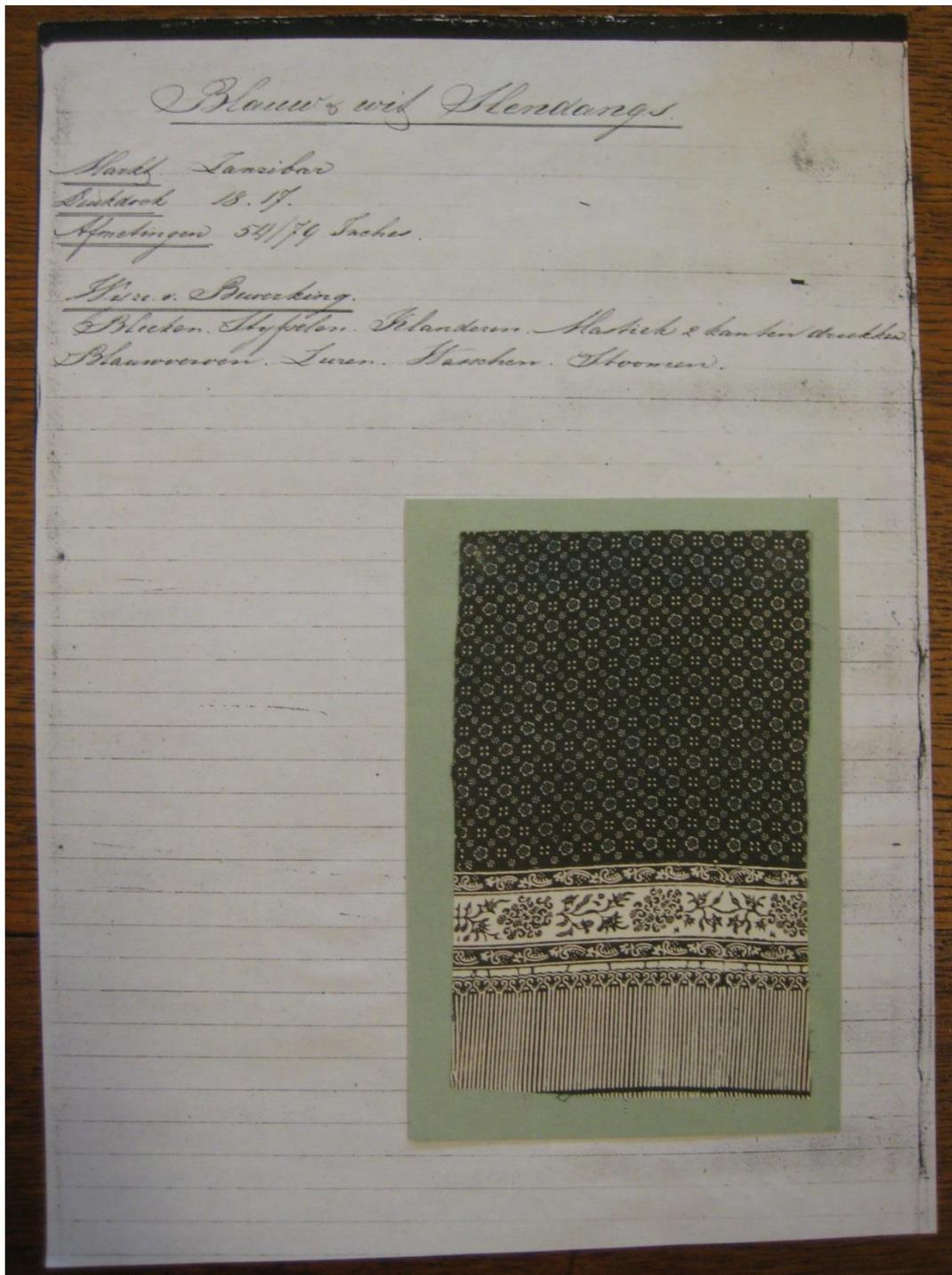


Figure 3-13. Photocopy of record with accompanying photograph of cloth salvaged from an 1876 sample book. Earliest record of Vlisco production for Zanzibar: *blauw & wit slendang* measuring 54" x 79". Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photograph by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.

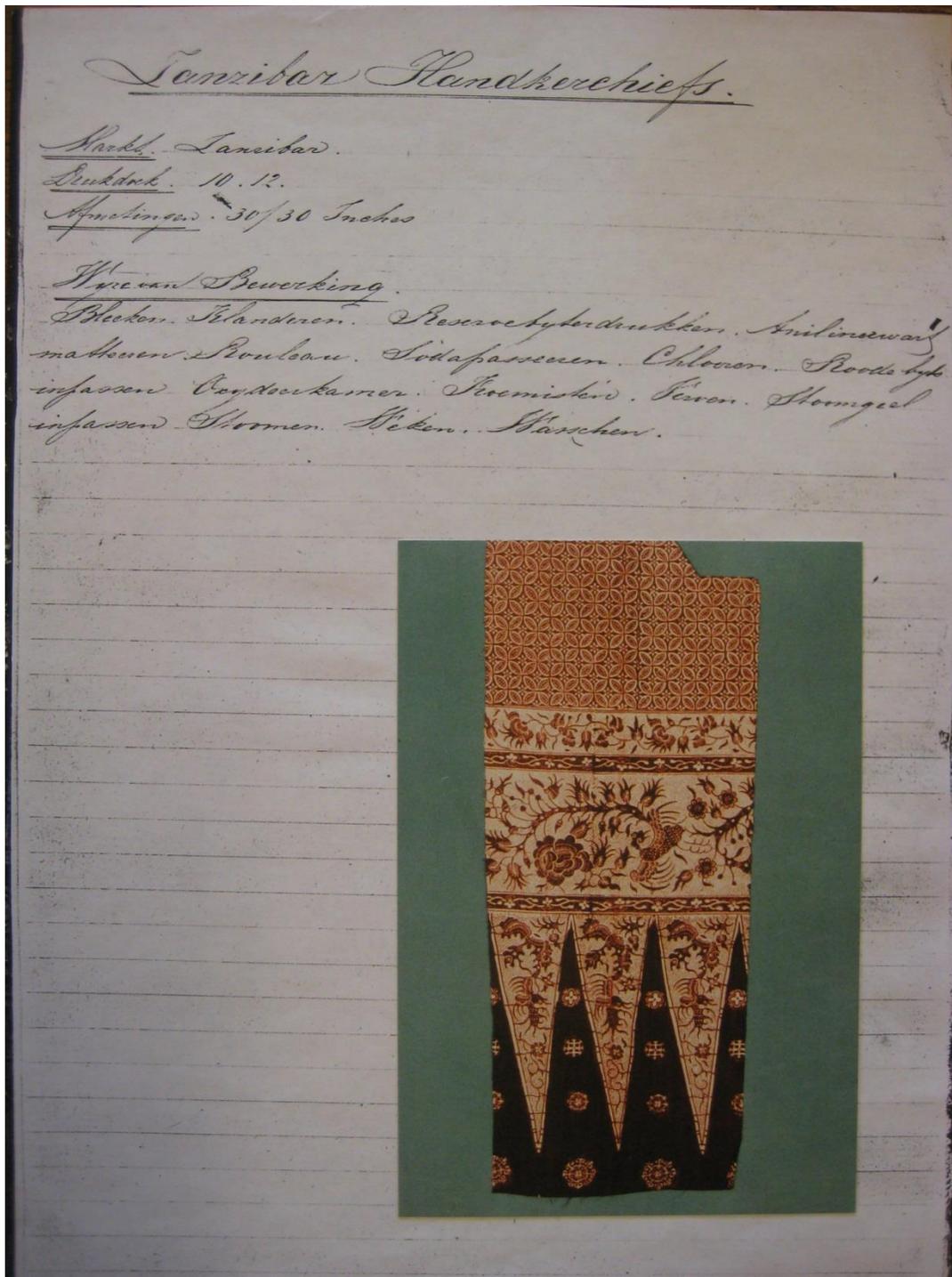


Figure 3-14. Photocopy of record with accompanying photograph of cloth salvaged from an 1876 sample book. Earliest record of Visco production for Zanzibar: Zanzibar handkerchiefs measuring 30" x 30". Visco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photograph by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.



Figure 3-15. Batiks from the North Coast of Java: *kain panjang* or “long cloth” with *tumpal* at each end, ca. 1880, from Lasem, Java. A) Chinese design with birds in interior. B) Possesses *prada* or goldleaf. Collection of Rudolf G. Smend, Photograph by Bernhard Schaub.



Figure 3-16. Unknown photographer, studio photograph with three girls holding mangoes and wearing printed cloth with *tumpal* designs, likely Zanzibar. Late nineteenth century. Photograph courtesy of Torrence Royer.



A



B

Figure 3-17. Printed cloth from 1886 with composition resembling Javanese batiked breast-cloth, *kemben*. A) Entire cloth sample. B) Detail of date, 26 June 1886, hand-written under edge of sample. Located in *Vlisco Slendangs 1886* sample book. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photographs by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.



Figure 3-18. Batik from the North Coast of Java: *kemben loka*n or “breast cloth” with elongated diamond shape in center, late nineteenth century, likely from Rembang or Pati, Indonesia. Silk, hand-drawn batik, natural dyes. 8-380-119. East Indies Museum.



Figure 3-19. Printed cloth likely from 1886 with composition resembling doubled Javanese batiked breast-cloth, *kemben*. Located in *Vlisco Slendangs 1886* sample book. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photograph by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.



Figure 3-20. Hand-drawn and colored designs for early *kanga*, including horn and *kemben* elongated diamond with eight-pointed stars, 20 November 1886. Located in *LKM 274 Stalen voor Afrika Slendangs, etc. 1884-1900* sample book. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photograph by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.



Figure 3-21. J. B. Coutinho, Female slaves who coaled the H.M.S. Agamemnon at Zanzibar, December 1888. Note the woman kneeling in the front row who wears printed cloth based on 1886 hand-drawn design in LKM sample book with elongated diamonds and eight-pointed stars. Photograph courtesy of Torrence Royer.



Figure 3-22. Engraving after J. B. Coutinho, Female slaves who coaled the H.M.S. Agamemnon at Zanzibar, December 1888. Printed in *The Graphic* (London) 11 March 1889. Photograph courtesy of Torrence Royer.



Figure 3-23. Photographer unknown, "Group portrait of native women," Zanzibar, ca. 1880-1900; based on the printed cloth these women wear, likely 1888. Note the elongated diamond, eight-pointed star, and rounded horn motifs based on the 1886 hand-drawn design in LKM sample book. The Humphrey Winterton Collection of East African Photographs, Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies, Northwestern University.

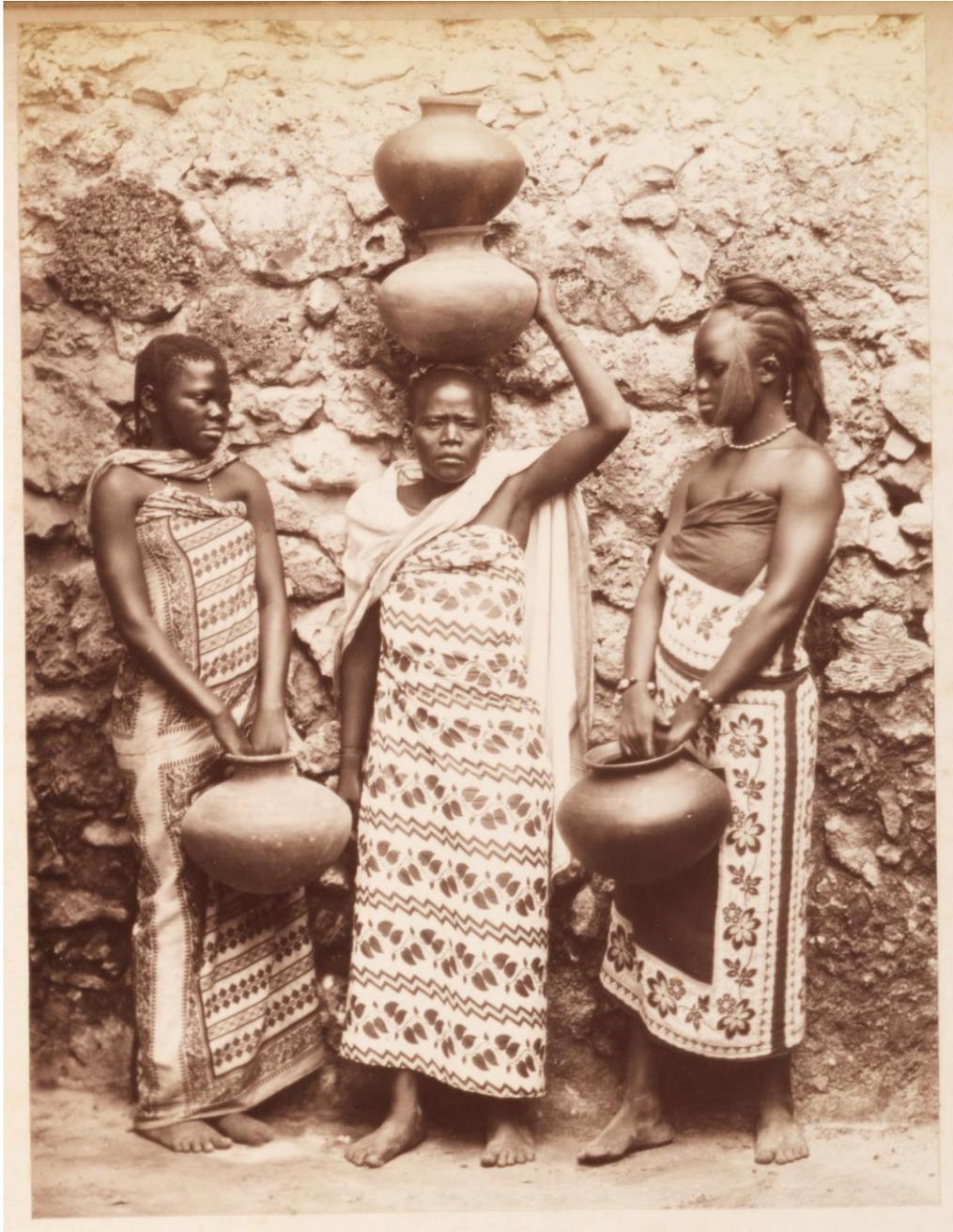


Figure 3-25. Unknown photographer, "Swahili women carrying pots," flanking women wear *leso ya kushona*, likely ca. 1886, Zanzibar. The Humphrey Winterton Collection of East African Photographs, Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies, Northwestern University.

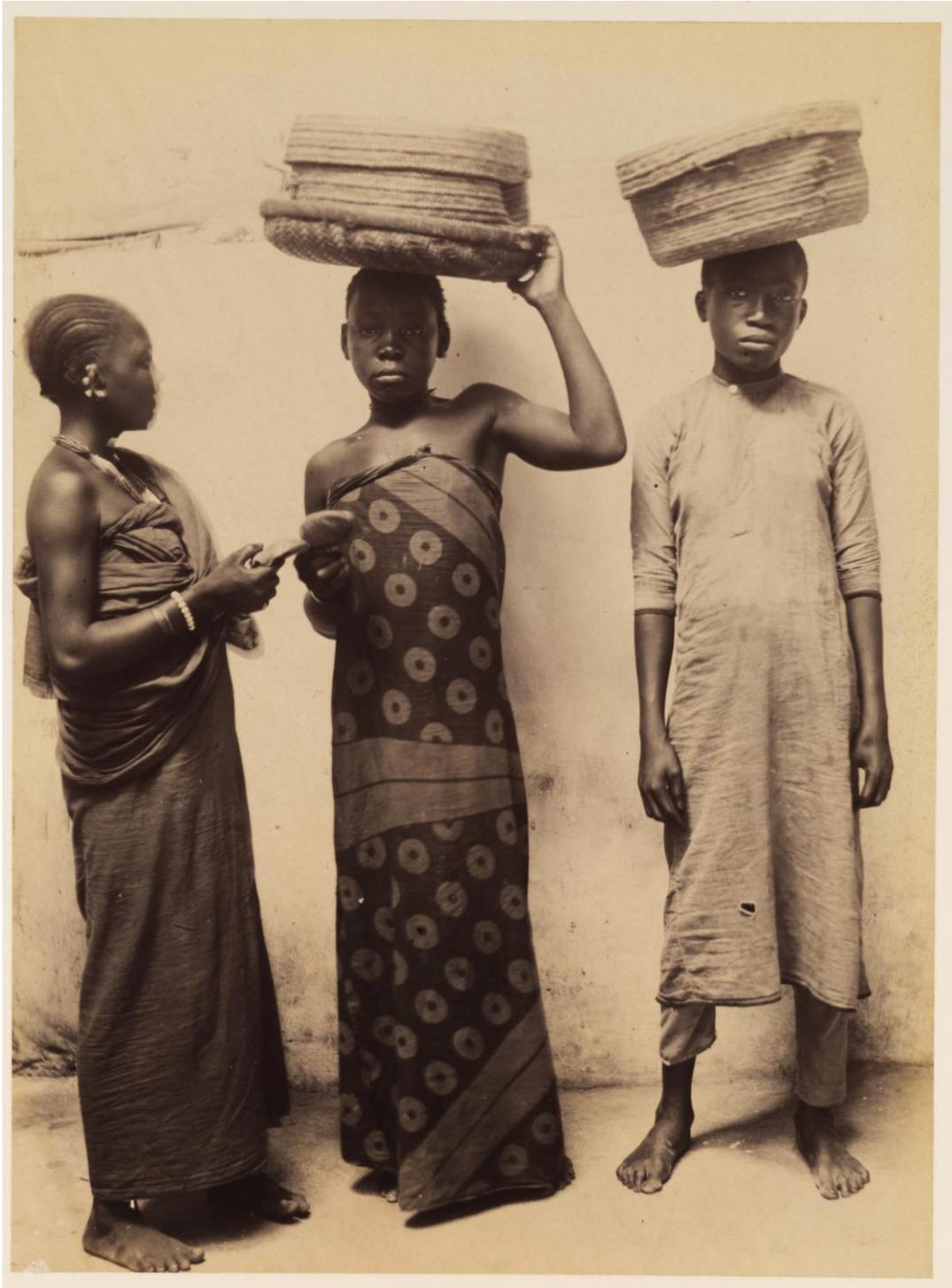


Figure 3-26. Unknown photographer, "Three native women, two carrying baskets on their heads." Woman on left wears *kaniki*, woman in center wears *leso ya kushona*, and woman on right wears a *kanzu* tailored from *merikani*. Photograph likely ca. 1886, Zanzibar. The Humphrey Winterton Collection of East African Photographs, Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies, Northwestern University.



Figure 3-27. Printed handkerchief or *leso*, sold to east Africa. Note the eight-pointed star motif and Arabic-script Swahili text. Located in *Vlisco Slendangs 1886* sample book. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photographs by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.

Der weibliche Theil der Bevölkerung bleibt auch hier in Afrika seiner Rolle treu. Alles wird aufgewandt, um sich in Kleidung und Schmuckgegenständen zu überbieten. Von der Brust bis zu den Knöcheln ist die „fesche“ Sansibarnegerin in bunte Tücher eingehüllt, und um den Kopf wird, falls sie „mardadi“ sein will, ebenfalls noch ein solches in geschickten Bindungen geschlungen.

— Diese Tücher sind meist echte, zu sechs oder zwölf in einem Stück zusammenhängende baumwollene Taschentücher, die ausschließlich für den Sansibarbedarf in Europa hergestellt werden. Ihre Farben, die darauf gedruckten Muster, Sprüche u. s. w. müssen von den Fabrikanten oder ihren Auftraggebern genau erwogen werden. Es gibt in Sansibar eine Mode wie bei uns in dem vielgesegneten Europa. Ein Tuch, das gefällt, das zu einem „Modetuche“ geworden ist, kann von dem Lieferanten vielleicht in Tausenden von Duzend abgesetzt werden. Er als Lieferant erzielt allerdings keinen höhern Preis, aber von dem indischen Kleinhändler wird ein solches Tuch vielleicht zwei-, ja dreimal so theuer verkauft als irgendein anderes jetzt unbeachtetes Muster, welches unter dem Werthe verschleudert werden muß. Doch die Mode ist auch hier eine launenhafte Göttin. Schon bei der nächsten Post erobert sich vielleicht ein anderes Muster die Gunst des Volkes, und das alte ist vergessen.



Gepuzte Negerin.

6*

Figure 3-28. Unknown photographer, “*Gepuzte Negerin*,” photograph reproduced in Karl Wilhelm Schmidt’s *Sansibar: Ein ostafrikanisches Culturbild* (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1888), 83. Note she wears *leso ya kushona* with budding paisley corners and striped borders around her torso.



Figure 3-29. Unknown photographer, "Three native women seated." All three women wear *kanga*, and the woman in the center wears the budding paisley with striped border design. Photograph likely ca. 1890, Zanzibar. The Humphrey Winterton Collection of East African Photographs, Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies, Northwestern University.



Figure 3-30. Unknown photographer, "Jakhalave." Woman on left wears *kaniki*, woman in center wears *leso ya kushona*, and woman on right wears a *kanzu* tailored from *merikani*. Photograph likely ca. 1886, Zanzibar. The Humphrey Winterton Collection of East African Photographs, Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies, Northwestern University.



MAKONDE WOMEN FROM MAHUTA

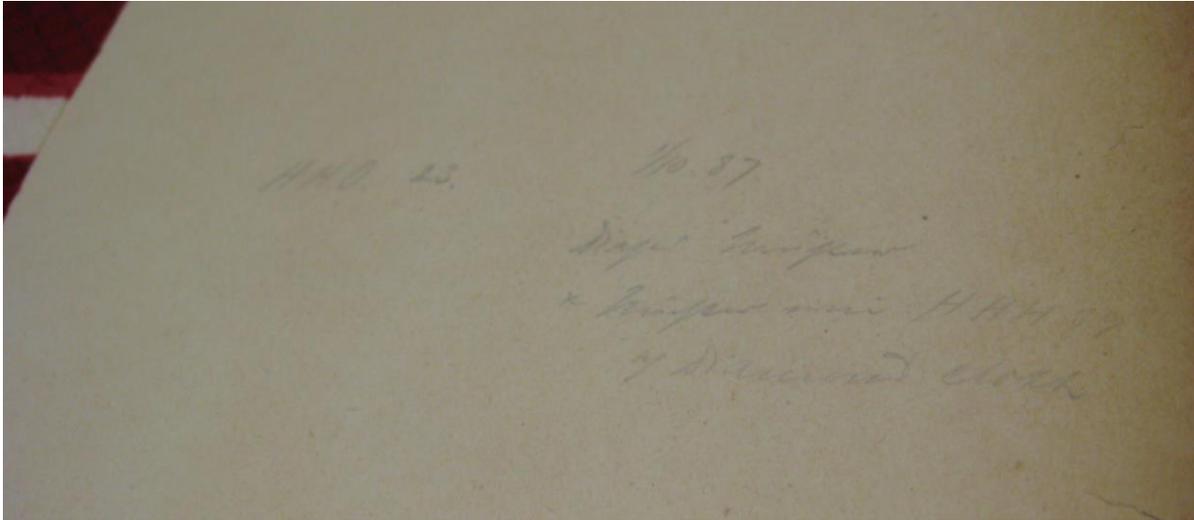
Figure 3-31. Unknown photographer, "Makonde women from Mahuta," photograph reproduced in Karl Weule, *Native Life in East Africa: The Results of an Ethnological Research Expedition*. Translated by Alice Werner. (1909; reprint, Chicago: Afro-Am Press, 1969), 153. Photograph taken in 1906.



A



B



C

Figure 3-32. *Kanga* sample with budding paisley and striped border design, in pink-white-and-rose colorway, 1 October 1887. A) Entire sample. B) Detail of checker-board weave and evidence of hand-printed design. C) Hand-written information to the left of sample, including date. Located in *Visco Slendangs 1886* sample book. Visco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photographs by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.



Figure 3-33. *Kanga* with eight-pointed stars, budding paisley motifs in inner corners, and striped borders in white-and-rose colorway, undated, likely after 1886. Visco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands.



Figure 3-34. *Kanga* sample with dotted ground, budding paisley motif in inner corner, and striped border in pink-white-and-rose colorway. Twelve orders indicated in hand-written text between 4 March 1891 and 17 August 1892. Located in *No. 290 Slendangs alles Handdr. 1891-1892* sample book. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photograph by James Ryan.



Figure 3-35. *Kanga* samples with budding paisley and striped border designs in white-and-black and pink-white-and-rose colorways, 15 March 1899. Located in *LKM 274 Stalen voor Afrika Slendangs Etc. 1884-1900* sample book. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photograph by Mackenzie Moon Ryan.



Figure 3-36. *Kanga* sample with budding paisley and striped border designs in white-and-rose colorway, 25 May 1899. Located in *LKM 260 Stalen Slendangs O. Afrika HKM vVL 1898-1915* sample book. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photograph by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.



Figure 3-37. *Kanga* with budding paisley and striped border designs in red-and-black colorway, 29 May 1925. Hanging sample, SM 2276. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photograph by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.

CHAPTER 4 POPULAR EARLY *KANGA* TEXTILES IN SAMPLE, IMAGE, AND WORD

The last chapter established the variety of textile precursors and designs that contributed to the creation of *kanga* textiles. In this chapter, I will discuss early popular *kanga* designs, drawn from sample books, late nineteenth-century studio photography, and contemporaneous textual descriptions by European observers. I begin with a widely popular (and still familiar) design called *kisutu*, which is at once a precursor to and an early design of *kanga* textiles. I continue with a discussion of early popular *kanga* designs and colorways to clarify printed textile trends from 1886 to 1917 in east Africa.

In most cases only portions of full-cloth *kanga* textiles were saved to record the production of Dutch textile printers. Particularly popular samples, judged from many orders placed, often appear in late nineteenth-century studio photographs from Zanzibar. Professional photographers such as the Coutinho Brothers, A.C. Gomes, and A. R. Pereira de Lord had prosperous studios in Zanzibar around the turn of the twentieth century. They captured many of these printed textiles in postcard images of east African women, who wore *kanga* textiles either wrapped or tailored into garments. The addition of textual descriptions alongside samples from Dutch textile printers and Zanzibari postcards can help augment our understanding of these trends. Many early twentieth-century visitors to east Africa were struck by the bold, graphic designs printed on brightly colored cotton cloths favored as items of dress by local women. Other early descriptions of *kanga* textiles are provided by British colonial officials, with an eye to expanding markets for British-made goods.

Turn-of-the-century descriptions often cast east African women as merely “slaves of fashion;”¹ I will argue that these women actually functioned more as masters of fashion. As I will show, for the handful of designs that became widely popular, many dozens of designs fell flat and failed to secure sales in east Africa. This suggests that east African women consumers had an element of control over their purchases; they were savvy consumers who did not passively accept whatever deliveries were available.

Kisutu: A Precursor to or Early Design of Kanga?

Local knowledge asserts that *kisutu* is a very old design of *kanga*, but references to *kisutu* predate *kanga* by thirty years.² Several European visitors mentioned the *kisutu* as the garment of choice for Swahili women in the mid-nineteenth century. Richard F. Burton writes about women wearing the *kisutu* in 1856:

The feminine garb is a Kisitu [*sic*], or length of stained cotton, blue and red being the pet colours. It resembles the Kitambi of the Malagash, and it is the nearest approach to the primitive African kilt of skin or tree bark. Wrapped tightly round the unsupported bosom, and extending from the armpits to the heels, this ungraceful garb depresses the breast, spoils the figure, and conceals nothing of its deficiencies.³

Notwithstanding his otherwise unflattering description of the effect of *kisutu* on Swahili women’s appearances, Burton accurately described the fashion in which the wrap garment was worn, observed by later travelers to the east African Coast as well.

¹ “Report on the Island of Pemba for the Year 1900,” by O’Sullivan-Beare, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports: Africa*, No. 2653 (London: Printed for His Majesty’s Stationary Office by Harrison and Sons, 1901), 15-16; Robert Nunez Lyne, *Zanzibar in Contemporary Times: A Short History of the southern East Africa in the nineteenth century* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1905), 234; Ethel Younghusband, *Glimpses of East Africa and Zanzibar* (London: John Long, 1910), 34-35; Captain C. H. Stigand, *The Land of Zinj: being an account of British East Africa, its ancient history and present inhabitants* (London: Constable and Company, 1913), 122-123; and Harold Ingrams, *Arabia and the Isles*, 3rd ed. (1942; New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1966), 33-34.

² This assertion was made repeatedly during informal interviews with women consumers, sellers, and designers of *kanga* textiles in Dar es Salaam in 2011.

³ Richard Burton, *Zanzibar: City, Island and Coast*, 2 vols. (London: Tinsley Brothers, 1872), 1:434.

Missionary Charles New mentions *visutu* (plural of *kisutu*) as “square coloured cloths” during his travels to East Africa in the 1860s.⁴ Bishop Edward Steere compiled his *Handbook of the Swahili Language* from 1865-1870, in which he defines *kisutu* as “a large piece of printed calico, often forming a woman’s whole dress, a coverlid.”⁵ He mentions “*kisuto*” again in his 1870 publication, *Swahili Tales*, in an end note that further explains the text. He translates the line, “*Nimekwenda njiani, nimeona kisuto; mwenyi kisuto sikumwona,*” as “I went on the way and I saw a woman’s cloth (which is often red); the wearer of the cloth I did not see.”⁶ He later expands on his description of “*kisuto*.”

A *kisuto* [*sic*] and headcloth make the dress of a woman slave. The headcloth is a piece of blue calico covering the head and hanging down the back nearly to the ground in two long ends, which are often adorned with spangles. It is tied on by a string passed loosely under the chin, from which generally hangs a silver ornament called a *jebu*. The *kisuto* is a large piece of calico about two yards square, wrapped tightly round the body and immediately below the armpits, and reaching to the ankles. It may be of blue or of printed calico; a pocket-handkerchief piece is very commonly used, and it is often of some red stuff.⁷

This “pocket-handkerchief piece,” common to both *kisutu* and the garment *leso ya kushona*, is of particular importance to the *kanga*’s development. The handkerchief, with its square printed designs, provides the pivotal fulcrum between generic printed cloth for sale in east Africa and commissioned printed textiles made for export to east Africa—

⁴ Charles New, *Life, wanderings and labours in eastern Africa: with an account of the first successful ascent of the equatorial snow mountain, Kilima Njaro, and remarks upon east African slavery*, 3rd ed. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1971), 60.

⁵ Edward Steere, *A Handbook of the Swahili Language, as Spoken at Zanzibar*, 10th ed. (1871; London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1917), 313.

⁶ Edward Steere, *Swahili Tales as told by Natives of Zanzibar*, 2nd ed. (1870; London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1889), 490.

⁷ Steere, *Swahili Tales as told by Natives of Zanzibar*, 497-498.

specifically to capture the burgeoning market in inexpensive women's fashion—the crucial link to *kanga* textiles.

A table from the 1891 British trade report for Zanzibar lists “Imports of Zanzibar Dominions” by type of commodity, breaking down large categories into specific commodities.⁸ For the three years documented (1876-77, 1877-79, 1878-79), the total value of cloth articles accounts for roughly 39% to 47% of all total imports, the largest majority by far. The category of “Cotton cloths” is divided into American, British, and Bombay types that likely refer to types of *merikani*. The category “Checks, &c.” is divided into European and Indian; “Coloured handkerchiefs” similarly is divided into European and Indian types, while three further categories of cloth are itemized: “Calicos, American and British,” “Indian dyed cottons, Kaniki,” and “Muskat turbans.”⁹ The category of “coloured handkerchiefs” is somewhat perplexing; are these the handkerchiefs that form the sewn garment, *leso ya kushona*? Or perhaps these handkerchiefs were used in the cloth design *kisutu*? It is impossible to tell from brief titles in tables, however, it is clear that imported, printed handkerchiefs had a long-lasting effect on printed cloth designs worn by women in east Africa.

Kisutu cloths are still well known today and are defined by a specific design and composition. Today they are generally associated with marriage among coastal communities.¹⁰ They are also commonly described as a very old type or design of

⁸ “Zanzibar: Report on the Trade and Commerce of Zanzibar for the Year 1881,” by Kirk, *Reports from Her Majesty's Consuls on the Manufactures, Commerce, &c. of their Consular Districts*, Commercial Trade Report No. 36 (London: Harrison and Sons, 1882), 1164.

⁹ “Zanzibar: Report on the Trade and Commerce of Zanzibar for the Year 1881,” 1164.

¹⁰ Farouque Abdela, “*Mimi Kama Kanga, Nafa na Uzuri Wangu*, I am like a *Kanga* Cloth, I Die in all my Beauty,” in *Art in Eastern Africa*, Marion Arnold, ed. (Dar es Salaam: Mkuki na Nyota Publishers, 2008), 103; Fatma Shaaban Abdullah, “*Kanga* Textiles from Tanzania” (London: Commonwealth Institute, 1984),

kanga. Indeed, a British trade report on Zanzibar from the year 1899 defined *kisutu* as “a special design of *kangas*.”¹¹ However, if the style of cloth popular today is a direct descendant of the *kisutu* mentioned in the mid-nineteenth century by Burton, New, and Steere, then *kisutu* actually predate *kanga*. In that case, *kisutu* is one type of cloth in a lineage of manufactured textiles that paved the way for the creation of *kanga*. If, however, the name *kisutu* first referred to a generic type of machine-woven, imported cloth, at times dyed red or blue or printed with patterns around the mid-nineteenth century, which, in the late nineteenth century was subsequently applied to the design still popular today, then this design of *kanga* may very well be one of the oldest known today. It certainly is among the oldest continuously popular designs, reprinted, altered, and sold to subsequent generations of women in east Africa. Either way, the history of *kisutu* is embedded in the second half of the nineteenth century, when it developed, gained popularity, and certainly contributed to early *kanga* designs.

The *kisutu* design has been the subject of many variations in color and design recently, but they all are related to a longstanding design and composition. A good example of a conventional *kisutu* can be found in the British Museum’s collection (Fig. 4-1). First, *kisutu* are characteristically printed in two in colors—red and black—in equal

n.p.; Mahfoudha Alley Hamid, “*Kanga*: It is More Than What Meets the Eye – A Medium of Communication,” *African Journal of Political Science* 1, no. 1 (June 1996): 107; Julia Hilger, “The *Kanga*: An Example of East African Textile Design,” in *The Art of African Textiles: Technology, Tradition and Lurex*, ed. John Picton, (London: Barbican Art Gallery, 1995), 106-107; “*Kanga* textiles from Tanzania,” *African Textiles: The Magazine for the African and Arab Markets* (August/September 1984): 24-25; Christopher Spring, “Not Really African? *Kanga* and Swahili Culture,” in *East African Contours: Reviewing Creativity and Visual Culture*, eds. Hassan Arero and Zachary Kingdon (London: Horniman Museum and Gardens, 2005), 82; Christopher Spring, “Printed Cloth (*kanga*),” in *Hazina: Traditions, Trade and Transitions in East Africa*, eds. Kiprop Lagat and Julie Hudson (Nairobi: National Museums of Kenya, 2006), 32; and Marloes van der Bijl, “*Kangas*: the voice of Zanzibar Women? Its present importance among young women in Zanzibar Stone Town, Tanzania,” *Khil’a* 2 (2006), 15-16.

¹¹ “Zanzibar: Report for the Year 1899 on the Trade of Zanzibar,” by Kestell Cornish, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports of Trade and Finance*, Foreign Office No. 2520 (London: Harrison and Sons, 1900), 10.

proportion on white industrially manufactured cloth. Second, the *kisutu* features a composition divided into thirds; when seen length-wise, the inner third is comprised of alternating small crosses and tangerine flowers, and the outer two thirds that flank the center are comprised of mirrored vertical strips of varying design. Generally, the motifs are small, intricate and repeating. A slim, horizontal border at the top and bottom edges may complete the design. No Swahili saying is incorporated into conventional *kisutu* cloths, and they are sold in identical pairs, uncut.

In the British Museum example, the central third is actually less than one-third of the length, but it retains the alternating cross and tangerine flower motif. The flanking thirds are made up of no less than fifteen smaller vertical registers, each with its own repeating motif. The horizontal borders at the finished edges (top and bottom) of the cloth are narrow in width and comprised of three registers of repeating designs. The customary method of folding *kisutu* elucidates this cloth's relationship to handkerchiefs. Whenever I asked about the origins of this design in Dar es Salaam, women and men with a relationship to the cloth would take a *kisutu* and quickly demonstrate the ordinary folding technique to show me how the design is made up of six squares, three-by-two: the flanking panels are comprised of two identical squares each for a total of four (striped) squares, and the central panel is comprised of two (cross and tangerine) squares, also identical to one another. When seen together, the six squares unite to form this pleasing design.

Kanga and *kisutu* cloth are actually folded in twelfths in east Africa. First, the *doti* or pair of cloths is folded in half, so each cloth mirrors its twin. Next, the pair is folded in a half again, so that the total length of each cloth is halved. Starting with the cut-edge,

one-third of the cloth is then folded over on itself. The opposite edge (the folded edge) is then folded over on top of the cloth to create a bundle that is one-sixth the total length of one piece of cloth, but spans the entire width of the cloth. Finally, the one-sixth bundle is folded in half, to create a folded cloth that displays the finished selvage edge and border as well as portions of the central motif. When folded into this rectangular shape, the *kanga* or *kisutu* can easily be hung for display or stacked in sturdy piles (Fig. 4-2 and 4-3). East African women also store new or keepsake *kanga* or *kisutu* cloth folded in this manner in wooden trunks. If the cloth were folded in half one more time to create a square bundle, then cut along fold lines, each cloth would be divided into twelve pieces of cloth, similar in size to twelve small pocket handkerchiefs.

Whether the *kisutu* developed from twelve small pocket handkerchiefs (arranged four-by-three), or six larger pocket handkerchiefs (arranged three-by-two, as in the *leso ya kushona*), the *kisutu*'s relationship to handkerchiefs uniting to form one, larger cloth, suitable for women to wear as a wrapper, seems likely. This certainly would account for Steere's mention of "pocket-handkerchief piece" and New's description as "square coloured cloths" in relation to *kisutu*. This places the *kisutu* between the innovation *leso ya kushona*, which clearly displays its construction of six handkerchiefs, and *kanga*, which simplified this design to display one contiguous border and central motif.

Many tales surround the creation of typical elements of this design, and many derivations for its name, *kisutu*, have been posited. Certainly the small, repeating shapes that often appear on *kisutu* are abstracted enough to support many interpretations. A few local experts suggest the name comes from a ghastly tale of murder. Fatma Shabaan Abdullah, a Zanzibari artist and textile designer, cites

information from the Friendship Textile Mill (*Urafiki*), the first fully integrated textile mill in Dar es Salaam in her 1984 exhibition brochure, “*Kanga Textiles from Tanzania*.”¹² The same story is given by Farouque Abdela, a Zanzibari fashion designer.¹³ The story is also included in a brief article published on the occasion of the same 1984 exhibition of *kanga* and *kitenge* at the Commonwealth Institute, London.¹⁴ As the story goes, when this design was new a woman demanded that her husband buy it for her. When he did not, she was overcome with anger and killed him while he slept. When she was interviewed by the police, she was asked how she murdered her husband. She responded, “*Kisu tu*,” which is Swahili for “a knife, only.” After this incident, the cloth’s full name became known as *kisutu cha chinja waume*, or “a knife only for murdering husbands,” which has been shortened to *kisutu*.¹⁵

Abdullah also provided another derivation for the name pointing to the word *msutu*, a screen used as a partition in Swahili homes, combined with *kiswat*, an Arabic word for an elaborate garment.¹⁶ Julia Hilger suggested that *kisutu* comes from the Tanzanian

¹² Abdullah, “*Kanga Textiles from Tanzania*,” n.p.

¹³ Abdela, “*Mimi Kama Kanga, Nafa na Uzuri Wangu*,” 103.

¹⁴ The story is recounted briefly in a footnote: “The *kisutu* legend: a husband who had failed to purchase *kisutu* design when it first appeared on the market, was at night knifed and killed by his wife. Its full name after this incident was *kisutu cha chinja waume*—*kisutu* of murdering husbands. Its irony lies in that it is the special bridal design.” “*Kanga Textiles from Tanzania*,” *African Textiles: The Magazine for the African and Arab Markets* (August/September 1984): 27. Fatma Shabaan Abdullah wrote the brochure to accompany this small exhibition, and it is likely she is also the author of this and one other short article, both entitled “*Kanga Textiles from Tanzania*” and both appeared in *African Textiles: The Magazine for the African and Arab Markets*. The first was published on page 5 of the June/July 1984 edition, and the second was published on pages 24-27 of the August/September 1984 edition.

¹⁵ van der Bijl, “*Kangas: the voice of Zanzibar Women?*” 15. Van der Bijl cites the same story, garnered from her time on fieldwork in Zanzibar in 2004. It is likely the story was told to her by the same Farouque Abdela, who along with Gill Shepherd published a similar article in *Africa Now* (February 1984), which extended the text and added images in an undated pamphlet, and subsequently republished the same information in 2008, the publication cited here.

¹⁶ Abdullah, “*Kanga Textiles from Tanzania*,” n.p.

town by the same name.¹⁷ *Kisutu* is the name of a town in central Tanzania as well as a neighborhood in the Uhindini (Indian) district of Dar es Salaam.

As for the inspiration for the design, Christopher Spring offered Zanzibari journalist Nasra Mohammed Hilal's interpretation of a fish with a knife laid across it. She also pointed to the saying once printed on *kisutu*, "*Wewe kisu fanya utakavyo*," which translates to "You are a knife, so you can do what you want."¹⁸ Based on the early samples in Vlisco's archive, which will be addressed shortly, combined with my interviews with local experts in Dar es Salaam, all of whom assured me "true" *kisutu* do not have sayings, it seems more likely that Swahili sayings were added after the design became popular. Van der Bijl suggests the crosses on *kisutu* may have derived from Portuguese handkerchiefs, decorated with the Christian symbol.¹⁹ Another expert, possibly Fatma Shabaan Abdullah, contends that the *kisutu* textile remains popular because of

Its aesthetic value maintained in traditional symbolic representations of tangerines – *chenza*, of crosses – *karantini*, of lines – *boriti*, of dots, domes and arches; assembled in rhythmic movement of geometric motifs which are a close reflection of African music. The Swahili designer of *Kisutu* who probably preferred to remain anonymous (as did most Swahili poets), was influenced by Swahili architecture and wood carving.²⁰

One story in particular, mentioned in two sources, accounts for the cross motif. Zawawi cites Zanzibari artist and textile designer Abdullah, and Klopper and Nchimbi make passing reference to the design inspiration for *kisutu*. They agree the cross motif

¹⁷ Hilger, "The *Kanga*: An Example of East African Textile Design," 106.

¹⁸ Spring, "Not Really African?" 82.

¹⁹ van der Bijl, "*Kangas*, the voice of Zanzibari women?" 15.

²⁰ "*Kanga* textiles from Tanzania," (September/October 1984): 24-25.

originated in Zanzibar during an epidemic that required assistance from the Red Cross.²¹

Zanzibar did fall victim to five cholera epidemics in the nineteenth century, in the years 1821, 1856, 1860, 1869, and 1870.²² The two epidemics of 1821 and 1856 are not well documented, but Richard Burton and David Livingstone mention the outbreak of 1860 from various locations in eastern Africa.²³ Thanks to Dr. James Christie, the Omani Sultan of Zanzibar's personal physician, both the fourth and fifth cholera outbreaks are well documented in his 1876 publication, *Cholera Epidemics in East Africa*, as Christie experienced them firsthand.²⁴

The cholera epidemic of 1869-1870 devastated Zanzibar, both the city and the island. Christie estimated 12,000-15,000 deaths in Stonetown and 25,000-30,000 deaths across the entire island.²⁵ Christie believed cholera was first brought to the island of Zanzibar on 27 October, though the official date of the appearance was listed as 22 November.²⁶ He surmised, "The first cases imported into the island, at the close of October, did not become epidemic centres, or they were not apparently so, and probably a considerable number of cases had been imported until at last one appeared

²¹ Sandra Klopper and Rehema Nchimbi, "East Africa," in *Encyclopedia of World Dress and Fashion*, eds. Joanne B. Eicher and Doran H. Ross, vol. 1: *Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 155; Sharifa Zawawi, *Kanga: The Cloth That Speaks* (Bronx: Azanya Hills Press, 2005), 15.

²² Myron Echenberg, *Africa in the Time of Cholera: A History of Pandemics from 1817 to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 50-51.

²³ Echenberg, *Africa in the Time of Cholera*, 52, 55-57.

²⁴ Christie spent the years 1865-1874 in the employment of the Omani Sultan of Zanzibar. James Christie, *Cholera Epidemics in East Africa: An account of the several diffusions of the disease in that country from 1821 till 1872, with an outline of the geography, ethnology, and trade connections of the regions through which the epidemics passed* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1876).

²⁵ Christie, *Cholera Epidemics in East Africa*, 421.

²⁶ Christie, *Cholera Epidemics in East Africa*, 364-365.

like a spark among the combustibles, and then the epidemic broke out with uncontrollable fury.”²⁷ Christie recorded how the disease decimated the population in the months of December 1869 and January 1870. “Even when the pestilence was at its height—when death was in every house, and when homes were being laid desolate—the inhabitants were not panic-stricken, and there was no rush from the place to escape danger. ... [A]s was the case with the negroes, the sole occupation of the living consisted in attending to the sick, and in burying the dead.”²⁸ Though he closely observed much suffering, death, and burial, he made no mention of the Red Cross or its involvement.²⁹

Kisutu is at least as old as other more familiar printed textiles in east Africa. The earliest extant sample of *kisutu* can be found in an 1886 sample book in the Vlisco archives. The *kisutu* design is printed in blue and red ink on white machine-woven cloth (Fig. 4-4). Recall Burton’s 1856 description: “The feminine garb is a Kisitu [*sic*], or length

²⁷ Christie, *Cholera Epidemics in East Africa*, 365.

²⁸ Christie, *Cholera Epidemics in East Africa*, 387-88.

²⁹ Certainly the Red Cross emblem familiar today is sufficiently old; the Red Cross organization itself came into being at an 1863 conference in Geneva, Switzerland. It was conceived of as a confederation of relief societies to “ameliorate the condition of wounded soldiers in the armies in campaign on land or sea.” The treaty provided for “the neutrality of all sanitary supplies, ambulances, surgeons, nurses, attendants, and sick or wounded men, and their safe conduct, when they bear the sign of the organization, viz: the Red Cross.” Beyond war, the Red Cross “afford[s] ready succor and assistance to the sufferers in time of national or widespread calamities, such as plagues, cholera, yellow fever and the like, devastating fires or floods, railway disasters, mining catastrophes. &c.” Zanzibar could have benefitted from the relief society’s assistance during the cholera epidemics of 1869 and 1870, and perhaps again in April 1872 when another catastrophe befell Zanzibar. A freak hurricane destroyed the island’s clove crop and wreaked havoc across the island. Prideaux, “Zanzibar: Report on the Trade and Commerce of Zanzibar for the Year 1873-74,” by Prideaux, *Reports from Her Majesty’s Consul on the Manufactures, Commerce, &c., of their Consular District*, Commercial Trade Report No. 36 (London: Harrison and Sons, 1876), 183. Still, it is not clear whether the Red Cross were on hand during either crisis—bearing their insignia—to give rise to the *kisutu* design. American Association of the Red Cross, *The History of the Red Cross: The Treaty of Geneva, and its adoption by the United States*. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1883), 14, 16.

of stained cotton, blue and red being the pet colours.”³⁰ Next to the sample, a logo is drawn, featuring the letters HHO, potentially referring the Hamburg-based merchant converter firm, Hansing & Co. The destination for the printed *kisutu* is also noted: Zanzibar, as is the date: 30 June 1886.³¹

Two early example dates from 1891-1892 (Fig. 4-5 and 4-6). Unmistakably *kisutu*, the first version differs from the 1886 sample in color, where it has shifted from a blue-and-red to black-and-red colorway. This change in color was certainly popular, as this new black-and-red colorway was printed ten times between March 1891 and February 1892. Another version retains the black-and-red colorway, though it does not display the familiar cross and tangerine flower motif on the interior panel. Rather, it has a series of white dots on a background of black. Not as successful as the previous version, this *kisutu* was ordered only three times during the same years.

Four more examples of *kisutu* come from an LKM sample book entitled “Samples for African wrappers, etc. 1884-1900.” Fortuitously, many of the *kisutu* are dated individually and appear to be the products of competitor firms. One sample shows only a small portion of the *kisutu* design, in a deep blue, almost black with red (Fig. 4-7). The sample itself is labeled “Maart ’93 Kisfutos Trümpy,” likely referring to the date (March 1893), the type of cloth (*kisutu*), and perhaps a competitor company. Another sample dates from 1894 and is printed in black and red.

Two of the *kisutu* samples illustrated in this volume may directly correspond to information printed in a British trade report on Zanzibar from 1899. The popularity of this

³⁰ Burton, *Zanzibar: City, Island and Coast*, 1:434.

³¹ The date may refer to the when the order was placed or when the cloth was printed; without further information, it is difficult to be sure.

cloth and difference in price depending on the country of manufacture are of specific importance:

One of the German firms in Zanzibar imported certain *kisutus** of one kind of Dutch printing some months since, and the demand was so great for this particular article that 20 cloths of it realised 22 rs. (the probable cost to the importer being 12 rs. to 12 rs. 12 a.), as compared with the amount realised by the Manchester printed article of about 12 rs. to 13 rs. 9a. for the same number.

*A special design of *kangas*.³²

The *kisutu* examples are almost identical and appear on facing pages, but they were manufactured by different printers on behalf of competitor merchant-converter firms (Fig. 4-8). They both date to 19 April 1899; the left was imported by (the German firm) Wm. O'swald & Co. and printed by (the Dutch firm) van Vlissingen (Vlisco), whereas the right was imported by (the German firm) Hansing & Co. from an English manufacturer (likely in Manchester).

A late nineteenth-century postcard by the Goan-born, Zanzibari photographer A. C. Gomes captures a woman wearing two *kisutu* cloths (Fig. 4-9).³³ The *kisutu* wrapped around her waist displays the familiar repeating strips, while the *kisutu* wrapped around her shoulders shows part of the interior motif, likely with repeating cross and tangerine flowers. The postcard's credit line, "A. C. Gomes & C.," likely dates the image to early in his career, between the 1870s after he arrived in Zanzibar and 1890, when he partnered with J. B. Coutinho, though it may date from just after this partnership, between 1897

³² "Zanzibar: Report for the Year 1899 on the Trade and Commerce of Zanzibar," by Kestell Cornish, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports of Trade and Finance*, Foreign Office No. 2520 (London: Harrison and Sons, 1900), 10.

³³ Goa is the smallest Indian state and is located on the western coast of the subcontinent, just south the state of Maharashtra, better known by its largest city, Mumbai. The Portuguese first landed in Goa the early sixteenth century and held the region as a colony for 450 years until it was annexed by India in 1961. Because of Portuguese colonization, Goans have long been noted for their differences in cuisine, religion (many are Roman Catholic), artisanal knowledge and cosmopolitan nature.

and 1902.³⁴ *Kisutu* cloths appear in a handful of other photographs from the last decade of the nineteenth century. Two studio photographs from Zanzibar show women wrapped in this cloth, the first facing the camera and the second by the Coutinho Brothers dressing another woman's hair (Fig. 4-10 and 4-11). Two outdoor photographs also show women wearing *kisutu*, the first by the Coutinho Brothers shows a seated woman with the cloth thrown over her shoulder and the second captures a variety of women walking on the main road to Zanzibar in March 1901 (Fig. 4-12 and 4-13). The woman with her back to the camera at the far right is draped in a *kisutu* cloth. As evidenced by the *kisutu* samples described above, references in the British trade report from 1899, and late nineteenth-century photographs, *kisutu* was a highly popular cloth by the 1890s.

An LKM sample book from 1901-1902 indicates that the company was making use of information gained through competitor samples of this popular design in the following years. This volume includes conventional *kisutu* designs as well as several more innovative compositions (Fig. 4-14). For example, two designs appear on facing pages; the left-hand page features a *kisutu* with the standard design, though the cross and tangerine motif has been replaced with red spots alternating with white spots encircled by a red border; though the shapes are different, the effect is very similar.

³⁴ Photographs by A. C. Gomes can tentatively be dated by the credit line given. A. C. Gomes established his commercial photography studio in Aden as early as 1869 and moved to Zanzibar sometime in the 1870s. He likely opened the first commercial photography studio in Zanzibar. He then partnered with J. B. Coutinho in the late 1890s. After this partnership dissolved on 31 July 1897, credit lines change to A. C. Gomes & Son, Zanzibar, and following, A. C. Gomes & Sons, Zanzibar. A. C. Gomes died in 1917, and his son, P. F. Gomes, continued the business, which was run by P. F. Gomes' son, G. Gomes by 1930. A second branch was opened in Dar es Salaam by P. F. Gomes and another of his sons, E. Gomes, in 1929. P. F. Gomes died in 1932. "A. C. Gomes and Sons," *Royal Commonwealth Society Photographers Index*. Cambridge University Library. Accessed 13 September 2012 <http://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/rcs_photographers/entry.php?id=208> and "A. C. Gomes and Son, Court Photographers," in *Eastern Africa and Rhodesia: Historical and Descriptive Commercial and Industrial Facts, Figures, and Resources* (London: W. H. & L. Collingridge, Ltd., 1930), 314.

However, the right-hand page contains large paisley-like shapes made up of irregularly shaped white spots encircled by a red border. This large panel replaces the registers of small, intricate designs. Four other samples from this volume demonstrate additional *kisutu* designs from the turn of the century printed by LKM. Six other *kisutu* appear in sample books from Vlisco's archive over the course of the next two decades. Another of LKM's sample books in Vlisco's collection features cloths dating between 1898 and 1915. The three *kisutu* illustrated are almost identical, save for very minor details.³⁵

In this same LKM pattern book, two *kisutu* feature the hand-written notation, "native shawls," bearing mentioning (Fig. 4-15). What look to be cuttings from the same locally produced *kisutu* appear on facing pages in another LKM pattern book in the Vlisco archives (Fig. 4-16). This volume contains cloths made by competitors from 1900-1932. While printed cloths from England, Switzerland, and fellow Dutch companies are illustrated, perhaps most notable are the "native shawl" patterns from Mombasa and Zanzibar. Most date nearer to the turn of the century, are labeled as such, and list the country of origin. Of particular interest here are the two illustrations of *kisutu*, both of which feature black and red ink printed on bleached white machine-woven cloth, but the example on the left's central panel is predominantly black whereas the example of the right's is predominantly white. Although the place of manufacture or collection is not noted on these pages, the predominately black cloth is labeled as "kisfuto real shawls native make." In all four images, printed designs appear messy and

³⁵ For example, the central motif of repeating crosses and tangerine flowers alternates starting shapes, from the corner: the first begins with a tangerine flower, while the second begins with a cross. Similarly, each strip of patterning begins with a slightly different starting point. Finally, the strip just to the left of the cross and tangerine motif is printed in red on white in the first two examples, but black on white in the third example. The sample is pinned or pasted down, obscuring this fact, but a small edge of the black design can be seen. Also, a similar design, outlined in black, can be seen at the opposite end of the *kisutu*.

inexact, with dyes bleeding into one another, obscuring a continuous flow of design. While perhaps aesthetically clumsy, these qualities actually confirm that these *kisutu* were hand-printed locally. The edges of the printing blocks, whether made of wood or otherwise, are readily apparent, suggesting these samples are indeed cuttings of hand-printed *kisutu* made in east Africa, likely Mombasa or Zanzibar, around 1900.³⁶ And because these samples have been kept between the pages of books in Dutch company archives for the last century, away from light, humidity, wearing and washings, they have likely retained much of their original color and quality. These locally produced, hand-printed *kisutu* from the turn of the century are a truly remarkable find, probably in near original quality. The existence of these locally produced *kisutu* calls into question whether European-manufactured *kisutu* or locally produced *kisutu* developed first. Although nearly impossible to ascertain from extant examples, locally produced *kisutu*, hand-stamped in Mombasa or Zanzibar with designs on imported, manufactured, bleached white cloth, gives credence to local assertions that maintain Europeans only capitalized on a demand first met by local merchants of Indian-descent in those trading centers.

Clearly, the *kisutu* with its familiar design and composition were very popular around the turn of the twentieth century and likely have been continually produced since then. Although generally thought of as a type of *kanga*, *kisutu* may predate *kanga*, an intermediate design between the clear joining of handkerchiefs in *leso ya kushona* garment, and the *kanga* designs that augment and simplify these designs. Whatever its

³⁶ An expanded discussion of vegetal and woodblock prints used to create printed designs on manufactured cloth in east Africa will follow in the next section. Equally, similar hand-stamped examples of early *kanga* from Mombasa and Zanzibar will be discussed in the following section. These examples, labeled by their place of origin or collection, support my conclusion that these locally hand-printed *kisutu* came from one of these urban centers around the turn of the twentieth century.

specific role, *kisutu* surely contributed to the development of *kanga* textiles. In 1931, the German trading house of Wm. O'Swald & Co. described the progression of native cloth preferences:

At first they preferred plain grey cloth, but subsequently they adopted printed cotton wear and other kinds of textiles. The richer Arabs and natives wore coloured woven articles imported from Muscat. A kind of shawls called *kissutos* came from India; and such names as *malabari*, *madrasi* and *madapolam* show that India formerly supplied East Africa with many goods of better quality. Nowadays, however, she chiefly furnishes very coarse and cheap textiles. When mechanical production developed more and more in England and the other European countries, machine-made goods gradually supplanted the Indian and Arabian handmade articles. *Khangas*—now a very important article of trade—were not introduced until about 1885 to 1890.³⁷

Although generally accurate if a bit simplistic, neglecting *leso ya kushona*, this brief overview suggests the progression of cotton cloths that led to the creation of *kanga* and posits that the *kisutu* design came from India.

The Vlisco pattern book from 1886 provides a snapshot of a three-year period in the development of printed cloth worn by east African women in the late nineteenth century. This volume includes *leso ya kushona*, *kisutu*, and *kanga*, each with its varying composition. The *leso ya kushona* dwindled out of fashion for Zanzibar and much of the mainland by 1890 but retains its popularity to this day in the Comoros Islands.³⁸ The *kisutu* design proved popular by the 1890s, mentioned in a British trade report and appearing frequently in pattern books. Generally thought of as a specific type of *kanga*, it has retained its popularity and has been the subject of much reinvention and

³⁷ *The Story of the House of O'Swald*, 37. An anecdote in the same publication mentions a new style of *kanga* designed to reference a German military excursion in Bagamoyo between 1884 and 1890, implying that familiarity with, popularity of, and demand for *kanga* was already established by this time. See page 30 for the entire passage.

³⁸ Christopher Spring mentions the *leso ya kushona* garment is still worn in the Comoros Islands. Spring, "Not Really African?" 75.

reprinting over the last century. Finally, *kanga*, with their rectangular composition featuring a central motif and a border of varying widths, were already represented in this volume from 1886.

Dominance of *Kanga* Textiles and Early Popular Designs

The earliest published mention of printed cloth referred to as *kanga* comes from none other than well-known British explorer Henry Stanley. He requested this particular type of cloth in a letter to Mr. Edmund Mackenzie, of the British merchant-converter firm Messrs. Smith, Mackenzie & Co., dated 31st of December, 1886.³⁹ He specifically requested four pieces of twenty-four yards each of *kanga*, equaling 96 yards. Additionally, he requested a wide variety of cloth, including brown sheeting, *kaniki*, handkerchiefs, *kikoi*, *bindera*, and fine sheeting.⁴⁰

By 1889 competition between European suppliers of printed cotton textiles was already rife. Frederick Jackson, Lieutenant-Governor for the East Africa Protectorate from 1907-1911 and Governor of Uganda from 1911-1917, comments on the fashions of east African women during his 1889-1890 expedition with the Imperial British East Africa Company:

While on the question of changing fashions, it may be of interest to record that nowhere did fashion change so quickly as in Zanzibar and the larger coast towns; but it was confined to women only. It is a fact that if importers of coloured shawls (*kanga* or *leso*) had not sold out one consignment before another one of different design arrived, sometimes only a month later, they had difficulty in disposing of them, and had either to reduce the price or dispose of them to up-country traders. It is also a fact that at the time when the Germans cut out Manchester in the matter of these coloured shawls, and in other commodities too, they sent out special agents to study the question of native requirements on the spot. Consular reports, however

³⁹ Henry Stanley, *In Darkest Africa, Or, the Quest, Rescue and Retreat of Emin, Governor of Equatoria*, 2 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, Toronto Presbyterian New Company: 1890), 1: 37.

⁴⁰ Stanley, *In Darkest Africa*, 1: 37.

strongly worded and inviting, were not enough for them. One of those agents conceived the brilliant idea of obtaining from a Swahili priest short and suitable texts from the Koran, which were stamped in black Arabic characters, and formed a very attractive border; they were not merely snapped up at once, but women actually fought for them.⁴¹

This passage records the fierce competition between European merchant converters by 1889-1890, and to my knowledge, this is the first mention of the addition of Swahili proverbs, stamped in Arabic characters, on garments clearly referred to as *kanga*. The passage, along with cloth samples of similar date, confirms the inclusion of Arabic characters was an original feature to *kanga* textiles, rather than a later addition.⁴² During the last decades of the nineteenth century, Swahili was most often written in Arabic script, following the centuries-old prevailing tradition for writing the various dialects of the Bantu language.⁴³ Swahili written in Roman script was introduced by European missionaries from the 1840s, but it was not officially adopted until the late 1920s.⁴⁴ The earliest *kanga* textiles that possess Roman-script Swahili text date to 31 March 1910 (Fig. 4-17). *Kanga* samples in Vlisco's collection show that a variety of lettering styles, including cursive, sentence case, and block capitals, were all used to write Roman-script Swahili text in the first decades of the twentieth century (Fig. 4-18). Arabic-script Swahili text and Roman-script Swahili text existed on contemporaneous *kanga* in the

⁴¹ Frederick Jackson, *Early Days in East Africa* (1930; repr., London: Dawsons of Pall Mall, 1969), 177.

⁴² Much of the existing literature on *kanga* textiles suggests that printed text appeared around World War I. While it is true that printed text, in both Arabic and Roman script, becomes a more standard feature or inclusion around World War I, the innovation of including text is original to the emergence of the cloth genre itself.

⁴³ Andrey Zhukov, "Old Swahili-Arabic Script and the Development of Swahili Literary Language," *Sudanic Africa* 15 (2004): 13.

⁴⁴ Zhukov, "Old Swahili-Arabic Script and the Development of Swahili Literary Language," 14.

first years of the twentieth century, and text in both scripts became a standard inclusion by the 1910s.⁴⁵

Kanga are first itemized in a British Trade Report for Zanzibar from the year 1891.⁴⁶ An enclosure included in the report addresses “the articles which command the readiest sale” among ports on the Benadir coast (present-day Somalia) and include a variety of cloths, such as, “Grey shirtings, of two sizes; Grey drills; Bhownager handkerchiefs; Indian silk handkerchiefs and head covers; Mucculla print goods; Dhanga (dyed print goods), kaneki, &c.”⁴⁷ Although misspelled, this “Dhanga” must certainly be *kanga*, as the description of “dyed print goods” indicates.

By 1895, *kanga* were a significant enough import to warrant a lengthy description in the British trade report on Zanzibar for that year: “Another important branch of this trade is in connection with what are known in the local market as “*Kangas*,” printed handkerchiefs measuring about 50 by 72 inches, which form the principal garments of native women.”⁴⁸ From 1895, *kanga* are mentioned in greater or less detail in every British Trade Report from Zanzibar until 1912, when the reports become much more

⁴⁵ *Kanga* textiles from the 1910s more regularly include Swahili text printed in either Arabic script or Roman script. Examples will be discussed in due course.

⁴⁶ “Inclosure 3: Extracts from a Report on the Trade of the Benadir Ports,” in “Zanzibar: Report for the Year 1891 on the Trade of Zanzibar,” by G. H. Portal, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports on Trade and Finance*, Foreign Office No. 982 (London: Harrison and Sons, 1892), 31.

⁴⁷ “Inclosure 3: Extracts from a Report on the Trade of the Benadir Ports,” in “Zanzibar: Report for the Year 1891 on the Trade of Zanzibar,” by G. H. Portal, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports on Trade and Finance*, Foreign Office No. 982 (London: Harrison and Sons, 1892), 31.

⁴⁸ The entire passage is reproduced in Chapter 5, “A Manufacturing Chronology of *Kanga* Textiles” and in Appendix A: “Discussion of *Kanga* Textiles In Early Twentieth-Century British Colonial Trade Reports.” “Zanzibar: Report for the Year 1895 on the Trade of Zanzibar,” by A. H. Hardinge, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports on Trade and Finance*, Foreign Office No. 1765 (London: Harrison and Sons, 1896), 9-10. Other textiles are also described at length, including *Americani*, *Membai*, *Gumpty*, *Hindessa*, *Madduf*, *Kaniki*, *Bandera*, *cambric*, *twill*, *Vilemba*, and *Vikoi*. See “Zanzibar: Report for the Year 1895 on the Trade of Zanzibar,” 8-10.

streamlined, offering values of general categories imports and exports but much less detail, both in value and description, about individual commodities.

The report from 1896 confirms *kanga*'s prominence among imported commodities to Zanzibar, and refers to a particular design commissioned to capitalize on the events of the day:

Piece-goods continue to hold the first place of all articles imported to Zanzibar, and enormously exceed (as was the case in the year 1895) in import value any other class of goods. Under this heading come "*kangas*," or printed handkerchiefs, which form the principal dress of Swahili women, and of the trade in these articles Germany practically holds the monopoly. Those made in England are machine-printed, and much more expensive than those imported by German firms, which are block-printed in Holland. With this report is sent a sample* of the above, with a device printed upon it representing the firing of one of Her Majesty's ships upon the Sultan's palace, advantage having been taken of this incident to enhance the value of the article.⁴⁹

The incident referred to here was the Anglo-Zanzibar War, which has the dubious honor of holding the record for the shortest war in history (forty minutes). The conflict took place on 27 August 1896 over a succession dispute. The British wanted the sultanate to pass to someone who shared their anti-slavery sentiments, and the accession was to be sanctioned by the British consul. The sultanate instead passed to another, who was not favorable to British interests, so British forces opened fire on the palace in Zanzibar, where the new sultan had barricaded himself. No doubt an important moment in

⁴⁹ "Zanzibar: Report for the Year 1896 on the Trade of Zanzibar," by A. H. Hardinge, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports on Trade and Finance*, Foreign Office No. 1961 (London: Harrison and Sons, 1897), 8-9. The asterisk denotes the sample was forwarded to the Manchester Chamber of Commerce. The other cotton piece goods mentioned are: American and English grey cotton sheetings, superior American grey cotton drill and the corresponding English type; other piece goods mostly received from Great Britain: white shirtings "Vikoi" or loincloths, Muscat scarves, white drill, Khaki drill, Khaki flannel and flannelette, cricketing flannels, tweeds, canvas, and Turkey-red twills, and from Bombay: gunny bags and indigo-dyed cottons or Kaniki. See "Zanzibar: Report for the Year 1896 on the Trade of Zanzibar," 8-10.

Zanzibari history, it is quite fitting a *kanga* would be designed around this incident, much like the German bombardment of Bagamoyo in 1888.

The definition of “*kangas*” as “printed handkerchiefs” in this same trade report points to their close association their direct predecessor, the *leso ya kushona*. The term *kanga* is reputed to have been adopted from one of the first popular styles of this printed cloth, called *kanga za mera*, an archaic form of Swahili meaning “the first of *kanga*.” A studio photograph from Zanzibar by the Coutinho Brothers from ca. 1890 may show a woman wearing a similar printed cloth (Fig. 4-19). Its name is said to refer to an early design that resembled the guinea fowl, a common bird in east Africa that has white spots on black feathers; *kanga*, literally translated, means guinea fowl (Fig. 4-20). Others explain the pattern as a comparison of the tendencies of guinea fowl to women: they both have a tendency to strut, (women in particular while wearing this cloth), and both tend to travel in groups and constantly chatter.⁵⁰ The term *kanga* came to apply to this new type of cloth in present-day Tanzania, transcending the original design; the older term *leso* (originally meaning handkerchief) was retained in present-day Kenya to refer to this genre of printed textile.

By 1876 Vlisco was already producing both *kanga*-sized garments and handkerchiefs for the east African market. The handkerchiefs could have been sewn three-by-two to create the *leso ya kushona* garment: a 30” x 30” handkerchief joined with five more identical would create a textile measuring 60” x 90”, not much larger than the early *slendang*, sized 54” x 79”. Late nineteenth-century photographs indicate that both types of garments were worn concurrently, such as this woman who wears a *leso*

⁵⁰ Anthony John, “The *Kanga* Struts in Style, *Weekend Standard* (Kenya) 2 July 1982, 11; Robert Nwiga, “Be it Love or Sorrow, Say it with Khangas,” *East Africa* (Nairobi) 2000, VIII; Hilger, “The *Kanga*,” 44.

ya kushona around her waist and a *kanga* thrown over her shoulders in two A. C. Gomes photographs from ca. 1890 (Fig. 4-21 and 4-22). It is likely these two types of cloth were commissioned, printed, and sold simultaneously in the late nineteenth century. Some pattern books in the Vlisco collection possess samples of both handkerchiefs and *slendangs* in the same volume, but gradually, the pattern books shift to illustrating only *slendangs*. One book from 1891-1892 contains only *slendangs*, but a shift to single cloth volumes became more common following the turn of the century. By then, it appears that the simplified composition of a central motif and surrounding continuous or compound border, common to *kanga* today, had taken hold. I posit that *kanga* had displaced its predecessors to become the fashionable wrap garment for women in east Africa by 1888 and designs proliferated around the turn of the century.

At least as early as 1876 Dutch *slendangs* were manufactured in Europe for sale in east Africa, by 1886 Europeans were asking for *kanga* by name to trade with Africans in the interior, by 1888 new designs were being commissioned to capitalize on current events, and by 1889 European competition was fierce and research into the demands of locals resulted in the addition of Swahili proverbs or Koranic excerpts stamped in Arabic script along the border of these textiles, although there is evidence that printed Arabic-script Swahili phrases existed from at least 1886. Therefore, many of the hallmarks of *kanga* are already present by 1889: the addition of Swahili proverbs, the presence of at least one border, designs based on local happenings, and sustained competition among European importers.

In the next section, a few of popular designs, motifs, and colorways will be analyzed from samples of early *kanga* textiles, turn-of-the-century studio photographs

from Zanzibar, and contemporaneous publications that report on the new fashions worn by women in east Africa. After 1900, new designs for *kanga* textiles proliferated, and many Europeans who visited east Africa described the cloth's widespread popularity, women's insatiable demand for new designs, and the regular appearance of bold, graphic images featuring familiar, often imported, objects.

1886-1899: A Few Popular Designs and Colorways

Earlier, I argued that the earliest printed cloth by Vlisco intended for an east African market dated to 1876.⁵¹ Judging from sample books in the Vlisco archive from their now defunct textile printer competitors LKM (*Leidsche Katoenmaatschappij* or Leiden Cotton Company) and HKM (*Haarlemsche Katoen Maatschappij* or Haarlem Cotton Company), Dutch textile printers manufactured the earliest recognizable *kanga* textiles using woodblocks. The earliest sample book with recognizable *kanga*, including textile precursors such as *kaniki*, *leso*, and *kisutu*, includes samples dating between 1884 and 1900.⁵² The volume documents LKM's early hand-stamped production for the east African market; not only does it provide dozens of cloth samples, but early hand-drawn designs are also included.⁵³ These hand-drawn and colored images, dating between 1886 and 1887, featured not only on early *kanga* textiles, but were absorbed into the repertoire of common images often seen on *kanga* over the next century and a quarter. The first drawing dates to 20 November 1886 and depicts a fez or *kofia* in

⁵¹ See Chapter 3, "The Historical Emergence of *Kanga* Textiles."

⁵² See LKM 274: *Stalen voor Afrika Slendangs, Etc. (1884-1900)*. As not all individual samples are labeled, better resources for early designs are the volumes *Vlisco Slendangs 1886*, No. 281: *Slendangs OA 1891-1892*, and No. 290: *Slendangs alles Handdr. 1891-1892*.

⁵³ See Chapter 5, "The *Kanga* Trade: Global Networks of Manufacturers, Distributors, Sellers, and Consumers," for the process of designing successful new *kanga*.

Swahili, adorned with a crescent and star (Fig. 4-23). In 1887, a hand-drawn design shows the curved dagger known as *hanjari* in Swahili alternating with an abstracted crown-like burst, contrasted with a phrase in Arabic script (Fig. 4-24).⁵⁴ One final example shows a drawing of a rose water sprinkler bottle (Fig. 4-25). This object, easily recognizable by its shape, is a regular feature on *kanga* textiles, from the earliest known examples to the latest design in production today.⁵⁵ It appears this design was immediately put into production, based on cuttings from a larger design included later in the same volume (Fig. 4-26). Although it is difficult to discern what the entire design may have looked like from just small cuttings, larger samples help to clarify the design and composition of early *kanga* textiles (Fig. 4-27). In this sample, the rose water sprinkler bottles repeat to form a continuous border, which encloses a central ground of umbrellas. If this sample displays roughly a quarter of the design, then it is likely that six or eight umbrellas were arranged throughout the central ground—one in each inner corner, and either two or four in the middle.

This early *kanga* conforms to the familiar composition of a central ground bordered by a thick, continuous design around the edges of a rectangular cloth. But this continuous-border composition existed alongside other approaches to borders until at least the mid 1950s, when it became dominant. A full-cloth example from the same volume, likely also dating to 1886, shows an alternative composition (Fig. 4-28).

Although similar, the central ground has been contracted, giving room for an expanded rectangular border. But instead of extending the border across the length of the cloth,

⁵⁴ The drawn scissors on this image may indicate cut lines; if so, this printed cloth would be too small to be considered a *kanga* textile. Nevertheless, the motifs of *hanjari* and Arabic-script Swahili phrases are commonly seen on *kanga* textiles.

⁵⁵ See Figure 7-85, discussed in Chapter 7.

narrow strips flank the thick, rectangular frame along the width of the textile. The elements of design in each portion of this cloth are familiar shapes on *kisutu*. The central ground has designs in the inner corners around what may be Islamic prayer beads, *sala shanga* in Swahili, or perhaps it is simply a necklace. It encloses Arabic-script lettering.⁵⁶

In addition to the early popular *kanga* designs discussed in Chapter 3—the Indonesian *kemben*-inspired, Indian woodblock-printed and tie-dyed, and the budding paisley—three distinct compositions and approaches to design existed from 1886. The first was a design with a large central ground with a wide expanse of solid color, bordered by a thick, continuous and mostly simple design around the entire rectangular cloth. The central ground might have four inner-corner motifs or one large, centered design, or both, but overall this continuous-bordered *kanga* featured simple, bold designs, such as the very popular *kanga* from 1888 and 1889 (Fig. 4-29). The design is closely related to the budding paisley design and features a bold, simple and continuous border made up of parallel stripes, which enclose a flower in each inner corner.

Some of the textile samples in this 1886 volume have notations next to the cuttings. These notations indicate orders of the design and often give the dates and intended destination. All designs in this volume were printed for Zanzibar, likely for the Hamburg-based merchant-converter firm, Hansing & Co. The vast majority of textile samples in volumes that record orders are only printed once, according to the handwritten notations next to designs. Others are printed between two and four times, and the ones illustrated here are the lucky few that succeeded beyond four, separate orders.

⁵⁶ The following image is included to give readers a sense of scale of these textile samples. Although the volumes might appear to be akin to normal books, the volumes actually are hugely oversized.

This continuous-bordered floral design was ordered no less than eight times within a space of less than a year, between April 1888 and February 1889.

The second compositional approach that can be first seen in 1886 is the compound border (Fig. 4-30). In this layout, wide strips of a contrasting pattern flank the central design, creating a smaller central ground and an overall more complex composition. An inner border may or may not set off the central ground. Effectively, the borders along the width of the cloth are thick, and the borders along the length of the cloth are thinner and are comprised of a contrasting design. The motifs that often appear within these compositional elements are smaller, more intricate, and largely abstract and repeating. The composition and design elements common to the compound-border *kanga* make for an overall busier design. This example, also in the pink-and-rose on white colorway, was ordered for the Zanzibar market five times in as many months, between November 1888 and March 1889.

Judging from the samples illustrated throughout the 1886 volume, paisley, geometric, and abstracted floral motifs were already popular with *kanga* consumers. A few examples in this volume display desirable commodities, like the umbrellas discussed above. Animals, too, are featured, including peacocks, fish, and even squirrels. Additionally, the colorway, pink-and-rose on bleached white cloth, was hugely popular between 1886 and 1888 and likely continued in its success during the 1890s. The volume also has a few samples that are blue-and-navy on white and orange-and-black on white, though these colorways do not appear to have captured east African women's fancy. A good number of black-and-red on white designs exist and likely indicate a shift in color trends. Colors, like designs, have a habit of falling in and out of

favor, and sometimes, designs that failed to sell in one colorway had huge success in another, such as this sample from 1891 (Fig. 4-31). This design appears in the 1886 volume in the pink-and-rose on white colorway, but it found popularity a few years later when it was transformed into a red-and-black on white design. Seven orders for this early *kanga* design for sale in Zanzibar were placed in the eight months between January 1891 and August 1891. Although it may not strike viewers familiar with *kanga* today, this textile features a third approach to border design—the integrated. Perhaps the least common in terms of examples, this *kanga* has a border that is undulating and integrated into its overall composition. *Kanga* with integrated borders continued to crop up throughout the twentieth century.

Although the pink-and-rose on white colorway continued to be popular in the early 1890s, by the first years of the new century, red-and-black on white dominated at least the imports of one Dutch manufacturer. This red-and-black on white design was ordered twenty-three times between March 1891 and February 1892 for the Zanzibar market (Fig. 4-32). Only part of the border and central ground are available in this sample, but both feature small, intricate, and repeating motifs. The border is comprised of geometric shapes, while the central ground has a more floral design. Fortuitously, a sample that includes the corner was saved in another colorway. Two colorways are shown in this image, the familiar pink-and-rose on white and a new pink-and-rose on dyed yellow. The dyed yellow ground is a subsequent innovation on the original bleached white grounds that were popular in the mid-1880s. By changing just this one aspect, a whole new array of textiles could be produced, using the same woodblocks and the same ink

colors. Although these pink-and-rose colorways did not achieve popularity to rival the red-and-black version, fourteen orders were made between May 1891 and June 1892.

The pink-and-rose on yellow colorway continued in popularity over the next year. Another example was also printed fourteen times; the design has a continuous border comprised of simple lines and repeating geometric shapes (Fig. 4-33). The central motif is filled with small, alternating paisley and eight-pointed, star-like shapes. The final, popular design from this volume is again in the pink-and-rose on yellow colorway (Fig. 4-34). It was ordered eleven times between June 1891 and January 1892 and the design is comprised of a number of bands of repeating, geometric shapes. The central ground design of small spots foreshadowed an even more successful design from 1891 and 1892—the spots and stripes.

The spots-and-stripes *kanga* was an extremely popular design between at least 1891 and 1892 and likely throughout the final years of the nineteenth century. Many variations on the basic design exist, but all share the striped, continuous borders and a central ground filled with spots (Fig. 4-35). The earliest versions were printed in September 1891; the more popular brown-on-white colorway was printed twelve times until April 1892 and the red, black and white colorway was printed ten times until June 1892. A Coutinho Brothers studio photograph from Zanzibar shows a young woman in a garment sewn from this design of *kanga* ca. 1890 (Fig. 4-36). The striped borders have been sewn together down the side of her body, and the corner portions of the original cloth have been paired at the bottom of the garment to create a dynamic half box-like design. The stripes are aligned along the bottom hem but become increasingly off kilter as the garment travels up her body. This misalignment gives the garment a sense of

movement; the alternating lines play on the eye. The portion of the sleeve below her elbow uses the striped portion, along with the bottom center of the tunic. The central panel of the tunic, in both front and back, are sewn from the spotted inner portion of the *kanga*. She wears striped trousers, though these appear to be made from a different striped fabric. She also wears sandals that may indicate she is a free-born woman. The photograph's subject looks none-too-pleased to be posing. She stands on gentle-striped textile, still partially rolled near the bottom of the painted backdrop.⁵⁷ Zanzibar functioned as the fashionable urban center in late nineteenth-century east Africa and was home to the established studio photographers A.C. Gomes, the Coutinho Brothers, and A. R. Pereira de Lord around the turn of the century.

As Dutch textile manufacturers realized the success of the spots and stripes motif, they responded by printing variations on the theme, while conforming to the basic composition. A month after printing the first version, Dutch textile printers sent black and white versions with slightly bigger spots (Fig. 4-37). The sample on the left has black spots on a white ground, with the spots arranged in orderly rows. This design only garnered eleven orders between October 1891 and June 1892, about half of the version on the right. This sample has white spots on a black ground, arranged in alternating positions. It was by far the most popular version of the spots-and-stripes *kanga*, with twenty-three orders. The following month, a pink-and-rose on yellow colorway was printed, and eleven orders followed between November 1891 and August 1892.

Like some versions of the budding paisley design, this sample is printed on a checkerboard-weave cloth, and the pink functions much like an outline or accent color

⁵⁷ My attribution to the Countiho Brothers is based on the appearance of the floor covering and painted backdrop, which appear in other studio photographs by the Countiho Brothers.

to the otherwise basic design of simple spots and stripes. In comparing samples from the three shipment dates in late 1891, the spots are gradually enlarged. The characteristic of larger spots, combined with the three-color design, feature on another studio photograph from the ca. 1890 (Fig. 4-38). This photograph was taken by the Zanzibar-based studio photographers, the Coutinho Brothers. The woman on the left wears a sewn garment similar to the woman in the previous figure. The front (and likely back) panel features the spotted portion of the design, and the striped borders unite down the sides of her body. The stripes, arranged perpendicularly to the side portions, also form a cuff on her cropped sleeves and across the bottom edge below her knees. A particularly notable design addition can be found between the vertical stripes at the bottom of the garment and the spotted central panel: a chevron-like design. This portion characterizes the corners of the original *kanga* design, where horizontal and vertical stripes meet at a ninety-degree angle. The tunic is finished with a Nehru- or Mandarin-style collar, with a deep placate outlined in a light color and decorated by a line of small, light spots. Her trousers also have horizontal stripes, with a small decoration adorning the lighter stripe. She wears a printed, striped cloth wrapped around her hair and jewelry including a number of earrings, at least one bracelet, and a nose piercing. Unlike the woman in the last photograph, she does not wear shoes.

The woman next to her wears a set of wrapped, printed cloths; she has wrapped one piece around her waist and the second underneath her arms. The pair of textiles is consistent with early *kanga* designs, many of which have small, intricate borders that outline the central ground; here, the central motif is comprised of small, repeating, heart-like shapes and the border is positioned to emphasize the contrasting patterns.

She, too, wears no shoes, perhaps indicating her bonded status, though she does wear two bracelets, a sign of conspicuous consumption. They stand on the same soft, striped textile, curling up behind them. The painted backdrop completes the studio photograph.

A second Couhtino Brothers photograph capturing the same women as the previous figure appears on a multi-image postcard (Fig. 4-39). The poses of the women are slightly different, and the woman on the right drapes a contrasting spots-and-stripes *kanga* over her right shoulder. The appearance of the same design in multiple colorways in the same photograph is quite remarkable and gives credence to the popularity of this early *kanga* design.

Another variation to the popular spots-and-stripes motif was printed along with the pink-and-rose on yellow version in November 1891. This variation retains the striped border, but embellishes the central motif to include larger spots and gently s-curving shapes (Fig. 4-40). Where the curving shapes are solid, the spots are filled with Arabic-script lettering and a laurel branch, tied together with a bow. This design was ordered ten times between November 1891 and August 1892. Although not the exact sample, a similar textile appears in a contemporaneous studio photograph from Zanzibar (Fig. 4-41). The photograph by A. C. Gomes captures two young women with pots balanced on their heads both wearing wrapped, printed cloth. The woman on the right wears a printed cloth with the same striped border wrapped around her torso, underneath her arms. The central motif has the same large spots and thick s-curving shape. This cloth is certainly another variation on the theme; when comparing the two, it is clear that the Arabic-script lettering, laurel branch and bow design do not appear within the spots and the colorway has changed. Based on the popular colorways indicated by early 1890s

Dutch sample books, it is likely it is either pink-and-rose or red-and-black in color. Although impossible to tell what the original colors may have been, they certainly juxtapose a medium tone with a dark tone, clear when compared against the bright light tone—possibly white—of the cloth worn by the woman to the left. That woman wears two matching pieces of printed cloth, each with thick, continuous stripes and a largely plain, dark ground in the interior. She wears a dark cloth wrapped in her hair, and the woman in the spots-and-stripes cloth has an all-over printed cloth thrown over her shoulders. Neither woman wears shoes or obvious jewelry. Like other studio photographs of the period, they pose in front of a painted backdrop.

A studio photograph from 1893 perhaps best exemplifies the range of popular early *kanga* textiles (Fig. 4-42). The photograph is tentatively credited to A. R. Pereira de Lord, but the same softly striped floor covering and painted background may indicate the image was taken by the Coutinho Brothers. Five girls, likely in their early teens, stand facing the camera. All are bare breasted and are wrapped from the waist down in a variety of printed *kanga* cloths. The girl on the far right wears the spots-and-stripes design with the s-curving shapes. Within each medium-toned spot, light Arabic lettering, laurel branch and bow motif is enclosed. The s-curves are mostly light in color, though they are accented by a medium tone. Similarly, the light stripes on the border are also accented by a medium tone, indicating this is a three-color design.

The girl to her immediate left wears two designs of early *kanga*: one wrapped just below her breasts and a second wrapped around her waist on top of the first cloth. This first cloth is gathered around her torso and the design is mostly obscured, but it peeks out and drapes freely behind the girl on the far right. It is another spots-and-stripes

motif, here with plain, medium-sized spots and stripes in a medium tone that contrast against the darker central ground and stripes. With only two tones indicated, this spots-and-stripes *kanga* textile was probably printed in a red-and-black or pink-and-rose colorway. The second cloth wrapped around her waist also features a continuous border and a contrasting interior motif. The border is comprised of sun bursts in two colors, placed on a dark ground. The inner motif has stripes in alternating light and medium colors, with a dark zigzag line printed on top of the medium-toned stripes. The zigzag decoration is continued in the light color placed on top of the medium color and functions as part of the framing border.

The girl in the center also wears two designs of printed cloth. The cloth worn as a wrap skirt and gathered around her torso features design elements commonly seen on *kisutu* cloths—the small, intricate designs, the thin line of spades, s-curves, and hearts, and the elongated designs seen most clearly on this cloth. Her second cloth is less visible, only visible draped by her right hand. The wispy designs are light in color against a dark ground, and a contrasting border design can be discerned against a busier central portion. It is impossible to tell whether this is a four-bordered *kanga* or a portion of the earlier popular *leso ya kushona* textile, which come created from six square designs. As all of the women wear early *kanga* designs, it is likely this is also *kanga* and not *leso ya kushona*.

The two girls on the left side of the photograph also wear *kanga* textiles, though these fall into the integrated-border category. No strict, straight border is apparent, as in so many other *kanga* textiles. However, the swooping lined-design which encloses snake-like shapes and swooping birds effectively create a border around the light

grounded center. The repeating squiggles and bold, contrasting designs, combined with the integrated border and all over printed design confirm this as a *kanga*, though perhaps not a typical one. The girl on the far left wears an equally bold design of light graphic shapes against a dark ground. The integrated border is formed by light, eight-pointed stars with dark circular interiors that frame a long, angular shape with palm frond-like extensions. None of the girls wear shoes but three do wear necklaces. The girl second from the right even wears a wristwatch.

A design of another spots-and-stripes *kanga* dates to 1892, when six orders were placed between February and September (Fig. 4-43). The two-color design was printed in two colorways, burgundy-on-white and black-on-white. The white spots are even larger than the last design without s-curves. It is possible the design retained its popularity throughout the 1890s, but a gap of a dozen years in Dutch sample books leaves the question open. What can be certain is the popularity of bold, clear, crisp designs; the vast majority of designs in the volume from 1891-1892 feature busier, more intricate designs. Many also retain Indonesian batik-inspired elements, such as the triangular *tumpal*. With few exceptions, east African women made their preference for large, bold, and simplified designs clear, for in the years that follow, these characteristics come to define *kanga* textiles.

Preference in *kanga* designs shifted from small, intricate and repeating decorative motifs to large, bold, and striking elements. This shift is discernible from studio photography from Zanzibar taken around the turn of the twentieth century (Fig. 4-44). In one Coutinho Brothers' photograph from the late 1890s, a young woman faces the camera with a water pot on her head. She stands on a floral rug and behind her the

same painted backdrop with the indication of palm fronds, a stone building, and a stone plinth with a bouquet of flowers. The woman wears a printed cloth wrapped underneath her arms. The cloth has a wide border at the bottom and a contrasting central design of diagonal stripes. These stripes alternate in color, and a floral design is highlighted in the lighter tone on top of the darker stripes. Compared with earlier *kisutu* designs, this cloth is certainly simpler, with bold stripes running diagonally across the cloth. However, the retention of small, intricate and floral motifs falls somewhat out of fashion around the turn of the century, as evidenced by the following photographs.

Another Coutinho Brothers' photograph from the late 1890s indicates a shift to favor printed cloth with large, simple designs (Fig. 4-45). Three seated women pose for this studio photograph; one is dressing another's hair. All three women wear matching pairs of *kanga* cloths, one gathered and wrapped underneath the arms and the second thrown over the shoulders, and in the case of the woman on the left, over her head, too. The women in the back wear designs with small, simple designs in the borders and bold, repeating designs across the central ground. The woman in the foreground wears a *kanga* with a wide, floral border, with a potentially plain interior. The design elements are quite large and bold: the cloth worn by the woman on the left has circles with a rectangle placed across; inside the rectangle are a line of six, dark spots. The woman dressing hair wears a light *kanga*, with dark, bold paisley shapes. A similar design is worn by another woman in a studio photograph of similar date, taken by A. C. Gomes (Fig. 4-46). In this figure, the *kanga* design is clear: a simple, undulating botanical border in mid tones contrasts with the large, bold paisley shapes scattered across the

interior. This design was printed in three colors, and the crisp, printed designs contrast greatly with her woven headscarf.

The large, bold paisley design must have been popular as it was printed in a number of variations and colorways (Fig. 4-47). The same design in reverse tones can be seen in another 1890s Coutinho Brothers' studio photograph. The woman on the left wears a pair of *kanga* in the same design, although the central ground is dark and the paisley shapes are light, accented by a medium tone. The small, continuous botanical border has a light ground, and dark undulating wave, and the leaves revealed in a medium tone. She also wears three large ear plugs and a necklace. The woman in the center also wears ear plugs, bracelets, and two manufactured cloths. The cloth wrapped around her torso is printed with a checked design, and the cloth thrown around her shoulders is dark and solid in color and may be *kaniki*. The woman at the right wears four visible ear plugs, a necklace, three bracelets, and a ring on her pinky finger. The cloth draped across her left shoulder is solid in a medium tone, while the cloth wrapped around her torso bears a design familiar to many later *kanga* textiles—a plant with three leaves and two jagged buds that resemble artichoke buds. The motif is repeated at regular intervals across the dark, central ground. The *kanga* is bordered by a continuous line of light, daisy-like flowers across a background of medium-toned wispy greenery.

Two final studio photographs confirm the trend towards large, bold, and striking designs. The first photograph is by the Coutinho Brothers and shows a woman standing in profile with her eyes downcast (Fig. 4-48). She wears four ear plugs, a necklace and two bracelets. Her printed *kanga* is wrapped underneath her arms and drapes down the

length of her body. The bold, dark border is accented with small, light spots and a series of large, light paisley shapes. Instead of the plain paisley shapes seen in the last three images, these shapes have interior patterns of lines, spots, waves, and circles. This bold border contrasts greatly with the light, likely plain interior ground, seen toward the woman's back. A similar border design appears in another turn-of-the-century photograph (Fig. 4-49). This photograph is included in an album from 1905, and although the photographer is unknown, it certainly is a studio portrait. The full-length portrait shows a woman facing the camera, so the composition of her printed *kanga* textiles is easily discernible. This design features a compound border, in which the border along the length of the textile is thinner and plain in comparison to the contrasting border along the textile's width. The ground of both borders is dark with medium-toned polka-dots; along the width, this basic border design is augmented both in size and by the addition of large, light paisley shapes. The paisley shapes are scalloped around the edges with intricate designs within their interiors. The light, central ground bears large tangerine flowers with concentric circle interiors. Overall, the preference for large, bold, and increasingly simplified designs characterizes *kanga* designs around the turn of the twentieth century.

1900-1917: A Plethora of Designs

British colonial officials, stationed in Zanzibar and the neighboring island of Pemba, were keen to help British manufacturers succeed in the market for fashionable printed cloths demanded by women in east Africa. As such, they offer particularly sensitive descriptions of popular *kanga* around the turn of the twentieth century. One official, writing from Pemba in 1900, had this to say:

There is much rivalry amongst the women as to who shall soonest appear arrayed in the latest thing in *kangas*, which sell at a high premium during the early days of their novelty. Thus newly-arrived *kangas* will fetch as much as 4s. for the set of two, during, say, the first week, after which time the price declines, as the articles goes out of fashion, until a pair of the same cloths can be had eventually for 1 s. 4d., which is the lowest figure at which the Indians sell them. Zanzibar is the Paris of East Africa, and the Zanzibar belles are admittedly the glass of fashion. To keep up their reputation for smart dressing involves the frequent purchase of new *kangas*, of which, I understand, a Zanzibar girl will possess as many as two to three dozen sets at one time. *Kangas* which have begun to be out of fashion in Zanzibar will in their turn, constitute the height of fashion in Pemba and on the coast, where they will sell at a premium until superseded by a later consignment from Zanzibar, and so on.⁵⁸

This passage encapsulates the trendiness central to *kanga* design and consumption.

The latest design is sold at a premium, but never for too long, before the market is saturated and the price declines. The colonial official also notes the conspicuous consumption related to *kanga* purchases, detailing the array of some dozens of cloths owned at any given time.

Other officials comment generally on themes or subject matter that tended to succeed, such as this British colonial official regarding the Zanzibar market in 1899:

Before leaving the subject of these articles [*kanga* textiles] it may be mentioned that the native is greatly taken with any bright and striking device, and clearness in the printing of these cloths or handkerchiefs is a matter of great importance. In the year 1896 a fanciful picture of the bombardment of the Palace had a good sale along the coast, and the native is much taken with devices of bicycles, flags, &c.⁵⁹

As I established in the previous section, a preference for bold, graphic designs is similarly noted in this passage. A design from 1905 may correspond to this description

⁵⁸ "Report on the Island of Pemba for the Year 1900," by O'Sullivan-Beare, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports: Africa*, No. 2653 (London: Printed for His Majesty's Stationary Office by Harrison and Sons, 1901), 15-16.

⁵⁹ "Zanzibar: Report for the Year 1899 on the Trade and Commerce of Zanzibar," by Kestell Cornish, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports on Trade and Finance*, Foreign Office No. 2520 (London: Harrison and Sons, 1900), 10.

of a “bright and striking device;” it shows a large, graphic drawing of a steam engine approaching the foreground diagonally (Fig. 4-50). The attached swatches indicate both colorways printed as well as the presence of a contrasting, geometric border. Early twentieth-century photographs capture just such “fanciful” devices (Fig. 4-51). Although not the same *kanga* design, the woman at the far left midground of this A. R. P. de Lord photograph wears a *kanga* with a large steam engine drawn in profile. The steam billowing from the smokestack perfectly frames the curve of the woman’s head, and a contrasting border is evident near her heels. The woman in left foreground wears a pair of *kanga* with a central motif covered in paisley designs and a contrasting spotted border. The woman in the right foreground likely wears *kaniki*, or indigo-dyed manufactured cloth.

Passing trends that sparked east African women’s fancy are also mentioned from time to time. A particular combination of colors is mentioned by a British colonial official in a trade report from 1900, “A few samples* are sent herewith of handkerchiefs which commande [*sic*] the readiest sale at the present moment; the most popular this year consist of fancy designs in red, black, or yellow, but it is quite possible that in a few months’ time the fashion will have entirely changed...”⁶⁰ The samples in the Dutch printers’ volumes show mainly red-and-black on white varieties, but of course many other textile printers were active in the *kanga* trade around the turn of the century.

The theme of Zanzibar women as the “slaves of fashion” is taken up by Robert Nunez Lyne. Lyne was the Head of the Agricultural Department for the Zanzibar

⁶⁰ “Zanzibar: Report for the Year 1900 on the Trade and Commerce of Zanzibar,” by Cave, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports: Africa*, No. 2718 (London: Printed for His Majesty’s Stationary Office by Harrison and Sons, 1901), 13.

Government in 1901. He writes in his 1905 publication, *Zanzibar in Contemporary Times*:

Women are simply clad in two square cloths of colored calico, one of which is tucked under the arms, and the other thrown over the shoulders. They are very particular about the patterns of the prints, the fashions of which change every few months. The fashions of the men's clothes never change, but the women, as in other countries, are the slaves of fashion; and I have no doubt Zanzibar sets the fashion for all that part of the world, as Paris does for Europe. The people of Zanzibar are in more prosperous circumstances than those on the mainland, and dress better.⁶¹

A handful of early twentieth-century travelers make especial note of the array of elements found on popular *kanga* designs. A British journalist, Edward Vizetelly, described Swahili women's dress in his 1901 publication, *From Cyprus to Zanzibar by the Egyptian Delta* in this way:

I was rather struck by the look of the African lady, when taking a stroll in the cool of the evening. Of course the complexion was dark, the nose flat, and the lips thick, but the eyes were bright, the figure was good, and the gait decidedly graceful. Perhaps the most attractive feature about her was her dress. This consisted of the usual yard or so of longcloth fastened about the loins, supplemented by a large square of printed calico thrown over the shoulders, and so arranged that the principal central design figured in the middle of her back. The drawing thus exhibited in red or black sometimes took the form of a large circular clock, a gigantic butterfly or a bird with expanded wings, a fish, a spider in his web with a fly, a tomahawk, a sunflower, a crab, a life-size rooster on the crow, and so forth.⁶²

Apart from Vizetelly's obvious objectification of this woman (which becomes decidedly more sexual as the passage continues), he does make careful note of the array of motifs featured on *kanga* textiles. Several popular samples from 1906-1907 can give a sense of the range of designs and subject matter typically included on these printed

⁶¹ Robert Nunez Lyne, *Zanzibar in Contemporary Times: A Short History of the southern East Africa in the nineteenth century* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1905), 234.

⁶² Edward Vizetelly (Bertie Clere), *From Cyprus to Zanzibar by the Egyptian Delta: The Adventures of a Journalist in the Isle of Love, the Home of Miracles, and the Land of Cloves* (London: C. Arthur Pearson, Ltd., 1901), 395.

textiles (Fig. 4-52, 4-53, 4-54, 4-55, and 4-56). All of the samples come from the same volume and record colorway, orders, and destination for each design. I have included particularly popular designs that were ordered more than four times in the space of one year. The first example was initially ordered in March 1906; it was re-ordered four times in differing quantities for differing markets, suggesting that the popularity of *kanga* textiles had spread beyond the turn-of-the-century east African urban center of Zanzibar (Fig. 4-52). This design had a main motif of Arabic lettering on a check ground, completed by an undulating dark border.

A second group of samples includes established *kanga* motifs (Fig. 4-53). The border is comprised of paisley shapes and tangerine flowers. The central ground is filled with small, closely aligned spots; a larger, central motif may exist, but it is impossible to tell from this small sample. Compared with a studio photograph previously discussed, the similarities are undeniable (Fig. 4-49). The burgundy-and-black on white colorways of this printed cloth design were ordered seven times within the space of three months in 1906. Although most of the orders went to Zanzibar, a good number were also sent to Mombasa and Dar es Salaam, likely after the design succeeded in the “Paris of East Africa.”⁶³ Similarly, striking geometric designs were also popular, as evidenced by the next samples (Fig. 4-54). The sample on the bottom left, the burgundy square-patterned border with a striped central ground, was ordered no less than six times between 1906 and 1907.

Desirable commodities or simple items of modern life were also included on popular *kanga* in 1906. A design featuring an early automobile was ordered six times

⁶³ “Report on the Island of Pemba for the Year 1900,” by O’Sullivan Beare, 15-16.

between the two available colorways (Fig. 4-55). Tried and true devices were re-used, such as a cloth with rose water sprinkler bottles (Fig. 4-56). Originally from 1886, the design found favor twenty years later with seven orders in red and burgundy colorways. The array of destinations—including Zanzibar, Dar es Salaam, Bagamoyo and Tanga—indicates that *kanga* were certainly a coastal-wide fashion by 1906; presumably these printed textiles traveled through overland trade routes and reached much of inland east Africa, too. Indeed, other visitors' observations confirm that *kanga* and other printed cloths had spread throughout east Africa by the early years of the twentieth century. A British colonial official on Zanzibar's neighboring island, Pemba, observed a variety of *kanga* in use in 1905:

The piece-goods chiefly consist of *kanga*, *i.e.*, a large square of cotton cloth, 6 feet 6 inches by 4 feet 6 inches, printed in colours, two *kanga* forming the complete dress of a native woman. Of these there is an enormous sale not only in Pemba but all over East Africa, for the women are very fanciful about the latest fashion in pattern or colouring, and if a man wishes for peace in his house he must present his wife or wives with a new pair of *kanga* at least once a month. These *kangas*, though imported by German firms, are almost entirely made in the United Kingdom and the Netherlands. A few years ago the Netherlands almost monopolised this item of trade, but of late the British export of these *kangas* has far exceeded the exports of the Netherlands and Germany together. A big German firm, which has many branches all over British and German East Africa and in Zanzibar, buys the whole of the *kanga* made by a Scotch manufactory. It must be remembered that native women prefer quiet colours, the favourite at the present moment being a cotton cloth of a pale lilac with a wide black border, and in the centre some design in black. I have seen traction engines, a hand of playing cards, or simple black stars, and many other designs. I should think animals, excepting dogs or pigs, would prove attractive, especially lions or leopards. The sale price of *kanga* is 1 rupee (or 1s. 4d.) each, or 2 rs. (2s. 8d.) the pair.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ "Report for the Year 1905 on the Trade and Commerce of the Island of Pemba," by Farler, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports: Zanzibar*, No. 3716 (London: Printed for His Majesty's Stationery Office by Harrison and Sons, 1906), 3-4.

Further inland, Dr. Karl Weule, the German ethnographer and later Director of the Leipzig Ethnographical Museum, spent six months in east Africa in 1906. He published his findings in his 1909 book, *Native Life in East Africa: The Results of an Ethnological Research Expedition*. His comments are not limited to the coastal areas, though he does visit Mombasa, Dar es Salaam, and Zanzibar, the majority of his observations are from inland. Perhaps most importantly, Weule reproduced 162 illustrations, dozens of photographs taken by him and drawings sketched by him or solicited from informants. Although not his explicit intention, in photographing women throughout German East Africa in 1906, he reproduced no less than forty-three photographs and nine drawings of people, mostly women, wearing printed cloth. From those, eleven photographs show women wearing *kanga*, and two show women wearing *leso ya kushona*. Weule mentions *kanga* by name only once:

In outward appearance these Yaos can scarcely be distinguished from the Swahilis of the coast. The women are dressed in precisely the same kind of *kanga* (calico printed in brightly-coloured patterns, and manufactured in Holland), as the Coast women, though not so neatly and fashionably as the girls at Dar es Salaam, where the patterns in vogue change faster than even at Paris.⁶⁵

Weule reproduced a photograph of Yao women at Mtua, all wearing printed cloth, and more than a few in what is easily recognizable as *kanga* (Fig. 4-57).⁶⁶ He also reproduced photographs of women from various ethnic groups around the region, all dressed in *kanga*.⁶⁷ Still, he expressed his disdain that so many women had abandoned

⁶⁵ Karl Weule, *Native Life in East Africa: The Results of an Ethnological Research Expedition*, trans. Alice Werner (1909, repr., Chicago: Afro-Am Press, 1969), 49.

⁶⁶ Weule, *Native Life in East Africa*, 33.

⁶⁷ See Weule, *Native Life in East Africa*, 33, 35, 47, 48, 121, 130, 153, 205, 278, 369, 375, for women from the ethnic groups Yao, Makua, Makonde, and Wangoni dressed in *kanga*.

older forms of dressing in favor of printed cotton imports: “To-day, nearly the whole population of German East Africa is clothed in imported calico. ... [M]any a mother, if she has no other garment handy, will still put her little one into a kilt of bark-cloth, which, after all, looks better, besides being more in keeping with its African surroundings, than the ridiculous bit of print from Ulaya [Europe].”⁶⁸

Although Weule considered the bold, striking, and graphic motifs printed on *kanga* to be ridiculous, the designs played on the variety of influences converging in east Africa at the time. Objects decidedly European in influence, like the German war helmet, would have been a familiar sight around 1906-1907, when this date of this design (Fig. 4-58).⁶⁹ Omani-influenced symbols, such as the star and crescent, appear on other *kanga* from this period (Fig. 4-59). The border design is comprised of small, closely aligned dots that are arranged to create diamonds, triangles, and paisley shapes. These are juxtaposed to familiar local themes, such as the crowing rooster on the facing page. Ships, flags, and cannons are all symbols of power and might be associated with any number of powerful parties in coastal cities, including those involved in trade (Fig. 4-60). Older design influences did not wholly cease, either, such as this *kanga* that borrows Indonesian *tumpal* design (Fig. 4-61).

Another detailed description from a European observer comes from a 1910 book, *Glimpses of East Africa and Zanzibar*, written by Ethel Younghusband based on her experiences in 1908. The author accompanied her husband, a member of the King’s

⁶⁸ Weule, *Native Life in East Africa*, 274, 277.

⁶⁹ The shape of the helmet is German, but the badges on the front of each indicate British affiliation. A simple explanation might be that the British monarchy is actually German, which may account for the mixing of influences. Note the Arabic lettering in the border design, too. The commonality may be that all of these symbols related to powerful parties in east Africa at this time.

African Rifles, to east Africa. They first lived in Mombasa and then in Zanzibar. Her observations discuss the graphic renderings of modern life on *kanga* and the tendency for designs and color schemes to fall out of fashion rapidly:

The women in East Africa simply wear two cloths or “*kangas*,” one tied under both arms, and the other thrown over their necks and arms. ... A manager of an English firm that imported these *kangas* told me the material was made near Manchester; copper rollers for printing are made in London, one for each colour or shade; then all these things are sent over to Holland to be printed. The ladies are so fastidious they will not wear the *kangas* when the fashion has passed, several thousand of one pattern are ordered the first time, but it never pays to re-order. Patterns of flowers or dogs do not sell; generally their taste is good, but just now it is rather startling, brilliant reds and yellows mixed with black happen to be the latest style. Sometimes large patterns of trains or ships appear just spread over the broadest part of their bodies. Even in beads they are most particular...⁷⁰

She verifies that women in east Africa are particularly fashion conscious and that styles fall out of fashion quickly, and judging from the array of designs recorded in Dutch printers' sample books, a steady stream of new designs were produced to meet this demand.

Captain C. H. Stigand also recorded his observations on Swahili women's dress in 1909, culled from his time in both Mombasa and Zanzibar. He writes:

The women's dress, however, differs materially from that of the Arab women. It consists generally of two big robes of Manchester cotton bearing the same device. Of these, one is worn folded round the chest and reaching to the ankles, while the second is worn either thrown over the shoulders or head as a shawl. These robes bear all manner of strange devices, every mail nearly brings a new assortment, and the old ones go out of fashion.

The new arrivals are sold at a price of from two to six annas more than those of patterns which have been in vogue for some time past. The commonest kinds are white with a coloured border. Different devices on this groundwork are, palm trees, bunches of three oranges, motor cars, monkeys climbing poles, a lion in a cage, horses, cashew, apples, pineapples, red fezzes, and every conceivable object which could possibly

⁷⁰ Ethel Younghusband, *Glimpses of East Africa and Zanzibar* (London: John Long, 1910), 34-35.

appeal to the coast natives. Other robes are in different colours, one in narrow stripes called the “zebra,” and another in broad stripes called the “mkeka,” the striped mat of coloured grass made on the coast. Other kinds of robes are of thin flannelette, muslin, or silk. Nearly every one of the hundreds sold has a special name of its own.⁷¹

Stigand accurately describes the style in which *kanga* textiles were worn as well as typical colorways and designs. An account from Pemba again confirms the popularity of *kanga* textiles throughout the region. Captain J. E. E. Craster describes women’s attire in Pemba from his experience surveying the island for the Zanzibar government in January 1911:

The women were dressed in cotton cloths wrapped round them close under their arms and reaching to the knees. The patterns on these cloths were very large and brightly coloured. Some of them were merely huge circles of colour, or simple geometrical patterns, but the more elaborate were representations of some adjunct of civilization. One of the most popular was a picture of an electric light standard, with a large arc light in a wired globe hanging from it.⁷²

Although most early twentieth-century European visitors were perhaps drawn to commenting on *kanga* due to their inclusion of modern elements including trains, planes, and automobiles, it appears that most *kanga* were in fact geometric or abstract in design with a contrasting border. In a handful of Dutch *kanga* designs dating between 1908 and 1912, the paisley, spots, abstracted flowers, diamonds, and other shapes greatly outnumber objects and animals (Fig. 4-62 and 4-63). Designs range from the very basic—repeating small motifs across a white ground with a contrasting black border—to the more bold and busy, exemplified here by Indonesian *kemben*-inspired diamond with intricate swirl-like ground. Colorways established in the late 1880s and

⁷¹ Captain C. H. Stigand, *The Land of Zinj: being an account of British East Africa, its ancient history and present inhabitants* (London: Constable and Company, 1913), 122-123.

⁷² John Evelyn Edmund Craster, *Pemba, the Spice Island of Zanzibar* (London: T. F. Unwin, 1913), 40.

early 1890s continue to be printed twenty years later, including black on white, pink-and-rose on yellow, black-and-red on white, and burgundy-and-black on white. Shapes and designs are repeated and re-used from earlier examples, such as the artichoke-like bud, which was printed in three popular colorways (Fig. 4-64). Spots, paisley, and abstracted blossoms are favorite subjects, as samples from 1910 show (Fig. 4-65).

One innovation in colorway appears in samples from 1914. Samples produced during World War I show grounds in not only bleached white but also a tinted blue (Fig. 4-66). In this example from 27 February 1914, large black stripes are printed on a tinted blue cloth. Enclosed within each stripe are rows of dots and wavy lines. The tinted-blue cloth color, much like the dyed-yellow ground added in the early 1890s to the ever popular pink-and-rose colorway, gives red-and-black designs new life.

Designs in the 1910s follow established *kanga* precedents and include geometric shapes, abstracted floral designs, spots, stripes, and familiar objects (Fig. 4-67, 4-68, 4-69, 4-70 and 4-71). Some of the early design elements continue to feature in later *kanga* textiles, such as the cross-and-x shape (Fig. 4-67) and the budding artichoke motif and tangerine flowers (Fig. 4-68). Arabic-script lettering, included from the earliest examples, continues to feature throughout the 1910s (Fig. 4-69). Desirable commodities, modern methods of transportation, and familiar local objects also are regularly seen, such as airplanes (Fig. 4-70) and horn instruments (Fig. 4-71).

A further mention of *kanga* as fashionable women's garments comes from Harold Ingrams, a British officer of the Colonial Administrative Service. In his 1942 book, *Arabia and the Isles*, Ingrams discusses some of the more notable aspects of Zanzibar before

1933.⁷³ Ingrams lived in Zanzibar and Mauritius in 1919 and drew on his experiences while on appointment there.⁷⁴ Ingrams described the dress of two particular sisters on the island of Pemba. One was married to the local leader, and the other to his brother, and they both enjoyed considerable comforts because of their wealth and status.

Ingrams describes their clothing:

They [the sisters] were always well dressed and I rarely saw them wearing the same clothes twice. ... *Kangas* were originally so-called because they were grey and spotted white like a guinea-fowl, for *kanga* also means guinea-fowl. But days when they were as plain as that had long since passed, and among the Swahilis all sorts of extraordinary patterns had their brief mode. You would see a lady with a flat-iron or a standard arc lamp pictured across her shoulders. You might even see a wondrous multirayed sun rising on her back: but Arab ladies of high degree did not go in for devices such as these. Their *kangas* were more expensive and of flowered cloths that did not come amiss as curtains. *Kangas* for the most part used to be made in Manchester but I believe there has been considerable Japanese competition in late years. There is quite an element of gambling about their manufacture, for patterns may fall absolutely flat. As a general rule the commercial travellers would consult the big wholesale Indian merchants in Zanzibar. If they were lucky in their choice of design the *kangas* would sell well. But where one succeeded ten would fail to tickle woman's fancy.⁷⁵

Ingrams confirms much of what earlier travelers wrote, but adds mention of *kanga* imported from Japan. British writer Ferdinand Stephen Joelson provides a lengthy discussion of *kanga* in his publication, *The Tanganyika Territory*, from 1921. Note he even mentions blue-tinted *kanga* varieties and possibly the rose water sprinkler bottle motif:

⁷³ Harold Ingrams, introduction to the third edition, *Arabia and the Isles*, 3rd ed. (1942; New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1966), 5.

⁷⁴ Bernard Reilly, foreword to *Arabia and the Isles*, by Harold Ingrams, 3rd ed. (1942; New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1966), ix.

⁷⁵ Harold Ingrams, *Arabia and the Isles*, 3rd ed. (1942; New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1966), 33-34.

In and out amongst the stalls saunter attractive women attired in rich flaming silks, black cottons or blue prints of strange designs, design which change as rapidly and as unaccountably as do ladies' fashions in more advanced lands. Neither are the dusky belles behind their fairer sisters in the obstinacy with which they turn from last season's creations. If we doubt the matter, we have merely to question the manager of a firm of wholesale importers, who will reveal to us some of the astounding secrets of Dame Fashion. This cloth was *de rigueur* for a few weeks; that held sway for as many moons; while that other proved almost unsaleable from the start, though why it is impossible to say. Fantastic patterns, some of which seem to be the creation of a disordered brain. Here on the pretty light blue background are four bicycles, one in each corner; there is a dead lion as the central figure, with a porcupine on either side; another features a row of gaudy bottles; a fourth might be a cunning advertisement for a well-known watch; the fifth depicts a negro gentleman beneath a wide-spreading umbrella; the next declares in gay letters that the wearer is a *bibi mzuri*, a piece of flattery dear to the lady's heart; and so on *ad infinitum*. There appear to be no rules as to designs. Everything conceivable is reproduced for the approval or otherwise of the fastidious negresses, whose taste it is out of the question to anticipate. Time alone will show the value and suitability of any given pattern. Some have even been known to fail entirely when first introduced to a market, though a year or two later for no apparent reasons they may cause a boomlet. Those who have the cloth in stick will sell it at top prices, but by the time a fresh supply can be expected from home the demand will probably have exhausted itself as quickly as it started.⁷⁶

All of these European visitors to east Africa were struck by the bold, graphic designs and inclusion of modern elements on printed cloth worn by east African women in the first decades of the twentieth century. From these fleeting descriptions, paired with photographs and sample designs, I have shown that east African women were very selective in their purchases of *kanga* textiles around the turn of the twentieth century. For every design that found success, many dozens fell flat, echoed in contemporaneous observations and the many pages of Dutch textile printers' sample books.

⁷⁶ Ferdinand Stephen Joelson, *The Tanganyika Territory* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1921), 33-34.

Some early designs, such as *kisutu*, continued to be reprinted and purchased by generations of east African women. Others, such as the spots-and-stripes design, enjoyed success but have not resurfaced to join the ranks of lasting *kanga* designs. Design components, including geometric, floral, and desirable commodity motifs, together with bordered compositions, characterize early *kanga* textiles. Many of these general features, and some specific ones, such as the rose water sprinkler bottle and paisley shapes, will become standard inclusions on *kanga* textiles throughout the twentieth century.

Figures



Figure 4-1. *Kisutu*. Printed in India, acquired in Mombasa, Kenya, 2003. Af2003,21.11.
© Trustees of the British Museum.



Figure 4-2. Folded and hanging *kanga* in a shop near Uhuru Street, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, 9 November 2011, Photograph by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.



Figure 4-3. Folded *kanga* for sale on Uhuru Street, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. 9 November 2011. Photograph by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.

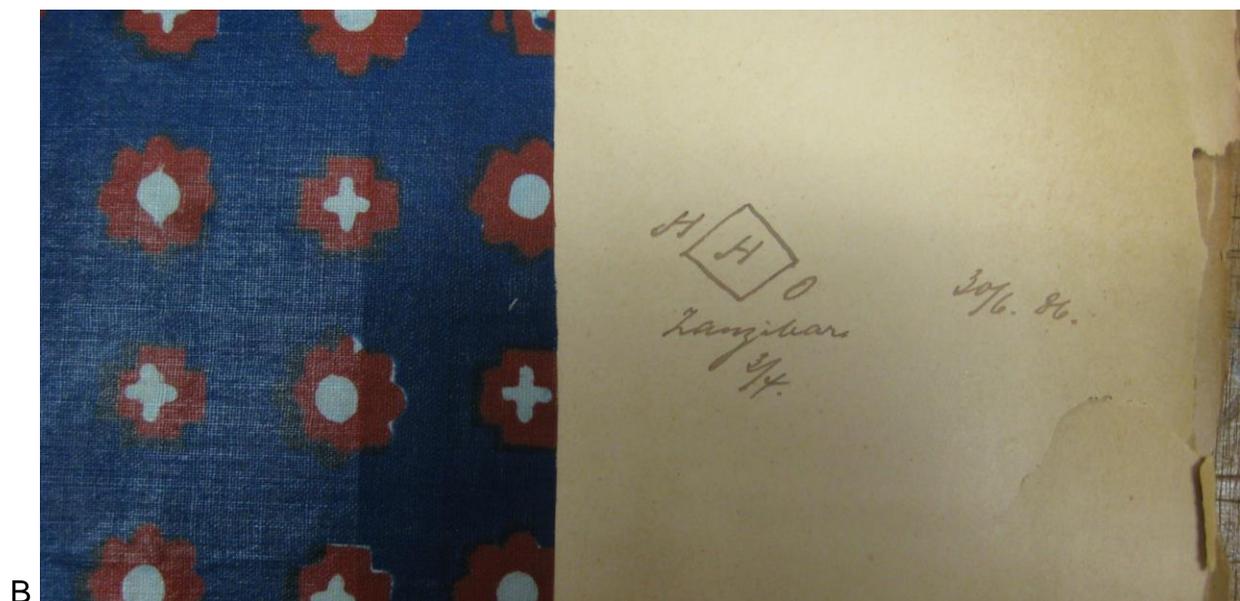


Figure 4-4. Earliest known example of *kisutu*, printed for Zanzibar, 30 June 1886. A) Entire sample. B) Detail of hand-written information to right of sample. Located in *Vlisco Slendangs 1886* sample book. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photographs by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.



Figure 4-5. *Kisutu* sample, ten orders between 4 March 1891 and 1 February 1892. Located in No. 290 *Slendangs alles Handdr. 1891-1892* sample book. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photograph by James Ryan.



Figure 4-6. *Kisutu* sample with dotted ground, three orders on 14 October 1891, 2 March 1892, and 26 October 1892. Located in No. 281 *Slendangs OA 1891-1892* sample book. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photograph by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.

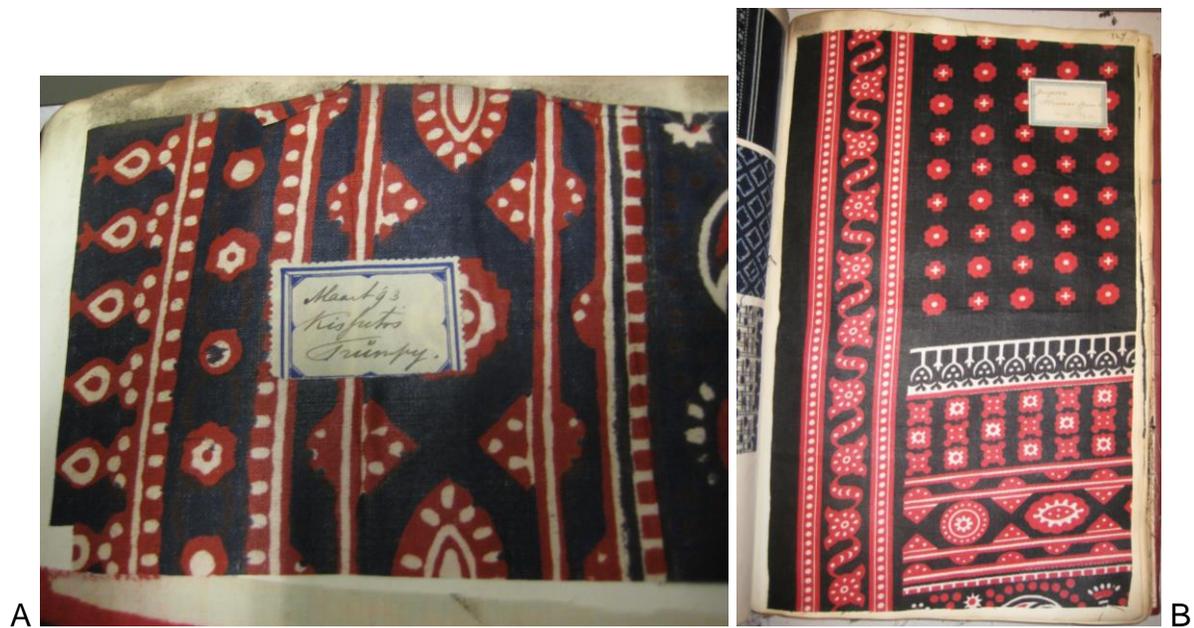


Figure 4-7. *Kisutu* samples. A) Red-white-and-blue colorway, March 1893. B) Red-white-and-black colorway, 1894. Both samples located in *LKM 274 Stalen voor Afrika Slendangs Etc. 1884-1900* sample book. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photographs by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.



Figure 4-8. *Kisutu* samples manufactured by rival printers on behalf of competitor merchant-converter firms. Left-hand sample printed by van Vlissingen and imported by Wm. O'Swald & Co. Right-hand sample printed by an English manufacturer and imported by Hansing & Co. Both date 19 April 1899 and are located in *LKM 374 Stalen voor Afrika Slendangs Etc. 1884-1900* sample book. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photograph by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.

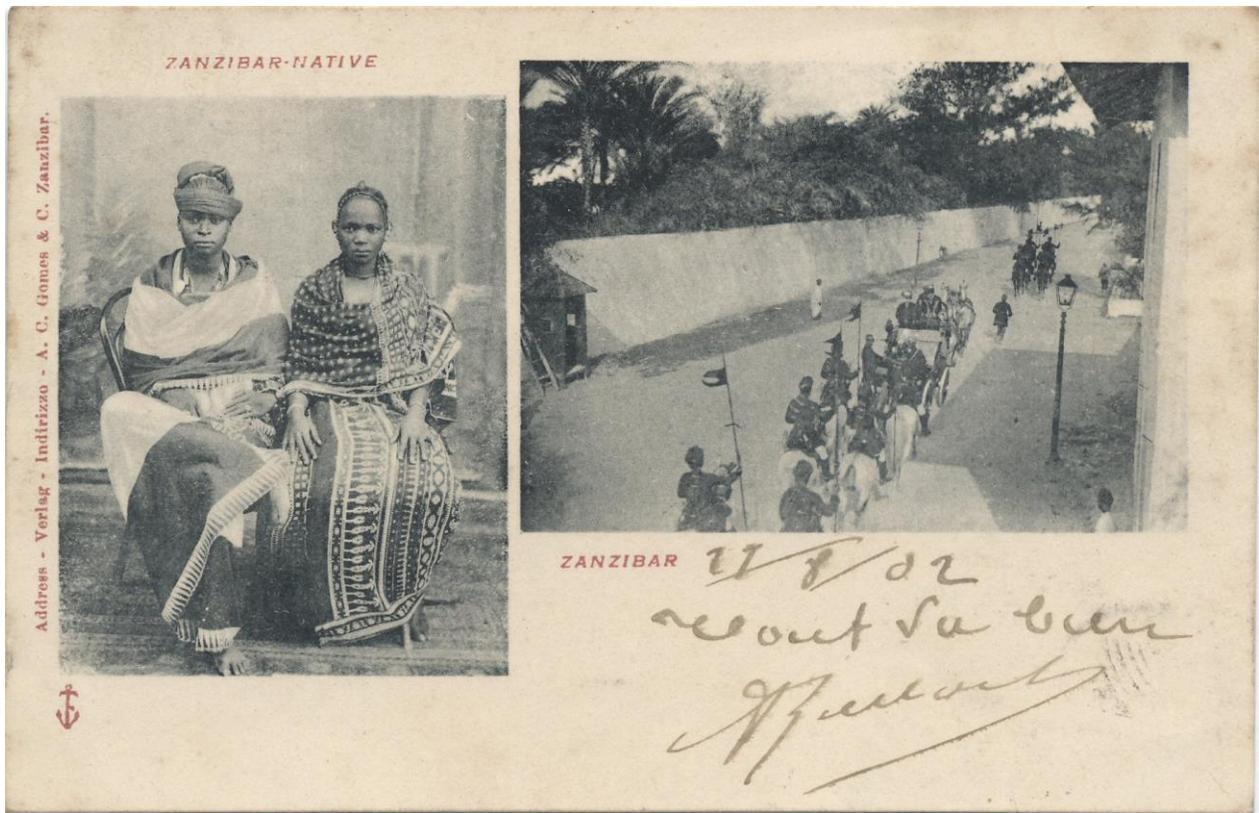


Figure 4-9. A. C. Gomes, postcard with two photographs, late nineteenth century, Zanzibar. Left photograph shows two women wearing printed cloth, the woman on the right wears *kisutu*. Right photograph shows the Sultan's coach in the streets of Zanzibar. Image courtesy of Torrence Royer.



Figure 4-10. Unknown photographer, "*Coiffures et habits malgaches*," three women wearing printed cloth, two wearing *kisutu*, ca. 1890. Courtesy of The Humphrey Winterton Collection of East Africa Photographs, Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies, Northwestern University.



Figure 4-11. Coutinho Brothers, "Swahili women hair-dressing," woman seated on barrel wears *kisutu* and woman seated below wears *kaniki*, late 1890s. Courtesy of The Humphrey Winterton Collection of East Africa Photographs, Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies, Northwestern University.



Figure 4-12. Countiho Brothers, woman wearing *kanga* around torso with *kisutu* thrown over shoulder, late 1890s. CO1069-176-3, British National Archives.

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The Main Road to Zanzibar.

ALONG THE EAST COAST OF AFRICA

By Richard Harding Davis

Figure 4-13. Unknown photographer, "The Main Road to Zanzibar," women wearing a variety of *kanga*, woman at right wears *kisutu*, before March 1901, reproduced in *Scribner's Magazine* 29 no. 3 (March 1901).

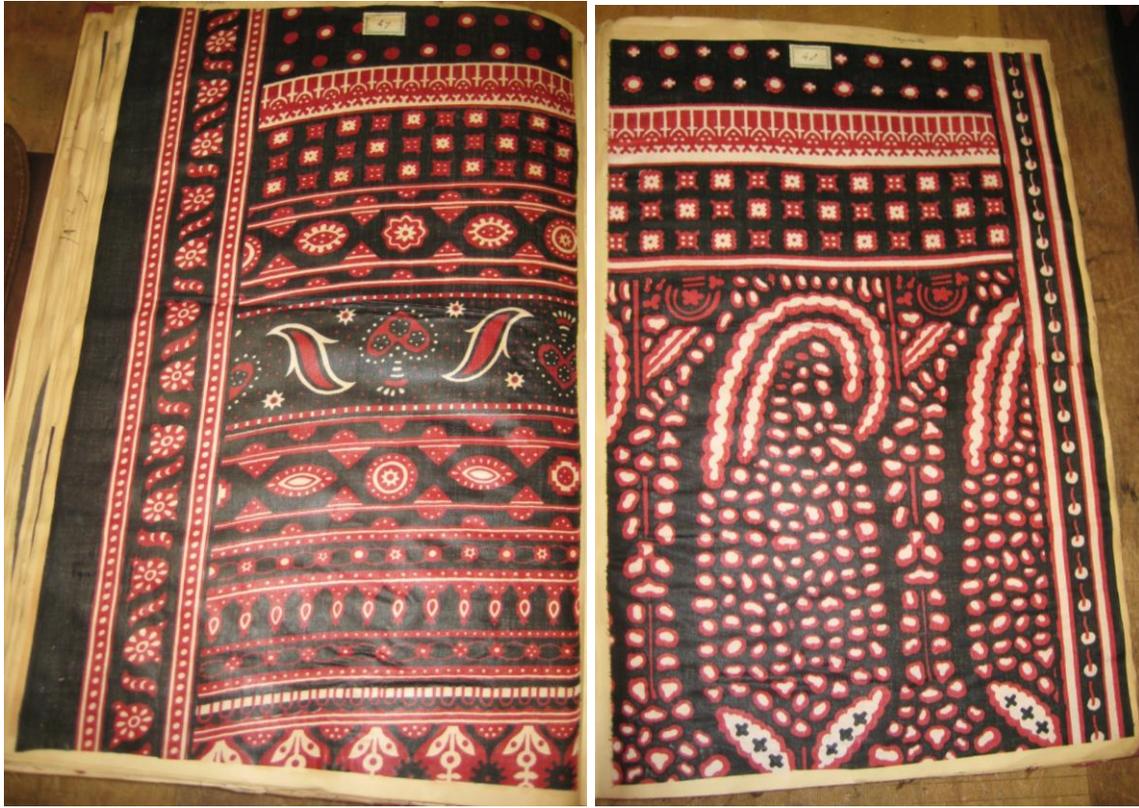


Figure 4-14. Variations on *kisutu* design, ca. 1901-1902. A) *Kisutu* with spotted ground. B) *Kisutu* with large, paisley panel. Both samples located in *LKM 1901-1902* sample book. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photographs by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.



A



B

Figure 4-15. Locally stamped *kisutu* designs on imported, industrially manufactured *merikani*, likely date to 1901. A) Full samples. B) Detail of top edge of right-hand page, showing hand-written notation, “Native Shawls.” Samples located in *LKM 260 1898-1915* sample book. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photographs by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.



Figure 4-16. Locally stamped *kisutu* designs on imported, industrially manufactured *merikani*, likely date to 1901. A) Full sample with black ground. B) Full sample with white ground. C) Detail of top edge of left-hand page, showing handwritten notation, "Native made." Samples located in *LKM 16 No. 230 Stalen OA Sarongs 1900-1932* sample book. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photographs by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.



A



B

Figure 4-17. Dutch-printed *kanga* samples with text, 1910. A) Earliest example with Roman-script Swahili text, 31 March 1910. Note use of lower-case lettering. B) Examples with Arabic-script Swahili text, 9 December 1910. Samples located in *Slendangs Sarongs Lijmdruk (No. 4531-4737)* sample book. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photograph by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.



A



B



C

Figure 4-18. Dutch-printed *kanga* samples with text, 1906-1916. Blue tint of samples suggests likely date of 1910s. A) Arabic-script Swahili on sample second from right, and cursive Roman-script Swahili on sample on far right. B) Roman-script Swahili printed in combination of capital and lower-case letters. C) Roman-script Swahili printed in block capitals. Samples located in 283 *Slendangs OA 1906-1916* sample book. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photographs by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.



Figure 4-19. J. B. Coutinho or Coutinho Brothers, woman wearing *kanga*, Zanzibar, ca. 1890. Photograph courtesy of Torrence Royer.



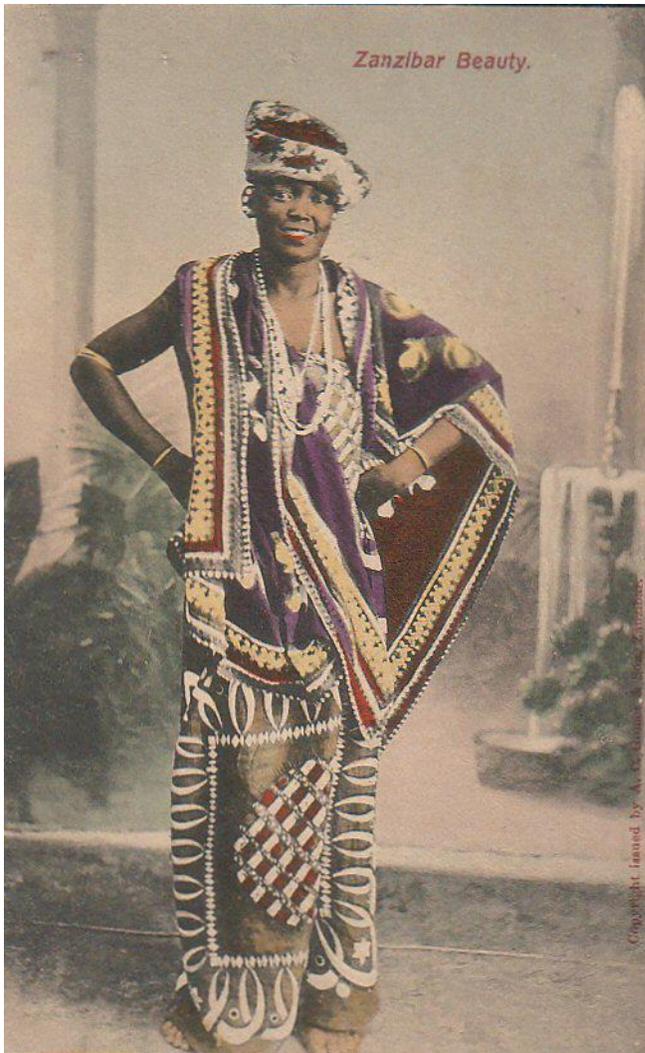
Figure 4-20. Guinea fowls. Photograph by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.



Figure 4-21. A. C. Gomes, woman seated, wearing *leso ya kushona* around waist and *kanga* draped over left shoulder, ca. 1890, Zanzibar. Photograph courtesy of Torrence Royer.



A



B

Figure 4-22. A. C. Gomes, woman standing wearing *lesa ya kushona* around waist and *kanga* draped across her shoulders, ca. 1890, Zanzibar. A) Original photograph, courtesy of The Humphrey Winterton Collection of East African Photographs, Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies, Northwestern University. B) Tinted postcard, courtesy of Torrence Royer.



Figure 4-23. Hand-drawn and colored designs for early *kanga*, including *kofia* with crescent and star motif, 20 November 1886. Located in *LKM 274 Stalen voor Afrika Slendangs, etc. 1884-1900* sample book. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photograph by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.



Figure 4-24. Hand-drawn and colored design for early *kanga*, including Arabic-script Swahili, *hanjari*, and crown-like bursts, 18 January 1887, for Zanzibar. Located in *LKM 274 Stalen voor Afrika Slendangs, etc. 1884-1900* sample book. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photograph by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.



Figure 4-25. Hand-drawn and colored designs for early *kanga*, including rose water sprinkler bottle, likely 1886. Located in *LKM 274 Stalen voor Afrika Slendangs, etc. 1884-1900* sample book. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photograph by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.



Figure 4-26. *Kanga* samples with umbrella, rose water sprinkler bottle, and geometric designs in pink-rose-and-white colorway, likely 1886-1887, for Zanzibar. Located in *LKM 274 Stalen voor Afrika Slendangs, etc. 1884-1900* sample book.

book. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photograph by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.



Figure 4-27. Corner of *kanga* with umbrella motif in center and rose water sprinkler bottle border, likely 1886-1887. Located in *Vlisco Slendangs 1886* sample book. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photograph by James Ryan.



A

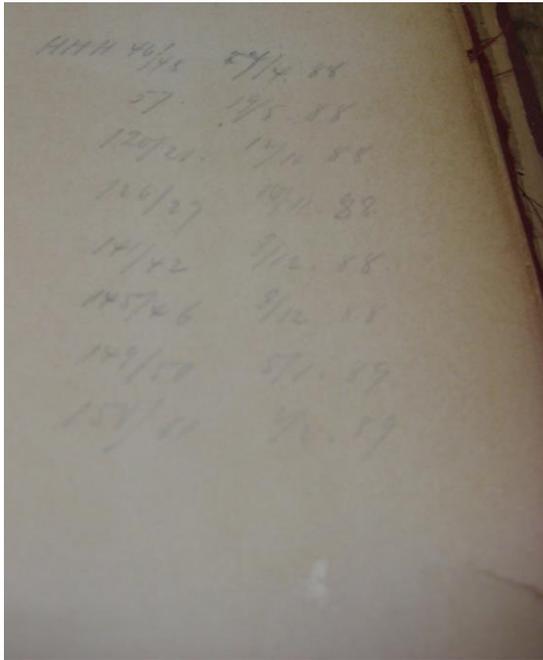


B

Figure 4-28. *Kanga* with *kisutu* design elements and Arabic-script Swahili text in pink-rose-and-white colorway. A) Composition melds continuous border with compound border. B) Author with *kanga*, to indicate scale of printed cloths. *Kanga* located in *Vlisco Slendangs 1886* sample book. Vlisco Museum, The Netherlands. Photograph by James Ryan.



A

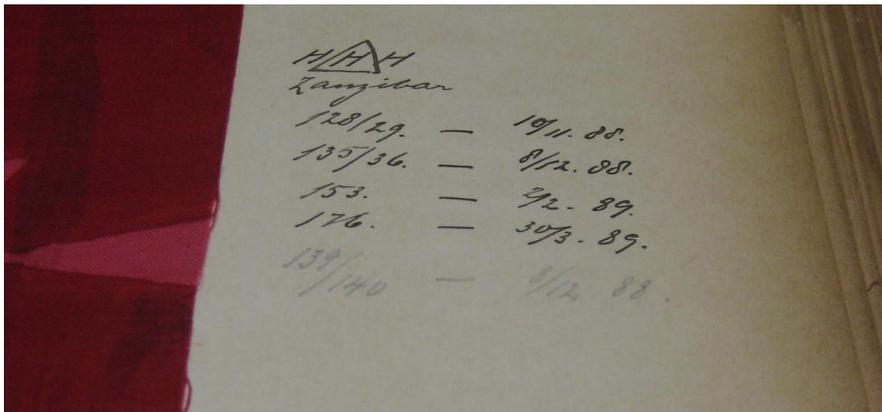


B

Figure 4-29. *Kanga* with flower inner-corner designs and striped double-border in pink-white-and-rose colorway, 1888-1889. A) Entire sample showing corner of *kanga*. B) Detail of hand-written notations to right of cloth sample, indicating eight orders. Located in *Vlisco Slendangs 1886* sample book. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photograph by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.



A



B

Figure 4-30. *Kanga* with geometric design and compound border in pink-white-and-rose colorway, 1888-1889, for Zanzibar market. A) Entire sample showing corner of *kanga*. B) Detail of hand-written notations to right of cloth sample, indicating five orders. Located in *Vlisco Slendangs 1886* sample book. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photograph by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.



Figure 4-31. *Kanga* with geometric design and integrated border in red-black-and-white colorway, 1891. Corner of *kanga* with hand-written notations to right of cloth sample, indicating seven orders. Located in *No. 290 Slendangs alles Handdr. 1891-1892* sample book. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photograph by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.



A



B

Figure 4-32. *Kanga* with geometric design and continuous border, 1891-1892, Zanzibar.

A) Portion of *kanga* in red-white-and-black colorway with hand-written notations to right of cloth sample, indicating twenty-three orders. B) Corner portions of *kanga* in pink-white-and-rose and pink-yellow-and-rose colorways, with hand-written notations beneath cloth samples indicating fourteen orders. Located in *No. 290 Slendangs alles Handdr. 1891-1892* sample book. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photographs by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.



Figure 4-33. *Kanga* with geometric design and doubled continuous border in pink-yellow-and-rose colorway, with hand-written notations to right of cloth sample, indicating fourteen orders between 1891 and 1892. Located in *No. 290 Slendangs alles Handdr. 1891-1892* sample book. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photographs by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.



Figure 4-34. *Kanga* with spotted central ground, geometric designs, and combination of compound and continuous border in pink-yellow-and-rose colorway, with hand-written notations to right of cloth sample, indicating eleven orders between 1891 and 1892. Located in *No. 290 Slendangs alles Handdr. 1891-1892* sample book. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photographs by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.



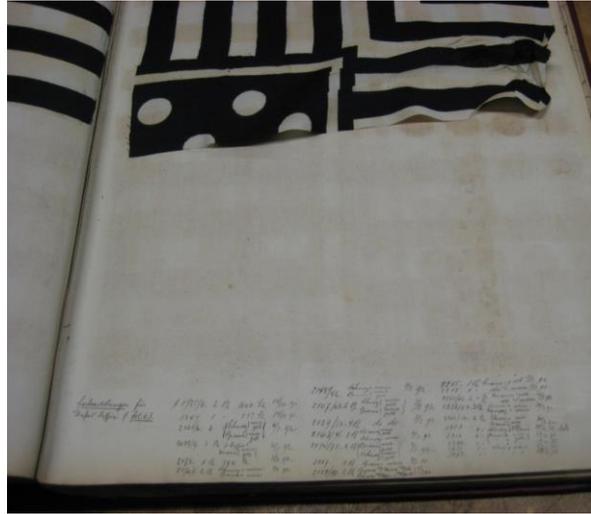
Figure 4-35. *Kanga* with spotted central ground and striped, continuous border, in white-and-brown and white-red-and-black colorways, with hand-written notations below cloth samples, indicating twelve orders of the former and ten orders of the latter between 1891 and 1892. Located in *No. 281 Slendangs OA 1891-1892* sample book. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photographs by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.



Figure 4-36. Coutinho Brothers, "Native woman standing in striped costume," woman wears *kanzu*-like tunic sewn from spots-and-stripes *kanga*, paired with striped trousers and shoes, ca. 1890, Zanzibar. Courtesy of The Humphrey Winterton Collection of East Africa Photographs, Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies, Northwestern University.



A



B



C

Figure 4-37. *Kanga* with spotted central ground and striped, continuous border, 1891-1892. A) Black-and-white colorway with white ground, eleven orders. B) Black-and-white colorway with black ground, twenty-three orders. C) Pink-yellow-and-rose colorway, eleven orders. All three cloth samples located in *No. 281 Slendangs OA 1891-1892* sample book. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photographs by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.



Figure 4-38. Coutinho Brothers, "Two native women standing," ca. 1890, Zanzibar. Woman on left wears *kanzu*-like tunic sewn from spots-and-stripes *kanga*, paired with striped and patterned trousers, while woman on right wears intricately patterned wrapped *kanga*. Courtesy of The Humphrey Winterton Collection of East Africa Photographs, Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies, Northwestern University.

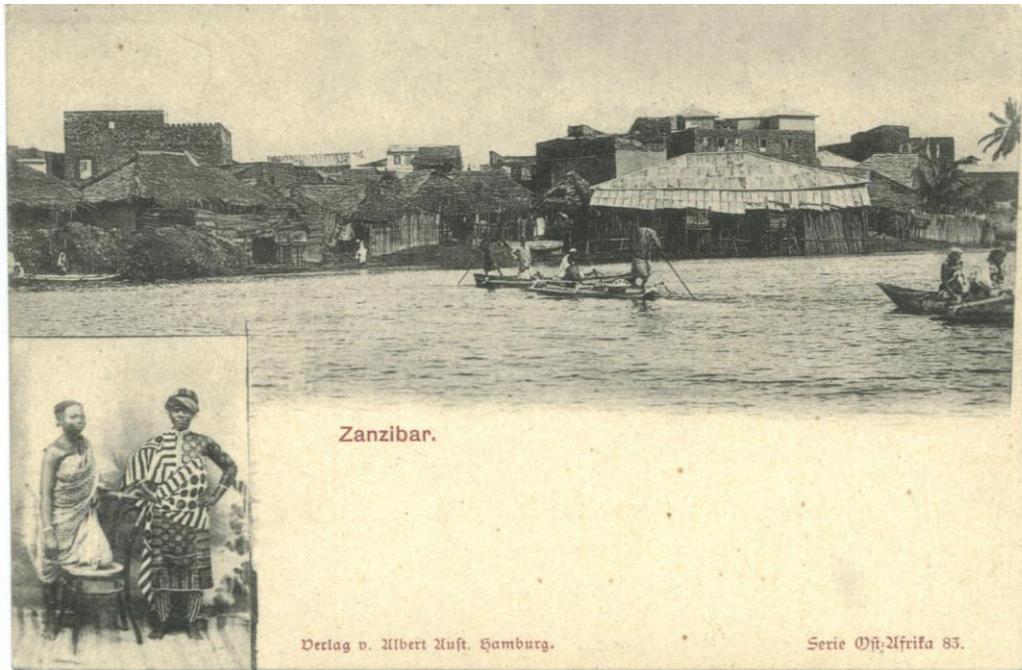


Figure 4-39. Coutinho Brothers, postcard, ca. 1890, Zanzibar. Inset photograph shows woman on left wrapped in *kanga* and woman on right dressed in *kanzu*-like tunic sewn from spots-and-stripes *kanga*, paired with striped trousers and draped in a contrasting spots-and-stripes *kanga* over her right shoulder. Postcard printed in Germany, ca. 1895-1900. Courtesy of Terrence Royer.



Figure 4-40. *Kanga* with spotted and s-curves in central ground and striped, continuous border, ten orders between 1891-1892. Located in No. 281 *Slendangs* OA 1891-1892 sample book. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photographs by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.



Figure 4-41. A. C. Gomes & Co., "Two Swahili women posing," ca. 1890, Zanzibar. Woman on left wears matching pair of *kanga* and woman on right wears spots/s-curves-and-stripes *kanga* around her torso. Courtesy of The Humphrey Winterton Collection of East Africa Photographs, Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies, Northwestern University.



Figure 4-42. Likely Coutinho Brothers, five girls wrapped in *kanga*, 1893, Zanzibar. Woman on far right wears the spots/s-curves-and-stripes *kanga* around her torso. Courtesy of The Humphrey Winterton Collection of East Africa Photographs, Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies, Northwestern University.

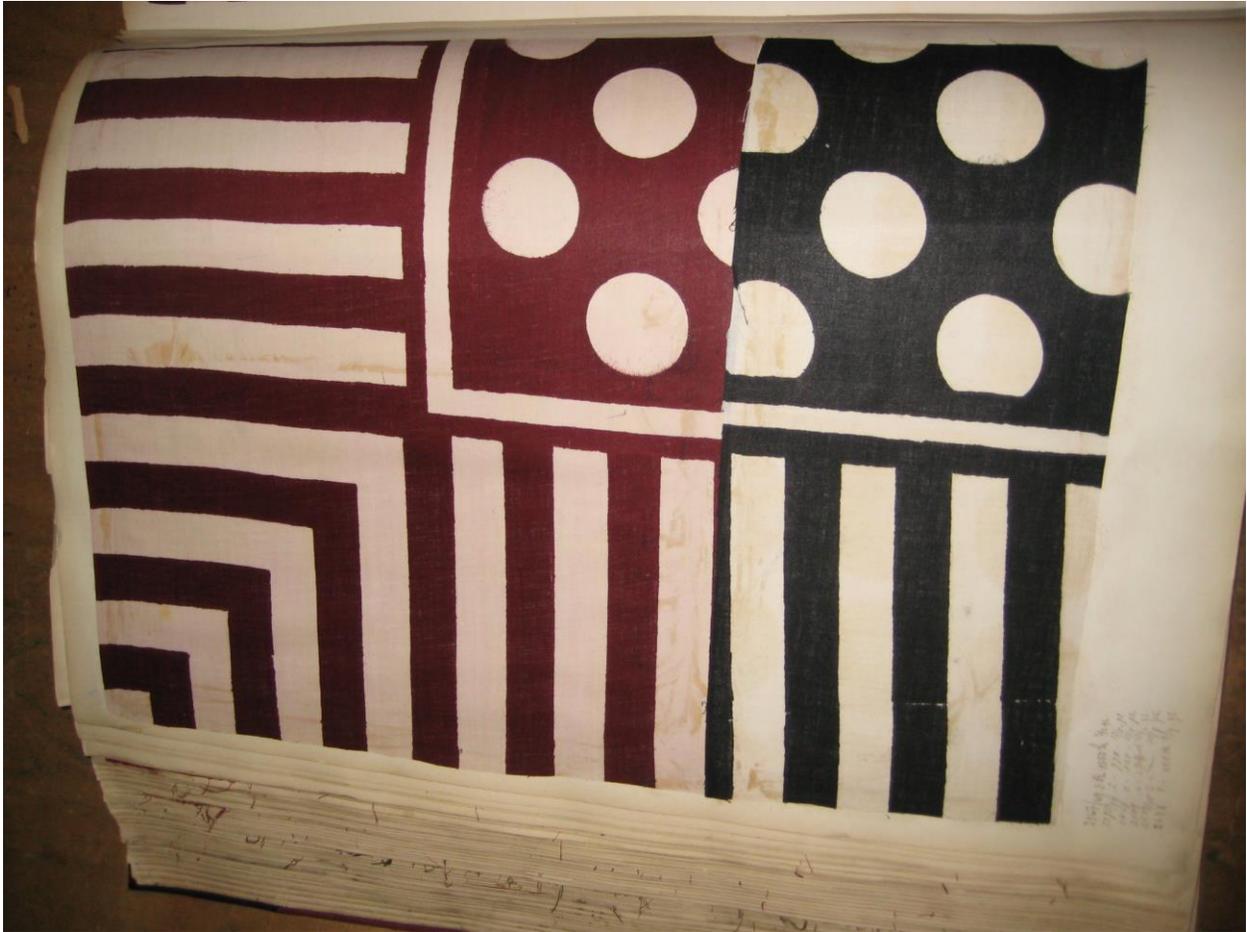


Figure 4-43. *Kanga* with large spotted central ground and striped, continuous border, in burgundy-and-white and black-on-white colorways, six orders in 1892. Located in *No. 281 Slendangs OA 1891-1892* sample book. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photographs by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.



Figure 4-44. Coutinho Brothers, "Swahili woman carrying vessel on her head," late 1890s, Zanzibar. Courtesy of The Humphrey Winterton Collection of East Africa Photographs, Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies, Northwestern University.

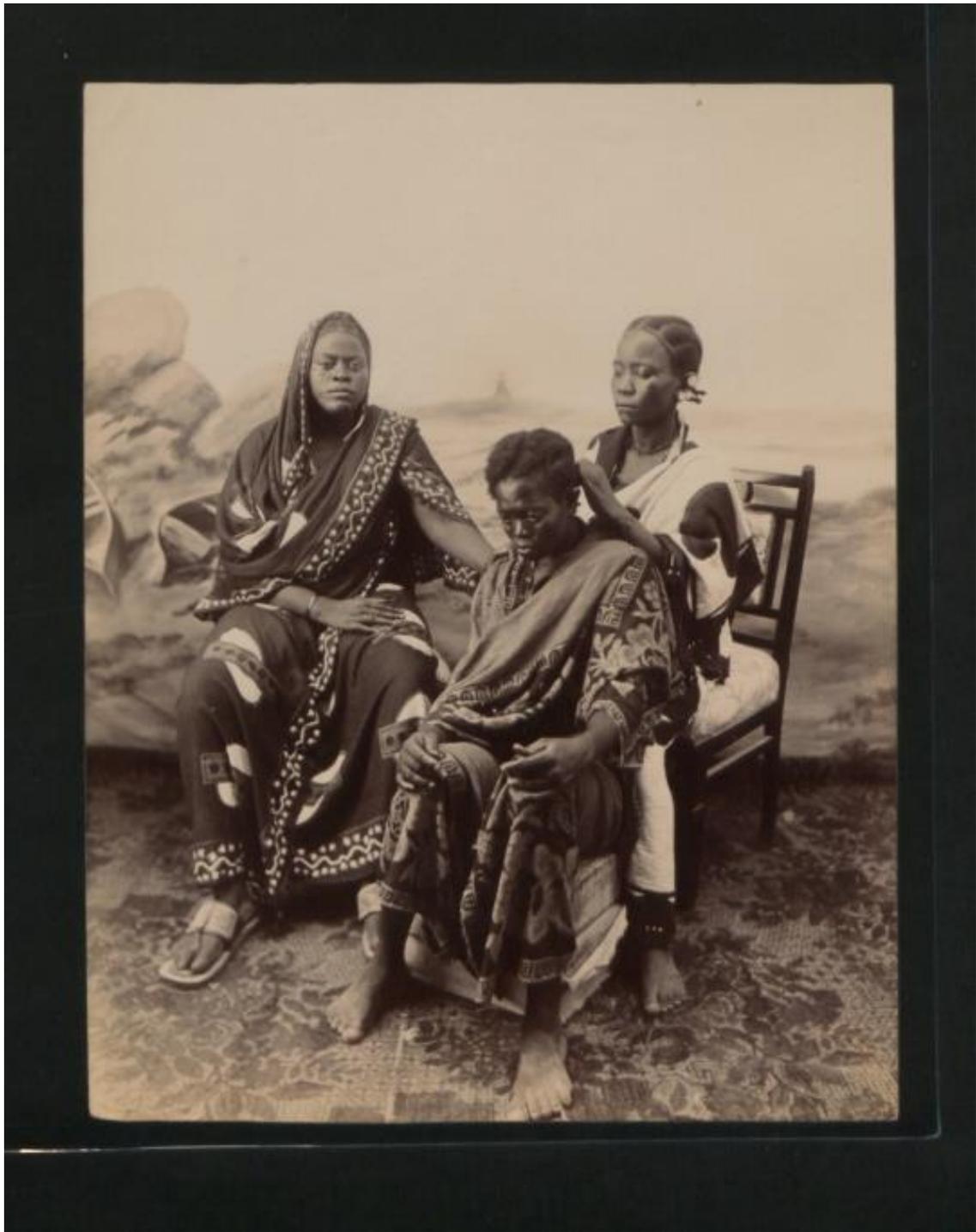


Figure 4-45. Coutinho Brothers, "Three seated women," 1890s, Zanzibar. CO1069-176-9, British National Archives.



Figure 4-46. A. C. Gomes & Co., seated woman wearing pair of *kanga*, 1890s, Zanzibar. Courtesy of The Humphrey Winterton Collection of East Africa Photographs, Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies, Northwestern University.



Figure 4-47. Coutinho Brothers, "Three Swahili women posing as they prepare to grind maize meal," late 1890s, Zanzibar. The two flanking women wear *kanga*. Courtesy of The Humphrey Winterton Collection of East Africa Photographs, Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies, Northwestern University.



Figure 4-48. Coutinho Brothers, "Swahili woman in profile," late 1890s, Zanzibar.
Courtesy of The Humphrey Winterton Collection of East Africa Photographs,
Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies, Northwestern University.



Figure 4-49. Unknown photographer, "Swahili woman," 1905, Zanzibar. Courtesy of The Humphrey Winterton Collection of East Africa Photographs, Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies, Northwestern University.

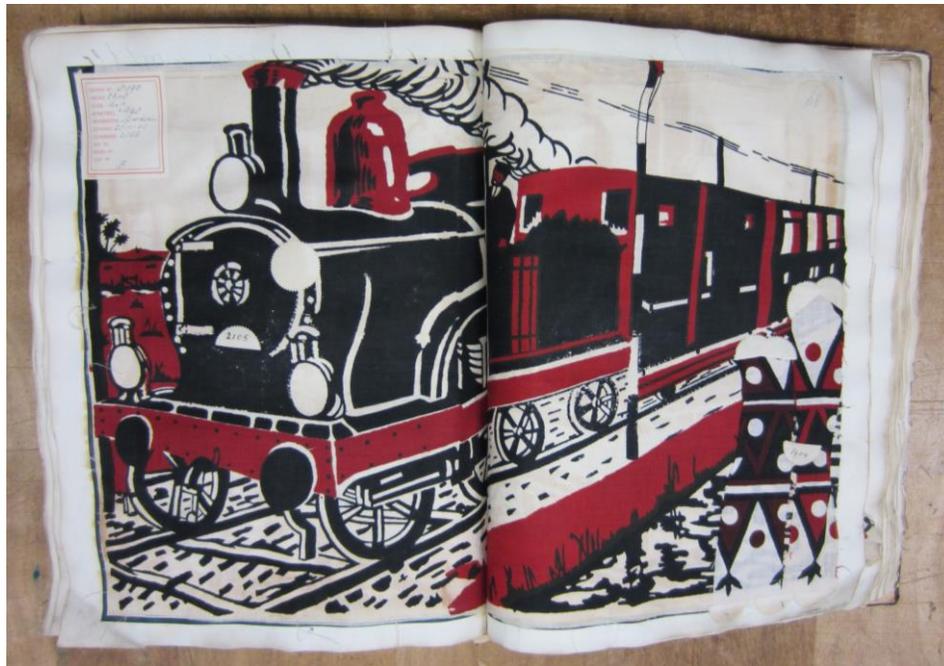


Figure 4-50. *Kanga* sample with steam engine, in red-black-and-white colorway, 25 November 1905. Located in No. 312 *Slendangs 1905-1906* sample book. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photograph by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.

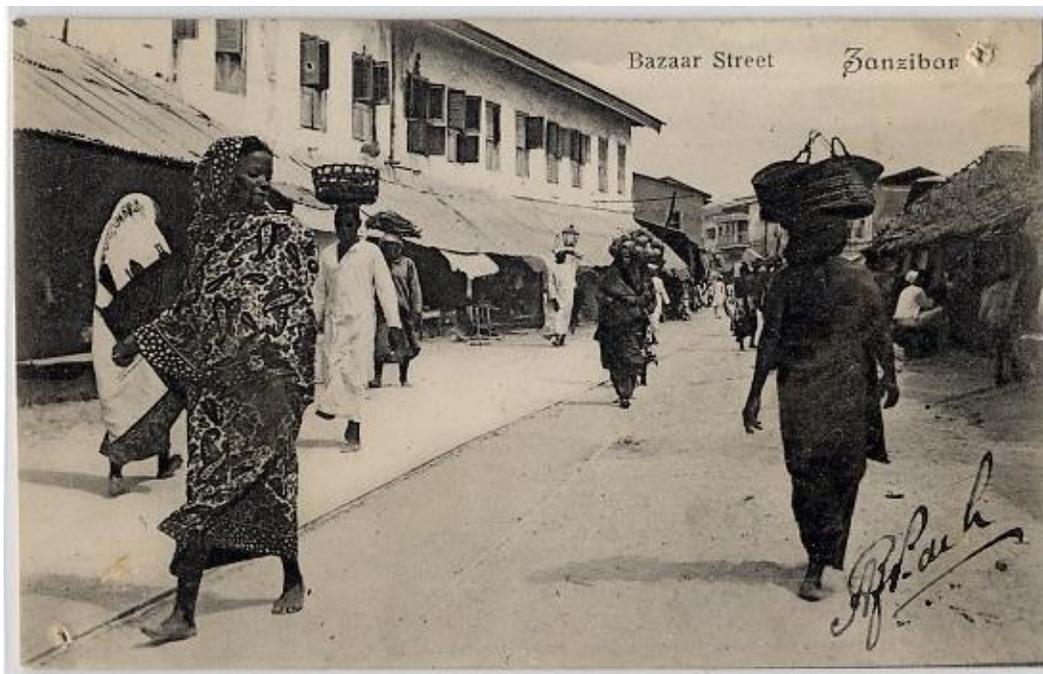


Figure 4-51. A. R. P. de Lord, "Bazaar Street," 1900-1910, Zanzibar. Note the woman at the far left in midground wears a *kanga* with a steam engine. Courtesy Terrence Royer.



Figure 4-52. *Kanga* samples with Arabic-script Swahili text, in red-black-and-white and burgundy-black-and-white colorways, five orders for Zanzibar and Dar es Salaam between 1906 and 1907. Located in *No. 306 Slendangs OA 1906* sample book. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photograph by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.



Figure 4-53. *Kanga* samples with paisley shapes and tangerine flowers in three colorways, eight orders for Zanzibar, Mombasa, and Dar es Salaam in 1906. Located in *No. 306 Slendangs OA 1906* sample book. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photograph by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.



Figure 4-54. *Kanga* samples at lower left have square-patterned border and diagonally striped interior, printed in two colorways, six orders of burgundy destined for Zanzibar, Mombasa, Dar es Salaam, and Tanga in 1906 and 1907. Located in *No. 306 Slendangs OA 1906* sample book. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photograph by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.



Figure 4-55. *Kanga* samples with an early automobile, printed in two colorways, six orders destined for Dar es Salaam, Zanzibar, and Mombasa in 1907. Located in *No. 306 Slendangs OA 1906* sample book. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photograph by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.



Figure 4-56. *Kanga* samples with diagonally stripe ground and rose water sprinkler bottle border, printed in two colorways, seven orders destined for Zanzibar, Bagamoyo, Dar es Salaam, and Tanga in 1906. Located in No. 306 *Slendangs OA 1906* sample book. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photograph by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.



YAO WOMEN AT MTUA

Figure 4-57. Unknown photographer, “Yao women at Mtua,” photograph reproduced in Karle Weule, *Native Life in East Africa: The Results of an Ethnological Research Expedition*. Translated by Alice Werner. (1909; reprint, Chicago: Afro-Am Press, 1969), 33. Photograph taken in 1906.



Figure 4-58. *Kanga* samples with German-style war helmet and Arabic-script Swahili border, printed in two variations, two orders destined for Zanzibar and Dar es Salaam in 1906 and 1907. Located in *No. 306 Slendangs OA 1906* sample book. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photograph by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.



Figure 4-59. *Kanga* samples with crescent and star central motif and paisley *bandhani* border and rooster, March and April 1907. Located in *No. 309 Stalen v. Slendangs Sarongs 1907-1911* sample book. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photograph by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.



Figure 4-60. *Kanga* samples with ship, flag, cannon, and Arabic-like script motif, September 1907. Located in *No. 309 Stalen v. Slendangs Sarongs 1907-1911* sample book. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photograph by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.



Figure 4-61. *Kanga* sample with *tumpal* design, 27 September 1907. Located in *LKM 260 Stalen Slendangs O Afrika HKN vL 1898-1915* sample book. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photograph by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.

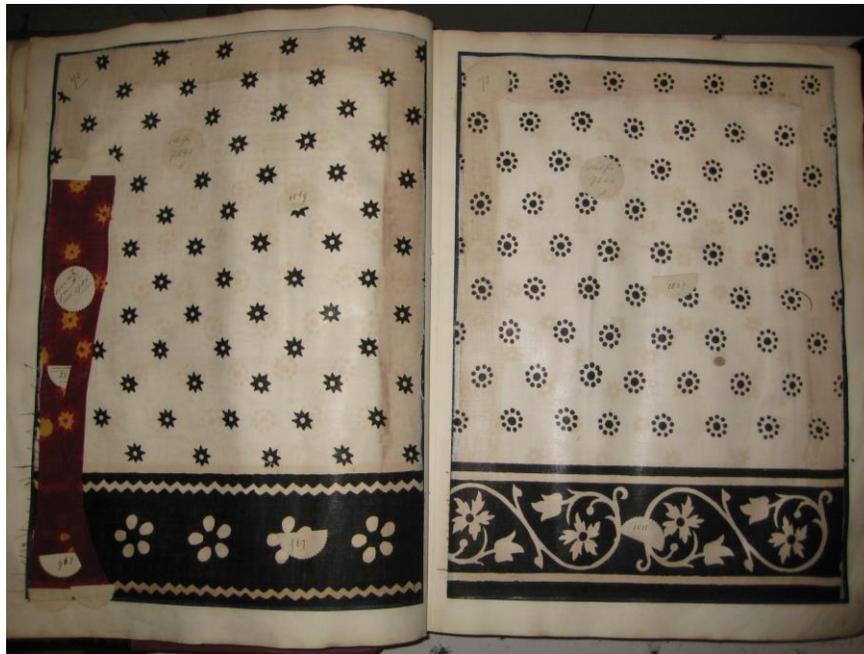


Figure 4-62. *Kanga* samples with eight-pointed star and floral designs, May 1908. Located in *LKM 310 Slendangs OA 1908-1912* sample book. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photograph by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.



Figure 4-63. *Kanga* samples with geometric designs, 10 June 1909. Located in *LKM 309 Stalen v. Slendangs Sarongs 1907-1911* sample book. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photograph by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.



Figure 4-64. *Kanga* samples with budding artichoke designs, 22 July 1909. Located in *LKM 309 Stalen v. Slendangs Sarongs 1907-1911* sample book. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photograph by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.



Figure 4-65. *Kanga* samples with spots, paisley, and abstracted blossoms, 15 September 1910. Located in *LKM 309 Stalen v. Slendangs Sarongs 1907-1911* sample book. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photograph by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.



Figure 4-66. *Kanga* sample with new blue tint, 27 February 1914, Zanzibar. Located in *LKM 260 Stalen Slendangs O Afrika HKN vVL 1898-1915* sample book. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photograph by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.



Figure 4-67. *Kanga* samples with new blue tint, one with cross-and-x shape, 27 June 1914. Located in *HKM No. 253 Sarongs Slendangs en Rangoon 1914-1916* sample book. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photograph by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.

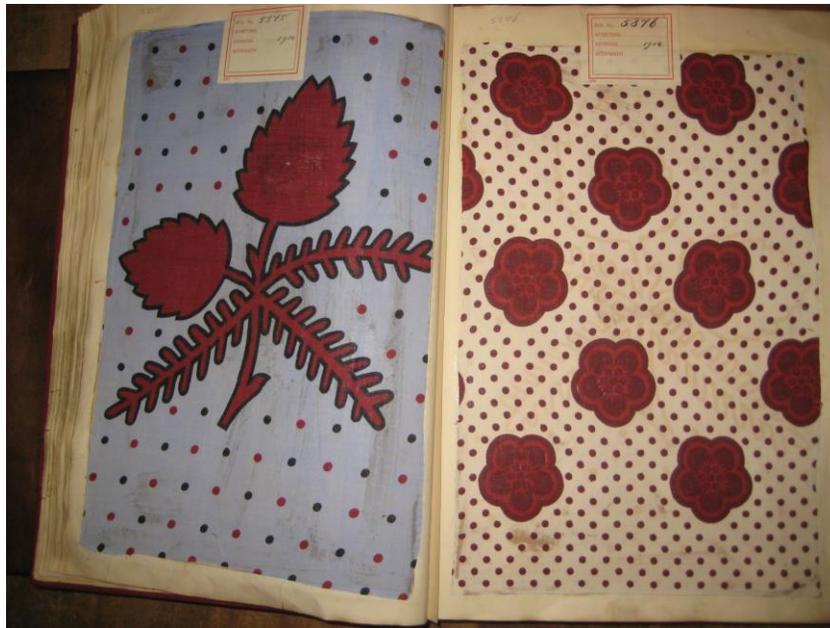


Figure 4-68. *Kanga* samples with new blue tint, budding artichoke and flower shapes, 1914. Located in *HKM No. 253 Sarongs Slendangs en Rangoon 1914-1916* sample book. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photograph by Mackenzie Moon Ryan.



Figure 4-69. *Kanga* samples with new blue tint, right with Arabic-script Swahili text, 21 May 1915. Located in *HKM No. 253 Sarongs Slendangs en Rangoon 1914-1916* sample book. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photograph by Mackenzie Moon Ryan.



Figure 4-70. *Kanga* sample with airplanes, 15 October 1915. Located in 212 *Slendangs en Sarongs 1913-1917* sample book. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photograph by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.



Figure 4-71. *Kanga* samples with new blue tint, horn instrument and Arabic-script Swahili text, 15 October 1914. Located in 212 *Slendangs en Sarongs 1913-1917* sample book. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photograph by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.

CHAPTER 5

THE *KANGA* TRADE: GLOBAL NETWORKS OF MANUFACTURERS, DISTRIBUTORS, SELLERS, AND CONSUMERS

A thorough history of *kanga* textiles would be incomplete without analysis of the players involved in not only the production, but also the distribution, sale, and consumption of *kanga*. In this chapter, I will describe the network of players involved in the *kanga* trade, who were primarily active during the colonial period (ca. 1885-1964) in Zanzibar and Dar es Salaam. First, a few of the major European textile printers and distributors of *kanga* will be discussed. Next, I will introduce two major mid-twentieth-century designers and wholesalers of *kanga* who have not featured in written histories to date. These networks were effectively ended by the advent of local production of *kanga* in Dar es Salaam, beginning in late 1967. Local production, together with protectionist policies of a newly independent nation state, completely changed the dynamics of the *kanga* trade. My purpose here is to demonstrate the convergence of players involved in *kanga* manufacture and trade during the colonial era in Zanzibar and Dar es Salaam, whereas the next chapter will chronicle the chronology of participants within the manufacturing history of *kanga* textiles.

The commercial organization of *kanga* production, distribution, sale, and consumption during the colonial period in Tanganyika can best be described in relation to the shape of the infinity sign (∞). A diagram demonstrates the interaction of players involved, who handle commodities specific to the *kanga* trade; the location of each type of participant is also noted (Fig. 5-1). Through this diagram, the motion of *kanga* textiles, raw materials such as cotton, and new designs can be traced.

Beginning on the left-hand side, European cloth manufacturers process cotton, spin thread, weave cloth, and finish textiles to order, such as with printed designs. Next

halfway between the left-hand side and the central convergence point, European shippers transport finished textiles from the metropole to the colony. In the center, where all four lines converge, European-based trading houses with branch offices in colonial cities handle new *kanga* textiles. Often referred to as merchant-converter firms or merchant converters, these middlemen united European production and African consumption. Halfway between the central convergence point and the right-hand side, Indian merchants function as sellers of imported *kanga* textiles. These Indian merchants were based in colonial cities and throughout the colonies of Tanganyika and Zanzibar.¹ On the upper branch of the right-hand side of the symbol, these Indian merchants designed new *kanga* cloth. On the lower branch, these Indian merchants sold *kanga* cloth. Within the colony, they served as middlemen, connecting European merchant converters with African consumers. On the far right-hand side, Africans are the final consumers of *kanga* cloth and also the producers of cotton and other natural resources—the raw material necessary for the cycle to begin all over again.

In the German colonial period, cultivation of cotton was introduced to German East Africa by colonial officials.² This cotton was then exported through the hands of Indian merchants to European merchant converters, operating at branch offices in colonial cities. Meanwhile, Indian merchants were busy assessing African consumer preference and creating new *kanga* designs. Orders for new *kanga*, based on designs by Indian

¹ Much of this discussion also holds true for Mombasa in British East Africa; it is less persuasive in Nairobi. See Karim Kassam Janmohamed, "A History of Mombasa, c. 1895-1939: Some Aspects of Economic and Social Life in an East African Port Town during Colonial Rule" (PhD diss., Northwestern University, 1978), 115-117, for further elaboration of the economic system centered upon colonial Mombasa.

² William H. Rodemann, "Tanganyika, 1890-1914: Selected Aspects of German Administration" (PhD diss, University of Chicago, 1961), 141-147, 200.

merchants, were placed with the same European merchant converters. At this stage then, both raw cotton (cultivated by African laborers) and new *kanga* designs (created by Indian designers) were in the hands of European merchant converters.

Representative at branch offices, in colonial cities such as Dar es Salaam, sent both the cotton and designs to their home offices in metropolitan cities by way of European shipping lines. Moving to the bottom far left of the infinity symbol, the raw cotton and *kanga* designs made their way to Europe; raw cotton was purchased mainly by factories near Manchester, England, in the county of Lancashire. The cotton was sold to cotton processing factories, which spun the cotton into thread. This thread was subsequently purchased by weaving factories, which wove the thread into cloth. The merchant converters purchased unfinished cloth to supply to textile printers. Simultaneously, merchant converters commissioned specialty textile finishers to print the new *kanga* designs, supplied by Indian merchants.³

³ The interconnected nature of the economic network involved in the *kanga* trade is key to its operation. A mid twentieth-century report on the calico printing industry in England stressed its reliance on a number of outside factors:

(a) Calico printing as a trade is very largely dependent on fashion demands. ...

(b) A large proportion (about 65 per cent.) of the industry's production is on cloth for export. Export markets may be closed or contracted by tariffs or other political measures, or by a fall in local purchasing power through crop failures. ...

(c) The bulk of printing is done on a commission basis, and the printers accordingly depend on merchants for supplies of grey cloth. They cannot command these supplies, and the question of printing for stock in bad times does not therefore arise. ...

(d) Printing is as near an art as any industry can be, and there is not and cannot be standardisation. The problem of labour and staffing is exceptionally difficult, and it is essential to keep trained staff together.

First, [calico printing] is a processing industry, for the supply of the material on which it works and for the disposal of its finished products. Secondly, it is dependent on export markets for the sale of the greater part of the cloth it processes. Thirdly, the size of its trade has been contracting for many years. ... Calico printing has had its full share of difficulties the cotton industry has had to face owing to the decline in its export trade since the early years of the present century... It is the merchant, not the printer, who has to sell cloth in overseas markets in competition with foreign producers. If the merchants are to compete successfully, they must be free to offer that combination of quality and price which, in their judgment, the market demands. They depend for their cloth on other sections of the textile trades—spinners, weavers, dyers and printers—and small differences in price at each of these stages may have a significant effect on the price of the finished cloth and determine whether an order is taken or lost. "Report on the Process

After European textile printers completed the surface design, new *kanga* textiles were ready for shipment to the colonies. European shippers transported bales of new *kanga* to the branch offices of merchant converters in colonial cities, such as Dar es Salaam, Zanzibar, and Mombasa; each order was then dispatched to Indian wholesalers. Indian wholesalers then sold bales⁴ to Indian retailers, who sold pairs to petty traders, who dealt in small numbers of cloth and other consumer goods. Individual pairs of *kanga* might pass through any number of hands on the way to their final consumer. This consumer was most often a member of the working class in east Africa; men bought *kanga* for their wives, and women also purchased *kanga* for themselves and to serve as gifts. East African women wore *kanga* as items of dress and for other utilitarian and cultural purposes and continue to do so today.

The production, distribution, and commercial organization just outlined were not unique to *kanga* textiles. Indeed, this network of trade was common to many other imported commodities available for sale in east African colonies, from lesser-quality cotton piece goods (also comprised of cotton) to soap (created using copra or coconut oil).⁵ The production of these commodities by and large took place in metropolitan countries using raw material and natural resources cultivated in colonies. In the case of *kanga*, cotton was grown in colonies and then shipped to the metropole for production

of Calico Printing,” The Monopolies and Restrictive Practices Commission (London: Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1954), 65, 70.

⁴ 200 pieces of cloth equals 1 bale. Interview with *kanga* wholesaler on Uhuru Street, 4 October 2011.

⁵ Much of colonial German East Africa/Tanganyika and Zanzibar’s natural resources were produced with the global economy in mind. For example, ivory, hides, copal, sisal, clove, sesame, coffee, tobacco, rubber, cashew nuts, among others were exported for processing and consumption of populations throughout the globe. Some agricultural production was intended for domestic consumption, but these made up less of the overall production of both colonies. See the British colonial “Blue Books” and editions of the *Year Book & Guide to East Africa* (also known as “Red Books”).

into value-added goods, such as finished cotton cloth. Firms dedicated to processing cotton, spinning thread, weaving cloth, and applying decorative finishes worked in tandem in places like Glasgow, Scotland; Manchester, England; and Haarlem, Leiden, and Helmond in the Netherlands.

Very often, the textile was identified with the merchant converter, despite the chain of production just outlined. Many people of an older generation in Dar es Salaam remembered “Makensis” textiles—those cotton piece goods imported by the British merchant converter, Smith, Mackenzie & Co.⁶ Few remembered the Dutch textile printer, P. F. van Vlissingen & Co. (Vlisco), who printed *kanga* for nearly a century. Still fewer remembered Vlisco’s main British competitor, “Cepea”—the Calico Printers’ Association.⁷ Many remembered good quality *kanga* were “Dutch or from Manchester,”⁸ which I take to refer to the products of Vlisco or the Calico Printers’ Association. No one was concerned with where the raw cotton was sourced from, where the cotton was spun into thread, or where the thread was woven into fabric. Their major concern was with the fastness of the dye, and less often, the thickness of the textile.⁹

Textile Printers

Specialty textile printers were in large part responsible for the production of *kanga* textiles. Two of the major European textile printers will be discussed to serve as

⁶ Information summarized from informal interviews with a clerk at the National Library of Tanzania on 8 October 2011 and with Edna Mahimbo on 18 October 2011 in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, Hashim A. Nakanoga, interview by author, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, 28 October 2011.

⁷ Ukera K. Peera, interview by author, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, 14 December 2011.

⁸ Various interviews with women in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, fall 2011.

⁹ These concerns were repeatedly mentioned in dozens of interviews with women in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, fall 2011. For a particularly insightful contribution, see Edna Mahimbo, Dar es Salaam, interview by author, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, 8 October 2011.

examples.¹⁰ European production of *kanga* textiles also involved spinners, weavers, bleachers, finishers, and other textile manufacturing specialists. A mid-twentieth century report on calico printing in the United Kingdom concisely describes the chain of production:

The rapid expansion of the Lancashire cotton industry up to the first decade of the 20th century was associated with an increasing degree of specialisation among the concerns employed, and consequently led to a structure on predominantly horizontal lines. Thus the industry became organised in four main sections—the spinners, weavers, merchant-converters and finishers. The spinner bought raw cotton and turned it into yarn, either against firm orders or, within limits, for putting into stock against future sales. The weaver bought yarn and made it into cloth, which he sold in the grey (unfinished) state to the merchant-converter, frequently working to the latter's orders. The merchant-converter had the grey cloth finished to his own requirements by bleaching, dyeing or printing, handing it over for this purpose to a finisher engaged in one or other of these processes. The finisher was thus commissioned to carry out work on the converter's cloth, supplying and being paid for a service which was consequently described as finishing "on commission".¹¹

Even within factories specializing in textile printing, necessary components might still be outsourced. For example, some textile printers outsourced the carving of woodblocks or the incising of copper rollers, and many of the products used (blank copper rollers, synthetic dyes, etc.) were themselves acquired independently. Still, one usually at least is able to identify the textile printer or parent association, even if the textile weaver, thread spinner, and cotton cultivator are unknown.

Two of the largest and longest-producing European textile printers will next be examined, as they were responsible for much of the European-produced *kanga* from the end of the nineteenth century through the 1960s. First, a short history of the Dutch

¹⁰ New research by Seiko Sugimoto and Hideaki Suzuki, Japanese textile scholars, will illuminate the role of Japanese manufacturers and printers in the *kanga* trade.

¹¹ "Report on the Process of Calico Printing," 7.

textile printer P. F. van Vlissingen & Co., today known as Vlisco, will be recounted, as it relates to *kanga* production. Next, the history of the British Calico Printers' Association, frequently referred to as CPA, will be chronicled. CPA member firms printed *kanga* for the east African market, and these two competed for dominance in the *kanga* market from the end of the nineteenth century through the eve of World War II in what is today Tanzania.¹²

P. F. van Vlissingen & Co.

Pieter Fentener van Vlissingen founded the calico-printworks P. F. van Vlissingen & Co. on 15 August 1846, after taking over the calico-printing factory of P. A. Sutorius in Helmond, the Netherlands.¹³ Known today as Vlisco, the company printed textiles for both the domestic and export market.¹⁴ His son, Pieter II, (b. 12 March 1826) joined him in the business. In 1852, the company started exporting batiks to the Dutch East Indies (present-day Indonesia).¹⁵ Van Vlissingen's brother-in-law Frederik Jacob Matthijsen subsequently joined the management, and the factory continued as a family business in Vlissingen and Matthijsen hands for four generations. The printworks produced articles

¹² Import records indicate British and Dutch textile printers competed for dominance in printed textiles during this time. See the following publication series for import figures on cotton piece goods and *kanga*: British colonial "Blue Books" for Zanzibar (1881-1924) and Tanganyika (1921-1948); *East Africa Trade Report* (1949-1950; 1953-1960); *East African Customs and Excise: Trade and Revenue Report for Tanganyika, Uganda and Kenya* (1951-1954); *East African Community Annual Trade Report* (1961-1976), *Annual Trade Statistics Report of Tanzania* (1972-1981; 1998-2001; 2006-2010). Statistical information on the number of imported *kanga* from each *kanga*-producing country will be considered in earnest in Chapter 6, "A Chronology of *Kanga* Supply: A Manufacturing History," based on statistical data compiled in Appendix B, "*Kanga* Imports to Colonial Tanganyika and Independent Tanzania, 1929-1981."

¹³ van Vlissingen & Co., *Extract of the Memorial Volume van Vlissingen & Co, Helmond, 1846-1946* (Helmond: van Vlissingen & Co., 1946), 7.

¹⁴ M. G. P. A. Jacobs and W. H. G. Maas, "A Life in Colour Summary," in *Een leven in kleur: Textieldrukkerij Vlisco, 1846-1996*, by M. G. P. A. Jacobs and W. H. G. Maas (Helmond: Uigeverij Historion, 1996), 154.

¹⁵ Jacobs and Maas, "A Life in Colour Summary," 154.

for domestic consumption, but its largest interest was in the export market, particularly in printed sarongs sold to the Dutch East Indies.¹⁶ These were entirely printed by hand until the company acquired its first roller printing machine in 1863, originally intended to print articles for domestic consumption.¹⁷

The 1870s and 1880s were a particularly difficult time for the printworks at P.F. van Vlissingen & Co. Van Vlissingen senior died on 27 January 1868, and over the next five years management changed hands several times. Technological advances warranted a shift in dyes; around this time, the factory began adopting synthetically produced dyes. From 1874, exports of printed batiks to the Dutch East Indies declined, due in part to competition from locally produced batiks as well as Dutch political changes in export policies to colonies.¹⁸ Knowing that to stay in business a shift in production or destined market was necessary, Pieter II began investigating potential exports to east Africa in 1875.¹⁹ Then one disaster after another riddled the business: first the power-plant was destroyed by fire in 1876, and then much of the factory, including the printing, drying, and bleaching departments burned down on 19 September 1883.²⁰ Pieter II worked to rebuild the factory after the 1883 fire and changed the organization to a limited partnership. Business was still unsteady until about 1897, when sales improved and profits were sustained until World War I. Exports

¹⁶ These printed sarongs sought to imitate wax batik methods, a lengthy processed that included drawing decorations in wax to protect portions of a cloth from dye.

¹⁷ At the time of writing in 1946, this original machine was still in use. van Vlissingen & Co., *Extract of the Memorial Volume*, 7.

¹⁸ Jacobs and Maas, *Een leven in kleur*, 25; Jacobs and Maas, "A Life in Colour Summary," 154.

¹⁹ Jacobs and Maas, *Een leven in kleur*, 26.

²⁰ Jacobs and Maas, *Een leven in kleur*, 25; *Extract of the Memorial Volume*, 8.

to east Africa also became steady right around the turn of the century, when Vlisco's archives show regular exports of *kanga* textiles. Export to West Africa likely began in the first decade of the twentieth century, when a new market for printed batiks was found in West Africa.²¹

Wartime conditions seriously affected business between 1914 and 1919: "Due to lack of raw materials and chemicals the factory could work only irregularly and eventually, towards the end of the war, it had to be closed down altogether."²² The company changed from privately-owned to a limited liability company at the end of 1916, and the factory reopened its doors in April 1919 to produce printed cotton goods for domestic and export markets. Vlisco stopped hand-printing products for the domestic market in 1918, but continued to utilize hand printing for the export market in both *kanga* and Dutch wax and Java prints.²³ The company thrived in the 1920s, and according to their sesquicentennial publication, Vlisco produced both hand-stamped and roller printed *kanga* for the east African export market.²⁴ In 1932, Vlisco succeeded in

²¹ Vlisco's sesquicentennial publication cites export to West Africa beginning in 1909. John Picton located a sample pattern book with explicit reference to textiles printing specifically for the coast of West Africa dating to August 1852 in the Vlisco archives, but this likely comes from a sample book originally produced by a competitor company. Picton documents a design dated 25 November 1904 from an HKM (*Haarlemsche Katoen Maatschappij*) pattern book in Vlisco's collection as record of Dutch production of Indonesian-inspired batiks printed for the West African market. Jacobs and Maas, "A Life in Colour Summary," 154 and John Picton, "Technology, Tradition and Lurex: The Art of Textiles in Africa," in *The Art of African Textiles: Technology, Tradition and Lurex*, ed. John Picton (London: Barbican Art Gallery, 1995), 24, 28. African soldiers who served in the Dutch East Indies' army between 1836 and 1872 returned to the Gold Coast with pieces of batik, admired for their designs, bright colors, and crackling effects from the batik process. Vlisco began producing designs tailored to the West African market, continue to do so today, and are known for their high quality "Dutch wax prints."

²² *Extract of the Memorial Volume*, 8.

²³ Dutch wax prints were expensive to manufacture, whereas the java print was an imitation of batik design and was much cheaper to produce. Jacobs and Maas, "A Life in Color Summary," 154 and Jacobs and Maas, *Een leven in kleur*, 26, 31.

²⁴ Jacobs and Maas, *Een leven in kleur*, 46.

producing Java prints mechanically, a cheaper alternative to both “real” Dutch wax prints and production by hand.²⁵ Vlisco formed a subsidiary in Belgium in 1932 to ease export difficulties, restructured during the Great Depression to avoid bankruptcy, and yielded profits once again after 1936.²⁶ For *kanga* in particular, hand-stamping ceased by the 1930s and all *kanga* produced in that decade shifted to roller-printed technology.²⁷

The German invasion of the Netherlands in May 1940 interrupted production once again. The staff of the factory was reemployed as peat diggers and avoided recruitment by the Germans, and savvy camouflage methods were enacted to protect the factory.²⁸ Domestic production continued during wartime, and on liberation day, as Vlisco’s centennial publication noted, “Several million yards were ready for export to our traditional markets.”²⁹ The factory resumed normal production after World War II and enjoyed continual growth from 1946-1960.³⁰ Due to increased international competition and protectionist policies implemented by newly independent African nations, Vlisco stopped printing cheaper types of cloth in the 1960s, including fancy prints, ‘imiwax’ (imitation wax print), Java prints for the West and Central African market, and *kanga* for

²⁵ Jacobs and Maas, “A Life in Colour Summary,” 154. For a fuller discussion of this technological innovation, see Jacobs and Maas, *Een leven in kleur*, 46, 51.

²⁶ During the 1930s, three of Vlisco’s closest textile printing competitors in the Netherlands closed their doors: Roesingh & Zoon in 1935, LKM (*Leidsche Katoen Maatschappij*) in 1936, and KKM (*Kralingsche Katoen Maatschappij*) in 1932. Jacobs and Maas, *Een leven in kleur*, 42.

²⁷ Jacobs and Maas, *Een leven in kleur*, 45-46.

²⁸ van Vlissingen & Co., *Extract of the Memorial Volume*, 9.

²⁹ van Vlissingen & Co., *Extract of the Memorial Volume*, 9.

³⁰ Jacobs and Maas, *Een leven in kleur*, 85 and Jacobs and Maas, “A Life in Colour Summary,” 154.

the east African market; the latter will be discussed in detail in Chapter 6.³¹ The changes in political policies and the launch of fully integrated textile mills in newly independent east African countries in the late 1960s severely limited imports. Vlisco redoubled their focus on designs destined for the West African market, by acquiring shares in domestic wax-print factories in Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, and Zaire (present-day Democratic Republic of the Congo). Vlisco also introduced more exclusive 'superwax' varieties in 1973.³² Vlisco stopped producing new *kanga* designs in 1967, ceased exporting printed textiles to east Africa in 1974, and ended production of textiles for the European market in 1981.³³ The company took the brand name "Vlisco" in the 1980s, printing "Real Dutch Wax Vlisco" or "Véritable Wax Hollandais Vlisco" in the selvage edge of wax prints.³⁴ Hand-block printing completely ceased on 15 December 1993.³⁵ More recently Vlisco has changed their approach, seeking further exclusivity and protection for their designs. From 2006, the company has launched limited seasonal collections of their Dutch wax prints and select accessories in their boutique stores in major cities across West Africa.³⁶

³¹ Jacobs and Maas, *Een leven in kleur*, 86 and Jacobs and Maas, "A Life in Colour Summary," 158. The latest *kanga* in Vlisco's collection dates from 1974, but only a dozen or so date to the 1970s, suggesting that production did indeed cease in the late 1960s.

³² Jacobs and Maas, "A Life in Colour Summary," 156.

³³ Jacobs and Maas, "A Life in Colour Summary," 155.

³⁴ Jacobs and Maas, "A Life in Colour Summary," 156.

³⁵ Jacobs and Maas, "A Life in Colour Summary," 160.

³⁶ See Vlisco's website for listing of boutique stores, examples of their limited edition cloth collections, and general turn towards embracing a high fashion approach, where quality and exclusivity is emphasized over quantity. www.vlisco.com

Calico Printers' Association

The British Calico Printers' Association, Ltd. (CPA), active between 1899 and 1950s, was comprised of dozens of member firms across the United Kingdom who specialized in printing surface designs on manufactured textiles.³⁷ CPA worked with related British associations made up of dozens of member firms that specialized in other aspects of textile manufacturing. The Bleachers' Association, Ltd., for example, was comprised of member firms that specialized in the bleaching and finishing of textile fabrics, whereas the Bradford Dyers' Association, Ltd. was comprised of member firms that specialized in dyeing and finishing textile fabrics.³⁸ By cooperating with these textile associations, CPA gained access to manufactured cloth, the raw material necessary for their printing trade. CPA was formed in 1899, and it brought nearly eighty percent of the textile printers under one management.³⁹ Originally comprised of 46 printing and 13 merchant firms as well as some weaving and spinning interests, CPA sought to centralize the finances, purchases of grey or unfinished cloth and production of textile printing, to avoid undue competition and overlap in design, sampling, engraving and pattern distribution.⁴⁰ Initially at least, it was largely unsuccessful, though the individual

³⁷ Most of the member firms were located in and around Lancashire, near Manchester in the north of England. Some member firms were also near Glasgow, Scotland, and only a few were located in Northern Ireland. "Report on the Calico Printing Industry," 120.

³⁸ "Report on the Calico Printing Industry," 120. This document also lists the number of branches and the location of works in existence in 1941.

³⁹ Calico Printers' Association, "Calico Printing—An Impression," in *Visit of Their Majesties King George V and Queen Mary to the Broad Oak Works of the Calico Printers' Association at Accrington, July 9th 1913* (Accrington: Broad Oak Works, 1913), 11. By contrast, another CPA publication from some years later estimated the founding of the association amalgamated 85% of the British calico printing industry. Calico Printers' Association, *Fifty Years of Calico Printing: A Jubilee History of the C.P.A.* (Manchester: Calico Printers' Association, Ltd., 1949), 17.

⁴⁰ "Report on the Process of Calico Printing," 16, 38, and "History of Calico Printing," unpublished manuscript, 7, in Calico Printers Association, M75/8/3/1 "Publicity Material for Company's Jubilee in 1949,

firms remained successful printers. In efforts to streamline sales, CPA restructured brands to sections, and individual branch names were left off in favor of a more inclusive CPA branding.⁴¹ For example, in a pamphlet entitled “Arrangements of the Association’s Selling Sections and Departments,” the East and West Africa Section is located at 42 Portland Street.⁴² The pamphlet is undated, but must date to the early twentieth century, after CPA restructuring. Unfortunately, the East and West Africa section does not list the firms that formerly would have printed textiles for this market, like other regional sections.⁴³

Advice was administered to bolster restructuring efforts, which sought to enhance competition of CPA against rival foreign textiles printers:

The market committees would have under them important departments, whose duty it would be to accumulate information with regard to trading prospects in the respective markets. No fact relating to a foreign market should be regarded as insignificant. Whilst direct trading may not be possible, all facts influencing market conditions, whether political, economic, or social, should be accumulated and studied with a view to the extension of trade. Blue Books and British and Foreign Consular Reports would be systematically studied in this department. ... A customer who finds that his supplier can give him “tips” is surely appreciative. In this

box 1,” Manchester Archives and Local Studies; Calico Printers’ Association, *Fifty Years of Calico Printing*, 17-18.

⁴¹ “It is not natural that a customer should prefer dealing with (say) the Rangoon Section rather than with Bayley & Craven or the Strines Printing Co., when it is remembered that these two firm names stand for so much in the Far East.” “Notes on the Organisation and Administration of the Association,” 3rd July, 1913, 3. Manchester Archives and Local Studies, Calico Printers Association, M75/1/5/1-2 Reports and Returns 1900-1968.

⁴² “Arrangements of the Association’s Selling Sections and Departments,” Calico Printers’ Association, 2. Manchester Archives and Local Studies, Calico Printers Association, M75/1/5/1-2 Reports and Returns 1900-1968.

⁴³ Surely a number of Calico Printers’ Association member firms printed *kanga* throughout the first half of the twentieth century. A 1942 report indicates that Messrs. M. & F. St. Goar of Manchester provided “Khangas” to the British merchant-converter firm Smith, Mackenzie & Co., Ltd. during wartime. “Khangas,” Managing Director’s Report on the year ended 30th June, 1942. Smith Mackenzie and Company Limited, London Metropolitan Archives, CLC/B/123/MS28126. But fleeting mentions such as this hardly illuminate the scale of CPA’s production of *kanga*.

manner, it might be possible to lead the way in trade development, instead of being a bad second, as we so often are.⁴⁴

World War I saw CPA printers shift production to war-time efforts, and in 1916, a trade association, the Federation of Calico Printers, was formed. This federation sought to institute minimum prices, to protect production and ward off undercutting profits of fellow member firms.⁴⁵ British textile production faced serious competition following World War I and began its long decline.⁴⁶ Countries such as Japan, China, India, and Brazil expanded their own textile production, and Japan's productivity in particular continued to rise.⁴⁷ These countries' textile industries paid lower wages, required longer working hours and ran double shifts in production, effectively undercutting the costs of British textile manufacturers.⁴⁸ In 1931, the fixed minimum price for CPA member firms was abandoned, which led to fierce competition and undercutting profits to the point of bankruptcy during the Depression era.⁴⁹ The purpose of the Calico Printers' Association—to protect profits by streamlining sourcing and production in the British textile printing industry—was undermined as competition increased. British firms competed with one another amid the shrinking worldwide market for British textiles.⁵⁰ In

⁴⁴ "Notes on the Organisation and Administration of the Association," 6-7.

⁴⁵ "Report on the Process of Calico Printing," 16, 39.

⁴⁶ "The number of active print works in operation was reduced from 29 in 1918 to 11 by 1935." Report on the Process of Calico Printing," 39. For a concise assessment of the calico printing industry in the UK from 1914-1950, see page 65.

⁴⁷ Calico Printers' Association, *Fifty Years of Calico Printing*, 31.

⁴⁸ Clive R. Hargreaves, *Some Comments on the Calico Printing Industry in its Relationship to the Cotton and Rayon Textile Industries, with special reference to the report by the Monopolies Commission on the Process of Calico Printing* (C. Nicholls and Co., 1954), 4.

⁴⁹ "Report on the Process of Calico Printing," 20.

⁵⁰ Hargreaves, *Some Comments on the Calico Printing Industry*, 5.

essence, British textiles firms had a much greater capacity to produce textiles than the market required for purchase at higher British prices, and soon CPA member firms were undercutting one another deep into bankruptcy.

Some forty percent of firms closed during World War II, and others shifted production to war supplies.⁵¹ Although the initial years following World War II were promising, manufacturing on the whole in the United Kingdom declined rapidly following World War II. Minimum prices were again set in 1954 on a number of CPA printed textiles, including the category “*Kangas and Sarries*,” which also entailed a “specified cash price” to engrave rollers for *kanga* printing.⁵² By 1954, the future of the British textile industry, and CPA in particular, was bleak:

We must face the fact that it is not possible from this country, or from any other western country, to compete with Japanese printed calicos, except at a heavy loss. ... Competition from India must also be considered. ... Quality is the only remaining criterion for the discriminating buyer at home or overseas in giving preference to British prints and the real hope for the future of the entire cotton and rayon textile industries lies in maintaining the highest quality of production by the industry...⁵³

In 1954, a government study on CPA—to do with whether or not the association was guilty of a monopoly—found that printing was commissioned by merchant converters, a practice common since at least the turn of the century. In that year, CPA possessed

a commission printing showroom where all the branches can display their work and available designs to converter customers. Some of the designs are produced for the branches by a central service department using a process peculiar to C.P.A. C.P.A. also provides hand coloured designs on

⁵¹ Hargreaves, *Some Comments on the Calico Printing Industry*, 7-8 and “Report on the Process of Calico Printing,” The Monopolies and Restrictive Practices Commission (London: Her Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1954), 8, Calico Printers’ Association, M75/1/5/1-2 Reports and Returns 1900-1968, Manchester Archives and Local Studies; Calico Printers’ Association, *Fifty Years of Calico Printing*, 49.

⁵² “Report on the Process of Calico Printing,” 28, 30.

⁵³ Hargreaves, *Some Comments on the Calico Printing Industry*, 20-21.

paper (the common method) for customers who prefer them. Duplicate patterns are available in C.P.A.'s overseas showrooms to facilitate ordering. The originals for these designs are brought by each branch from outside designers in Manchester, London, Paris, New York or elsewhere or created in its own atelier. In about 50 per cent. of cases customers choose a design from the selections offered; in other cases they provide their own, the modifications commonly needed for technical reasons being provided in the branch atelier.⁵⁴

Therefore, tracing the factory or firm that actually printed the designs of *kanga* is difficult, a fact made nearly impossible by the dearth of extant records. The association of European-produced *kanga* with the merchant-converter firm who commissioned, imported, and sold the textiles is quite understandable, given that, according to the 1954 British government report, “[p]rinting ... is usually, but not invariably, carried out by concerns on cloth owned by their customers, the merchant-converters. The goods most commonly printed are of cotton, rayon and rayon mixtures... About 99 per cent. of textile printing is now done on the calico-printing machine, the remainder being accounted for principally by hand-block and screen printing.”⁵⁵ Regarding the relationship of specialty printers, such as CPA, to merchant converters, “Of the total output of the [calico printing] industry about 85 per cent. consisted of commission work, i.e. printing on cloth not owned by the printer.”⁵⁶

Indeed, the Calico Printers' Association's reliance on export trade meant that it was increasingly vulnerable to shifts in the global economy and the rapid industrialization of other countries. The same report points to the challenges posed by

⁵⁴ “Report on the Process of Calico Printing,” 42. Showrooms in Buenos Aires, Bombay, Nairobi, Singapore, and Rangoon are listed in CPA's 1949 jubilee publication, where customers can see the latest Manchester productions the following week in showrooms abroad. See page 40 for interior photographs of these showrooms. Calico Printers' Association, *Fifty Years of Calico Printing*, 44.

⁵⁵ “Report on the Process of Calico Printing,” 9.

⁵⁶ “Report on the Process of Calico Printing,” 65.

export markets seeking the most inexpensive goods: “C.P.A. says that it has always been something of a struggle to maintain its share of the printing trade and that ‘by reason of its size and its dependence primarily on export trade’ it appears to be more vulnerable than other concerns to particular market contractions or a general recession.”⁵⁷ This shift is particularly clear in the case of *kanga* production; essentially a very inexpensive, simple cloth to print, *kanga* production was first in European hands, then it shifted to Japanese manufacturers, and over the past quarter century Indian and Chinese manufacturers have secured the lion’s share of the market.⁵⁸

During the 1960s textile producers and finishers, including printers, went out of business rapidly. Unfortunately, no systematic effort was made to save the business records of CPA member firms. I consulted the Calico Printers’ Association records in the Manchester Archives and Local Studies and found a random selection of employment records, meeting minutes, limited correspondence and only a handful of sample pattern books, none of which displayed cloth for the east African market. I did track down one CPA pattern book in the Manchester Metropolitan University Library’s special collections that displayed hand-drawn designs stamped “For East and West Africa,” (Fig. 5-2). Still, repeated mention of British textiles in colonial reports, import records to Tanganyika, and the limited holdings of CPA archive in Manchester confirm that the United Kingdom

⁵⁷ “Report on the Process of Calico Printing,” 45.

⁵⁸ See the following publication series for import figures on cotton piece goods and *kanga*: British colonial “Blue Books” for Zanzibar (1881-1924) and Tanganyika (1921-1948); *East Africa Trade Report* (1949-1950; 1953-1960); *East African Customs and Excise: Trade and Revenue Report for Tanganyika, Uganda and Kenya* (1951-1954); *East African Community Annual Trade Report* (1961-1976), *Annual Trade Statistics Report of Tanzania* (1972-1981; 1998-2001; 2006-2010). Statistical information on the number of imported *kanga* from each *kanga*-producing country will be considered in earnest in Chapter 6, “A Chronology of *Kanga* Supply: A Manufacturing History,” based on statistical data compiled in Appendix B, “*Kanga* Imports to Colonial Tanganyika and Independent Tanzania, 1929-1981.”

was certainly a large producer of textiles for the east African market.⁵⁹ Through limited cloth samples, advertisements, and off-hand mentions of British textile printers, some CPA member firms that produced *kanga* can be identified.

The CPA pamphlet produced on the occasion of King George V and Queen Mary's visit to the Broad Oak Works in Accrington near Manchester on July 9th, 1913 mentions cloth block-printed for the African market:

It is the human quality, the touch of the hand of man which the machine cannot get—the hand which lingers over its work, the hand which sometimes falters and sometimes even fails. And it is this which gives to the fabric printed by block a character, an atmosphere which does not belong to the product of the machines. The workman at this table before one is working for one of the great African markets, printing on a deep blue background some pagan symbolism. He may be seen deliberately varying the intervals in the design, fitting the tracery of pattern loosely, imperfectly, leaving ends that will not meet—the negro will not have an art which is too precise in every part, and the negro is aesthetically right. When he has mastered quite a number of the sciences the Calico Printer must begin the study of man.⁶⁰

Although the writer is certainly a product of his or her times, this passage does accurately represent the advantage of block printing designs on cloth by hand. The author may be referring to East or West African markets here, providing no other defining features than “great African markets” and “deep blue background some pagan symbolism.”

Another article dating from a decade later confirms *kanga* production by CPA member firms. The *Manchester Guardian Commercial* was a weekly periodical that reviewed industry, trade, and finance. A supplement from 17 May 1923 entitled “Textile Finishing Trades: Bleaching, Dyeing, Calico Printing and Finishing,” included an article

⁵⁹ See Appendices A, “Discussion of *Kanga* Textiles in Early Twentieth-Century British Colonial Trade Reports” and B, “*Kanga* Imports to Colonial Tanganyika and Independent Tanzania, 1929-1981.”

⁶⁰ Calico Printers' Association, “Calico Printing—An Impression,” 11-12.

that makes plain CPA's production of *kanga* for the east African market.⁶¹ "Designs for All: Customs and Crazes" by "A Textile Designer" tells a little bit about a designer's work, especially in production for foreign markets. I quote from the article at length below; note *kanga* and its forbearer, *leso ya kushona*, are both mentioned:

The singular thing about the calico-printing industry is that the average Manchester resident does not see the wide range of designs produced by the various firms. In the shops one sees prints for men's wear and voiles and fancy dress fabrics made up or sold by the yard. This class of goods is well known, being home trade, but there is the immense output for foreign markets, India, China, Africa, Egypt, Persia, and the Levant. Designs for these far-away places are very distinctive, and are never seen in our shops. ... Where does the inspiration come from for the variety of designs? A designer must be told the kind of pattern wanted, and the general plan is for the indication to come through the salesman, who in turn usually gets the idea from his customer, often from abroad. ... Someone must be in touch with the coming trend of fashion, whether it be in England, India, or Africa, as the designer, sitting in his room has no such opportunity. ... Designs are drawn on drawing-paper in body water-colours, in any number from two to seven colors, and are drawn to scale for engraving on a copper roller 16 inches girth and up to 50 inches wide. ... A large trade is also done with the east coast of Africa. At one time the natives there wore a piece of cloth with was six handkerchiefs uncut. This the designer developed by drawing a border round and a large animal in the centre, till its appearance now is like a rug. This article of apparel is called a "*kanga*." This short article can only give a faint idea of a designer's work, but it will be easily seen that his knowledge of the geography and customs of the world must be quite extensive in order to cope with the enormous trade Manchester does in printed cotton goods, originated by the designer, and distributed all over the world.⁶²

This short article confirms that inspiration for export designs comes directly from those with direct access to consumer desires. It also notes that CPA firms print *kanga* for the east African market. It even describes the *leso ya kushona* garment, comprised of six

⁶¹ "Textile Finishing Trades: Bleaching, Dyeing, Calico Printing and Finishing," *Manchester Guardian Commercial*, 17 May 1923.

⁶² "Designs for All: Customs and Crazes," in "Textile Finishing Trades: Bleaching, Dyeing, Calico Printing and Finishing," *Manchester Guardian Commercial*, 17 May 1923.

handkerchiefs sewn together, which gave way to the four-bordered *kanga*, here, likened to a rug.

A photograph accompanying the article displays five east African women all wearing printed cloth (Fig. 5-3). The three women in the middle wear cloth with borders, one flowered, one spotted, and one with floral or paisley motif. The two women on the edges wear cloth that is entirely spotted. The caption reads: “Probably the Simplest Garment in the World is the *Kanga*, of which Lancashire sends Millions to the Tropics. It is a Simple Development from a Piece of Cotton Designed to be cut into six Pocket Handkerchiefs. One is Wrapped Round the Body and Another Thrown over the Shoulders.”⁶³ Although this is confirmation that CPA member firms did indeed print vast quantities of *kanga*, the specific firms still elude identification.

Fleeting mentions of CPA member firms that produced *kanga* for the east African export market can be found in a smattering of far-flung records and very limited holdings of CPA *kanga*. For instance, a list in the Smith Mackenzie archives records a few of the Manchester-based textile printers that produced *kanga* for the British merchant converters. The document lists “Goods on Order, En Route and In Stock on 31st December 1918.” In addition to the familiar Dutch textile printer Vlissingen, the list mentions “Roskill Blue Kanicki,” “Matusch Kissutus,” “Manchester *Kangas*,” and “Colmans Blue” among others.⁶⁴

CPA and other British calico printers appear on the acquisition information or original identification stickers affixed to mid twentieth-century *kanga* in the collection of

⁶³ “Designs for All: Customs and Crazes,” 675.

⁶⁴ “List of Goods On Order, En Route and In Stock on 31st December 1918,” Smith, Mackenzie and Company Limited, London Metropolitan Archives, CLC/B/123/MS36447/2: General correspondence.

the Whitworth Gallery at the University of Manchester.⁶⁵ Eight display CPA stickers, like two from the 1940s (Fig. 5-4 and 5-5). Three also display the printed name “Ogdens” near the corner of the central motif (Fig. 5-6, 5-7, and 5-8). This refers not to the CPA member firm that printed the *kanga*, but rather the merchant-converter firm that commissioned the printing of this *kanga* design. In this case, Ogdens & Madeleys, Ltd. advertised themselves as “commission agents” in Mombasa and Zanzibar in the 1922 edition of the “Red Book.”⁶⁶ This printed “Ogdens” functions as a trademark for the merchant-converter firm.

⁶⁵ The Whitworth Art Gallery at the University of Manchester has a superb collection of textiles from around the world. Unfortunately, the collection does not hold exhaustive or even explanatory collections of British textile production. Their holdings of CPA printed textiles were equally limited, but the curators and I did manage to locate 22 *kanga*-related printed cloths, seven of which were donated by Dehns (Africa) Ltd., four were donated recently by individuals who acquired examples in East Africa, three by S. Schwabe & Co., Ltd., and eight by the Calico Printers’ Association. The CPA and Schwabe *kanga* were found in a trunk in the basement in the 1980s and only formally accessioned in 2001. When I inquired about the circumstances of the discovery, Head of Collections, Nicola Walker, told me that her predecessor likely accepted the trunk in the midst of CPA member firms declaring bankruptcy in the 1960s, and the trunk remained untouched (with eleven folded *kanga* inside) for two decades until she unearthed the textiles. Therefore, little acquisition information accompanies the textiles, but luckily, original identification stickers remain intact. She also lamented the fact that no systematic collection or archive was established as the Manchester-area textile industry folded in the 1960s. Many documents were burned, left to rot, or otherwise destroyed. The fate of many pattern books was the same, though some have entered public and private collections, as acquiring firms sought to recoup their investment by selling any profitable supplies or equipment to the highest bidder.

⁶⁶ “*The Red Book 1922-23: The Directory of East Africa, Uganda and Tanganyika* (Nairobi: East African Standard Limited, 1922), 498-499. A more verbose explanation of their business appears in a similar publication from 1930: “...influence and popularity of that firm [Ogdens & Madeleys, Ltd.] in connection with the piece-goods trade. Anyone interested in that trade and inspecting the extraordinary range of textile materials and sundry native requirements imported by Messrs. Ogdens & Madeleys, Ltd., would receive many impressive object lessons in the great differentiations of designs and chromatic effect created and sustained by the preferences and fashions of the native and Asiatic peoples of East Africa. Amongst the merchants there the firm are regarded with esteem and appreciation because of the swift efficiency with which they manufacture new designs embodying the most approved tribal idiosyncrasies of each district; and the field of their operations in that connection is very extensive. Achievements such as theirs are only possible by long specialised knowledge and experience. Established since 1830, Messrs. Ogdens & Madeleys, Ltd., have their own manufacturing connections in Lancashire, and recently took over certain departments of the prominent business of Henry Bannerman and Sons of the same city. Messrs. Ogdens & Madeleys, Ltd., had been engaged for decades in the piece-goods trade of East Africa before they opened their Mombasa office in 1910,” Allister Macmillan, *Eastern Africa and Rhodesia: Historical and Descriptive Commercial and Industrial Facts, Figures, and Resources* (London: W. H. & L. Collingridge, Ltd., 1930), 92.

Acquisition records indicate that seven *kanga*-related cloths were donated to the Whitworth Gallery by Dehns (Africa) Ltd. in 1961. Five are *kanga* created for the east African market;⁶⁷ two date from 1915 (Fig. 5-9 and 5-10), one from 1935 (Fig. 5-11) and one from 1939 (Fig. 5-12). Two other circa 1935 cloths are square in shape and are identified in the accession records as “Kaffir mats.”⁶⁸ Only one was available to be photographed (Fig. 5-13). The other features roosters and is reported to resemble the rectangular *kanga* with roosters, though it is smaller and square in shape. The seventh example is a *lamba hoany*, the Malagasy-cousin of *kanga*, which dates to 1955 (Fig. 5-14). Mid twentieth-century *lamba hoany* from Madagascar are easily recognizable, due to their distinctive color palette (maroon-and-marigold on bleached white cloth) and their use of the Malagasy language instead of Swahili for the short sayings. From this small sampling of Dehns (Africa) Ltd.’s production, we can assume that a large variety of *kanga*-related clothes were being produced in the UK for the east African export market.

The final three European-printed *kanga* in the Whitworth’s collection were manufactured by S. Schwabe & Co. Ltd. The first is a rather striking *kanga*; it features “RAF” emblazoned diagonally across the cloth (Fig. 5-15). Together with nine airplanes and a simplified version of the “wings” emblem, this cloth celebrates the British Royal Air Force. The printed information along the selvage edge may refer to the nickname of the original designer of this cloth, “Sikukuu,” which is Swahili for “holiday” or “festival.”

⁶⁷ Although labeled as “*kangas*,” a variety of intended markets are given in the acquisition records. The first two are given as “Portuguese East South Africa,” the third indicates “East Africa, East Rhodesias,” the fourth indicates “East Africa or Rhodesias,” the fifth confirms Madagascar as its intended market, and no markets are provided for the “Kaffir mats.”

⁶⁸ Little information on these “kaffir mats” exists. The original word “kaffir” (also spelled “kafir”) is an Arabic term used by Muslims to describe non-Muslims. It was adopted by Europeans in southern Africa as a derogatory term to describe Black Africans (as opposed to white Africans, or the settler communities scattered throughout southern Africa in particular). The word “mat” implies they may have been used on the floor.

No date is recorded in acquisition records. The two other *kanga* printed by S. Schwabe & Co. Ltd. fortuitously do record their dates of manufacture—June 1946 (Fig. 5-16 and 5-17). The first is an uncut pair of *kanga* with differing borders on the long and short sides. The second has a continuous paisley border, and both have sayings printed in Arabic scripts. Like the last Schwabe *kanga*, the selvage edges give credit to “Fundi ‘Sikukuu’” on the first and “Sikukuu” on the second. “Fundi” is Swahili for “expert, craftsman, or skilled person,” and generally can be more effectively translated with context. Here, I would define “fundi” as “designer,” where “Sikukuu” likely refers to a particular person skilled in *kanga* design. The inclusion of this information becomes more common around the mid-twentieth century, when *kanga* designers of Indian-descent gained a level of success to be able to demand their names be included within the printed design. This practice will be discussed in subsequent sections on local *kanga* designers.

Merchant Converters

The European trading houses are often referred to as merchant converters. The term “merchant converter” refers to their role in the trade, as savvy distributors. Indeed, merchant converters neither manufactured nor consumed commodities; rather, they played effective middlemen, bringing together the specific demands of consumers and the manufacturing capabilities of industries located in metropolitan countries. Through their presence in colonies (through branch offices) and close communication with their headquarters in industrialized centers, successful orders could be placed, delivered, distributed, and eventually sold for profit. European merchant converters who dealt in *kanga* and other piece goods included the British firms Smith, Mackenzie & Co. Ltd. and Ogdens & Madeleys, Ltd., the German firms Hansing & Co., and Wm. O’Swald & Co.,

and the French firm L. Besson & Co. One Japanese firm, C. Itoh & Co., came to prominence in the 1920s and there were undoubtedly others active throughout the course of the twentieth century. Mid twentieth-century advertisements confirm C. Itoh's presence, and new research by Hideaki Suzuki will illuminate the Japanese role and dominance in the Tanzanian *kanga* trade from 1955-1981 when records ceased.⁶⁹ Cotton piece goods, including *kanga*, constituted only one portion of their total sales. Most trading firms were loath to specialize in one type of good only, for fear that African consumer tastes could change.⁷⁰

European and American merchant converters controlled much of the trade between east Africa and the wider world from the 1830s through independence. Merchant converters moved their branch offices to capitalize on the main entrepôt for trade throughout that time. These middlemen first stationed themselves at Zanzibar, the center of trade in east Africa in the mid-nineteenth century. They then established branches at Mombasa or Bagamoyo, following the caravan trade routes, and finally, when colonial headquarters moved down the coast, they opened branches in Dar es

⁶⁹ For example advertisements, see "*The Red Book 1963*": *Kenya, Uganda, Tanganyika and Zanzibar Directory: Trade and Commercial Index* (Nairobi: East African Directory Co., 1963). See the following publication series for import figures on cotton piece goods and *kanga*: British colonial "Blue Books" for Zanzibar (1881-1924) and Tanganyika (1921-1948); *East Africa Trade Report* (1949-1950; 1953-1960); *East African Customs and Excise: Trade and Revenue Report for Tanganyika, Uganda and Kenya* (1951-1954); *East African Community Annual Trade Report* (1961-1976), *Annual Trade Statistics Report of Tanzania* (1972-1981; 1998-2001; 2006-2010). Statistical information on the number of imported *kanga* from each *kanga*-producing country will be considered in earnest in Chapter 6, "A Chronology of *Kanga* Supply: A Manufacturing History," based on statistical data compiled in Appendix B, "*Kanga* Imports to Colonial Tanganyika and Independent Tanzania, 1929-1981."

⁷⁰ Janmohamed, "A History of Mombasa," 139. Although based on Mombasa, Janmohamed does well to articulate the economic network that closely parallels *kanga* production and distribution in Dar es Salaam.

Salaam.⁷¹ A British trade report from 1908 concisely describes the role of merchant converters, here called “local commission houses:”

Imports from Europe are effected almost entirely by the local commission houses, and by them are distributed to wholesale Indian traders who supply the retailers. It is well to note that it is the usual practice for local houses in Zanzibar to place their orders with their head offices in Europe, and inquiries should therefore in the first instance be directed to the latter... It is not customary for Indian merchants to have direct dealings with exporting firms in Europe, and commission houses here find it necessary to allow credit.⁷²

Two of the largest and longest-dealing European merchant converters who dealt in *kanga* were the German firm, Wm. O'Swald & Co. and the British firm, Smith, Mackenzie & Co. They commissioned, arranged transport, and distributed European-produced *kanga* from the end of the nineteenth century through the 1960s. Both firms commissioned printed *kanga* for the east African market from the Dutch textile printer van Vlissingen & Co. (Visco), Wm. O'Swald & Co. before World War I, and Smith, Mackenzie & Co. following at the outbreak of World War I.

Wm. O'Swald & Co.

The trading house Wm. O'Swald & Co. was founded in 1831 by William O'Swald. The son of a chief accountant of the *Preussische Seehandlung* (Prussian Overseas Trading Co.), O'Swald circumnavigated the world twice on merchant ships before founding the trading house that bears his name.⁷³ It was headquartered in Hamburg, which was a free port until 1871, when the city-state became part of the German

⁷¹ Rodemann, “Tanganyika, 1890-1914,” 190.

⁷² “Report for the Year 1908 on the Trade of and Commerce of Zanzibar,” by Kohan, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports: Zanzibar*, No. 4312 (London: Printed for His Majesty's Stationery Office by Harrison and Sons, 1909), 10-11. Similar points are made in the 1909-10 report, “Report for the Years 1909-10 on the Trade and Commerce of Zanzibar,” *Diplomatic and Consular Reports: Zanzibar*, No. 4716 (London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1911), 10.

⁷³ William O'Swald and Company, *The Story of the House of O'Swald* (Broschek & Co., 1931), 7-8, 22.

Empire.⁷⁴ Initially, the trading house was appointed agents of the Prussian Overseas Trading Co. and traded mainly around the Baltic Sea.⁷⁵ Their involvement in the Indian Ocean happened by chance, when the firm bankrolled Captain Rodatz and his German schooner *Alph* in 1843, which had run short of funds. The schooner returned to Hamburg by way of Zanzibar in 1845, handling goods at every port. From then, Captain Rodatz was employed by Wm. O'Swald & Co. to continue business in Zanzibar, and he subsequently established a branch of the trading house there in 1849.⁷⁶

Wm. O'Swald & Co.'s initial competition was comprised of two American firms, specializing in *merikani* cotton sheeting, one French firm, and another Hamburg firm, A. J. Herz Söhne, who were involved in the cowry trade.⁷⁷ Trade was steady throughout the 1850s, 1860s, and 1870s, and the O'Swald firm expanded both regionally (to West Africa) and into ship owning (to support their main business of trade). Wm. O'Swald & Co. increased most rapidly after 1884 with the partitioning of the continent. The colonial powers improved infrastructure by building roads, railroads, and increased shipping, greatly expanding opportunities for and ease of trade. The O'Swald trading firm established regional branches in the following locations, primarily in German East Africa (or present-day mainland Tanzania): Mombasa⁷⁸ (1899), Bagamoyo (1902), Dar es Salaam (1904), Mwanza (1906), Tanga (1910), Tabora (1911), Bukoba (1912), and

⁷⁴ William Henry O'Swald II, son of the trading house's founder, successfully lobbied to retain a section of the quay as a free port, arguing that trade would be irrevocably damaged if obliged to pay duties. One of the quays bears the name "O'Swald-Quai" in honor of O'Swald. William O'Swald and Company, *The Story of the House of O'Swald*, 20.

⁷⁵ *The Story of the House of O'Swald*, 8.

⁷⁶ *The Story of the House of O'Swald*, 10.

⁷⁷ *The Story of the House of O'Swald*, 10.

⁷⁸ Mombasa is in present-day Kenya on the coast of east Africa.

Kigoma (1914), and even more in Madagascar.⁷⁹ During World War I, the trading house's branches were liquidated as enemy property, but Wm. O'Swald & Co. resumed trade in Mombasa, Dar es Salaam, and Kampala, and reduced their holdings at Tabora, Mwanza, Bukoba, Nairobi, Tanga, and Zanzibar following the war.⁸⁰ World War I also had severe effects on the merchant converter's role in the *kanga* trade. As a German company, Wm. O'Swald & Co. lost their most valuable contract in printed textiles due to World War I.⁸¹ Following the war, van Vlissingen & Co. started producing *kanga* for Smith, Mackenzie & Co. when the British firm was appointed to administer the former offices of Wm. O'Swald & Co.⁸² Although Wm. O'Swald & Co. tried to recover the business arrangement with van Vlissingen & Co., the Dutch textile printer continued to work with Smith, Mackenzie & Co. only, which brought an end to Wm. O'Swald & Co.'s role as middleman in the *kanga* trade.⁸³

The 1930 edition of *Eastern Africa and Rhodesia: Historical and Descriptive Commercial and Industrial Facts, Figures, & Resources* by Allister Macmillan provides this concise description of Wm. O'Swald & Co.:

No German firm was better known nor more firmly established in East Africa before the Great War than Messrs. Wm. O'Swald & Co. Founded in

⁷⁹ Madagascar is a large island off the coast of east Africa. *The Story of the House of O'Swald*, 18.

⁸⁰ *The Story of the House of O'Swald*, 18.

⁸¹ Wm. O'Swald & Co. to van Vlissingen & Co., 24 November 1914, as quoted in Gerritt Vollaard, "Vlisco Memories and Manufacturing," my translation of manuscript in Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands, October 1972, 2.

⁸² Letter from the firm Wm. O'Swald & Co. to the firm van Vlissingen & Co., 24 November 1914, as quoted in G. Vollaard, "Vlisco Memories and Manufacturing," unpublished manuscript, October 1972, Vlisco Archives, 3.

⁸³ Letter from the firm Wm. O'Swald & Co. to the firm van Vlissingen & Co., 24 November 1914, as quoted in G. Vollaard, "Vlisco Memories and Manufacturing," unpublished manuscript, October 1972, Vlisco Archives, 3. Some *kanga* in the Vlisco Museum still have Wm. O'Swald & Co. identification stickers attached, similar to the CPA *kanga* in the Whitworth Gallery.

1831 at Hamburg, they had their connections throughout the world, and opened in 1841 a branch at Zanzibar when that place was in the height of its prosperity, twenty-eight years before the opening of the Suez Canal. Later, with the development of German East Africa, they established branches throughout that territory, also in British East Africa, Uganda, and Madagascar, having altogether before the war between thirty and forty branches, and giving employment to upwards of 110 Europeans besides many natives and Asiatics. Messrs. Wm. O'Swald & Co. are importers of merchandise of every description and exporters of all kinds of East African products. Besides their Mombasa branch they are also established at Kampala and Dar-es-Salaam, and have agents all over East Africa.⁸⁴

Smith, Mackenzie & Co., Ltd.

The origins of the British merchant-converter firm, Smith, Mackenzie & Co., Ltd. are closely associated with the Scottish businessman, William Mackinnon. Along with Robert Mackenzie, William Mackinnon established the trading firm of Mackinnon Mackenzie & Co. around the Bay of Bengal along the east coast of India in 1847. Mackenzie died tragically when the SS Aurora shipwrecked off Queensland in 1853. Mackinnon went on to found the shipping company, British India Steam Navigation Co. in 1856, which expanded operations to include the whole of the Indian Ocean, including the Persian Gulf. The trading firm of Smith, Mackenzie & Co. was founded by employees of Mackinnon's growing business empire. First, Archibald Smith began to manage business affairs for the British India Steam Navigation Co. in 1874, upon the death of his employer, Captain H. A. Fraser in Zanzibar. In 1875, E. N. Mackenzie arrived from the staff of Mackinnon Mackenzie & Co. of Calcutta, and the two joined trading interests. Along with Archibald Gray, nephew to William Mackinnon, and Edwyn S. Dawes, and Archibald Brown, they founded the British trading firm of Smith, Mackenzie and Company in 1877, based on the assumption that the east African coast

⁸⁴ Macmillan, *Eastern Africa and Rhodesia*, 314.

was likely to grow in importance.⁸⁵ Gray and Dawes were founders of the London trading house Gray, Dawes & Co., and provided the necessary capital to finance this new Zanzibar-based firm.

As a British trading house, Smith Mackenzie & Co. enjoyed opportunities in William Mackinnon's Imperial British East Africa Co. (IBEAC) before the crown took over the colonies of British East Africa (now Kenya) and Uganda. Much like the German East Africa Co. (DOAG), the IBEAC tried to open up the interior of east Africa to trade before relinquishing rule to their respective governments and declaring bankruptcy. Smith, Mackenzie & Co., as a subsidiary company of William Mackinnon's commercial empire, first tried to open a branch office in Mombasa in 1887 and succeeded in 1893.⁸⁶ The merchant-converter firm followed with a new branch in coastal Lamu in 1907.⁸⁷ Following World War I, Germany lost her colonies and German East Africa became Tanganyika Territory, mandated by the British. Therefore, British trading interests, formerly limited in German East Africa, were now enhanced by the change in rule. Smith, Mackenzie & Co. established a branch in Dar es Salaam in 1919, another in Tanga in 1920, and a third in Lindi in 1923.⁸⁸

Coinciding with the Dar es Salaam branch opening in 1919, Smith, Mackenzie & Co. secured a contract with the Dutch textile printer van Vlissingen & Co. to print *kanga*

⁸⁵ *The History of Smith, Mackenzie and Company, Ltd.*, 10-11. The young company expanded to Mozambique in 1879, but abandoned the branch in 1882, when Archibald Brown was killed in a shark attack in the harbor. That same year, Archibald Smith died in Zanzibar from "some malady," *The Story of the House of O'Swald*, 19-20; Percival Griffiths, *A History of the Inchcape Group* (London: Inchcape & Co., Ltd., 1977), 58.

⁸⁶ Janmohamed, "A History of Mombasa," 74.

⁸⁷ Lamu is in present-day Kenya on the northern coast, near the border with Somalia.

⁸⁸ Tanga is a coastal town in the north of present-day Tanzania, and Lindi is a coastal town in the far south of present-day Tanzania. *The History of Smith, Mackenzie and Company, Ltd.*, 60.

for the East African market.⁸⁹ The acquisition of this contract coupled with the increasing demand for *kanga* throughout east Africa, helped Smith, Mackenzie & Co. (or rather, “Makensi,” as the firm was colloquially known,) become synonymous with excellent quality *kanga*.

Advertisements in the Tanganyika popular publication *Mambo Leo* suggest Smith, Mackenzie & Co. became more and more associated with *kanga* and other imported cotton piece goods throughout the 1920s. *Mambo Leo* (Swahili for “Current Affairs”) was a government-initiated publication founded in January 1923 and produced monthly until 1963. It was Tanganyika Territory’s first Swahili language publication.⁹⁰ The firm’s earliest advertisement appears in the tenth volume of the monthly periodical; Smith, Mackenzie & Co. took over much of the title page (Fig. 5-18).⁹¹ The advertisement includes two Smith, Mackenzie & Co. logos, and short Swahili phrases extolling the variety and quality of cotton piece goods: “Mackenzie’s Prints: Everyone knows these prints. If anyone sees *leso*, *kanga*, and dark *kaniki*, obtain one immediately. Because these printed cloths are absolutely the best, they cannot be beaten. You will agree when you try our prints.”

A variety of Smith, Mackenzie & Co. advertisements appeared monthly over the next four years of *Mambo Leo* publications. In 1924, Smith, Mackenzie & Co. alternated their rectangular- and diamond-shaped logos in their monthly advertisements. Near the end of the year, they began simplifying their designs. The firm continued with the design

⁸⁹ Wm. O’Swald & Co. to van Vlissingen & Co., 24 November 1914, 2-3.

⁹⁰ Martin Sturmer, *The Media History of Tanzania* (n.p.: Ndanda Mission Press, 1998; electronic edition by afrika.info), 51, 90-91.

⁹¹ *Mambo Leo* No. 10 (October 1923): title page.

and alternating logos in 1925, condensed in size but retaining all of the same components. In 1927, the firm lists their line of products, highlighting their variety of cloths. The list includes “all of our *kanga*, *kaniki*, prints, shirtings, burrahs, hodrunks, tassors, Muscat cloth, shawls, and *Americani*.” The new accompanying Swahili text translates as: Everyday when you go to purchase things at the shop, you are first obliged to ask: “Hey, is there Mackenzie’s?” Around the logo, the words “Good printed cloth” have been added. Increasingly, the advertisements became more streamlined and featured less text and relied more on the recognizable diamond-shaped logo. In the January 1928 edition, the merchant-converter firm took out a half-page advertisement with only the following information: the name of the firm, the logo, and the Swahili phrase: “[Smith Mackenzie] has very good things and excellent prints.” The progression of 1920s Smith, Mackenzie & Co. advertisements reveals that the firm increasingly associated themselves with printed cloth, including *kanga*, and relied more and more on their brand name and recognizable diamond-shaped logo, which also featured as an identifying sticker on their printed textiles.

The diamond-shaped logo, printed in full-color, was affixed to all Smith Mackenzie printed textile imports. Evidence of these stickers can be found on dozens if not hundreds of sample *kanga* in Vlisco’s archive and collection (Fig. 5-19). One is affixed to a *kanga* dated 23 February 1951, which was printed for the Dar es Salaam and Zanzibar markets by Vlisco. The recognizable logo features the firm’s name in Roman-script text at the top of the diamond and Devanagari-script at the bottom of the diamond, which likely repeats the firm’s name in standard Hindi. The crossed flags in the center of

the diamond proclaim the firm's national ties; at left is the British Union flag and at right is the British Royal Standard.

According to Smith, Mackenzie & Co. archives, four different ways of acquiring, handling, and selling commodities were practiced by the British merchant-converter firm in the 1930s; the second applies to their dealings in *kanga* textiles: “[The company] purchases goods and simultaneously sells to recognised dealers who sign a contract to take up the goods at a certain date ahead, generally on arrival. This is known as “Indent business”. Examples of this type are Dutch Khangas (piece goods) and certain Japanese piece goods.”⁹²

Unfortunately, much of the business archives of the east African branches of Smith, Mackenzie & Co. have been lost. Seventeen boxes of files, which were originally housed the Zanzibar archives and subsequently housed in the Dar es Salaam archives, have gone missing.⁹³ A letter in the company archives, part of the Guildhall Library Collection, now housed in the London Metropolitan Archives, gives indication an invitation to host files in the newly formed Oxford Colonial Records Project in 1964 (now Oxford University's Institute of Commonwealth Studies).⁹⁴ Mr. Ledger of the Zanzibar branch of Smith, Mackenzie & Co., responded positively to this invitation, but voiced concerns about the actual transfer of the documents. The letter is dated 28th January 1965, just one year following the violent Zanzibar Revolution. Although nominal peace

⁹² “Managing Director's Report for the Year Ended 30th June, 1937,” 1-2, 4, Smith Mackenzie and Company Limited, London Metropolitan Archives, CLC/B/123/MS28126.

⁹³ A list of the boxes of files is available at the Tanzanian National Archives in Dar es Salaam, but upon repeated request in November and December 2011, archivists informed the author they were “missing.”

⁹⁴ John J. Tawney, Oxford University, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, letter to Mr. A. C. Ledger of Smith, Mackenzie & Co. Ltd., Zanzibar, 25th September 1964,” Smith Mackenzie and Company Limited, London Metropolitan Archives, CLC/B/123/MS36469.

had been restored to the island through its political unity with mainland Tanganyika to form the present country of Tanzania, the author alludes to the limitations faced because of widespread suspicion from the new class of officials:⁹⁵

Now we come to the problem of getting them out as under present conditions everything is scrutinised and subject to prohibition. My personal effects involving ornaments, clothes, picture, books have been ruthlessly searched – by quite illiterate ‘officers’. I think the short-coming mentioned will help get them through particularly if I saw, as I propose to do, and is the case, that I am using them for re-writing our Company’s history. So I hope to write you shortly saying they are on their way.⁹⁶

The records never arrived in Oxford.⁹⁷ Perhaps the records will turn up in the future, but for the present, the archives of the east African branches of Smith, Mackenzie & Co., Ltd. must be assumed lost.⁹⁸

Kanga Designers and Sellers

Whereas European merchant converters can be considered the middlemen in the *kanga* trade that unites the entire spectrum of producers, consumers, distributors, shippers, and sellers, the role of the Indian trader can be seen as that of a middleman

⁹⁵ For an extended discussion of the Zanzibar Revolution and immediate aftermath, see Anthony Clayton, *The Zanzibar Revolution and its Aftermath* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1981), especially 50-155 and Esmond Bradley Martin, *Zanzibar: Tradition and Revolution* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1978), especially 55-74.

⁹⁶ A. C. Ledger of Smith Mackenzie & Co. Ltd., Zanzibar, letter to John J. Tawney, Oxford University, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, dated 28th January 1965,” 1-2, Smith Mackenzie and Company Limited, London Metropolitan Archives, CLC/B/123/MS36469.

⁹⁷ “I have been trying to find any information about the Smith Mackenzie files offered to this library as described in the letters from 1964 and 1965 which you sent. I have found a card recording the dealings with Smith Mackenzie in the 1960s and learnt that, despite the willingness shown to deposit files, nothing was ever received and in 1969 the Library decided not to take any further action.” “RE: Smith Mackenzie files,” Lucy McCann, Archivist, Bodleian Library of Commonwealth and African Studies at Rhodes House, Oxford University, email to author, 23 February 2012.

⁹⁸ The business archives of Smith, Mackenzie & Co. Ltd. are extremely piecemeal, and as is expected, record more of the financial triumphs and concerns of their east African branch offices than detailed information on the daily running of said branches. Still, the names of successful Indian merchants with whom Smith, Mackenzie & Co. worked are notated. See Smith Mackenzie and Company Limited, London Metropolitan Archives, CLC/B/123/M36447, vols. 1-3: General Correspondence.

within the colony. This class of merchants, who function as wholesalers and retailers of *kanga*, did not produce the commodity they sold to African consumers. However, Indian merchants provided the crucial link between African consumers and European manufacturers and suppliers; they were responsible for canvassing African tastes and communicating design preferences to representatives of merchant-converter firms. In this way, they placed orders for new *kanga*, hoping for success based on their intimate knowledge of market tastes. Sometimes, these Indian wholesalers and retailers also doubled as *kanga* designers.⁹⁹ Through networks of retailers, imported goods such as *kanga* found their way beyond Dar es Salaam to the far reaches of the colony and beyond. A short article from 1924, published in *The British South African Export Gazette*, concisely articulates the integral role of Indian traders in east Africa, and their relationship to all of the economic the players within the commodities trade:

It is not too much to say that the important native trade of Kenya Colony, Uganda and Tanganyika and, indeed, the greater part of East Africa could not be carried on without the services of the Indian merchant and retail distributor. The fact has to be recognised equally by the British manufacturer and shipper and by the European wholesale importing houses in the territories concerned, even though they may qualify the admission by adding certain criticisms. It is through the “duka” or Indian store, and the peripatetic trader, that the large native population is reached commercially and through them not only are imported goods carried to native consumers, but the latter are stimulated to various forms of industrial activity in order to find the wherewithal to buy the goods.¹⁰⁰

Indian merchants played the following parts within the *kanga* trade. First, an Indian designer, with links to European merchant converters, created a template for a new *kanga* design that would meet the needs and demands of a discerning clientele—east

⁹⁹ It is my understanding that *kanga* designers prior to the Independence era (specifically the nationalization of *kanga* production in 1967) were primarily of Indian-descent.

¹⁰⁰ “Indian Trader in East Africa,” *The British South African Export Gazette* 33, no. 385 (August 1924): 581, as cited in Janmohamed, “A History of Mombasa,” 134.

African women, who desired fashionable yet affordable textiles. Local Indian merchants in east Africa, primarily in Zanzibar, Mombasa, and Dar es Salaam, rose to fill this need. These local Indian traders of *kanga* created new designs and sold them to merchant converters. They may have also reordered older designs or commissioned a revamping of old designs in new colorways, with new sayings, or even to undercut a competitor's success.¹⁰¹ Information in the Vlisco archives confirms these recollections of east

African *kanga* designers:

The Khanga trade was characterized by a continuous demand for new designs, in contrast with West African markets, where a large part of the textile trade is driven in traditional patterns, which might for many decades be ordered again. Designing new Khanga designs for East Africa was for years a regular occupation of our artists, but this was done mainly on descriptions of the customers themselves, which were made on paper and developed in accordance with the technical requirements for engraving and printing in Helmond.¹⁰²

As has been previously stated, merchant converters were effectively the middlemen in *kanga* manufacturing—they bought designs locally in east Africa and commissioned the textile production abroad. Most often, merchant converters were headquartered in industrialized countries and kept branches in major colonial cities. Representatives at local branches sent newly purchased designs back to their headquarters. From there, the textile's production was commissioned, as affordably as possible. The merchant converters routinely enlisted the services of specialty manufacturers: cotton was sourced from cotton producing countries or colonies, shipped to industrial centers to be processed, spun and woven into cloth by industrial weavers, and bleached or dyed by

¹⁰¹ Drawn from interviews with K. G. Peera and his son, Ukera K. Peera, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, November and December 2011.

¹⁰² Gerritt Vollaard, "Vlisco Memories and Manufacturing," my translation of manuscript in Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands, October 1972, 3.

finishers. Then, the cloth was sent to specialty textile printers for surface design. Finally, the finished commodity was ready to be shipped to east Africa.

The merchant converters arranged for shipping between manufacturers and also from the final place of production to the branch office in east Africa. The new shipment of *kanga* designs was received by the merchant-converter branch office and subsequently delivered to the *kanga* designer, if he doubled as a *kanga* wholesaler. The distribution of new designs was the prerogative of the designer/wholesaler; many bales were sold to retail shops, who in turn sold scores to individual sellers. Many shops and stands also sold directly to customers. And each time a *doti* (pair) of *kanga* changed hands, the price climbed.

An example of an order placed by Messrs. Molu Peera & Co. with Smith, Mackenzie & Co. of Zanzibar for “four border Manchester *Kangas*” shows the typical features of a *kanga* order in 1916 (Fig. 5-20).¹⁰³ The order uses a standard format, with blanks filled in with hand-written details specific to the particular order. This letter dates to 14 October 1916, before Smith, Mackenzie & Co. secured an agreement with Dutch textile printer van Vlissingen & Co. following the end of World War I. Therefore, the order was placed with a Manchester firm, likely a member of the Calico Printers’ Association. The quantity (1,200 corges¹⁰⁴), type, (four border¹⁰⁵ Manchester *Kangas*),

¹⁰³ “Indent No. 116,” order of 1,200 corgas more or less of four border Manchester *Kangas* by Messrs. Molu Peera & Co. to Smith Mackenzie & Co. of Zanzibar, 14 October 1916, Smith Mackenzie and Company Limited, London Metropolitan Archives, CLC/B/123/MS36454.

¹⁰⁴ “Corges” or “corjas” is a measurement equivalent to scores, where one corge or corja equals twenty pieces of cloth. Where cloth is sold in pairs, one corgye or corja equals ten pairs, or twenty single pieces of cloth. “Import Trade: Cotton Piece Goods,” *Tanganyika Trade Report for the year ended 31st December 1926*, 3.

¹⁰⁵ This description of “four border” *kanga*, as opposed to borderless or two-border *kanga* affected the price of cloth dramatically.

quality (7660), number of colors (two) on a particular ground (Blueywhite), price (Rs. 18/12/- per corgo), duty (7½%) and delivery (Godown Zanzibar) were all noted in the first sentence.¹⁰⁶ Three designs were commissioned, details of shipment (in three lots), and the terms (C.O.D. immediately on arrival of the goods, strictly nett [*sic*] cash).

The order form also indicates that the three designs were due to be delivered to Smith, Mackenzie & Co. within fourteen days. This confirms the fact that designs were supplied by the Indian merchants, who doubled as sellers and designers of *kanga*. The order form also specifies that repeats of the design should be held back from sale for at least a month from the initial delivery. This may be to protect against the new design flooding the market, at which point its value might drop significantly.

Two particular *kanga* designers, both active in Dar es Salaam in the mid-1960s, deserve mention for their large contribution to the history of *kanga*. Most publications on the history of *kanga* mention the Indian trader Kaderdina Hajee Essak, known as Abdulla. He was the proprietor of Mali ya Abdulla on Biashara Street in Mombasa; the shop is still in business today. However, very little else has been written about the number of *kanga* sellers and designers, active in Dar es Salaam and Zanzibar from the late nineteenth century, through the twentieth century, continuing today. Through my research, I hope to shed light on two more of these dynamic figures and their families, who devoted their lives to the *kanga* trade.

¹⁰⁶ "Indent No. 116," order of 1,200 corgas more or less of four border Manchester *Kangas* by Messrs. Molu Peera & Co. to Smith Mackenzie & Co. of Zanzibar, date 14 October 1916, Smith Mackenzie and Company Limited, London Metropolitan Archives, CLC/B/123/MS36454. Note the mention of "blueywhite" ground color; this order coincides with the broad design history of early *kanga* textiles established in the previous chapter.

Miwani Mdogo and the Peera family

Mr. K. G. Peera, whose full name is Kassamali Gulamhussein Peera, was known by the nickname Miwani Mdogo, which means “Little Spectacles” in Swahili. Miwani Mdogo was born in Zanzibar on 4/5 January 1911 or 1912 to parents of Gujarati descent, who were also born in Zanzibar. He died in Dar es Salaam on 9 December 2011 at the age of 99 or 100 (Fig. 5-21). A photograph of Mr. Peera and his son, Mr. UK, was taken just four weeks before his death. He holds one of his *kanga* designs; a design that was subsequently gifted to me by his son following Mr. Peera’s death (Fig. 5-22). Mr. Peera, or Miwani Mdogo, as he was colloquially called, was actively involved in the *kanga* trade, as a designer, distributor, wholesaler, and retailer of imported textiles in Zanzibar between circa 1928 and 1964. He continued to design *kanga* until his final years. The Peera family was involved in the textile trade in Zanzibar from at least the turn of the twentieth century. According to Miwani Mdogo’s son,

Yes, my grandfather was actually born in Zanzibar. My great-grandfather as far as he was concerned, there were three brothers: Muraj Ukera, Mamad Ukera, and Peera Ukera. ... Two brothers’ boat broke in Mogadishu, Somalia. My great-grandfather Peera’s boat broke in Zanzibar, that’s why he stayed there. That’s one story. The other, they came to build the railway. We don’t know. Whether it was the railway they came to build in the time of the British Raj, Peera Ukera started in Zanzibar. That’s how we started then. Then Gulamhussein, my grandfather, he was born in Zanzibar. If you have been to Zanzibar, and you know the theatre, Majestic City, he was born just behind that.¹⁰⁷

Miwani Mdogo’s grandfather, Peera Ukera, emigrated from Gujarat to Zanzibar. It is unclear whether Peera Ukera was involved in the textile trade in the late nineteenth century. Miwani Mdogo’s father, G. P. Ukera, whose full name is Gulamhussein Peera Ukera, was a designer, importer, and seller of *kanga* and other textiles in Zanzibar in

¹⁰⁷ Ukera K. Peera, interview by author, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, 14 December 2011.

the first decades of the twentieth century. Like his father, Mr. Peera and his elder brother, H. G. Peera, whose full name is Hassanali Gulamhussein Peera, also made their livelihood trading textiles. Miwani Mdogo's elder brother was known by the nickname Miwani Mkubwa, which means "Big Spectacles" in Swahili. They acquired these nicknames from the Zanzibari women who were their customers, because both of the Mr. Peeras were bespectacled. In Swahili, "mdogo" is a diminutive referring to a living being, and means both "little" and "younger," while "mkubwa" is an augmentative referring to a living being, and means both "bigger" and "elder."

Around 1928/1930, Miwani Mdogo and his brother Miwani Mkubwa entered the textile business in Stonetown, beginning with just two pieces of *kikoi*, hand-woven cloth often featuring striped edges, popularly worn by men on the east African coast. At the height of their success, they owned and ran a 2000-square meter store with a variety of textile products, including *kanga*, *kitenge*,¹⁰⁸ *shuka*,¹⁰⁹ and *kikoi*.¹¹⁰ Both brothers functioned not only as sellers of textiles, but also as designers of *kanga*. Miwani Mdogo had the gift for designing *kanga*, and according to his son and daughter-in-law, was always combining patterns and colors to create new designs.¹¹¹ Miwani Mkubwa also

¹⁰⁸ *Kitenge* is the Swahili word referring to fancy prints, popular throughout West and Central Africa. This type of cloth was originally based on Indonesian wax batik designs, mechanically reproduced by Dutch textile printers beginning in the late nineteenth century. The term "fancy print" was adopted to differentiate more expensive cloth printed using a wax process (known as "wax-print") from the less expensive imitation prints. In Zambia, this type of cloth is called *chitenge*, which derives from the same Bantu word as *kitenge*, meaning cotton cloth or wrapper.

¹⁰⁹ *Shuka* is another manufactured and imported cloth popular throughout East Africa. *Shuka* translates as "wrapper" or "sheet," but they are easily identifiable by their pattern and typical color scheme. *Shuka* are often majority red in color with blue or black accents, and generally they resemble the plaid common to Scottish tartans. *Shuka* are most often worn by the Maasai, a semi-nomadic, pastoralist people who live near the border of present-day Kenya and Tanzania.

¹¹⁰ K.G. Peera, aka Miwani Mdogo, interview by author, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, 11 November 2011.

¹¹¹ Ukera K. and Zakiya Ukera Peera, interview by Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, 14 December 2011.

designed *kanga*, though he was more business-driven and tended to design *kanga* with veiled political themes.¹¹² Miwani Mdogo took pleasure in conceptualizing new designs, tweaking color combinations, and thought of himself first and foremost as a designer.

Miwani Mdogo's son fondly remembers cuttings of patterns from textiles, paper, and old *kanga* everywhere as a child.¹¹³ Many inspirations for shapes and designs come from everyday objects, such as beans, grain, *pili pili* (chili peppers), bananas, oranges, flowers (including tangerine flowers and jasmine), and cashew nuts (more universally recognized as paisley). The Swahili sayings printed on *kanga* came from a variety of sources. Sometimes, Miwani Mdogo and his wife would sit around the kitchen table thinking up new sayings. Other times, the Miwani brothers would pay two to three shillings or offer new *kanga* in exchange for new sayings Zanzibari women would provide, whether at their shop in Zanzibar or while on sales trips to *shambas* (farms).¹¹⁴

Miwani Mdogo's son was also involved in the textile business. Mr. UK, as he is colloquially known, was born in 1943 and played in various roles in the *kanga* trade, as a designer, seller, and local agent for the Japanese textile printers, Nishizawa & Co. from 1961-1975. At that time, Mr. UK went by the name Ukera Kassamali Gulamhussein.¹¹⁵ He deliberately did not use his family name of Peera, so that his Japanese employers would not be aware of his close familial connection to his father and uncle. He of course had an unfair advantage, as an agent for Nishizawa, a

¹¹² K.G. Peera, aka Miwani Mdogo, interview.

¹¹³ Ukera K. Peera, interview, 11 November 2011.

¹¹⁴ Ukera K. Peera, interview, 11 November 2011.

¹¹⁵ Any extant *kanga* designs by Mr. UK listed his name on the selvage edge as Ukera K. Gulamhussein. Ukera K. Peera, interview, 11 November 2011.

grandson, son and nephew to three successful *kanga* designers. Of course locally in Zanzibar and Dar es Salaam, everyone knew of his relations. During the height of his involvement with the *kanga* trade, Mr. UK was known locally by the nickname, Mtoto wa Miwani Mdogo, which is Swahili for “Child of Little Spectacles.” Today Mr. UK goes by the name Ukera K. Peera (Ukera Kassamali Peera) in deference to his father.

The Peera brothers developed their business in Zanzibar but became very well known in Dar es Salaam and Mombasa and supplied both through their business in Zanzibar until 1964. They were also very enterprising; although their shop was previously in Stone Town, Zanzibar, the brothers regularly traveled upcountry to sell *kanga* textiles. Miwani Mdogo’s son explained these trips from his experience in the late 1950s and early 1960s:

We would go by this boxcar, station wagon, sell them come back, midnight, normally we start at 2:30-3 in the afternoon, we would go up to the point of Zanzibar, Nungwi, we would come back, stopping every station, and we get back around 1 or 2 in the morning. I would not go all the time, we had people going out, my uncle, my mother’s brother.

(So would you sell *kanga* or was this the reservation?)

First when we go, we take the samples, we get the booking, they pay deposit, 25 cents or 50 cents, and then we would come back in Swahili months, *funga mosi*, the Swahili way of calendar, we would give them dates, also in English calendar. We would come back, you have your money ready, you give us your receipt and the balance and we give you the *kanga*. So again same area we would go twice: one time for booking, for reservation, and second time for delivery.¹¹⁶

To announce their return, Miwani Mdogo’s son explained how they heralded new arrivals:

We would put a gramophone, His Master’s Voice, a small one, you know, and then, a box one, a square, with record inside, and we would crank it,

¹¹⁶ Ukera K. Peera, interview, 14 December 2011.

and then put the plate, and it will play, you see? You know? Sometimes if we didn't have that, we would take a small transistor radio and use the local station, *Sauti Mbuya*, Zanzibar voice, if we didn't have the gramophone. Most of them Indian songs.¹¹⁷

Two other sources make note of another way new *kanga* designs were advertised. In her 1984 article, Abdillah writes about these *kanga* criers in the 1950s and 1960s:

Waswahili remember how 20 or 30 years ago each new *kanga* design, coming out as often as monthly, would be greeted with excitement. Big towns such as Zanzibar and Mombasa would have town-criers hired by merchants to walk around the narrow streets, chinking a brass tray for attention and calling out a description of the new *kanga*: its colour, its pattern, its central motif, its motto and which shop had it in stock. Women would compete to be seen first in the new design.¹¹⁸

Zawawi's personal reflections also confirm this observation, as she recalls a particular salesman, Hamadi Makongoro announcing the arrival of new *kanga* designs through the streets of Zanzibar.¹¹⁹ Fatma Shabaan Abdullah, Zanzibar artist and *kanga* designer, describes Makongoro's antics:

In Zanzibar in the 1940s, Homadi Makongoro, a comedian, was employed to advertise new *kanga* designs. Although there were many other design-vendors with their brass trays, he was spectacular in combining the art of dancing with that of costume. His pushcart was decorated with samples of new designs while he also adorned himself with colourful cloths and make-up to look like a woman. He would stop and dance to the rhythmic beating of two drums attached to the cart. One he had his audience of women, he danced vigorously before announcing the details of new designs. Women were said to have left their food burning in the kitchen and left babies to cry upon hearing Makongoro's drums.¹²⁰

Miwani Mdogo's son also expands on the demand for certain *kanga* designs:

¹¹⁷ Ukera K. Peera, interview, 14 December 2011.

¹¹⁸ Farouque Abdillah and Gill Shepherd, "I am like a *kanga*-cloth. I die in all my beauty," *Africa Now* (February 1984): 49.

¹¹⁹ Sharifa Zawawi, *Kanga: The Cloth that Speaks* (Bronx, NY: Azaniya Hills, 2005), 25.

¹²⁰ Fatma Shaaban Abdullah, "Reflection on a Symbol," *African Now* (February 1984), 51.

If a lady wanted a *kanga* and the husband did not provide it, oh my, there was no peace at home, there was no peace at home. The wife would not speak to the husband for days and days, and not cook, just throw herself at him, I want that *kanga*! So the husbands would come to us, Sell me this *kanga*! Upset my marriage, any price you want, you name it. Just tell us. So once in a while *kangas*, in that way, would reach 30 shillings! We would not sell, we as a distributor, importers, and wholesalers, we would give to other shops also. Those are the ones who know the shops that this *kanga* will be in demand, They would keep it behind till the time comes, they sell at a high price. They would keep some for such situation, not because we wanted a high price, but we knew the method and the system, that if these people didn't buy them, there would be a problem. If they didn't buy them, we would keep a few scores, 15-20 scores, for such situation, so there is no, otherwise they get upset with us! Somebody's a problem, and they know that I have it. All these kinds of things involved back then.¹²¹

The Peera brothers' success in the Zanzibari *kanga* trade was interrupted by revolution and political upheaval on the island. The Zanzibar Revolution took place in 1964, when Zanzibaris of mainland-descent overthrew the Sultan and the mainly Arab government of Zanzibar. Zanzibaris of Arab- and Indian-descent were targets of violence, as they were judged to be unfairly in control of government, trade, and business on the island. Miwani Mdogo escaped the island with only the clothes on his back, and tellingly, his most prized possession—a suitcase of *kanga* designs. The *kanga* designs illustrated and discussed in Chapter 7 came from this very suitcase.¹²² Miwani Mdogo did not save the final *kanga*, the printed cotton textile, but rather his working designs.

¹²¹ Interview with Mr. Ukera K. Peera, Dar es Salaam, 14 December 2011.

¹²² Twenty of these designs were gifted to me following Peera's death in December 2011; six of which I donated to the British Museum. I believe it is his son's hope that Peera's contribution to the history of *kanga* and his life's work will be memorialized through his life story and these remaining designs. It is my sincere hope that some posthumous recognition will come to Mr. Peera; one has already been featured in Christopher Spring's publication, *African Textiles Today* (London: British Museum, 2012), 128. One of Peera's designs also graces a *kanga* in the British Museum's collection; Af2003,21.19 was collected in Kenya in 2003. The selvage edge reads "Mali ya Miwani Mdogo (Saidina) Rivatex Eldoret Made in Kenya." This *kanga*, and few of Peera's mid-century designs, have already been displayed (along with a photograph of Peera, taken just four weeks before his death) in the temporary exhibition, *Social Fabric: African Textiles Today*, on view from 14 February – 21 April 2013 at the British Museum, London.

After fleeing Zanzibar in 1964, Miwani Mdogo made Dar es Salaam his home. Since 1966, he even lived in the same apartment in the Jiwan Hirji building located at 2 Mosque Street, which was once the center of the *kanga* trade in Dar es Salaam. Miwani Mdogo died on 9 December 2011 in Dar es Salaam, under a month shy of his 100th (or 101st) birthday. Miwani Mdogo and the Peera family remains wholly unknown outside of east Africa, though he has not gone without recognition in Zanzibar. Within the last five years, Miwani Mdogo was honored with the Dhow Award for contribution to Zanzibar, the first person of Indian-descent to be recognized with this honor. He was credited with giving Zanzibar the gift of *kanga*, and some of his extant designs (in the form of the finished printed cotton textile) went on display at the National Museum and House of Wonders in Stone Town. His son was interviewed by Zanzibari television and accepted the award on his father's behalf, as Miwani Mdogo was too frail to travel to Zanzibar.

It is said that Miwani Mdogo's designs are still prized by those who remember him and his renown, and any of his original *kanga* (marked by his name in the selvage edge) are snapped up by those knowledgeable few.¹²³ Miwani Mdogo was friends with his more famous Mombasa counterpart, Abdulla, and considered him a fellow *kanga* designer, but added, "He lacked attention to color combination and detail to make *kanga* really pop."¹²⁴ Perhaps due to the longevity of Abdulla's shop, and the larger political forces that interrupted Miwani Mdogo's *kanga* career in Zanzibar, Abdulla is better known outside of east Africa. Further research into Japanese-printed *kanga* may

¹²³ Farouque Abdela, interview by author, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, 30 November 2011.

¹²⁴ K.G. Peera, aka Miwani Mdogo, interview, 11 November 2011.

uncover more of Miwani Mdogo's designs and restore his contribution the twentieth-century *kanga* design.¹²⁵

Jiwan Hirji: The Khanga King

Today, the *kanga* trade in Dar es Salaam is centered on Uhuru Street. The street is lined with wholesalers, retailers, and petty traders all selling *kanga* and lesser amounts of *kitenge*. However, this was not always the center of the *kanga* trade. In fact, around the mid-twentieth century, *kanga* trade was centered on Mosque Street. The streets are only blocks from one another in the commercial Uhindini (place of the Indians) district of Dar es Salaam.¹²⁶ One Deco-era building in particular, the Jiwan Hirji Building, located at 2 Mosque Street, attests to the prominence of the *kanga* trade and one of its largest merchants in Dar es Salaam.

The Jiwan Hirji Building was built by and named for the proprietor. Hirji also was known colloquially by another name: the "Khanga King." Correspondence in the Vlisco archive contains a letter dated 1965 on letterhead from the firm, Jiwan Hirji & Sons, Ltd. (Fig. 5-23). The letterhead itself displays the founding year of the firm (1899), an image of the building that housed its headquarters (located at 2 Mosque Street), the firm's logo to the left (a crown) with van Vlissingen's logo to the right (the monogram VH, for Vlissingen Helmond).¹²⁷ The building itself still stands as a testament to the firm's success, even if the *kanga* trade has relocated (Fig. 5-24).

¹²⁵ See Christopher Spring, *African Textiles Today* (London: British Museum Press, 2012) for publication of one of Miwani Mdogo's designs, and the accompanying exhibition, *Social Fabrics: African Textiles Today*, on view between 14 February and 21 April 2013 at the British Museum.

¹²⁶ More will be said regarding the racially based city planning first implemented by German colonial officials and then continued by British colonial officials in the next chapter.

¹²⁷ This VH serves as a trademark and is one of the defining characteristic of Vlisco-printed *kanga*: a small "VH" can be seen in the selvage edge of their products.

Jiwan Hirji began his commercial venture in 1899, as the company's letterhead indicates. In 1938, minutes from a Smith, Mackenzie & Co. board meeting recorded a partnership between the merchant-converter firm and four of the largest *kanga* sellers in Dar es Salaam.¹²⁸ Minutes from a Smith, Mackenzie & Co. board meeting that took place two months later confirms the "Khanga Purchase Agreement" with Jiwan Hirji and *kanga*-seller associates in Dar es Salaam.¹²⁹

The Hirji fortune was indeed made from *kanga*, according to an unpublished manuscript of *kanga* recollections in the Vlisco Archive:

The Khanga trade's steep quotations and distant shipping continued to put pressure on the prices in Helmond, and over the years the thought aroused that better prices in East Africa were not feasible for the traders. Yet afterwards, the accuracy of this conclusion was highly questionable, because this writer [witnessed] a confidential conversation and met with

¹²⁸ "To report that the Branch Manager at Dar-es-Salaam, in an endeavour to minimise competition in this trade, between the Indian merchants there, had been successful in bringing about the formation of a partnership between four of the largest merchants, and to mention that an agreement had been completed between the partnership, Messrs. Jiwan, Ladha, Hasham & Co, and the Company, which provides for all purchases of khangas by the partnership being made from this Company, the partnership receiving a commission of 1%, which will be held by this Company as security for sales, until it has accumulated to Shs 250,000. The agreement also provides that the buyers shall deposit with the Company, Shs 100,000 as additional security, against any liabilities incurred by the purchases, such sum being increased by 1/3d. per corge of khangas arriving in East Africa after the date of the agreement. [The Agreement, copy of which was produced, was approved and the Managing Director was asked to write to Mr. Stone, the Branch Manager at Dar es Salaam, congratulating him on the successful result of his efforts]," from "Agenda for the Board Meeting of Smith Mackenzie and Company, Limited, to be held at 122 Leadenhall Street, London, EC3, on Wednesday, 30th November, 1938, at 3pm," item 12: Khanga Trade, Smith Mackenzie and Company Limited, London Metropolitan Archives, CLC/B/123/MS28121.

¹²⁹ "To report that in order to give the Company additional security against breach of the Khanga Purchase Agreement between this Company and Messrs Jiwan, Ladha, Hashm & Co., Jiwan Hirji, one of the members of the Partnership, had agreed to transfer two plots of land, owned by him and situated in Dar-es-salaam to the Company. To place on the table a draft conveyance formally transferring the property and to resolve: 'That the local Board be authorised to sign and seal the conveyance between Jiwan, Ladha, Hasham & Co., of the first part, Jiwan Hirji of the second part, and the Company of the third part, formally transferring two plots of land situated in Dar-es-Salaam, and owned by Jiwan Hirji, to the Company as security against breach of the Khanga Purchase Agreement between his firm and the Company.' To mention that as soon as the conveyance has been completed and the title deeds of the property handed over to the Company, it is proposed to hand Jiwan Hirji a release to the equitable mortgage over the properties, which was granted by him in July, 1938," from "Agenda for the Board Meeting of Smith Mackenzie and Company, Limited, to be held at 122 Leadenhall Street, London, EC3, on Wednesday, 25th January, 1939 at 3pm," Khanga Trade, Smith Mackenzie and Company Limited, London Metropolitan Archives, CLC/B/123/MS28121.

surprise that the distributors of Smith Mackenzie, with whom we were in direct contact with in 1948, their fathers traded with 100% profit, and their family fortune [had Khanga] to thank! In those earlier times there was no market research on our part, and visit to these areas never happened, but [if] this case is true, then had the actual market value of Khangas at that time came to light then the factory [would have] had more lucrative basic work.¹³⁰

A decade later, Hirji was serving as the key representative for the British merchant-converter firm, Smith, Mackenzie & Co. As Vlisco printed all of Smith, Mackenzie & Co.'s *kanga*, Jiwan Hirji also developed a working relationship with the Dutch textile printer. The relationship even translated into a visit to the factory in Helmond in 1948.¹³¹ Certainly Hirji's visit can be seen to be a mark of how important, successful, and integral the textile seller was to the *kanga* trade in Dar es Salaam and colonial Tanganyika more generally. According to the unpublished memoirs of Vlisco employee G. Vollaard, "The man had never been outside Tanganyika and thus made the first trip of his life. He was accompanied by his youngest son and was full of admiration for the Helmond production unit."¹³² Sadly, Hirji never made it back to Dar es Salaam, as his plane crashed on his departure from Brussels en route to London. His son survived the disaster, and the family business was continued by Hirji's eldest son Hussein, aged 22 at the time.¹³³ It seems more likely that these heirs are actually Hirji's grandsons, not sons. If so, this succession tallies with a probate notice dealing with their father's estate. According to the 28 February 1961 edition of the Kenya Gazette, Tajdin Jiwan Hirji of Dar es Salaam "...died at Leopoldville in Belgian Congo on the 9th day of

¹³⁰ Vollaard, "Vlisco Memories and Manufacturing," 5.

¹³¹ Vollaard, "Vlisco Memories and Manufacturing," 5.

¹³² Vollaard, "Vlisco Memories and Manufacturing," 5.

¹³³ Vollaard, "Vlisco Memories and Manufacturing," 5.

August, 1958,” and his sons are identified as Hussein Jiwan Hirji and Gulabanu Tajdin Jiwan Hirji.¹³⁴

In any case, the working relationship between Hirji’s *kanga* sales in Dar es Salaam and van Vlissingen & Co.’s *kanga* printing in Helmond continued to flourish. Hussein Jiwan Hirji made frequent trips to Helmond and contributed new ideas and marketing strategies to ensure van Vlissingen and Smith Mackenzie *kanga* textiles held their share of the market in east Africa until the independence era.¹³⁵ By 1965, Jiwan Hirji & Sons, Ltd., (and likely Hussein Jiwan Hirji, when closely examining the signature) was corresponding directly with van Vlissingen & Co. (Fig. 5-23). This letter discusses “particular efforts we are making on advertisement,” including a recent successful fashion show of dresses tailored from “V.H. Kitenge and V.H. Khangas” and a forthcoming “beach-wear show.”¹³⁶ The increased popularity of kitenge is also mentioned, the type of cloth Vlisco is most associated with across West and Central Africa. Furthermore, the attendance of Mrs. Nyerere, “wife of our President,” augments the status of the firm Jiwan Hirji & Sons, Ltd. The penultimate line also hopes that “our President Dr. Nyerere” will be in attendance at their next fashion show.¹³⁷ The letterhead indicates the firm Jiwan Hirji & Sons, Ltd. functioned as general merchants

¹³⁴ “Gazette Notice No. 956: In Her Majesty’s Supreme Court of Kenya at Nairobi, Probate and Administration: Cause No. 225 of 1960,” *Kenya Gazette* (28 February 1961): 246.

¹³⁵ Furthermore, the working relationship between van Vlissingen and the Hirji companies appears to be responsible for introducing Java prints, known locally as *vitenge*, to east Africa. “During the years 1960, 1961, and 1963, an intensive sales promotional campaign was conducted in the [east African] region by Messrs. Van Lokeren Campaign and H. F. Vlissingen; ... Mr. Hussein Hirji subsequently rendered outstanding service in sales. On his frequent visits to Helmond, he bought assorted lots of four-yard pieces to the market to test, which later became regular orders,” Vollaard, “Vlisco Memories and Manufacturing,” 9.

¹³⁶ Hussein Jiwan Hirji of Jiwan Hirji & Sons, Ltd., letter to Messrs. P. F. van Vlissingen & Co.’s Katoenfabrieken, dated 21st May, 1965. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands.

¹³⁷ Hirji to P. F. van Vlissingen & Co.

and commission agents, dealing in “piecegoods, building materials, provisions tea, khangas, and scrap metals.”¹³⁸

A page of photographs enclosed with the letter is also instructive in assessing the importance of the firm Jiwan Hirji & Sons, Ltd. (Fig. 5-25). The first photograph likely shows Hussein Jiwan Hirji and his son, the grandson and likely great-grandson of the founder of the firm, Jiwan Hirji. They wear *kanga* festooned with a photograph of the first president of independent Tanganyika/Tanzania, Julius Nyerere, which likely dates the photographs to the early 1960s. In the second photograph, a caption notes that Husein [sic] Jiwan Hirji appears with K. F. Sobhan, the High Commissioner in East Africa. Hirji is holding another piece of the *kanga* with Nyerere pictured. In the third photograph, Hussein Jiwan Hirji appears with his family in front of their “Khangas King” showroom, likely in the Jiwan Hirji Building located at 2 Mosque Street.¹³⁹ Various *kanga* can be seen hanging in the background, and all members of the family wear the same Nyerere cloth, printed in different colorways and worn tailored or wrapped in different configurations.

Countless examples in Vlisco’s archive and collection give further evidence of the success of Jiwan Hirji, and the company’s successful business relationship with Vlisco. Vlisco began identifying their printed textiles with the use of their monogram along the width of each cloth in the 1910s. A “VH” with a circle around the V was printed on each of their products. By the mid-1930s, the company Jiwan Hirji began commissioning designs with their own monogram, usually integrated into the inner corners of select

¹³⁸ Hirji to P. F. van Vlissingen & Co.

¹³⁹ Incidentally, Miwani Mdogo, a designer and seller of *kanga*, moved into an apartment in this very building in 1966. As this street was the center of the *kanga* trade in the 1960s, it was a logical place to relocate.

kanga designs. The monogram features the letters HJH, with one H incorporating a central H and J. These are the initials of Hussein Jiwan Hirji, likely the founder's grandson and the director of the company from 1938. Both of these monograms served as trademarks or logos for each company and an assurance of the quality each name brand commanded. Two examples from 1951 make plain Jiwan Hirji's involvement in the commissioning, and likely designing, of new *kanga* textiles (Fig. 5-26). In the example at the left, the bold (Hussein) Jiwan Hirji monogram is displayed in corner medallions within the thick, continuous border. In the example at the right, the central motif of the *kanga* is a telephone, which conveniently lists the firm's name and address near the bottom of the phone, and the telephone number in the center of the rotary dial. Both textiles were commissioned in December 1951 for the Dar es Salaam market.

Although little information has been published on the importance of the Khanga King and Miwani Mdogo, this section has demonstrated a small portion of their contributions to the *kanga* trade during the mid-twentieth century. Jiwan Hirji and K.G. Peera and their families clearly played a dynamic role in *kanga* design and sales in Dar es Salaam and Zanzibar throughout the first two-thirds of the twentieth century.

This chapter has described the network of players involved in the *kanga* trade, who were primarily active during the colonial period (ca. 1885-1964) in Zanzibar and Dar es Salaam. The involvement of two major European textile printers, Dutch P.F. van Vlissingen & Co. (Vlisco) and British Calico Printers' Association (CPA), was discussed. Next, the participation of two European merchant-converter firms was considered, the Hamburg-based firm Wm. O'Swald & Co. prior to World War I, and the British firm, Smith, Mackenzie & Co., Ltd. after World War I. Finally, two key mid-twentieth-century

designers and wholesalers of *kanga* who have not featured in written histories to date were presented, Miwani Mdogo and the Peera family in Zanzibar, and the Khanga King and the Jiwan Hirji family in Dar es Salaam. The networks discussed were effectively ended by the advent of local production of *kanga* textiles in Dar es Salaam, beginning in late 1967. Local production, together with protectionist policies of a newly independent nation state, completely changed the dynamics of the *kanga* trade. My purpose here has been to demonstrate the convergence of players involved in *kanga* manufacture and trade during the colonial era in Zanzibar and Dar es Salaam; the next chapter will chronicle the chronology of participants within the manufacturing history of *kanga* textiles.

Figures

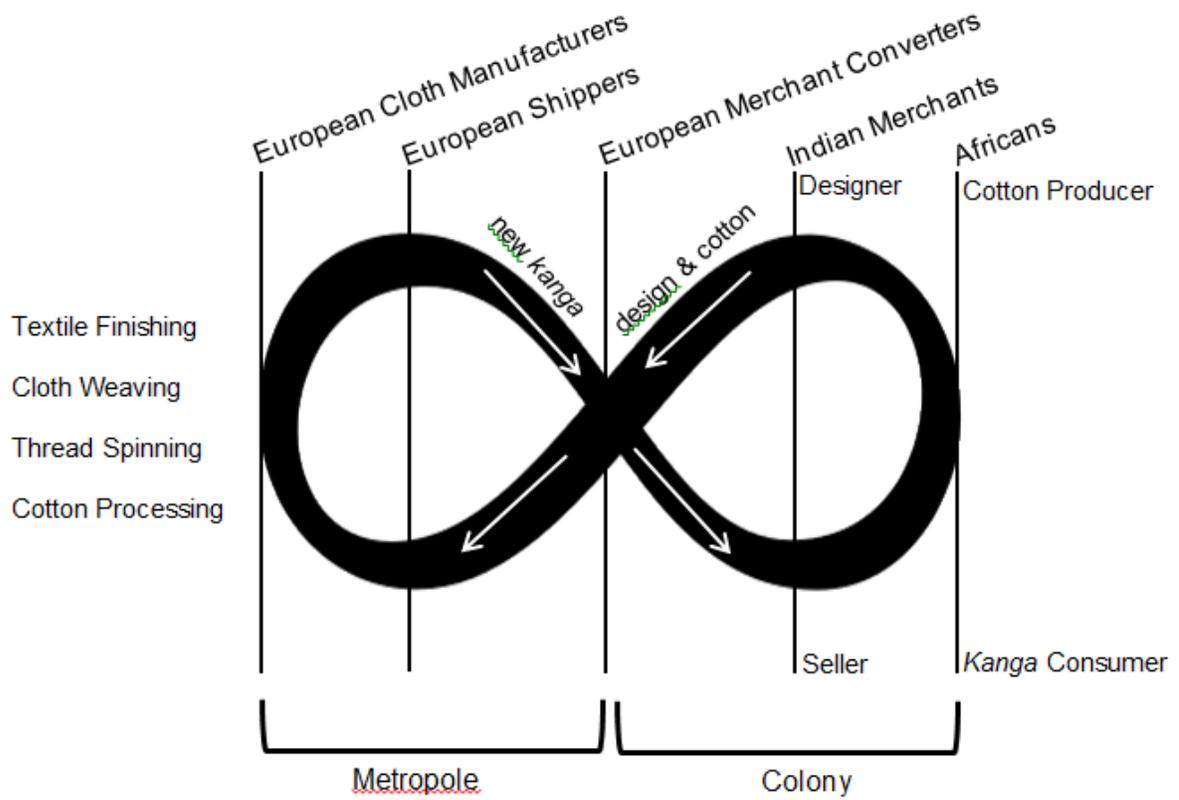
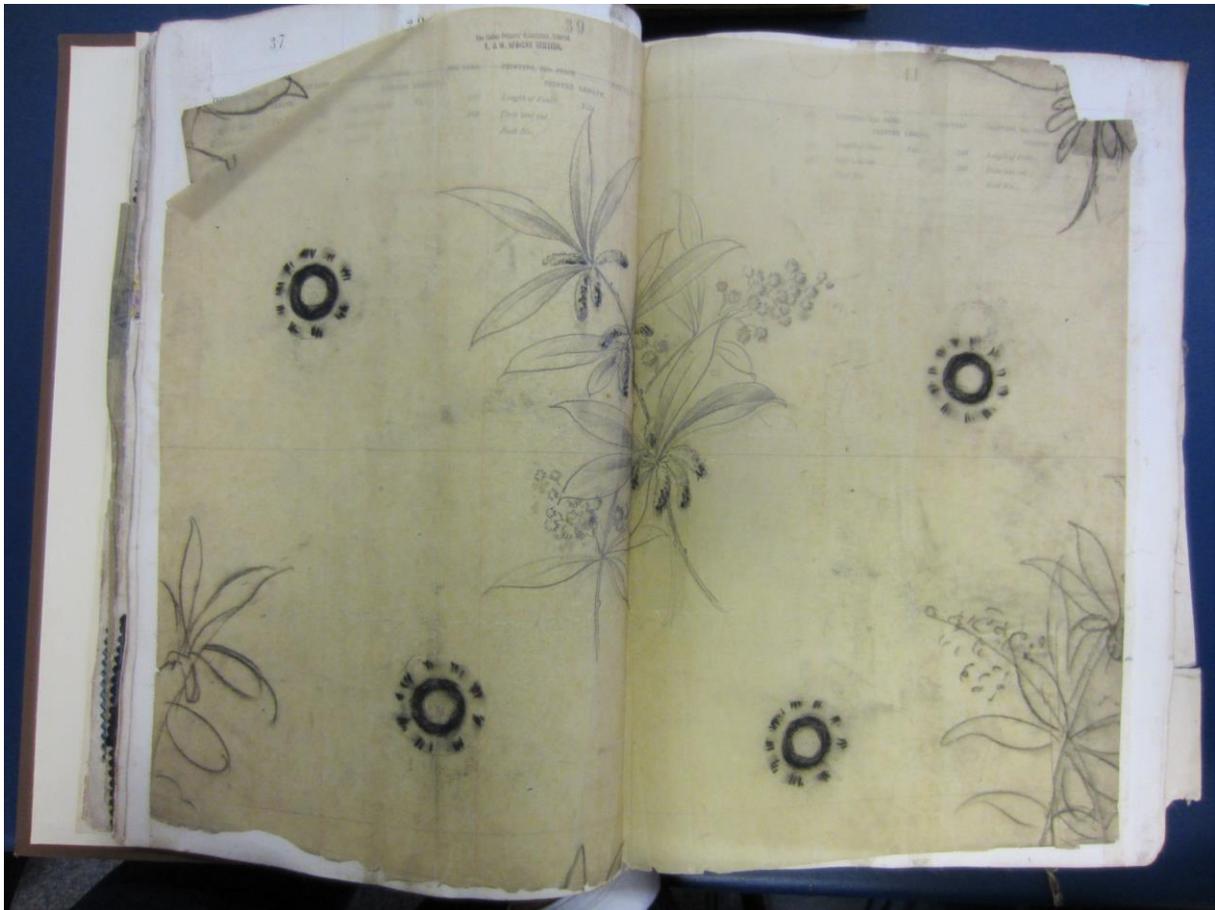
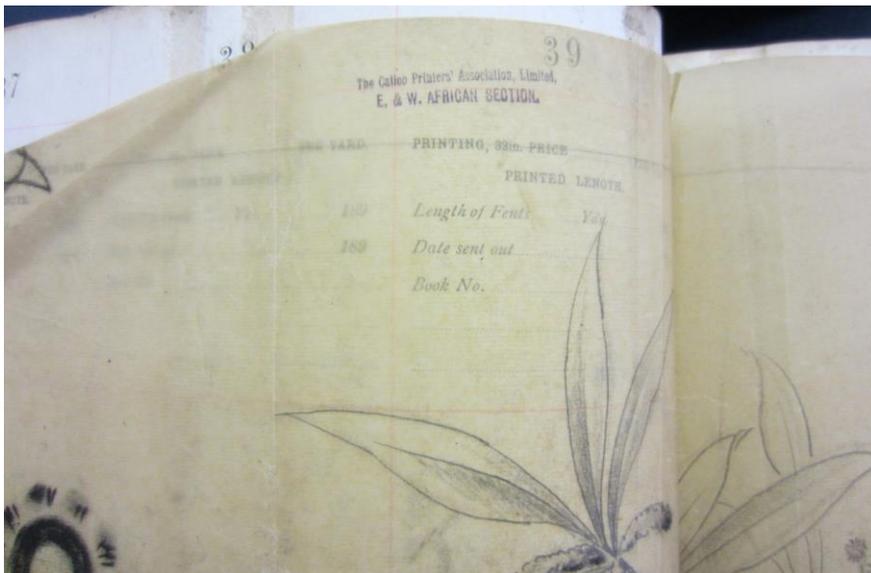


Figure 5-1. Commercial organization of *kanga* production, distribution, sale, and consumption during the colonial period in Tanganyika. Created by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.



A



B

Figure 5-2. Calico Printers' Association hand-drawn design for the African market. A) Entire design. B) Detail of top center showing intended destination. Located in *Calico Printers Patterns Vol. 1*. Manchester Metropolitan University Special Collections.



Figure 5-3. "Probably the Simplest Garment in the World is the *Kanga*, of which Lancashire sends Millions to the Tropics. It is a Simple Development from a Piece of Cotton Designed to be cut into six Pocket Handkerchiefs. One is Wrapped Round the Body and Another Thrown over the Shoulders." Photograph printed to accompany article, "Designs for All: Customs and Crazes," in special section, "Textile Finishing Trades: Bleaching, Dyeing, Calico Printing and Finishing." *Manchester Guardian Commercial* 17 May 1923.



Figure 5-4. CPA *kanga*, 1940s. Compound border, no text, in an orange-black-white-and-green colorway. T.2001.181, Whitworth Art Gallery, University of Manchester. Photograph by James Ryan.



Figure 5-5. CPA *kanga*, 1940s. Tulip motif, continuous border, no text, in a yellow-black-and-blue colorway. T.2001.182, Whitworth Art Gallery, University of Manchester. Photograph by James Ryan.

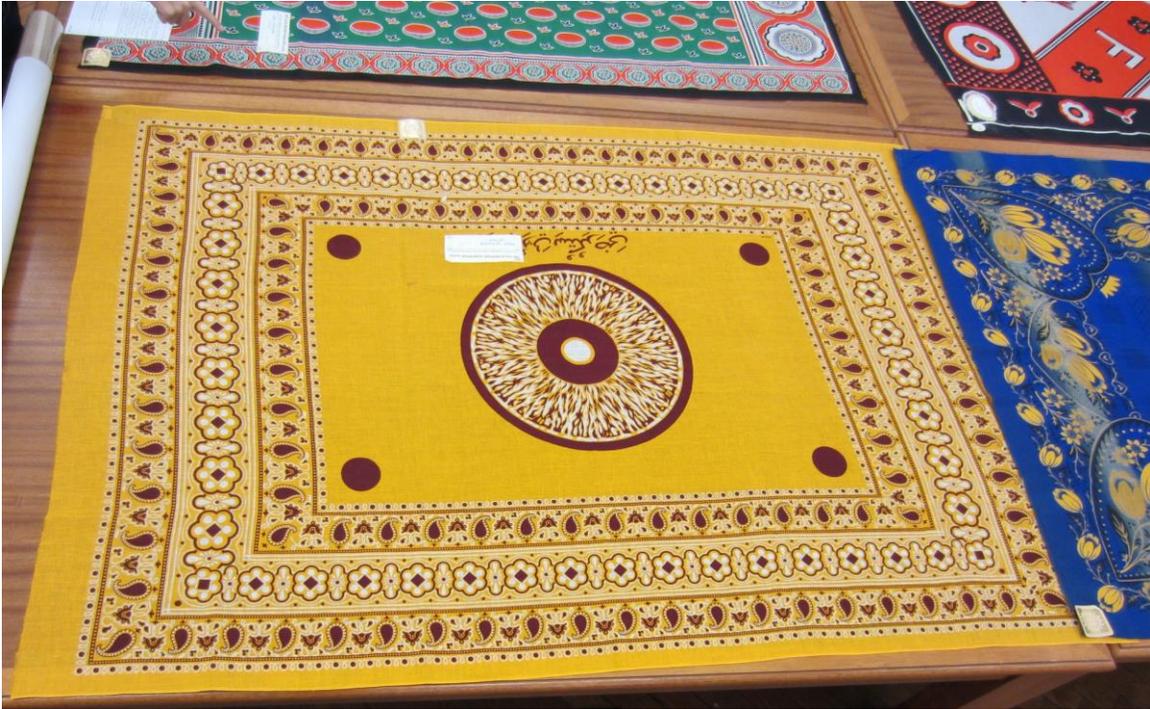


Figure 5-6. CPA *kanga* with continuous border, 1940s. Arabic-script Swahili text, in a white-maroon-and-yellow colorway. T.2001.177, Whitworth Art Gallery, University of Manchester. Photograph by James Ryan.



Figure 5-7. CPA *kanga*, handled by Ogdens, 1940s. Continuous border, Arabic-script Swahili text, in a red-black-and-white colorway. T.2001.179, Whitworth Art Gallery, University of Manchester. Photograph by James Ryan.



Figure 5-8. CPA *kanga*, handled by Ogdens, 1940s. Leaf and heart motif, with compound border, no text, in a maroon-white-and-yellow colorway. T.2011.180, Whitworth Art Gallery, University of Manchester. Photograph by James Ryan.



Figure 5-9. CPA member firm Dehns *kanga* printed for Portuguese East South Africa (Mozambique), 1915. Lion motif with continuous border, no text, in a red-black-and-white colorway. T.10943.1, Whitworth Art Gallery, University of Manchester. Photograph by James Ryan.



Figure 5-10. CPA member firm Dehns *kanga*, 1915. Fish and eight-pointed star motif, Arabic-script Swahili phrase, in red-navy-and-white colorway. Selvage edge: "Sikukuu Reg. Great Britain." Whitworth Art Gallery, University of Manchester. Photograph by James Ryan.



Figure 5-11. CPA member firm Dehns *kanga*, 1935. Rooster motif with continuous border, Arabic-script Swahili text, in a black-white-and-red colorway. Selvage edge: "Fundi Sikukuu Reg. Great Britain." T.10943.3, Whitworth Art Gallery, University of Manchester. Photograph by James Ryan.



Figure 5-12. CPA member firm Dehns *kanga*, 1939. Mango and floral motif with continuous border, Roman-script Swahili text, in a navy-white-and-orange colorway. Selvage edge: “Fundi Sikukuu Reg. Great Britain.” T.10943.4, Whitworth Art Gallery, University of Manchester. Photograph by James Ryan.



Figure 5-13. CPA member firm Dehns square “kaffir mat,” 1935. Feather and tassel motif, no text, in a red-white-and-black colorway. T.10943.7, Whitworth Art Gallery, University of Manchester. Photograph by James Ryan.



Figure 5-14. CPA member firm Dehns *lamba hoany*, 1955. Floral and paisley motif with continuous border, Roman-script Malagasy text, in a gold-maroon-and-white colorway. T.10943.5, Whitworth Art Gallery, University of Manchester. Photograph by James Ryan.



Figure 5-15. S. Schwabe & Co. Ltd. *kanga*, no date. British Royal Air Force motif with compound border, no Swahili text, in a orange-navy-and-white colorway. Selvage edge: "Sikukuu Reg. Great Britain." No accession number. Whitworth Art Gallery, University of Manchester. Photograph by James Ryan.



Figure 5-16. S. Schwabe & Co. Ltd. uncut *kanga*, June 1946. Botanical motif with compound border, Arabic-script Swahili text, in a orange-white-and-navy colorway. Selvage edge: “Fundi Sikukuu Reg. Great Britain.” No accession number, Whitworth Art Gallery, University of Manchester. Photograph by James Ryan.



Figure 5-17. S. Schwabe & Co. Ltd. *kanga*, June 1946. Stripe and paisley motif with continuous border, Arabic-script Swahili text, in a black-white-and-red colorway. Selvage edge: “Sikukuu Reg. Great Britain.” T.2001.100 (?), Whitworth Art Gallery, University of Manchester. Photograph by James Ryan.



A



B

Figure 5-18. Smith, Mackenzie & Co. advertisements in *Mambo Leo*. A) October 1923 with two logos and text. B) January 1928 with diamond logo and statement. East Africana Collection, University of Dar es Salaam Library. Photograph by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.



Figure 5-19. Smith, Mackenzie & Co. diamond-shaped logo affixed to *kanga* sample, 23 February 1951. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photograph by James Ryan.

Indent No. *116*

Zanzibar.

dated

14 October 1916.

Sold this day to Messrs. Molu Peera & Co. *1,200*

corges more or less of four border Manchester Kangas of quality 7660 in two colours on Blueywhite ground; at the price of Rs. 18/12/- per corge, $7\frac{1}{2}\%$ Duty Paid delivered Godown Zanzibar, war risk included.

Designs:- to *Three* only.

Shipment:- to be in *three* lots, *following the arrival of land 109 as near possible as possible; commencing* about July but this date is in no way guaranteed.

Terms. C. O. D immediately on arrival of the goods, strictly nett cash.

Messrs. Smith, Mackenzie & Co. are neither responsible for slight differences in colours and /or designs, and the quality of the colours; nor for shipments not completed, lost and/or delayed owing to "force majeure" causes.

Three designs to be handed S.M & Co. within *14 days* from date.

Repeats:- The 200 corges of *each* design here indented for, as repeats; are, if possible, not to be shipped until after one month after the shipment of the original lot of 400 corges of *each* design. If *this* cannot be done and all 600 corges arrive by one steamer, the 200 corges of repeats are not to be sold or the sample made public by Smith, Mackenzie & Co. until after one month from the date of the arrival of the goods.

Copy *[Signature]*

Figure 5-20. Order placed by Messrs. Molu Peera & Co. with Smith, Mackenzie & Co. of Zanzibar for "four border Manchester Kangas," 14 October 1916. CLC/B/123/MS36454, Smith Mackenzie and Company Limited, London Metropolitan Archives. Photograph by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.



Figure 5-21. K. G. Peera (right) holding one of his *kanga* designs, with his son, Ukera K. Peera. Note the suitcase full of *kanga* designs on the floor. Photograph taken in his home in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, on 11 November 2011, just four weeks prior to his death on 9 December 2011. Photograph by James Ryan.



Figure 5-22. *Kanga* design by K. G. Peera. Note the instructions hand-written in Gujarati. Gifted to the author by designer's son, Ukera K. Peera in December 2011. Collection of James and MacKenzie Ryan. Photograph by James Ryan.

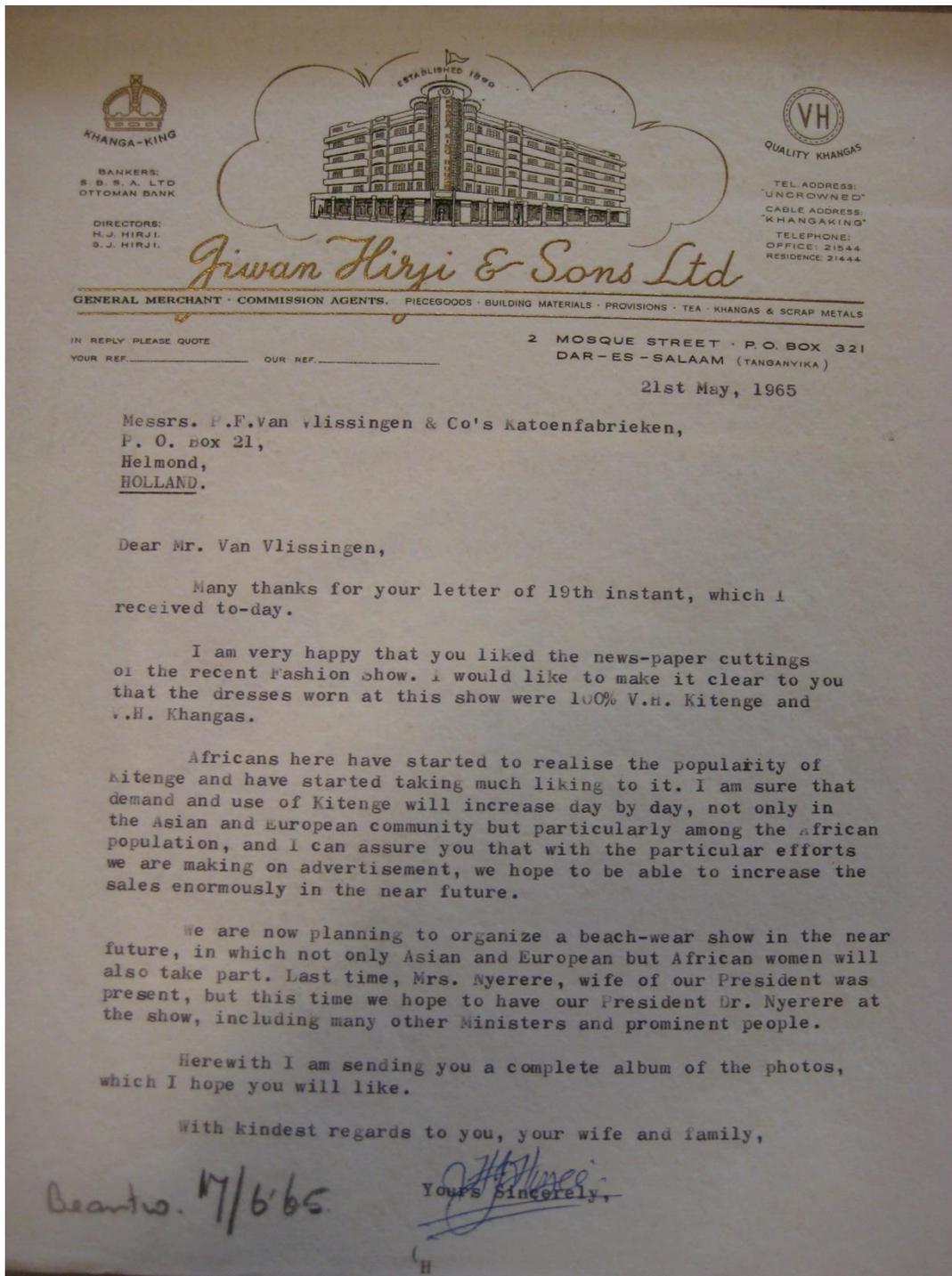


Figure 5-23. Hussein Jiwan Hirji of Jiwan Hirji & Sons, Ltd. to Messrs. P. F. van Vlissingen & Co.'s Katoenfabrieken, 21 May 1965. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photograph by James Ryan.



Figure 5-24. Jiwan Hirji Building, 2 Mosque Street, Dar es Salaam. 15 December 2011.
Photograph by James Ryan.



*Husein Jiwan Hirji en K.F. Sobhan
High Commissioner in E. Africa*

Figure 5-25. Photographs of Hussein Jiwan Hirji of Jiwan Hirji & Sons, Ltd. early 1960s. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photograph by James Ryan.



A



B



C

Figure 5-26. Vlisco *kanga* commissioned by Jiwan Hirji & Sons, Ltd. 1951. A) *Kanga* in foreground shows Hussein Jiwan Hirji monogram in corner medallions. *Kanga* in background shows telephone advertising Jiwan Hirji & Sons, Ltd. firm. B) Detail of left half of telephone motif. C) Detail of right half of telephone motif. Not the firm's contact information is integrated into design. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photographs by James Ryan.

CHAPTER 6 A CHRONOLOGY OF *KANGA* SUPPLY: A MANUFACTURING HISTORY

As the last chapter established, the history of *kanga* textiles, including their manufacture, distribution, sale, and consumption, involved many players, all whom had a stake in the success of the venture. Because of the global nature of *kanga* production, changes in international relations affected *kanga* trade and manufacture. In this chapter, I will trace the chronology of *kanga* manufacture. I will begin with a brief outline of the history of Dar es Salaam; as the east African locus for the *kanga* trade for much of the twentieth century, Dar es Salaam provides the backdrop for much of the sale and consumption of *kanga*. I will next provide a timeline of *kanga* consumption, focusing on two eras: German East Africa, from approximately 1895 to 1916, followed by Colonial Tanganyika, from approximately 1920-1961. Competition between nations of manufacture and distribution will be noted, until continuous records ceased in 1981. By using colonial and governmental reports, statistical data, business records, and contemporaneous travelogues, I will show how manufacture and distribution of *kanga* textiles changed hands between competing nations throughout the twentieth century. In doing so, we see that consumers in east Africa and manufacturers in industrialized nations interacted and were interconnected. While consumption of *kanga* textiles in Dar es Salaam and Tanganyika generally increased throughout the twentieth century, manufacture of these textile commodities shifted, showing constant competition by foreign powers to capture the market in this regionally popular cloth. Not at all a story of

helpless colonial consumers marginalized by dominant industrialized powers, the manufacturing history of *kanga* textiles instead suggests a global interdependence.¹

Brief History of Dar es Salaam

Dar es Salaam is located on the east coast of present-day Tanzania. Although not the political capital of the country, it is the major city and the economic, cultural, and for all intents and purposes, the de facto capital of the east African country. While a booming city of nearly four million people today,² Dar es Salaam had humble beginnings.

A relatively young city, Dar es Salaam was founded in 1862 by the Omani sultan of Zanzibar.³ In 1865 or 1866, Omani Sultan Majid bin Said began building a new town on a natural harbor on the coast of mainland east Africa. British colonial anthropologist J.A.K. Leslie chronicled the history of Dar es Salaam in his 1957 *Survey of Dar es Salaam*. He states that Sultan Majid bin Said gained the permission of local Zaramo chiefs, who were living in the area in small villages, by presenting them with presents of cloth and money.⁴ Cloth, thus, was a part of this city's culture from its very inception. In addition to the Zaramo, other Africans living in and around what was to become Dar es

¹ Jeremy Prestholdt, *Domesticating the World: African Consumerism and the Genealogies of Globalization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 4.

² The CIA World Factbook lists the population of Dar es Salaam at 3.207 million in 2009. A recent article in the BBC Magazine estimates the population of this major city nearer to four million in July 2012. "Tanzania," *The World Factbook 2012* (Washington, DC: Central Intelligence Agency, 2012) and Joe Boyle, "Dar es Salaam: Africa's next megacity?" *BBC News Magazine* (30 July 2012).

³ James R. Brennan, "The Emerging Metropolis: A History of Dar es Salaam, circa 1862-2000," in *Dar es Salaam: Histories from an Emerging African Metropolis*, ed. James R. Brennan, Andrew Burton, and Yusuf Lawi (Dar es Salaam: Mkuki na Nyota Publishers, in association with the British Institute in Eastern Africa, Nairobi, 2007), 14.

⁴ J. A. K. Leslie, *A Survey of Dar es Salaam* (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), 19.

Salaam include members of the Shomvi and Shirazi ethnic groups.⁵ The sultan brought slaves from the island of Kilwa⁶ to clear the land, Arabs from Hadramaut⁷ to develop coconut plantations, and Indian merchants to promote trade.⁸ According to Brennan, the town's name is likely from the Arabic for "Harbor of Peace" (*bandar as-salâm*).⁹

Dar es Salaam was founded to counter the economic power of Bagamoyo, a coastal town about forty miles to the north.¹⁰ However, for the first half-century of its existence, Dar es Salaam struggled to compete with the more established and prosperous Bagamoyo. The town's founding coincided with a key period of European exploration and missionary zeal.¹¹ Many European visitors passed through the young town on their way to explore the interior, whether for economic or religious purposes.¹² Many of these early visitors to Dar es Salaam commented on the town's potential role in the eradication of the Indian Ocean Slave Trade, though most of their efforts were focused on Zanzibar as the entrepôt of trade in the region.¹³ The town was largely

⁵ David Henry Anthony III, "Culture and Society in a Town in Transition: A People's History of Dar es Salaam, 1865-1939" (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1983), xiv. Shirazis came from Brava in present-day Somalia, and the Shomvi came from Southern Arabia, Brava, or other places and intermarried with the Zaramo and Shirazi. Anthony, "A People's History of Dar es Salaam," xv.

⁶ Kilwa is an island of the coast of present-day Tanzania, located about 200 miles south of Zanzibar.

⁷ Hadramaut is located in present-day Yemen on the Arabian Peninsula.

⁸ Leslie, *A Survey of Dar es Salaam*, 20; Brennan and Burton, "The Emerging Metropolis," 16. Anthony, "A People's History of Dar es Salaam," 41, 52, 199-201.

⁹ Brennan and Burton, "The Emerging Metropolis," 16.

¹⁰ Brennan and Burton, "The Emerging Metropolis," 16.

¹¹ Anthony, "The People's History of Dar es Salaam," 54.

¹² An excellent distillation of early visitors' impressions on the young city of Dar es Salaam can be found in J. E. G. Sutton, "Dar es Salaam: a Sketch of a Hundred Years," *Tanganyika Notes and Records* 71 (1970).

¹³ The following is a list of early visitors to Dar es Salaam who chronicled their experiences; the year of their visit is noted: British Lieutenant Colonel Lewis Pelly (1862), British Bishop Edward Steere (1865),

abandoned in 1870, on the sultan's death, but the population grew incrementally until large-scale efforts to develop the town's infrastructure were taken up by the burgeoning German and British colonial powers.

As demand for ivory and slaves grew, the town and region attracted other industrial interests before the turn of the century. Indian merchants settled in the town to supply passing caravans with trade goods.¹⁴ Others associated with the caravan trade, Nyamwezi porters, for example, also added numbers to early population estimates. As economic interest in the area grew, so too did the population. Sir William Mackinnon, a Scottish ship owner and businessman, had commercial interests in India before turning his sights to east Africa. In Dar es Salaam, Mackinnon spearheaded the construction of the Mackinnon Road in 1877, which was to connect the coast to Lake Nyasa and pave the way for increased trade with the interior. However, the road stretched a mere eighty-one miles before it was abandoned in 1881.¹⁵ Although the overall project failed, Mackinnon's "Road to Nowhere" helped secure Dar es Salaam's place as the center of the growing region. It drew attention to the town's potential to rival Zanzibar as a center for trade; where Zanzibar was enmeshed in the slave trade, Dar es Salaam could be a

British government official G.E. Seward (1866), British surgeon Dr. John Kirk (1866-67 & 1868), German missionary Pere Hörner (1867), British Commander Richard Bradshaw (1867), British abolitionist George Lydiard Sullivan (1868), British Bishop William Tozer (1868), renowned caravan leader Tippu Tip (1868), Adrien Germain (1868), British missionary Charles New (1871-72), British government official Henry Bartle Frere (1873), British government official J.F. Elton (1875), British Captain Colomb (between 1868 and 1872), British explorer and journalist Henry Morton Stanley (1874), British explorer Keith Johnston (1877), British explorer Joseph Thomson (1877), British government official Dr. John Kirk (1883?), German August Leue, representative of DOAG (1884 & 1887), German explorer Carl Peters (1884), German Bernhard Gronemann, representative of DOAG (1885), Carl Velten (between 1893 and 1896), and German August Seidel, secretary of the German Colonial Society (1898).

¹⁴ Anthony, "A People's History of Dar es Salaam," 203-204.

¹⁵ Brennan and Burton, "The Emerging Metropolis," 18; William O'Swald and Company, *The Story of the House of O'Swald: 1831-1931* (Hamburg: Broschek & Co., 1931), 52.

haven for “legitimate” trade in the region.¹⁶ Additionally, other Mackinnon ventures, including Smith, Mackenzie & Co., Ltd., would continue to play a key role in the town and region.

Later, Dar es Salaam fell within the remit of the Protectorate of German East Africa, which extended from present-day mainland Tanzania to the countries of Burundi and Rwanda. Germany was granted the colony during the Berlin Conference of 1884 and subsequent Berlin Treaty of 1885, where European powers effectively divided up the continent of Africa and claimed the right to rule. But Dar es Salaam itself was first briefly held by the *Deutsch Ostafrikanische Gesellschaft* (DOAG) or German East Africa Company, a private organization tasked with improving infrastructure and securing trade opportunities for the benefit of the colony and the financial gain of the company. Trading rights in Dar es Salaam were first secured by the German East Africa Company in 1885, and taxation rights were granted in 1888 by Omani Sultan Barghash of Zanzibar.¹⁷ The company made its base in Dar es Salaam and attempted to revive the largely abandoned town. In September 1890, direct shipping began between Hamburg and the

¹⁶ Anthony, “A People’s History of Dar es Salaam,” 55-56. Indeed, the changing fortunes of coastal entrepôts like Dar es Salaam and Mombasa spelled decline for the older trading center of Zanzibar, as observed by S. A. Pratt, the American Consul at Zanzibar in 1887: “...the commercial importance of the Island and City of Zanzibar would seem from present indications to have reached its limits... With the English established at Mombasa and the Germans – and perhaps others – at more southern ports, the chances for African produce finding its market here will be very considerably reduced. And Zanzibar will, as a matter of course lose much of its present important.” “Dispatches from Zanzibar,” microcopy T.100, roll 8, “Trade Report of Zanzibar, 1 July, 1886 to 30 June, 1887,” enclosed in S. A. Pratt to the Third Assistant to Secretary of State, 20 September 1887, as cited in Karim Kassam Janmohamed, “A History of Mombasa, c. 1895-1939: Some Aspects of Economic and Social Life in an East African Port Town during Colonial Rule” (PhD diss., Northwestern University, 1978), 60.

¹⁷ Brennan and Burton, “The Emerging Metropolis,” 19; Anthony, “A People’s History of Dar es Salaam,” 62; Rodemann, “Tanganyika 1890-1914,” 26.

fledging town and its northerly neighbor of Tanga. Two years later, shipping links between India and Dar es Salaam were established.¹⁸

On 1 January 1891, the German East African Company relinquished administration of the coastal area to the German government, which proclaimed the area a protectorate.¹⁹ The colonial government moved their capital from Bagamoyo to Dar es Salaam, effectively shifting the administrative and economic center of the colony.²⁰ In the 1890s, the colonial government instituted a taxation system and continued building roads and other infrastructure. The population of Dar es Salaam grew, both in German immigrants who came to establish plantations or embark on missionary work, and in African laborers, such as the Nyamwezi, who became plantation laborers after initially coming to the region as caravan porters.²¹ In 1897, the *Deutsche Ostafrika Linie* shipping line moved its headquarters from Zanzibar to Dar es Salaam.²² Mercantile firms would follow suit over the course of the next decade.

Dar es Salaam also served as the center of German colonial military power.²³ Initially, the German colonial government concerned itself with “military pacification and effective occupation.”²⁴ Wars and rebellions, including the Maji Maji Uprising, plagued the protectorate until 1907.²⁵ The colonial government instituted the use of Swahili as

¹⁸ Janmohamed, “A History of Mombasa,” 61.

¹⁹ Rodemann, “Tanganyika, 1890-1914,” 32.

²⁰ Anthony, “A People’s History of Dar es Salaam,” 70, 75.

²¹ Anthony, “A People’s History of Dar es Salaam,” 75.

²² Janmohamed, “A History of Mombasa,” 61.

²³ Brennan and Burton, “The Emerging Metropolis,” 23.

²⁴ Rodemann, “Tanganyika, 1890-1914,” 33.

²⁵ Rodemann, “Tanganyika, 1890-1914,” 33-66.

the *lingua franca* in German East Africa.²⁶ By 1907, increased trade and economic growth due to the completion of the railroad helped Dar es Salaam eclipse the economic superiority of nearby Bagamoyo.²⁷ German merchant converters and trading houses such as O'swald & Co. and Hansing & Co. relocated from Zanzibar to Dar es Salaam. Trade soon became the backbone of the new town, and with economic opportunities came larger numbers of immigrants from the Indian subcontinent.²⁸

The German colonial administration welcomed economic growth, and the growing city attracted many different people—wage laborers, traders, wealthy businessmen, missionaries, and government officials, among others. By and large, these groups of people were separated along racial lines as well as divided by differences in class and employment. The years leading up to World War I saw colonial policy tailored around racially segregated urban planning, which enhanced racial categorization.²⁹

Dar es Salaam saw little combat during World War I and was occupied by British forces from 9 October 1916. The town served as temporary quarters for the Allied Forces until food and housing limitations forced populations to seek provisions upcountry. Germany was defeated in 1918 and was forced to concede its colonies; in Dar es Salaam, the German population and military personnel were expelled from the town.³⁰ In 1919, civilian rule returned under the administration of the British.³¹ With this

²⁶ Brennan and Burton, "The Emerging Metropolis," 35.

²⁷ Brennan and Burton, "The Emerging Metropolis," 21.

²⁸ For simplification purposes in reference only, I will refer to this varied and diverse population as "Indians." In truth, this population of East African Asians hails from the subcontinent (not just the modern nation-state of India), practices a variety of religions, and refers to themselves in a multitude of ways.

²⁹ Brennan and Burton, "The Emerging Metropolis," 29.

³⁰ The majority of the former colony, German East Africa, was transferred to the British via a League of Nations mandate. The exceptions were present-day Rwanda and Burundi, which formed part of German

dip in population and relief of strain on infrastructure, the British continued German colonial plans for racially segregated urban planning.³² The colony of German East Africa was officially renamed “Tanganyika Territory” when the former German colony became a free-trade colony administered by the British in 1922. Throughout the interwar period, Dar es Salaam was firmly established as the political, economic, and social center of the newly named territory. In 1928, a railway expansion to Mwanza was completed, better linking the extremities of the colony to the capital, and in turn, the rest of the world.

Urban planning in Dar es Salaam under the British ensured not only racial division in residential areas but also in commercial quarters. Europeans enjoyed tree-lined streets and large estates near the coastline, in their aptly named quarter, Uzunguni (Swahili for “place of the Europeans”), while Indians were sandwiched between the European and African districts. This geographic location mirrored their intermediary economic role, as merchants and traders, serving both the interests of Europeans and Africans.³³ As merchants and the owners and proprietors of shops, the Indian district, known as Uhindini (Swahili for “place of the Indians”), became the commercial hub of Dar es Salaam. The African district, known as Kariakoo, from the phonetic spelling of Carrier Corps, was farthest from the coast and least developed between the wars,

East Africa but were assigned to Belgium under the Treaty of Versailles. A small portion of land known as the Kionga Triangle was reassigned to Portuguese Mozambique following World War I; today it remains part of Mozambique.

³¹ Brennan and Burton, “The Emerging Metropolis,” 29, 31.

³² For a lengthy discussion of urban planning policy predicated on racial boundaries in Dar es Salaam, see James R. Brennan, “Nation, Race and Urbanization in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, 1916-1976” (PhD diss., Northwestern University, 2002).

³³ Anthony, “A People’s History of Dar es Salaam,” xvi.

featuring mostly single-story, often wattle and daub structures.³⁴ With the prosperity of Indian merchants, the commercial district improved in infrastructure and three- and four-story buildings were built in a variety of styles from the mid-1930s to the mid-1960s.³⁵ These Indian entrepreneurs became both landlords and proprietors of shops, ensuring their continued financial success throughout the colonial period. Surrounding villages were encroached upon and gradually the borders of the growing town expanded.

Africans, on the other hand, were free only in so far as they had the ability to sell their labor for a wage.³⁶ They were not allowed to participate in commerce, as Indians were, which led to a distinct class divide—European plantation owners, colonial administrators, and entrepreneurs comprised the upper class; Indian merchants, shop owners, and middle men in the import/export trade comprised the middle class; and finally, African wage laborers made up the working class. Typical employment for Africans in the interwar period included dock laborer, casual laborer, and domestic service.³⁷ There were of course many exceptions to this generalization, as mission-educated Africans often worked as school teachers, lower-level civil servants, and sometimes, landlords in the sprawling urban center of Dar es Salaam. Resentment brewed between poor and better-off inhabitants, especially between the lower-class Africans and middle-class Indians, a theme that reprises throughout the history of Dar

³⁴ Leslie, *A Survey of Dar es Salaam*, 22; Anthony, “A People’s History of Dar es Salaam,” 95-96. Carrier Corps was a British military organization founded to fulfill portage and other supporting tasks during World War I. Other towns in East Africa also have quarters named for the presence of the Carrier Corps, likely given housing in these locations, such as Kariakor in Nairobi and Kariakoo in Dodoma.

³⁵ Brennan and Burton, “The Emerging Metropolis,” 56.

³⁶ For an extended discussion, see Frederick Cooper, *From Slaves to Squatters: Plantation Labor and Agriculture in Zanzibar and Coastal Kenya, 1890-1925* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1997).

³⁷ Brennan and Burton, “The Emerging Metropolis,” 36.

es Salaam. In the 1930s, when the Great Depression affected economies worldwide, migrations to the territorial capital decreased as many Africans looked to farming as a means of survival in the countryside.³⁸

During World War II, the population of Dar es Salaam expanded quickly. However, urbanization and infrastructure failed to keep pace with the rapid migration into the city. Housing and sanitation were inadequate to accommodate the growing population, and limited imports following austerity measures of World War II led to high inflation for basic consumer goods, such as food and clothing. The colonial government responded with a rationing system, designed to make basic necessities affordable and available to inhabitants. However, the rationing system, which guaranteed access to necessities, had the unintended consequence of actually encouraging migration to the city.³⁹ The rationing system also exacerbated tensions around racial lines, as the amount, type, and quality of food allotted to inhabitants differed depending on one's race, as defined by the colonial government. Some Indian merchants also benefitted from the squeeze on commodities; they participated in a black market in both food stuffs and clothing. Tensions reached their breaking point in a strike, when dockworkers and women brought the capital to a halt for a week shortly after the war in 1947.⁴⁰

Following the war, Dar es Salaam continued to grow in population and importance. The post-war period was a boom time for the economy, and as Leslie remarks, "The pent-up demand for consumer goods, for exports, for outlets for capital, all conspired to

³⁸ Brennan and Burton, "The Emerging Metropolis," 36.

³⁹ Brennan and Burton, "The Emerging Metropolis," 39.

⁴⁰ Andrew Burton, *African Underclass: Urbanisation, Crime and Colonial Order in Dar es Salaam* (Oxford: James Currey, 2005), 184-85.

force a headlong pace.”⁴¹ Housing construction, both formal and informal, continued. To counter housing shortages, informal settlements were transformed into planned suburbs for the growing populations of Dar es Salaam, and the colonial government even encouraged self-construction in unplanned areas for Africans.⁴² Industrial construction, too, increased, as well as schools, hospitals, and other necessities to support a growing population. Increasingly, the city became the hub of not only economic and political trends, but also social and cultural innovations.⁴³

The improvements in infrastructure, amenities, and working conditions in Dar es Salaam were meant to stabilize the urban African population, but in the period after World War II, these developments had the effect of encouraging larger number of migrants to the city. The colonial government lacked the ability to assert effective control over this growing urban population, and without means of self-representation, African political organizations promoting anti-colonial politics were founded from the late 1940s.⁴⁴ Tanganyika (later Tanzania) African National Union (TANU) was founded in 1954, and as the successor to other political organizations, it gained widespread popularity with its criticisms of racial discrimination and its calls to increase expenditure on African participation in government, education, and constitution reforms to more widely benefit the African population.⁴⁵

⁴¹ Leslie, *A Survey of Dar es Salaam*, 22.

⁴² Brennan and Burton, “The Emerging Metropolis,” 45.

⁴³ Brennan and Burton, “The Emerging Metropolis,” 44. For two case studies from this period, see Susan Geiger, *TANU Women: Gender and Culture in the Making of Tanganyikan Nationalism, 1955-1965* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1997) and Andrew Ivaska, *Cultured States: Youth, Gender, and Modern Style in 1960s Dar es Salaam* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011).

⁴⁴ Brennan and Burton, “The Emerging Metropolis,” 48-49.

⁴⁵ Brennan and Burton, “The Emerging Metropolis,” 51.

Independence was attained in 1961, when TANU gained power in a peaceful transaction from the British. TANU was widely supported by Africans in Dar es Salaam, and the ruling party quickly abandoned the racial organization that colonialism supported and in some ways had institutionalized, but they maintained policies of price regulation and restrictions on movement.⁴⁶ Migration from rural areas continued to fuel Dar es Salaam's population growth, while other populations diminished following independence.

Other developments marked the new nation state in the first decade of its existence. The University of Dar es Salaam was founded in 1961 and was host to a number of radical thinkers in the 1960s and 1970s.⁴⁷ Industrial development improved, with the first fully-integrated textile mill, a cement factory, and a new industrial estate opened in 1967 and the expansion of deep-water berths at the port in 1970.⁴⁸ Newly independent Tanganyika became Tanzania when the mainland united with the islands of Zanzibar and Pemba in 1964 in the aftermath of the Zanzibar revolution.⁴⁹

Although urban development took place during this time, the government formalized their commitment to a policy of socialism, which was decisively anti-urban. The Arusha Declaration of 1967 espoused a policy of socialism and self-reliance, known

⁴⁶ James R. Brennan, "Nation, Race and Urbanization in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, 1916-1976" (PhD diss., Northwestern University, 2002), 359.

⁴⁷ Andrew Ivaska, "Of Students, 'Nizers, and Comrades: Youth, Internationalism, and the University College, Dar es Salaam," *Cultured States: Youth, Gender, and Modern Style in 1960s Dar es Salaam* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 124-165.

⁴⁸ Brennan and Burton, "The Emerging Metropolis," 58.

⁴⁹ On 12 January 1964, a violent revolution overthrew the government of Zanzibar. A simplistic explanation is the exploited African majority rose up and overthrew the oppressive ruling minority, comprised of Arabs and Indians. See Anthony Clayton, *The Zanzibar Revolution and its Aftermath* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1981), Helen-Louise Hunter, *Zanzibar: The Hundred Days Revolution* (Santa Barbara: Praeger Security International, 2010), and Esmond Bradley Martin, *Zanzibar: Tradition and Revolution* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1978) for a complete discussion.

colloquially as *Ujamaa*. Rural development became the government's primary focus, as urbanization was viewed as exploitative of rural populations.⁵⁰ Political propaganda praised agricultural work and life in cooperative villages, while damning the morally suspect and instable life in the city.⁵¹

The government attempted to exert control over the urban population with forced repatriation to rural areas for the informally employed, the under-employed, and unemployed. New villages were organized, people were relocated, and almost everyone was instructed to become a self-reliant agriculturalist, shunning the opportunities and modern associations with the city of Dar es Salaam. A pass system was even put in place to ensure that only those with full employment remained legally in Dar es Salaam.⁵² But urban migration continued unabated.

African resentment of Indian prosperity in Dar es Salaam continued to fuel tense relations in the post-colonial era. The Acquisition of Buildings Act (1971) ostensibly brought equality to Tanzanians, but in reality it simply nationalized second homes and businesses of a certain value. Between 1971 and 1973, nearly 3,000 buildings in Dar es Salaam were nationalized—of which 96% were owned by Indians.⁵³ Many Indians saw the writing on the wall and left Tanzania. In just over a decade, the country's Indian population had effectively been cut in half.⁵⁴ In 1974, Dodoma, a town in the geographical center of Tanzania, became the political capital of Tanzania, but this

⁵⁰ Brennan, "Nation, Race and Urbanization," 334.

⁵¹ Brennan, "Nation, Race and Urbanization," 336, 350.

⁵² Brennan, "Nation, Race and Urbanization," 334.

⁵³ Brennan and Burton, "The Emerging Metropolis," 57.

⁵⁴ Brennan, "Nation, Race and Urbanization," 349.

decree did little to change the reality that Dar es Salaam was not only the de facto political capital, it was also the center of the nation state's economic, trade, manufacturing, social, and cultural activities.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, this policy of self-reliance did not flourish, and by the mid-1980s Tanzania's economy was devastated. Inflation was high, industry struggled, and people were yearning for a change. Tanzania's second president took office in 1985 with the promise of liberalizing reforms. The transition from state-run to cost-sharing, in education, healthcare, sanitation, social security among others, has marked the past quarter century of Tanzania's and Dar es Salaam's history. A move away from socialism has also seen a growth in conspicuous consumption of luxury goods.⁵⁵ The media, too, has been liberalized, with large increases in the numbers of newspapers, magazines, radio stations, and the coming of television in 1994.⁵⁶

Today, Dar es Salaam is highly paradoxical: large-scale building projects feature on every block in the old Uhindini and Kariakoo neighborhoods, closest to the city center. Investments are pouring in from abroad, but basic infrastructure—electricity, roads, potable water, and sanitation—still elude most of the city's inhabitants.⁵⁷ Exports are a fraction of the number of imports, and the chasm between rich and poor grows ever larger.

Chronology of *Kanga* Players

The city of Dar es Salaam served as the location for much of the import, sale, and consumption of *kanga* textiles for much of the twentieth century. With the broad

⁵⁵ Brennan and Burton, "The Emerging Metropolis," 62-63.

⁵⁶ Brennan and Burton, "The Emerging Metropolis," 64-65.

⁵⁷ Brennan, "Nation, Race and Urbanization," 363.

overview of the city's history as context, I turn to *kanga* textiles' similarly multinational history. The following sections document the chronology of *kanga* players, production, and distribution as they converged in Dar es Salaam, through import statistics, colonial trade reports, published accounts, and archival sources. In this section, competition between merchant converters, countries of manufacture, and larger economic, political, and global forces come to bear on the trade in this regionally popular textile.

This chronology is organized into eras distinguished by political changes affecting Dar es Salaam. *Kanga* consumption during the era of German colonial rule is viewed through the lens of Zanzibar, as the entrepôt for trade and commercial relations in east Africa around the turn of the twentieth century. During this period, Dar es Salaam fell within the remit of German East Africa, but in many ways still relied on goods transshipped through Zanzibar, which was a British Protectorate. Dutch imports of *kanga* textiles reigned supreme, followed by British imports in the hands of German and sometimes French merchant converters.

World War I interrupted German colonial rule; when Germany was defeated at the end of the war, the country was stripped of its colonial holdings. Next, the Tanganyika Territory era is detailed, when Dar es Salaam served as capital of a free-trade colonial territory administered by the British. Generally, the United Kingdom was the largest producer of *kanga* textiles before 1950, beating out its closest competitor, the Netherlands. British India (later India) and Japan also maintained steady presence in the *kanga* trade during this time. Japan took over as the largest producer of *kanga* textiles in 1950, largely maintaining this place until 1981 when records ceased.

Tanganyika gained its independence in 1961 and united with the islands of Zanzibar and Pemba to become Tanzania in 1964. These years will be briefly outlined, as statistical records indicate that *kanga* textiles were steadily imported to Dar es Salaam until local production began in the late 1960s, when government policies shifted to embrace socialism and protect the fledgling textile industry.⁵⁸ A flurry of Asian competition accompanied this shift in policies, when Japan, China, Hong Kong and India struggled to dominate *kanga* imports between 1966 and 1970. Imports largely dwindled throughout the 1970s, when Japan served as the sole importer between 1971 and 1981.

The remainder of this chapter will show that the market for this regionally popular cloth was important, as industrialized countries competed throughout the course of the twentieth century to produce this commodity. Dominant countries of manufacture changed many times throughout the twentieth century and included the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Japan, and even India and China, before imports ceased in the early 1980s. This fierce competition among industrialized nations indicates that *kanga* textiles, an inexpensive commodity demanded by east African women, was worth fighting over.

German East Africa

As has previously been established, Zanzibar was the regional commercial hub for east Africa in the nineteenth century.⁵⁹ Around the turn of the twentieth century,

⁵⁸ Records such as statistical abstracts for the colony of Tanganyika and subsequently the independent nation of Tanzania record amounts and value of imported *kanga*. "Consumption, Table 127: Retained Imports of Certain Textile Goods: Cotton Piece Goods: Printed Khangas), *Tanganyika Statistical Abstract 1938-1952* (Dar es Salaam: The Government Printer, 1953). For complete statistics, see Appendix B, "*Kanga* Imports to Colonial Tanganyika and Independent Tanzania, 1929-1981."

⁵⁹ See Chapter 2, "Global Networks of Trade and the East Coast of Africa."

commercial interests gradually began to shift away from the island off the coast of east Africa to mainland ports, which could more directly serve the growing colonies of German East Africa (present-day mainland Tanzania, Rwanda, and Burundi) and British East Africa (present-day Kenya). Whereas Zanzibar was dominant throughout the nineteenth century, by 1905 its economic stronghold had been broken.⁶⁰ This was due to a number of factors: Zanzibar's loss of status as a free port in 1899, new direct steamship connections between Germany and German East Africa through Dar es Salaam, and completion with the railway line beginning in 1907.⁶¹ One 1903 British trade report remarks on the opening up of direct steamship lines through Dar es Salaam:

There is nevertheless little doubt that a general and growing tendency has sprung up amongst the merchants on the mainland to take advantage of the frequent opportunities offered to them by the steamers of the various lines which now call at their ports to deal direct with other countries instead of through Zanzibar as in former times; the result is that Zanzibar, though it still retains its position as a financial centre, is undoubtedly losing some of its old importance as the emporium of the east coast of Africa.⁶²

Indian traders and shopkeepers in Zanzibar were lamenting the lost trade by 1906: "In olden days nearly every Government official, planter, &c., going to and from the mainland, used to look to Zanzibar for his wants while he was at his post, and spend freely on his way out and home; now he goes direct from his port of entrance and either gets his supplies direct from home or from local merchants, and in many cases does not

⁶⁰ Rodemann, "Tanganyika, 1890-1914," 191.

⁶¹ Rodemann, "Tanganyika, 1890-1914," 191.

⁶² "Report for the Year 1903 on the Trade and Commerce of Zanzibar and Pemba," by Sinclair, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports: Africa*, No. 3263 (London: Printed for His Majesty's Stationery Office by Harrison and Sons, 1904), 3.

land at Zanzibar at all.”⁶³ By 1910, trade in piece goods, the category that included *kanga* textiles, was notably affected in Zanzibar: “The trade in manufactured cotton goods has steadily declined in recent years as a result of the extension of direct steamer communication between Europe and India and the East African ports, and the consequent rapid development of these ports as distributing centres at the expense of Zanzibar.”⁶⁴ But Dar es Salaam had not yet supplanted Zanzibar as the center of fashion in 1910:

The loss in the transshipment trade would not, however, appear to have any disturbing effect upon the imports of *kaniki*, *kangas*, and piece-goods imported under the heading of “Sundries.” Zanzibar, in the estimation of all East African natives, sets the fashion in the two former articles of female dress, and any surplus which remains after the local demand is satisfied finds a ready sale on the mainland.⁶⁵

Still, the first decades of the twentieth century show a decline in Zanzibar’s centrality; with imports shifting to the growing coastal town of Dar es Salaam in the case of German East Africa and Mombasa in the case of British East Africa.⁶⁶

Colonial records formerly housed in the Tanzania National Archives from German East Africa (ca. 1885-1916) were unavailable in fall 2011.⁶⁷ British colonial trade reports on nearby Zanzibar often discussed *kanga* textiles in the early years of the twentieth

⁶³ “Report for the Year 1906 on the Trade of and Commerce of Zanzibar,” by Richards, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports: Zanzibar*, No. 3940 (London: Printed for His Majesty’s Stationery Office by Harrison and Sons, 1907), 6.

⁶⁴ “Zanzibar,” by Kohan, in “Report for the Years 1909-10 on the Trade and Commerce of Zanzibar,” *Diplomatic and Consular Reports: Zanzibar*, No. 4716 (London: His Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1911), 3.

⁶⁵ “Zanzibar,” by Kohan, in “Report for the Years 1909-10 on the Trade and Commerce of Zanzibar,” *Diplomatic and Consular Reports: Zanzibar*, No. 4716 (London: His Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1911), 6.

⁶⁶ In the case of Mombasa, see Karim Kassam Janmohamed, “A History of Mombasa, c. 1895-1939: Some Aspects of Economic and Social Life in an East African Port Town during Colonial Rule” (PhD diss., Northwestern University, 1978).

⁶⁷ Records in the Tanzania National Archives indicate files from the German colonial period were purposefully destroyed.

century. During this period, Zanzibar was declining in commercial importance, but the trade reports from this former regional hub effectively describe regional developments.

As one Zanzibar annual report for the year 1901 notes,

[O]wing to excellent grain crops and the consequent prosperity amongst the native population on the mainland, there was a greater general demand for this class of goods [piece-goods], which first entered Zanzibar (thus figuring as an import) and was afterwards transshipped to the east coast of Africa. This fact tends to show the value of this port [Zanzibar] as a distributing centre.⁶⁸

Furthermore, in the early years of the century, reports from Zanzibar provided extensive discussion on the lucrative but exacting *kanga* trade, for great success was possible, but only if suppliers heeded the specific demands of consumers. By looking to imports to Zanzibar and the recommendations for manufacturers, much can be garnered about the manufacturing history of *kanga* textiles.

In 1895, trade in cotton piece goods was supplied to Zanzibar by only five countries: British India, Holland, the United States of America, Great Britain, and Germany, in amounts relative to the order listed.⁶⁹ A British trade report from that year included the first lengthy discussion of the trade in *kanga* textiles. I quote this report at length to show the established demand for this commodity and the competition in its manufacture already in 1895:

Another important branch of this trade is in connection with what are known in the local market as "*Kangas*," printed handkerchiefs measuring about 50 by 72 inches, which form the principal garments of native women. At one time a large business was done in these with both Manchester and

⁶⁸ "Report for the Year 1901 on the Trade and Commerce of Zanzibar," by Kestell-Cornish, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports: Africa*, No. 2893 (London: Printed for His Majesty's Stationary Office by Harrison and Sons, 1902), 4.

⁶⁹ "Zanzibar: Report for the Year 1895 on the Trade of Zanzibar," by A. H. Hardinge, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports on Trade and Finance: Africa*, No. 1765 (London: Printed for His Majesty's Stationary Office by Harrison and Sons, 1896), 8.

Glasgow, the goods received being roller-printed and good in quality and pattern, but of recent years a demand has set in for a cheaper article, and it has been met by the import by German firms of a common block-printed "*Kanga*," made in Holland, which has almost entirely superseded the superior and more expensive English variety, although the cloth itself is still supplied from Manchester. The printing of these handkerchiefs is in Holland performed by hand by a very cheap class of labour, consisting chiefly of old women and children, and Dutch manufacturers are willing to supply different patterns in comparatively small quantities, whereas the only business house in Great Britain that has, as far as is known, been approached with a view to taking up this particular line, has only been willing to do so on the understanding that merchants here would order such large quantities of each variety that the latter were afraid that they would be unable to dispose of them, and therefore declined the offer. Whether English could compete with Dutch labour at the price at which these goods are sold is a question that can only be decided at home, but there is little doubt that it is a matter well worth the serious consideration of the British manufacturer, more especially as the trade is one which his bound to increase with the extension of civilization into the interior of Africa. The enclosed samples will be sufficient to show the class of article which is mostly in demand.⁷⁰

This report, combined with the historical research discussed in the previous chapter, illuminates local demand, global networks of trade and basic manufacturing processes deployed in the *kanga* trade as early as 1895. For example, the standard size (50" x 72") and use ("principal garments of native women") are noted. A divergence in manufacturing process and shift in dominant manufacturers was already articulated: first, roller printed *kanga* were commissioned from British firms (based in Manchester and Glasgow; likely firms that would become members of the Calico Printers' Association in 1899). By 1895, however, consumers demanded a cheaper alternative: block-printed *kanga*, whose designs were hand-printed in Holland on Manchester-woven cloth, and subsequently distributed by a German firm. These cheaper *kanga*

⁷⁰ "Zanzibar: Report for the Year 1895 on the Trade of Zanzibar," by A. H. Hardinge, 9-10. Other textiles are also described at length, including *Americani*, *Membai*, *Gumpty*, *Hindessa*, *Madduf*, *Kaniki*, *Bandera*, *cambric*, *twill*, *Vilemba*, and *Vikoi*, see "Zanzibar: Report for the Year 1895 on the Trade of Zanzibar," by A. H. Hardinge, 8-10.

were likely printed by specialty Dutch textile printers, such as van Vlissingen & Co. (Visco), HKM, or LKM. The less expensive Dutch-printed *kanga* were distributed by German merchant-converter firms, likely Wm. O'Swald & Co. or Hansing & Co.

The savvy nature of Dutch printing here must be stressed—even though British roller-printed *kanga* were of better quality, the expense of engraving copper rollers dictated that very large runs were required to break even on the printed textile commission. The German distributors realized that small print runs—even of lesser quality *kanga*—were safer and more lucrative investments than large print runs of the same *kanga* design. Consequently, the commission went to Dutch textile printers, who wisely used a cheaper class of labor—old women and children—thus keeping their labor costs down, and accepted smaller print runs to satisfy east African women's insatiable demands for new *kanga* designs.

One of the purposes of annual trade reports was to aid British manufacturers in their quest to improve their businesses by expanding to new markets or regaining former dominance. By 1895, the production of *kanga* textiles was already established as a safe investment, where return on investment was guaranteed if the market was carefully considered. Many of these reports were accompanied by samples of the textiles in question, to help British manufacturers produce sought-after commodities.⁷¹ Again in the 1895 report, the author, a British colonial official with firsthand experience in Zanzibar, advised British manufacturers to seriously consider producing this commodity again, as the expansion into the interior of Africa would certainly increase

⁷¹ Although many reports indicate that samples of *kanga* textiles were forwarded to the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, I was unable to locate their present whereabouts. I searched for them within the Manchester Chamber of Commerce archives, held in the Greater Manchester County Record Office with the Manchester Archives, but was unsuccessful in locating them.

demand for such consumer goods. The 1895 report goes on to offer these sharply worded comments regarding trade interests in east Africa:

...unless the British manufacturer will come down from his pedestal and produce an article, as his foreign competitors do, that will meet the practical requirements of the buyers, it is likely that a trade which might be fairly profitable to him will drop more and more into other hands. There is another point also, apart from any question of price, in which British trade suffers by comparison with our foreign rivals, and that is the enterprise and care which are necessary to obtain a hold on this market, and when once obtained, to keep it. The mercantile firms of Zanzibar are constantly receiving from foreign manufacturers elaborate foreign sample and price lists, from which they can select the particular article which they consider will best meet the native fancy, but the British exporter apparently considers that no advertisement is necessary, for English houses in Zanzibar seldom receive any particulars of what he is prepared to offer. It appears also to be a popular idea that goods sent out from England will find a ready sale, without regard to the form in which they arrive. This is a complete error, for the native is a very particular person indeed; he wants his coil of brass wire to be in one complete length, and so many coils in a case; there must be exactly the same number of yards in every piece of cloth; each bar of soap should cut into an equal number of equal pieces. These details may appear to be unworthy of consideration, but it is just a careful observation of some of these small points that has helped foreign trade to succeed where British trade has failed.⁷²

The British official was quite damning of the British manufacturers' reluctance to cater to the tastes of the east African market, and pointed to three aspects to account for the struggling British trade in Zanzibar. First, the writer noted Manchester merchants' reluctance to produce a commodity "that will meet the practical requirements of the buyers." Second, the writer criticized the lack of advertisement or effort put forth to maintain business in east Africa. Finally, British manufacturers paid no mind to the packaging or presentation of commodities upon arrival. One can infer that other merchant converters, likely German near the turn of the twentieth century, had already mastered such specifications preferred by consumers in east Africa. Only with great

⁷² "Zanzibar: Report for the Year 1895 on the Trade of Zanzibar," by A. H. Hardinge, 12-13.

attention to detail would British merchant converters and manufacturers be able to compete in the highly competitive *kanga* trade.

The prominence of *kanga* textiles in particular among imported commodities to Zanzibar was reiterated in the following year's British trade report, 1896:

Piece-goods continue to hold the first place of all articles imported to Zanzibar, and enormously exceed (as was the case in the year 1895) in import value any other class of goods. Under this heading come "*kangas*," or printed handkerchiefs, which form the principal dress of Swahili women, and of the trade in these articles Germany practically holds the monopoly. Those made in England are machine-printed, and much more expensive than those imported by German firms, which are block-printed in Holland.⁷³

Again, German merchant converters commissioning inexpensive block-printed *kanga* from Dutch textile printers continued to beat out British roller-printed varieties. This dominance in the *kanga* trade was repeated in the following year's report, from 1897:

Another important branch of the piece-goods trade is in connection with printed cotton handkerchiefs, or "*kangas*," measuring about 50 by 72 inches, two of which, with a scarf round the head, constitute the ordinary dress of a Swahili woman. The reasons that these are supplied, as they are, almost entirely from Continental countries, is that in England, where the printing process is effected by means of somewhat expensive machinery, it is found that the work cannot be carried on at a profit unless a considerable number of handkerchiefs, perhaps 3,000 or 4,000 of each pattern are disposed of, whereas in Holland, where a system of block printing by hand is adopted, a much greater variety of pattern can be produced at comparatively little extra cost. The work is in the latter case undoubtedly inferior, but that is a detail which, so long as she can be dressed in the latest fashion, the native lady is quite prepared to overlook. The cloth which these handkerchiefs are made is still supplied from Manchester, and perhaps some cheaper system of printing may yet be devised there which

⁷³ "Zanzibar: Report for the Year 1896 on the Trade of Zanzibar," by A. H. Hardinge, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports on Trade and Finance*, No. 1961 (London: Harrison and Sons, 1897), 8-9. The other cotton piece goods mentioned are: American and English grey cotton sheetings, superior American grey cotton drill and the corresponding English type; other piece goods mostly received from Great Britain: white shirtings "Vikoi" or loincloths, Muscat scarves, white drill, Khaki drill, Khaki flannel and flannelette, cricketer flannels, tweeds, canvas, and Turkey-red twills, and from Bombay: gunny bags and indigo-dyed cottons or Kaniki. See "Zanzibar: Report for the Year 1896 on the Trade of Zanzibar," by A. H. Hardinge, 8-10.

will enable the British manufacturer to recover this trade from his Dutch competitor.⁷⁴

British manufacturers seem to have taken the advice on local taste and requirements set forth in the 1896 and 1897 trade reports, as the outlook in the 1898 trade report is brighter. The report indicates prices are competitive but the problem of large print runs still plagued British manufacturers, who continued to use the copper roller-printed method rather than woodblocks.⁷⁵ Thus, Dutch printers maintained an advantage over the British because the antiquated technology they used (hand-block printing) allowed for the printing of small batches of textiles. The British had much higher capacity, but in this specialized market, a large capacity for only one design was less marketable than small batches of many designs. The annual report from 1899 indicates the Dutch advantage was lessening over competition from British manufacturers:

In former years the bulk of *kangas* imported were of Dutch manufacture, yet in the past year fairly large quantities have arrived from Manchester, and patterns designed in Zanzibar have been approved in England and preferred to those which were block-printed in Holland on account of their being clearer and better.⁷⁶

While the Dutch hand-printed *kanga* may have initially dominated the market, by 1899 the British fought their way back as competitors, by the use of superior roller-printing technology that produced a clearer image while maintaining a low price. This passage

⁷⁴ "Zanzibar: Report for the Year 1897 on the Trade and Commerce of Zanzibar," by Cave, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports: Africa*, No. 2129 (London: Printed for His Majesty's Stationary Office by Harrison and Sons, 1898), 14.

⁷⁵ "Zanzibar: Report of the Year 1898 on the Trade and Commerce of Zanzibar," by Cave, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports: Africa*, No. 2351 (London: Printed for His Majesty's Stationary Office by Harrison and Sons, 1899), 14.

⁷⁶ "Zanzibar: Report for the Year 1899 on the Trade and Commerce of Zanzibar," by Kestell Cornish, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports: Africa*, No. 2520 (London: Printed for His Majesty's Stationary Office by Harrison and Sons, 1900), 10.

also noted that *kanga* patterns were designed in Zanzibar, presumably by Indian merchants involved in the *kanga* trade.

A report on the neighboring island, Pemba, provides the most detailed and complete description of the *kanga* trade in the Report for the Year 1900, from which I quote at length:

There are many articles in general use here, to the supplying of which British firms might profitably devote their attention. Thus the trade in the gaily-coloured cotton cloths, locally known as *kangas*, in which the women array themselves, and for which there is an immense demand throughout East Africa, is at present wholly in the hands of German and French firms in Zanzibar. The secret of success in the *kanga* trade is to keep up a continual supply of novelties in the matter of design and colouring. The mode of procedure adopted by the German and French firms in Zanzibar is this: they cause hundreds of hand-coloured samples to be prepared at home, and these they submit to the leading Indian dealers, who select therefrom such as they judge will be most likely to sell, and who, themselves, frequently suggest new patterns or modifications in the sample designs. The importing firms book orders from the Indian dealers for given quantities of the patterns selected or suggested by them, to be delivered within such period or at such intervals as may be arranged. The Indians take good care to let the native women know whenever fresh consignments of *kanga* are due, and the goods are placed on the market with the least possible delay after being landed. There is much rivalry amongst the women as to who shall soonest appear arrayed in the latest thing in *kangas*, which sell at a high premium during the early days of their novelty. Thus newly-arrived *kangas* will fetch as much as 4s. for the set of two, during, say, the first week, after which time the price declines, as the article goes out of fashion, until a pair of the same cloths can be had eventually for 1s. 4d., which is the lowest figure at which the Indians sell them. ... I am informed that the bulk of the *kangas* imported into East Africa are printed in Holland. There appears to be no reason why British firms should not successfully make a bid for their share of the *kanga* trade, by adopting methods similar to those practised by German and French firms.⁷⁷

This passage adds a few more clarifying details to the networks of *kanga* trade active around the turn of the twentieth century. First, it describes the dominance of French

⁷⁷ "Report on the Island of Pemba for the Year 1900," by O'Sullivan-Beare, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports: Africa*, No. 2653 (London: Printed for His Majesty's Stationary Office by Harrison and Sons, 1901), 15-16.

merchant-converter firms in addition to the Germans. It is likely the French firm to which this official referred to is L. Besson & Co., which also commissioned *kanga* from the Dutch textile printer, van Vlissingen & Co. (Vlisco).⁷⁸

The report from 1900 also clarifies how new designs—the secret to the success of the *kanga* trade—were created. Hand-drawn designs by draftsmen in Europe were sent to Zanzibar for selection, improvement, and approval by Indian merchants, who knew the tastes and demands of east African women, the primary consumers of *kanga* textiles. These Indian merchants also created their own designs, and orders were placed for the designs that were most favored by these market experts. The Indian merchants then advertised the arrival of new *kanga* designs, which when new, were snapped up by fashion-conscious women for three times the cost of *kanga* designs that have fallen out of fashion.⁷⁹

Furthermore, trade reports recorded the superiority of German business acumen and willingness to experiment. British colonial official Charles Eliot accounted for German dominance in east Africa by stating, “There is no doubt that British merchants have less spirit of adventure than their German brethren. They like certain and immediate profits; they are little disposed to make experiments or run risks in opening up new markets of doubtful value or to change their methods and product in order to

⁷⁸ L. Besson supplied a *kanga*-like textile, known locally as *lamba hoany* in to consumer in Madagascar, a former French colony. *Lamba hoany* are easy to spot, due to their use of the Malagasy language (rather than Swahili), the particular color combination favored (maroon-brown and gold), and many designs featuring people and other items less commonly seen on east African *kanga*.

⁷⁹ The trade report indicates that a new, sought-after design sold for 4s, and a design that has fallen out of fashion sold for 1s. 4d. With 12 pence per shilling, the high price is exactly three times the low price, where 4s. = 48d. and 1s. 4d. = 16d.

suit new and outlandish customers.”⁸⁰ The British report for the year 1900 on Zanzibar stresses the importance of quality, affordable cost, small print runs, attractive pattern and color in creating a successful *kanga* design.⁸¹ Equally, drawing on the knowledge of “local agents,” likely Indian merchants in Zanzibar, was critical to ensure designs met with local demand. Although British manufacturers still lagged behind their Dutch competitors, strides were made at offering a superior product at a competitive price, in efforts to capture the market in *kanga* textiles.

Between 1900 and 1901, imports of Dutch *kanga* increased enormously. Accounting for the surge, the British 1901 trade report notes: “It is difficult entirely to account for this enormous increase [from 4,500*l.* in 1900 to 50,006*l.* in 1901], though it is no doubt partly owing to the greater demand for native “Kanzus” and “*Kangas*,” the ordinary dress of the Swahili men and women, who are by no means slow to take advantage of any improvement in their circumstances by (what is to them) an extravagant outlay on an improvement in their attire.”⁸² When the purchasing power of consumers of *kanga* increased, so too did their consumption of textiles. Although a very basic principle, it proves once again that *kanga* textiles were relatively inexpensive consumer items worn throughout east Africa; when disposable income increased, so too did east Africans’ consumption of fashionable *kanga* textiles.⁸³

⁸⁰ Charles Eliot, *East African Protectorate* (London: Edward Arnold, 1905), 229-230.

⁸¹ “Report for the Year 1900 on the Trade and Commerce of Zanzibar,” by Cave, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports: Africa*, No. 2718 (London: Printed for His Majesty’s Stationary Office by Harrison and Sons, 1901), 13.

⁸² “Report for the Year 1901 on the Trade and Commerce of Zanzibar,” by Kestell-Cornish, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports: Africa*, No. 2893 (London: Printed for His Majesty’s Stationary Office by Harrison and Sons, 1902), 5.

⁸³ A similar surge in *kanga* imports was noted in the neighboring island of Pemba in 1904, which saw the fortuitous combination of an “unusually abundant” clove crop and high average prices. These factors

From 1902, different types of cotton piece goods were itemized in tables recording the value of “principal articles of import” into Zanzibar.⁸⁴ Descriptions of particular cotton goods were also provided.⁸⁵ In addition to fashions continually changing, trade reports make note of how particular the east African consumer could be, even specifying how textiles should be folded.⁸⁶ The 1903 British trade report reiterates similar information about the dominance of Dutch *kanga* manufacture.⁸⁷ Importation of this lucrative if inexpensive commodity to east Africa was monopolized by the Germans in the first decades of the twentieth century, likely in the hands of the merchant-converter firm, Wm. O’swald & Co. Their advantage was maintained by extending Indian merchants “very long credits.”⁸⁸ But this is not to say other European merchant-converter firms did not fight for their share of the *kanga* trade, as the 1904 annual report describes:

Until within the past four years Germany held a monopoly of the trade in *kangas*, not only in Zanzibar and in Pemba, but also throughout East Africa

enabled consumers to purchase records amounts of “piece-goods,” which according to the report, “is to be understood as meaning chiefly the coloured cotton cloths, locally known as “*kangas*,” which constitute the universal wear of the native women. For a complete discussion, see “Report for the Year 1904 on the Trade of Pemba,” by O’Sullivan-Beaure, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports: Zanzibar*, No. 3375 (London: Printed for His Majesty’s Stationery Office by Harrison and Sons, 1905), 3-4.

⁸⁴ Piece-goods were itemized into the following types: American, Blankets, Grey shirting, Kaniki, *Kangas*, Prints, White shirting, and Sundries. “Report for the Year 1904 on the Trade and Commerce of Zanzibar,” by Sinclair, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports*, No. 3517 (London: Printed for His Majesty’s Stationary Office by Harrison and Sons, 1905), 9.

⁸⁵ “Report for the Year 1902 on the Trade and Commerce of Zanzibar,” by Cave, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports: Africa*, No. 3036 (London: Printed for His Majesty’s Stationary Office by Harrison and Sons, 1903), 6-7.

⁸⁶ “Report for the Year 1902 on the Trade and Commerce of Zanzibar,” by Cave, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports: Africa*, No. 3036 (London: Printed for His Majesty’s Stationary Office by Harrison and Sons, 1903), 8.

⁸⁷ “Report for the Year 1903 on the Trade and Commerce of Zanzibar and Pemba,” by Sinclair, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports: Africa*, No. 3263 (London: Printed for His Majesty’s Stationery Office by Harrison and Sons, 1904), 5.

⁸⁸ “Report for the Year 1904 on the Trade and Commerce of Zanzibar,” by Sinclair, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports*, No. 3517 (London: Printed for His Majesty’s Stationary Office by Harrison and Sons, 1905), 4.

generally. Most of the *kangas* shipped from Germany are printed in the Netherlands, where, it appears, the process of printing them can be most cheaply carried out. Lately, however, France has begun to compete with Germany in supplying these goods. A considerable proportion of the *kangas* imported into Pemba during the past four years had been shipped from Marseille; but, doubtless, the *kangas* of French origin had also been printed in the Netherlands. The trade in *kangas* is a matter well worth the attention of British manufacturers of cotton goods. It must be remembered that *kangas* are universally worn not only in Zanzibar and in Pemba, but also throughout British Central Africa, throughout all East Africa, in Uganda and on the West Coast as well. The aggregate value of the *kanga* trade throughout Africa must amount to a very large sum per annum.⁸⁹

One French merchant-converter firm, L. Besson, did commission *kanga* textiles from the Dutch textile printer, van Vlissingen & Co. (Vlisco). *Kanga* textiles spread rapidly throughout east Africa and have been documented in far-flung locales such as Ujiji (on the eastern banks of Lake Tanganyika on the far western border of present-day Tanzania) in 1890⁹⁰ and in Mahuta (on the border of present-day Tanzania and Mozambique) in 1906.⁹¹ The demand for *kanga* textiles is well-documented on the islands of Zanzibar and Pemba through trade reports, which record steady demand and consumption through import figures. It is likely that *kanga* were popular throughout British Central Africa (present-day Malawi), east Africa (at that time comprising British East Africa, present-day Kenya, and German East Africa, present-day mainland Tanzania, Rwanda, and Burundi), and Uganda, but I have seen no documentary

⁸⁹ "Report for the Year 1904 on the Trade of Pemba," by O'Sullivan-Beare, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports: Zanzibar*, No. 3375 (London: Printed for His Majesty's Stationery Office by Harrison and Sons, 1905), 4-5.

⁹⁰ Sheryl McCurdy, "Fashioning Sexuality: Desire, Manyema Ethnicity, and the Creation of the 'Kanga,' ca. 1880-1900," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 39 no. 3 (2006): 441-69, especially 461-462.

⁹¹ See Chapter 3, "The Historical Emergence of *Kanga* Textiles," and Karl Weule, *Native Life in East Africa: The Results of an Ethnological Research Expedition*, trans. Alice Werner (1909 repr., Chicago: Afro-Am Press, 1969). Weule spent six months in East Africa in 1906 and reproduced no less than eleven photographs that show women wearing *kanga*.

evidence to suggest that *kanga* were popular throughout West Africa as well. It is possible the author here conflated the use of a *kanga*—worn as a wrapper by African women—with other types of cloth popular across the continent.

The tone of earlier reports that bemoaned the fact that British manufacturing interests were outpaced by their foreign rivals changed in 1904:

A good deal has been said in the past about the lack of enterprise shown by British firms as compared with their foreign (notably German) rivals, but it is I think clear, looking at the position British trade is shown by the accompanying statistic to hold, that however just this criticism may have been it is now, in so far as Zanzibar is concerned, unmerited.⁹²

Finally in 1904, British manufacturers dominated the *kanga* trade when they greatly outsold Dutch-produced *kanga* in Zanzibar. According to the import figures, British imports of *kanga* textiles dominated Dutch imports by just under £12,000 in 1904 and £2,000 in 1905, proving that British manufacturers could compete in the *kanga* trade.⁹³ Each yearly report provided itemized values of the category “cotton piece goods” as a whole. From 1905, the country of origin as well as the individual type of cotton piece good was provided for both the current and previous year; these statistics document which country was responsible for importing the majority of *kanga* and may point to a likely merchant-converter firm as well as a likely printer. In 1904 and 1905, overall numbers of *kanga* textiles imported fell, likely due to the outbreak of bubonic plague in

⁹² “Report for the Year 1904 on the Trade and Commerce of Zanzibar,” by Sinclair, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports*, No. 3517 (London: Printed for His Majesty’s Stationary Office by Harrison and Sons, 1905), 8.

⁹³ “The value of *kangas* imported from the United Kingdom was 40,781*l.* [in 1905] as against 29,183*l.* in 1904, and from the Netherlands 29,322*l.* [in 1905] as against 27,400*l.*” “Report for the Year 1905 on the Trade and Commerce of Zanzibar,” by Sinclair, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports: Zanzibar*, No. 3677 (London: Printed for His Majesty’s Stationary Office by Harrison and Sons, 1906), 4.

Zanzibar.⁹⁴ The Netherlands regained their dominance in *kanga* imports in 1906, when trade reports organized itemized types of piece good values by country of origin into useful tables.⁹⁵ Dominance in imported *kanga* textiles to Zanzibar, judged by import values, shifted between the British and the Dutch for the next decade. This alternation is chief country of *kanga* supply suggests sustained competition between British and Dutch manufacturers, which fought to capture the largest share of the market in *kanga* textiles among east African women. Although only a regionally popular cloth, the requirements of rapidly changing designs were met by these European manufacturers, determined to supply this saleable commodity to consumers half a world away.

In addition to providing import figures, some trade reports offer lengthy detail on many aspects of the *kanga* trade.⁹⁶ Dutch printers continued to print textiles more cheaply than British competitors, and merchant converters, the middle-men in the textile trade, continued to be dominated by German firms in 1906 and 1907.⁹⁷ British imports

⁹⁴ For discussion of the outbreak of bubonic plague in Zanzibar in 1905, see "Report for the Year 1905 on the Trade and Commerce of Zanzibar," by Sinclair, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports: Zanzibar*, No. 3677 (London: Printed for His Majesty's Stationary Office by Harrison and Sons, 1906), 3, 12.

⁹⁵ In 1905, the United Kingdom imported £40,781 worth of *kanga* to Zanzibar, compared with the Netherlands' £29,423; total *kanga* imports were worth £71,805. In 1906, conversely, the United Kingdom imported only £16,024 worth of *kanga* to Zanzibar, compared with the Netherlands' £36,743; total *kanga* imports were worth £56,400. "Report for the Year 1906 on the Trade of and Commerce of Zanzibar," by Richards, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports: Zanzibar*, No. 3940 (London: Printed for His Majesty's Stationery Office by Harrison and Sons, 1907), 16. The drop in trade between 1905 and 1906 was due to the outbreak of plague and the quarantine restrictions placed on Zanzibar by neighboring protectorates. "Zanzibar" by Kohan, in "Report for the Years 1909-10 on the Trade and Commerce of Zanzibar," *Diplomatic and Consular Reports: Zanzibar*, No. 4716 (London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1911), 10.

⁹⁶ "Report for the Year 1905 on the Trade and Commerce of the Island of Pemba," by Farler, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports: Zanzibar*, No. 3716 (London: Printed for His Majesty's Stationery Office by Harrison and Sons, 1906), 3-4.

⁹⁷ "Report for the Year 1906 on the Trade of and Commerce of Zanzibar," by Richards, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports: Zanzibar*, No. 3940 (London: Printed for His Majesty's Stationery Office by Harrison and Sons, 1907), 4. Cheaper Dutch manufacture is again stated in the 1907 report, see the paragraph on "piece-goods" in "Zanzibar" by Sinclair, in "Report for the Year 1907 on the Trade and Commerce of

were on the rise in 1907⁹⁸ and in 1908, Dutch imports decreased dramatically, falling behind British imports.⁹⁹ The chain of supply and sale remained similar to previous years, with German merchant converters uniting the local knowledge of Indian traders with the technological prowess of European manufacturers.¹⁰⁰

A 1908 trade report warns against introducing ill-considered commodities, as east Africans are extremely particular about their purchases, and prefer “cheapness and showiness” in their goods:

Firms wishing to open business relations with Zanzibar should remember that the African native is extremely conservative in his taste for the articles with which he is acquainted and refuses to accept any innovation in them. The introduction of a new commodity for native use is always attended by a risk of failure, since, owing to the extremely capricious nature of the native demand, it is very difficult to foresee the manner in which an unknown article will be received. The essential features that goods intended for this market should possess are cheapness and showiness; quality is, in most cases, an altogether minor consideration. Cheap cutlery, watches and chains, mirrors, enamel ware, crockery, umbrellas and bicycles are amongst the articles for which there is a constant demand and in which the share of the United Kingdom might be profitably extended. It is, however, necessary, as has been pointed out above, that the manufacturer, before

Zanzibar and Pemba,” *Diplomatic and Consular Reports: Zanzibar*, No. 4058 (London: Printed for His Majesty’s Stationery Office by Harrison and Sons, 1908), 4, 6.

⁹⁸ In 1907, the United Kingdom imported £28,028 worth of *kanga* to Zanzibar, compared with the Netherlands’ £39,746; total *kanga* imports were worth £70,013. “Zanzibar” by Sinclair, “Report for the Year 1907 on the Trade and Commerce of Zanzibar and Pemba,” *Diplomatic and Consular Reports: Zanzibar*, No. 4058 (London: Printed for His Majesty’s Stationery Office by Harrison and Sons, 1908), 20. Conversely, imports of *kanga* into the neighboring island Pemba were dominated by those manufactured in the United Kingdom. I surmise this is a trickle-down effect of the dominance of British *kanga* in 1905. “Pemba” by Lister, in “Report for the Year 1907 on the Trade and Commerce of Zanzibar and Pemba,” 21.

⁹⁹ In 1908, the United Kingdom imported £30,646 worth of *kanga* to Zanzibar, compared with the Netherlands’ £23,015; total *kanga* imports were worth £56,570. “Report for the Year 1908 on the Trade of and Commerce of Zanzibar,” by Kohan, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports: Zanzibar*, No. 4312 (London: Printed for His Majesty’s Stationery Office by Harrison and Sons, 1909), 24.

¹⁰⁰ “Report for the Year 1908 on the Trade of and Commerce of Zanzibar,” by Kohan, 6.

making any attempt to introduce his goods, should make himself thoroughly acquainted with the local requirements.¹⁰¹

One description of outsourcing typical of *kanga* manufacturing comes from a 1908 book, *Glimpses of East Africa and Zanzibar*, written by Ethel Younghusband. The author accompanied her husband, a member of the King's African Rifles, to east Africa; they first lived in Mombasa and then in Zanzibar. Younghusband observes east African women's highly specific tastes and the tendency for designs and color schemes to fall out of fashion rapidly:

The women in East Africa simply wear two cloths or "*kangas*," ... a most picturesque dress, as they are most particular about the colours and patterns. A manager of an English firm that imported these *kangas* told me the material was made near Manchester; copper rollers for printing are made in London, one for each colour or shade; then all these things are sent over to Holland to be printed. The ladies are so fastidious they will not wear the *kangas* when the fashion has passed, several thousand of one pattern are ordered the first time, but it never pays to re-order.¹⁰²

Younghusband here confirmed that *kanga* were manufactured jointly by British and Dutch firms, with the use of Manchester cotton cloth, London copper rollers, and Dutch printing. Imports of *kanga* to Zanzibar in 1909 grew steadily from 1908, with the United Kingdom out-earning the Netherlands. However, in 1910, while Dutch imports grew steadily, British *kanga* fell drastically.¹⁰³ The colonial report named these figures "the

¹⁰¹ "Report for the Year 1908 on the Trade of and Commerce of Zanzibar," by Kohan, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports: Zanzibar*, No. 4312 (London: Printed for His Majesty's Stationery Office by Harrison and Sons, 1909), 10-11. Similar points are made in the 1909-10 report; "Zanzibar" by Kohan, in "Report for the Years 1909-10 on the Trade and Commerce of Zanzibar," *Diplomatic and Consular Reports: Zanzibar*, No. 4716 (London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1911), 10.

¹⁰² Ethel Younghusband, *Glimpses of East Africa and Zanzibar* (London: John Long, 1910), 34-35.

¹⁰³ In 1909, the United Kingdom imported £41,048 worth of *kanga* to Zanzibar, compared with the Netherlands' £25,393; total *kanga* imports were worth £68,850. In 1910, the United Kingdom imported just £7,891 worth of *kanga* to Zanzibar, compared with the Netherlands' £29,112; total *kanga* imports were worth £39,322. "Zanzibar" by Kohan, in "Report for the Years 1909-10 on the Trade and Commerce of Zanzibar," 26.

lowest recorded in the last 15 years,” but neglected to account for why in particular British *kanga* suffered so acutely in 1910.¹⁰⁴ Imports of both British and Dutch *kanga* fell slightly in 1911, but rebounded in 1912; Dutch *kanga* continued to account for more than double the numbers of British *kanga* imports into Zanzibar.¹⁰⁵ Records for 1913 list only the total value of piece-good imports; the overall value decreased by about 20%, but without specific numbers for *kanga* imports, no conclusions may be drawn from this general decrease. To account for lower values of piece-good imports in 1913, the report stated, “The decrease is probably due to more direct importation by mainland coast ports,”¹⁰⁶ indicating a shift in commercial center, from Zanzibar as an off-shore island entrepôt, to the mainland ports of Mombasa for British East Africa and Dar es Salaam for German East Africa. Imports of piece-goods fell again in 1914, but this time, it was due to the outbreak of war.¹⁰⁷

Overall throughout the German colonial period, goods intended for both European and African consumption increased, especially cotton goods, both of European and

¹⁰⁴ “Zanzibar” by Kohan, in “Report for the Years 1909-10 on the Trade and Commerce of Zanzibar,” 3.

¹⁰⁵ In 1911, the United Kingdom imported £6,741 worth of *kanga* to Zanzibar, compared with the Netherlands’ £28,855; total *kanga* imports were worth £38,950. In 1912, the United Kingdom imported £17,045 worth of *kanga* to Zanzibar, compared with the Netherlands’ £42,780; total *kanga* imports were worth £65,070. “Zanzibar” by Beak, in “Report for the Years 1911-12 on the Trade and Commerce of Zanzibar,” *Diplomatic and Consular Reports: Zanzibar*, No. 5176 (London: His Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1913), 21. Beginning in the Report on the Years 1911-12, exports of itemized cotton piece goods, including *kanga*, were recorded along with their destination (British East Africa, German East Africa, or other countries). See “Zanzibar” by Beak, in “Report for the Years 1911-12 on the Trade and Commerce of Zanzibar,” 22.

¹⁰⁶ Piece-goods: 1912 - £240,902 and 1913 - £191,023. “Report for 1913,” by F. B. Pearce, *Zanzibar*, No. 823 (London: Printed under the authority of His Majesty’s Stationery Office by Barclay and Fry, Ltd., 1914), 8-9.

¹⁰⁷ Piece-goods: 1914 - £134,361. “Report for 1914,” by F. B. Pearce, *Zanzibar*, No. 843 (London: Printed under the authority of His Majesty’s Stationery Office by Barclay and Fry, Ltd., 1915), 8.

Indian manufacture.¹⁰⁸ According to Rodemann, cotton textiles constituted 28.4% of total value of imports in 1913.¹⁰⁹ In fact, between 1909 and 1913, the value of imported cotton goods outstripped the nearest competitor (iron) by almost three times. Even though the number of *kanga* fluxuated within that same period, imports of cotton piece goods dwarfed other types of commodities.¹¹⁰

Wartime interrupted the trade in *kanga* textiles, particularly because Dar es Salaam fell within the bounds of a German colony when World War I broke out in 1914. The 1914 British trade report for Zanzibar notes the following,

The trade in piece-goods was largely in the hands of German firms, who held sole agencies for the British and Dutch manufactures principally in demand. On the outbreak of war all orders which had been placed in England and Holland were held up, and it was some time before merchants succeeded in getting into touch with manufacturers. These facts, combined with the cessation of trade with German East Africa, account for the fall in imports.¹¹¹

No figures are provided in the yearly report for 1915, but decreases in imports across the board were likely. The report noted that “there were decreases in the case of several other articles, attributable generally to the reduced shipping facilities and exportation restrictions imposed consequent on the war.”¹¹²

The competition between Dutch and British manufacturers, and German, French, and British merchant converters documented in turn-of-the-century British trade reports

¹⁰⁸ Rodemann, “Tanganyika, 1890-1914,” 194.

¹⁰⁹ Rodemann, “Tanganyika, 1890-1914,” 194.

¹¹⁰ Rodemann, “Tanganyika, 1890-1914,” 195.

¹¹¹ “Report for 1914,” by F. B. Pearce, *Zanzibar*, No. 843 (London: Printed under the authority of His Majesty’s Stationery Office by Barclay and Fry, Ltd., 1915), 9.

¹¹² “Report for 1915,” by F. B. Pearce, *Zanzibar*, No. 886 (London: Printed under the authority of His Majesty’s Stationery Office by Barclay and Fry, Ltd., 1916), 6.

indicates that *kanga* textiles were a commodity worth competing to control. The manufacture and export of a specific commodity that was tailored to meet the desires of east African women characterizes the *kanga* trade in the colonial period in German East Africa. The mutually beneficial relationship of foreign producers meeting local east African demands suggests a global interdependence in trade.

Colonial Tanganyika

The colony of German East Africa became Tanganyika Territory after World War I. As a British-administered, free-trade territory, annual reports on the colony of Tanganyika were submitted beginning in 1921 and provide a wealth of information on trade related to *kanga* textiles.¹¹³ In the 1921 annual report, Senior Commissioner F. W. Brett expressed concern about German textiles outselling British piece goods:

The appearance of German goods on the local market during the latter part of the year, and the increasing value of imports from Germany is regarded with some consternation by the merchants who hold highly priced stocks of similar lines in British goods. The local native prefers German cloth goods, because he is accustomed to dealing in these which are more attractive or more in accord with his requirements, and which are retailed at a much lower price than similar British articles. When it is realised in addition to the comparatively low initial cost of German goods, due to cheaper labour on production and favourable exchange, ...it is evident that without a protective tariff British and German articles cannot compete on equitable terms in the local market under present conditions.¹¹⁴

As a free-trade territory, the British could not institute a protective tariff to secure the market in cotton piece goods.

¹¹³ See Appendix A: "Discussion of *Kanga* Textiles in Early Twentieth-Century British Colonial Trade Reports." The names of the reports change throughout the century, due to changes in administration, politics, and organization. Annual reports between 1921 and 1942 are especially insightful, as they provide written explanations for the variations in imports, year on year. From 1929, *kanga* textiles are itemized as a separate entry within the larger category of cotton piece goods. Reports between 1944 and 1981 provide only numerical figures, but still itemize *kanga* as a separate entry within the larger category of cotton piece goods.

¹¹⁴ "Trade, Agriculture, and Industries: Trade," Tanzania National Archives, AB.9:1922: Annual Report 1921, 20-21.

At the most general level, cotton piece goods were the import with the highest value by far between 1920 and 1946 in Tanganyika Territory.¹¹⁵ In the early 1920s, for example, cotton piece goods accounted for about 40% of the total value of imports, and although the percentage generally declined over the next quarter century, it consistently accounted for between 20-30% of total value of imports.¹¹⁶ In fact, the value of cotton piece goods was at least twice the value its closest competitor until 1947.¹¹⁷ These numbers indicate that the cotton piece good market in Tanganyika and more generally

¹¹⁵ See *Tanganyika Territory Trade Reports*, published annually from 1921.

¹¹⁶ The percentage of cotton piece good imports in relation to overall value of imports to Tanganyika Territory: 1921 = 41.2%, (which showed a slight decrease from 1920), 1922 = 42.8%/42.6%, 1923 = 40.2%, 1924 = 39.4%, 1925 = 33.3%, 1926 = 25.9%, 1927 = 25.7%, 1928 = 24.8%, 1929 = 21.0%, 1930 = 17.5%, 1931 = 19.8%, 1932 = 24.0%, 1933 = 22.8%, 1934 = 21.0%, 1935 = 20.1%, [gap in annual reports] 1940 = 19.4%, 1941 = 34.1%, 1942 = 33.5%, [gap for 1943], 1944 = 30.1%, 1945 = 28.5%, 1946 = 20.4%, 1947 = 16.1%*, 1948 = 16.7%*, 1949 = 20.0%*. The asterisk marks the years when cotton piece goods were not the largest import according to value in Tanganyika Territory, but the fell to the second largest; this first occurred in 1947, continued in 1948 and 1949. Records ceased to record percentage of total import values in 1950. Garnered from "Imports: Cotton Piece Goods," *Tanganyika Trade Report* from 1922-1935, 1940-1942, 1944-1949. (In the unpublished report found in the Tanzania National Archives, the value for 1922 was listed as 42.8%. In the published reports, the value for 1922 was 42.6%.) The majority of these cotton piece goods were the grey, unbleached *merikani*, at this time produced by Japanese manufacturers.

¹¹⁷ The second highest value of imports to Tanganyika Territory was the following for each year: 1921 = 11% for Foodstuffs, 1922 = 10.0% for Foodstuffs, 1923 = 7.4% for Foodstuffs, 1924 = 8.5% for Foodstuffs, 1925 = 10.3% for Iron and Steel manufactures, 1926 = 9.5% for Iron and Steel Manufactures, 1927 = 8.1% for Iron and Steel Manufacturers, 1928 = 6.3% for Iron and Steel Manufactures, 1929 = 6.8 for Building Materials, 1930 = 11% for Iron and Steel Manufacture, 1931 = 6.0% for Other Foodstuffs, 1932 = 6.1% for Other Foodstuffs and Motor Spirit, 1933 = 7.1 for Machinery, 1934 = 6.3 for both Machinery and Other foodstuffs, 1935 = 8.1% for Machinery, [gap in annual reports from 1936-1939,] 1940 = 6.9% for Machinery, 1941 = 5.1% for Vehicles, including aircraft, railway rolling stock and ships, and parts thereof, 1942 = 6.1% for Other textile manufactures, [gap for 1943,] 1944 = 7.6% for Cigarettes, cigars and manufactured tobacco, 1945 = 9.5% for Vehicles, including aircraft, railway rolling stock and ships, and parts thereof, and 1946 = 7.5% for Cigarettes, cigars and manufactured tobacco. For the first time since annual reports began in 1922, cotton piece goods fell to the second largest import to Tanganyika Territory in 1947, behind Vehicles, including aircraft, railway rolling stock and ships, and parts thereof, which accounted for 20.5% of the value of total imports, and again in 1948 = 17.7% for Vehicles, including aircraft, railway rolling stock and ships, and parts thereof, and finally in 1949 = 33.1% for Machinery, Apparatus, Appliances and Vehicles. Records ceased to record percentage of total import values in 1950. Garnered from "Imports: Cotton Piece Goods," *Tanganyika Trade Report* from 1922-1935, 1940-1942, 1944-1949. (In the 1926 edition, the percentage given for Iron and Steel manufactures for that year decreased to 9.4% and in the 1933 edition, the percentage given for Other foodstuffs for 1932 increased to 6.2%.)

throughout east Africa was certainly worth fighting for, as consumption of inexpensive cotton commodities was relatively consistent.

Kanga textiles were just one type of cloth imported to Tanganyika Territory. The 1923 trade report explained the categories of cotton piece goods and itemized the countries of origin for each type of cloth:

[Cotton piece goods] has increased in value very considerably although its percentage to the whole import trade is decreased. The goods comprising this were, in order of value, (a) Grey unbleached (Americani and chadder) mainly of United Kingdom, Japanese and British Indian manufacture, (b) White bleached (bafta, white shirting, drill and duck) mainly from the United Kingdom, (c) Printed piece goods, manufactured principally in the United Kingdom and Holland, (d) Dyed piece goods, chiefly from the United Kingdom, British India and Holland, (e) Coloured piece goods of United Kingdom, British India, Germany and Holland manufacture, (f) Blankets from the United Kingdom and British India.¹¹⁸

Kanga textiles fell into the category “Printed piece goods,” according to their method of manufacture. The 1923 trade report indicates that these types of textiles were “manufactured principally in the United Kingdom and Holland;” the specialty textile printers known to have taken *kanga* commissions in the 1920s are member firms of the British Calico Printers’ Association and the Dutch firms van Vlissingen (Vlisco) and LKM.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁸ “Cotton Piece Goods,” 4. Imports: Comparative value of the principal item of import for the years 1922 and 1923; and the percentage of each article to total imports,” TNA, AB.33:1923 Annual Report of Commissioner of Customs Department (1733/1), *Tanganyika Territory Trade Report for the year ending December 31st, 1923*. In 1924 and 1925, the category “printed piece goods,” which includes *kanga* textiles, fell to fifth among cotton piece goods. Still, the supplying countries—the United Kingdom and Holland—point to the British Calico Printers’ Association and the Dutch companies van Vlissingen (Vlisco) and LKM (*Leidsche Katoenmaatschappij* or Leiden Cotton Company) as likely manufacturers. HKM (*Haarlemsche Katoen Maatschappij* or Haarlem Cotton Company) went bankrupt in June 1918 and LKM acquired their machinery and sample books. H.W. Lintsen, ed., *History of Technology in the Netherlands: The Genesis of Modern Society 1800-1890*, part III, “Gas, electricity and light construction,” (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 1993), 81 and Jacobs and Maas, *Een leven in kleur*, 42.

¹¹⁹ See Chapter 4, “The *Kanga* Trade: Global Networks of Manufacturers, Distributors, Sellers and Consumers.”

According to the Annual Reports for 1925 and 1926, “Cotton Piece-Goods” were by far the largest category of imports, based on value. In the early 1920s, these cotton textiles were at least twice the value of their nearest imported competitor, foodstuffs; at times the gulf between these two categories of imports stretched to over 500%.¹²⁰ And although the countries of origin for imports were not itemized, one general statement was provided for 1925: “Of the import trade 64.5% was with the United Kingdom and British possessions while the remainder the biggest share went to Germany, Holland and Japan with 10.5%, 9.0% and 7.2% respectively.”¹²¹ It is by no means a coincidence that the United Kingdom and British possessions, Germany, Holland, and Japan were all fighting to capture the market in cotton piece-goods. Dealing in these regionally popular, inexpensive cotton textiles could mean huge profits for manufacturers and nation (from taxes paid).

Harold Ingrams, a British officer of the Colonial Administrative Service, mentioned another shift in the *kanga* trade. Ingrams lived in Zanzibar and Mauritius in 1919 and

¹²⁰ The values of cotton piece-goods and foodstuffs are given for 1922-1926 respectively: 1922: £590,466/£141,312; 1923: £722,325/£132,179; 1924: £811,679/£175,467; 1925: £954,689/£282,380; 1926: £817,576/£349,245; “62. Imports: Comparative value of the principal items of import for the years 1922, 1923, 1924, and 1925,” TNA, AB.13.1926: Annual Report Tanganyika Territory 1925 (1733:11). 1926 values from TNA, AB.8.1927: Annual Report Tanganyika Territory 1926 (1733:6). Furthermore, the decrease in total value of imported cotton piece-goods between 1925 and 1926 was explained: “The decrease of £137,113 in the value of cotton piece-goods as compared with the imports for 1925 is due to the fact that large stocks were carried over from 1925. Stocks at the end of 1926 were comparatively low.” “58. Imports: Comparative value of the principal items of import for the years 1923, 1924, 1925, and 1926,” TNA, AB.13.1926: Annual Report Tanganyika Territory 1925 (1733:11).

¹²¹ “62. Imports: Comparative value of the principal items of import for the years 1922, 1923, 1924, and 1925,” TNA, AB.13.1926: Annual Report Tanganyika Territory 1925 (1733:11). These numbers shifted slightly in 1926: “Of the import trade, 62.2% was with the United Kingdom and British possessions, while of the remainder the biggest share went to Germany, Holland and Japan with 9.4%, 8.8% and 7.2% respectively,” “58. Imports: Comparative value of the principal items of import for the years 1923, 1924, 1925, and 1926,” TNA, AB.13.1926: Annual Report Tanganyika Territory 1925 (1733:11).

drew on his experiences while on appointment there.¹²² In his 1942 book, *Arabia and the Isles*, Ingrams notes,

Kangas for the most part used to be made in Manchester but I believe there has been considerable Japanese competition in late years. There is quite an element of gambling about their manufacture, for patterns may fall absolutely flat. As a general rule the commercial travelers would consult the big wholesale Indian merchants in Zanzibar. If they were lucky in their choice of design the *kangas* would sell well. But where one succeeded ten would fail to tickle woman's fancy.¹²³

Here, Ingrams confirmed the importance of Indian merchants, who have knowledge of which designs might succeed with east African women. He noted the uncertain nature of the *kanga* trade: if a design failed to become popular, manufacturers would be left with a batch of unwanted textiles. He also recorded an important shift in the manufacturing of *kanga*, from British-dominated to new competition from the Japanese. According to import records, Japan entered the cotton piece goods' trade in Tanganyika tentatively in 1922 and again in 1925; they increased the presence in 1926, made huge strides in 1927 and became a major competitor in 1928 and 1929, and were the largest importer of cotton piece goods (both in quantity and value) in 1930.¹²⁴

The 1926 edition of the annually published *Tanganyika Trade Report* provides considerable detail concerning the differences between categories of cotton piece goods imported into the colony. The five categories of piece goods itemized are grey unbleached, white bleached, printed, dyed in the piece, coloured wholly or in part and in

¹²² Bernard Reilly, foreword to *Arabia and the Isles*, by Harold Ingrams, 3rd ed. (1942; New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1966), ix.

¹²³ Harold Ingrams, *Arabia and the Isles*, 3rd ed. (1942; New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1966), 33-34.

¹²⁴ The Japanese eased their way into the east African market by first manufacturing some of the most simple and inexpensive cotton piece goods, the grey unbleached cotton known throughout east Africa as *merikani*. See *Tanganyika Trade Reports* from 1921, 1922, 1923, 1924, 1925, and especially 1926 for an extended discussion of Japanese involvement in the cotton piece goods trade in colonial Tanganyika.

dyed yarn.¹²⁵ Within each category, the main textiles are described, including various names, country of manufacture, use, price, and other identification or notable characteristics, much like trade report descriptions from the turn of the century.¹²⁶

Beginning in 1927, the types of cloth, percentage, and value of each were itemized within the overarching category cotton piece goods. Using this information, it is possible to trace imports of *kanga* textiles more closely, rather than just as a portion of the general category of cotton piece goods. In 1927, for example, “printed” textiles accounted for 17% of total cotton piece-good imports.¹²⁷ In 1928, this figure increased to 20.5%, and the report noted that “the increase in the importation of Khangas [sho]ws the enhanced prosperity of the natives.”¹²⁸ The figure decreased slightly in 1929, to 18.6% for printed cotton piece goods¹²⁹ and fell again in 1930 to 15.2%.¹³⁰

Commencing in 1929, the category “printed piece goods” was subdivided into “printed khangas” and “printed other;” for that year, “printed khangas” accounted for

¹²⁵ “Cotton Piece Goods,” *Tanganyika Trade Report for the year ended December 31st 1926* (Dar es Salaam: The Government Printer, 1926), 2.

¹²⁶ “Printed Piece Goods,” *Tanganyika Trade Report for the year ended December 31st 1926*, (Dar es Salaam: The Government Printer, 1926), 4.

¹²⁷ “Imports: Cotton Piece Goods,” *Tanganyika Territory: Trade Report for the year ended December 31st 1927* (Dar es Salaam: The Government Printer, 1927).

¹²⁸ Had the two categories remained as one, they would have amounted to 15.9%, very close to the figures for the previous year. “Imports: Cotton Piece Goods,” *Tanganyika Territory: Trade Report for the year ended December 31st 1928* (Dar es Salaam: The Government Printer, 1928). The source was badly damaged, leading to loss of some text.

¹²⁹ To my knowledge, the first mention of *kitenge* in Tanganyika comes from a 1929 trade report: Japanese print stuff (*kitenge*) has no border and it measures 46in. to 30in., whereas a *khangas* measured from 46in. to 60. As the breadth of the Japanese stuff is narrow, two pieces are sewn together to enable it to be used mostly as *khangas* by the native women. This material is also used as a substitute for cretonne for curtains, chair covers, etc.” “Imports: Cotton Piece Goods,” *Tanganyika Territory: Trade Report for the year ended December 31st 1929* (Dar es Salaam: The Government Printer, 1929).

¹³⁰ “Imports: Cotton Piece Goods,” *Tanganyika Territory: Trade Report for the year ended December 31st 1930* (Dar es Salaam: The Government Printer, 1930).

10.7% of all imported cotton piece goods.¹³¹ The report also confirms competition from Japanese imports:

From the above figures it will be seen that at a time when imports generally are decreasing those of Japanese piece goods are increasing. The Japanese manufacturers have their representatives constantly touring East Africa and, realizing that in a time of money shortage the native prefers quantity to quality, have catered for his demands by putting cheap articles on the market.¹³²

Japan also supplied of other forms of inexpensive cotton goods that affected *kanga* consumption.¹³³ Although Japan was not the chief importer of *kanga* textiles until 1950, the nation's manufacturers steadily increased imports until 1940 when World War II disrupted production.

Between 1929 and 1981, each type of cloth, its quantity, value, and country of origin were itemized in British yearly reports.¹³⁴ For these five decades, the amounts and competing countries of manufacture can be discerned for *kanga* production and importation. At first, competing countries of import appear to continue from records prior to World War I, when Dutch and British manufacturers imported the vast majority of *kanga* textiles. Indeed, from 1929 to 1937, the United Kingdom imported the most *kanga* textiles, followed by the Netherlands. In 1938 and 1939, the Netherlands briefly imported the largest number, only for the United Kingdom to resume their place as the

¹³¹ "Imports: Cotton Piece Goods," *Tanganyika Territory: Trade Report for the year ended December 31st 1931* (Dar es Salaam: The Government Printer, 1931).

¹³² "Imports: Cotton Piece Goods," *Tanganyika Territory: Trade Report for the year ended December 31st 1931*.

¹³³ In 1932, *kanga* imports increased to 12.9% and the trade reports notes that "Cheap Black Drill from Japan has to some extent displaced Americani in the native choice. Also cheap printed jeans and dyed poplins, chiefly from Japan, have had a strong tendency to displace Khangas from the United Kingdom and Holland," "Imports: Cotton Piece Goods," *Tanganyika Territory: Trade Report for the year ended December 31st 1932* (Dar es Salaam: The Government Printer, 1932).

¹³⁴ With the exception of three years, in 1941, 1948, and 1952. During these years, only total quantities and values are mentioned, rather than itemized by country of import.

chief importer of *kanga* textiles into Tanganyika Territory between 1940 and 1949.

Production was much reduced throughout the war years.

From the vantage point of the remaining Dutch textile printer, van Vlissingen & Co. (Vlisco), the firm's competition between 1920 and 1940 was one of the British member firms of the Calico Printers' Association:

In the years 1920-1940, the only competition was from the English factory [name omitted], which is now part of the CPA, and if anything came of the market of Japanese manufacture, this was of inferior quality in terms of colors and execution that this was no competition to fear. In the course of time, our article with the trademark VH had gained great fame in the market due to its color accuracy and consistent quality, and its reputation would continue until the day in which the item was abandoned.¹³⁵

Competition was so rife that firms often went to great lengths to protect their interests. For example, a passage from an unpublished manuscript in the Vlisco archives records extended haggling over price with merchant converters as well as the use of commercial codes to save money and protect the order:

There was usually a long telegram exchange before the close of a new Khanga order. The quoted price was never accepted; a price difference of a few pennies per corge (= 20 Khangas) was often endlessly transmitted back and forth. This telegram traffic came in Bentley's Code, which was supplemented by our own secret code words. The reason this code was used was because we found that the telegraph office in Dar es Salaam practiced commercial espionage when the exchange took place in the English language. Since about 1950, however, telegram codes have not been used.¹³⁶

World War II interrupted production and importation of *kanga* textiles, and for the first time since records began, the Netherlands ceased production from 1940-1945.

Wartime may have limited some countries' manufacturing prospects, but it granted

¹³⁵ Gerritt Vollaard, "Vlisco Memories and Manufacturing," my translation of manuscript in Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands (October 1972), 5.

¹³⁶ Vollaard, "Vlisco Memories and Manufacturing," 4-5.

others the opportunity to capitalize on the gap in the market. In 1938, the Office of the Indian Government and Trade Commissioner opened in Mombasa. Indian officials compiled useful commercial information on the ground in east Africa just at the moment when longstanding trade networks were interrupted due to World War II. They also issued annual reports with their findings. The report from 1940-1941 is explicit in urging Indian manufacturers to take advantage of the gap in the east African textile market caused by wartime, under the heading, "New Openings for Indian Commodities," from which I quote at length:

Manufacturers and exporters in India are accordingly advised to take advantage of the present position and endeavour to establish trade relations with importers in this country. ... It is accordingly necessary that the Indian manufacturers should co-operate with the merchants in these territories in the matter of complying with their specifications. It would benefit them to send out to this country capable commercial travellers with complete ranges of samples to interview importers and secure orders. ... It is also advisable for the Indian manufacturers to appoint sole selling agents in this country who should report to them of any changes in the designs and qualities of goods gaining popularity in these markets.¹³⁷

Since itemized records began in 1929, *kanga* imports from British India were consistent but small. Indian production greatly increased in 1942 but remained largely marginal until a brief period in the 1960s. Japan, too, wanted to expand the production of *kanga* textiles for the east African market around the outbreak of World War II. A Japanese trade agency, headquartered in Nairobi, opened in 1938.¹³⁸ According to the Indian trade commissioner, the success of European and Japanese textile imports in

¹³⁷ Sangat Singh, *Report on the Work of the Indian Government Trade Commissioner in East Africa During 1940-1941* (Calcutta: Printed by the Manager Government of India Press, 1942), 3; TNA 28609.

¹³⁸ M. H. Ismail, *Report on the Work of the Indian Government Trade Commissioner in East Africa, Mombasa, during 1938-1939* (Delhi: Printed by Manager of Publications, 1940), 22; TNA 28609.

east Africa was due to timely and frequent delivery of samples, to keep pace with the ever-changing demand for innovation in textiles.¹³⁹

In 1950 and 1951, Tanganyika imported the largest number of *kanga* textiles from Japan; the huge increase in quantities reflects postwar prosperity and a boom in consumption. Countries of origin for *kanga* imports to Tanganyika are lacking for 1952, and the United Kingdom enjoyed its final two years as chief exporter of *kanga* textiles in 1953 and 1954, with British exports dwindling through the late 1950s.¹⁴⁰ Millions of yards of *kanga* textiles were imported, sold, and consumed in Tanganyika in the 1950s and early 1960s, a veritable boom time for the commodity and its suppliers. Japan exported the vast majority of *kanga* textiles to Tanganyika and later Tanzania for over a decade from 1955 until 1966. *Kanga* printed in the Netherlands remained second during many of these years, indicating the Dutch were a constant supplier at this time though their production was dwarfed by Japan. The Netherlands ceased exporting *kanga* textiles to Tanzania in 1968.

Between 1966 and 1970 a flurry of Asian countries competed to supply the market in *kanga* textiles to the nation of Tanzania. In 1966, India exported the largest number of textiles, with Japan, China, Hong Kong, and the Netherlands all competing for a fair share of the market.¹⁴¹ Likewise in 1967, 1968 and 1969, Japan was the largest

¹³⁹ Ismail, *Report on the Work of the Indian Government Trade Commissioner in East Africa, Mombasa, during 1938-1939*, 53; TNA 28609.

¹⁴⁰ The final continuous year of British production was 1959, though the British *kanga* imports ceased for good in 1964. See Appendix B, "*Kanga* Imports to Colonial Tanganyika and Independent Tanzania, 1929-1981."

¹⁴¹ British India and later India often imported *kanga* to Tanganyika and later Tanzania, but rarely does the colony/nation compete with more established industrial nations. The exceptions are 1965 and its triumphant year in 1966 until after the liberalizing era begins in 1985. See Appendix B, "*Kanga* Imports to Colonial Tanganyika and Independent Tanzania, 1929-1981."

exported of *kanga* textiles to Tanzania, though China and Hong Kong also exported large numbers. In 1970, China was the chief exporter of *kanga* textile, trailed by Japan and Hong Kong.

From 1971 to 1981, Japan was the only foreign country to export *kanga* textiles to Tanzania. Local production in Tanzania began in late 1967, and import restrictions were placed to protect domestic *kanga* production. (The Chinese had partnered with the local government in Tanzania to found the first fully integrated textile mill, Friendship Textile Mill [*Urafiki*], so local production was aided by Chinese efforts.) Records in consistent and comparable form ceased after 1981.¹⁴²

This section has shown that cotton piece goods were the largest category of imports into Tanganyika Territory in the interwar period. A sizeable component of this trade was in printed *kanga* textiles. Consumption of *kanga* textiles in Tanganyika and subsequently Tanzania increased throughout the twentieth century. From 1929 through 1981, the dominant country of *kanga* textile production varied among British, Dutch, British Indian, Japanese, Indian, Chinese, and Hong Kong-based manufacturers. Such competition in the supply of inexpensive, printed textiles to satisfy east African women's desire for wrap garments indicates this market was worth competing to control. Not at all a story of helpless east African consumers marginalized by dominant industrialized powers, the manufacturing history of *kanga* textiles instead suggests a global interdependence of supply and demand.

¹⁴² In 1981, 86 individual *kanga* were imported by other countries—74 from Saudi Arabia and 12 from Singapore—numbers so insignificant they do not affect the larger history. See Appendix B, “*Kanga* Imports to Colonial Tanganyika and Independent Tanzania, 1929-1981.”

This chapter has provided a brief history of Dar es Salaam, variously located in German East Africa, colonial Tanganyika, independent Tanganyika, and the present nation of Tanzania. The chronology of *kanga* manufacture was next presented, beginning with the dominance of Dutch printers over British competitors before World War I. I subsequently traced the shift to British dominance after World War I until 1950. Although the story of *kanga* imports to Dar es Salaam consisted mainly of Dutch versus British in the first half of the twentieth century, Japanese and British Indian manufacturers were constant though smaller suppliers until midcentury, when tables turned to favor the Japanese. Japanese manufacturers enjoyed unprecedented numbers of *kanga* exports during their height of production from 1950-1965. British production largely ceased in the late 1950s, and Dutch manufacturing continued until the late 1960s, marking the end of European exported *kanga* textiles to Dar es Salaam. A brief flurry of Asian competition occurred in the late 1960s, before Japan enjoyed a decade as the sole exporter of *kanga* textiles to Tanzania from 1971-1981.

CHAPTER 7 THE ARTISTRY OF *KANGA* TEXTILES: A DESIGN HISTORY

Building on the networks of players involved in the *kanga* trade as well as the chronology of manufacturing charted in the previous two chapters, this chapter focuses the innovations in *kanga* designs throughout the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. I begin by briefly discussing technological advances that visibly manifest in *kanga* design and production, which contributed to changing designs throughout the twentieth century. Next, this chapter explores the stylistic innovations in *kanga* designs, based on over 5,000 full-cloth examples from the Dutch printer Vlisco. Crucially, I establish how a conventional *kanga* composition emerged, as a bordered cloth with a Swahili phrase, at times in Arabic script or Roman script. Although this dissertation centers on the development of *kanga* in Zanzibar in the nineteenth century and its proliferation in Dar es Salaam in the twentieth century, designs destined for the east African cities of Zanzibar, Dar es Salaam, and Mombasa will all be considered, as they interrelate, at times coinciding, diverging, and certainly influencing one another.¹

This chapter suggests that *kanga* textiles, as imported commodities until the late 1960s, featured designs that reflect global influences as experienced locally in east Africa. Regardless of the origin of individual objects depicted on *kanga* textiles, these objects became familiar in east Africa and were domesticated into daily life. *Kanga* textiles were fashionable consumer items, and printed designs on the cloths changed to accommodate passing trends—especially larger trends reflecting power dynamics in

¹ It should be noted that the vast majority of textiles produced by Vlisco were destined for Dar es Salaam. Smaller markets, such as Zanzibar and Mombasa, are vital in providing comparisons and contrasts in subject matter and design. A substantial secondary market for Vlisco production was Madagascar, whether sent via Paris, Marseille, or directly to Tananarive; these textiles are today known as *lamba hoany*. Somewhat surprisingly, *kanga*-like cloths destined for Rhodesia (present-day Zimbabwe), Mogadishu, Somalia, and Mozambique also appear, though they number less than three dozen.

east Africa. Furthermore, changes in popular colorways, the parameters of borders, continuity of certain design elements, and variation between intended markets will all be examined.

Based on over 5,000 *kanga* textiles, this chapter will show how compositions and colors of *kanga* textiles shifted during the first half of the twentieth century. *Kanga* designs featured three approaches to border design and the inclusion of text. The preference for a continuous border, a compound border, or an integrated border shifted throughout the history of imported *kanga* textiles. The inclusion of text was by no means guaranteed; if included, the Swahili text was printed in either Arabic script or Roman script, depending on the date and intended market. Colorways also varied, including the number of ink colors used and the preference in tone and combination. Descriptions of representative examples will be provided to demonstrate the variety of designs, script, and colorways.

Designs printed on *kanga* textiles also fluctuated, but they displayed much variation on established themes to suggest perhaps more continuity overall than wholesale change. *Kanga* textiles continued to include early design influences, such as elements first introduced from Indonesian batiks and Indian woodblock and tie-dyed designs. Preference for locally demanded crisp, bold, and repeating designs continued to characterize *kanga* textiles, as discussed in Chapter 3. *Kanga* textiles also incorporated modern additions and desirable commodities related to international influences as experienced locally in east Africa. These included European- and Omani-related objects, which reflect some of the dominant forces circulating in east Africa. The Sultan of Zanzibar was Omani between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The

upper class in Zanzibar adopted clothing styles and many prestige items from the Omanis and the Arabian Peninsula, and lower class *kanga* consumers often selected designs featuring objects, informed by the Omani presence. During the colonial era, British-related objects, such as Union flags, appeared on *kanga* textiles, and undoubtedly referenced the influence of the European colonial power. Regardless of where such objects originated, they became familiar within east Africa, complicating a simple foreign/domestic dichotomy.

Kanga textiles with designs related to international influences as experienced locally in east Africa may have been preferred by women consumers who sought to associate themselves with the powerful influences of the day. By adopting designs with Omani or European accoutrements, women consumers also may have selected such designs because they reflected their reality, surrounded by familiar objects. For example, while automobiles were certainly imported, they are also part of everyday life in east Africa; and whether or not *kanga* consumers personally owned them, automobiles can be considered a modern addition and a desirable commodity, and therefore a reasonable inclusion in *kanga* designs. *Kanga* textiles with fruit, animals, and other familiar designs also waxed and waned in popularity throughout the first half of the twentieth century.

This chapter concludes with an introduction to four *kanga* designers: Mr. K. G. Peera, a colonial-era designer, was primarily active between 1930 and 1975. Professor Hashim A. Nakanoga, an independence-era designer, primarily designed in the 1970s. Mr. Furahi Kasika, Jr., a liberalizing-era designer, began designing in the early 1990s, after the Tanzanian economy reopened. Mr. Vijay Patankar, a contemporary designer,

began designing after 2000 with the shift toward digital production. Each conceived of his craft in different ways, predicated on the historical moment each experienced and the training each received, whether formal, informal, or self-taught. These designers chronicle the changing emphasis and practice of *kanga* textile design over the past half century or more and their experiences bring the design of *kanga* textiles up to the present day.

Technological Developments in the Printing of *Kanga* Textiles

For the most part, *kanga* textiles have been and continue to be printed on industrially woven, light cotton cloths. This is practical for two reasons: *kanga* textiles have been popular throughout the Swahili Coast of eastern Africa for over a century, a region that straddles the equator and abuts the Indian Ocean. The tropical climate is best suited to light and airy clothing; therefore, the thinness of the cloths is appropriate for the region's climate. Second, the low quality of the weave and thinness of the cotton cloth ensure that *kanga* textiles remain affordable. Women purchase, wear, use, and discard *kanga* textiles as fashions change and as they wear out. Their inexpensive nature ensures repeated consumption, fuelling constant demand for these printed cotton textiles.

Polyester or polyester/cotton-blend *kanga* became available in 2010. The appearance of synthetic *kanga* textiles in Dar es Salaam corresponded with a spike in the price of cotton; in order to keep *kanga* textiles affordable, polyester and polyester/cotton-blend *kanga* were created to meet the demands of consumers. Women reported that synthetic *kanga* do not wear out as quickly, and retain their bold

(sometimes neon) colors better than cotton *kanga* textiles.² However, they do not breath like cotton *kanga*, are quick to catch fire while cooking over open flames, and tend to slip when worn as wrappers. Overall, the women I interviewed tended to prefer cotton *kanga*, but with the quality failing and the price rising, some had turned to polyester or polyester/cotton-blend *kanga* for economy purposes.

The printing process will be discussed next, in so far as methods of printing affect the visual appearance of *kanga* textiles. The differences between woodblock printing by hand, etched copper roller printing, flat screen printing and rotary screen printing will be clarified.³ And because synthetic dyes became available during the 1870s⁴ just as

² Summarized from interviews with a variety of women in Dar es Salaam throughout fall 2011.

³ For a discussion of technological developments in calico preparation, printing, and dyeing, prior to 1876, see Charles O'Neill, "The Practice and Principles of Calico Printing, Dyeing, &c.," in *The Textile Colourist*, ed. Charles O'Neill (Manchester: Palmer and Howe, 1876). For a discussion of technological developments in calico preparations, printing, and dyeing prior to 1951, see Geoffrey Turnbull, *A History of the Calico Printing Industry of Great Britain* (Altrincham: John Sherratt and Son, 1951). This short review of the steps necessary for creating any roller-printed design may be helpful: "The conversion of grey cloth to printed cloth may be regarded as falling into the following broad divisions: (a) the choice of a design and the colours in which it is to be printed, and if the design is a new one, the engraving of the rollers; (b) the preparatory processes of singeing, washing and bleaching the cloth; mercerising may be done at this stage, and for certain types of printing, the cloth requires to be dyed; (c) the printing of the cloth in the printing machine; (d) the development and fixation of the colours printed by steaming, ageing or treatment with chemicals according to the type of dyestuffs employed; (e) the washing and soaping of the processed cloth to remove all loose dyestuff and any chemicals remaining in the cloth; (f) the final finishing of the cloth involving the addition of filling materials to improve its texture and handle, calendaring (a kind of ironing or pressing by a revolving bowl) to impart smoothness or lustre, or any other special finishing process required," "Report on the Process of Calico Printing," The Monopolies and Restrictive Practices Commission (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1954), 9, M75/1/5/1-2 Reports and Returns 1900-1968.

⁴ M. G. P. A. Jacobs and W. H. G. Maas, *Een leven in kleur: Textieldrukkerij Vlisco, 1846-1996* (Helmond, Uitgeverij Historion, 1996), 23. For example, in 1863 Griens and Caro discovered "Bismark brown", which produced oranges, browns, and yellows, in 1873, Croissant and Bretonniere produced a brown dye for cotton, in 1878, Caro discovered a synthetic red dye, in 1880 Baeyer discovered a synthetic indigo dye, in 1884 Paul Bottiger discovered a "Congo red," in 1885 Hoffmann and Weinberg discovered "Naphthol black," in 1887 Green discovered primuline that produced the color yellow, in 1888 Holliday and Sons produced "Para red," in 1889 Gais produced a direct cotton black dye and in 1891 Hoffman and Daimler produced a synthetic green dye. Turnbull, *A History of the Calico Printing Industry*, 47-49.

kanga textiles were first being industrially printed, it is likely that *kanga* textiles were always printed using synthetic dyes.⁵

Block Printing. Around the turn of the twentieth century, *kanga* textiles were block printed by hand by the Dutch textile printer van Vlissingen & Co. (Vlisco). In this method, cloth was stretched out over a printing table, the surface of which was a heavy stone slab. The stone slab was covered with a thick textile, which provided a small amount of give when the blocker applied color. Next to the table was a color box and pad; the box was replenished and the pad smoothed out by a printer's assistant. To print a design, the printer first pressed the block into the color pad, placed it in the correct position on the cloth, then struck the back with a mallet to ensure even penetration of color throughout the design.⁶

Woodblocks were constructed in two ways. The first was to carve a block of wood to reveal a design in flat relief (Fig. 7-1). An example resides in Vlisco's collection; it has Arabic-script Swahili text that likely would have been integrated into an early twentieth-century *kanga* textile. The Arabic characters stand out in relief from the depressed background. The entire phrase has been carved from a single block of wood, though the woodblock itself comprises no less than four layers of wood, which provides the printer with an easy grip. Vlisco's centennial publication lists varieties of wood best suited to

⁵ In the United Kingdom, dyes prior to 1876 were naturally derived; after that year, dyes were artificially made. Calico Printers' Association, *The History of Broad Oak* (Accrington: Calico Printers' Association, 1926), 3.

⁶ van Vlissingen & Co., "Printing," *Extract of the Memorial Volume P. F. van Vlissingen, 1846-1946* (Helmond: van Vlissingen & Co., 1946), 19.

this purpose: “A hard closegrained wood is necessary, sycamore, plane or pear being in commonest use.”⁷

The second way woodblock designs were created was by inserting copper strips into the woodblock (Fig. 7-2). These examples are from Vlisco’s collection; the smaller block on the left displays a repeating floral pattern, while the larger block on the right shows a peacock sitting in a blooming tree with two butterflies. While the bases of both blocks are made of wood, the design is constructed by embedding thin copper strips directly into the block (Fig. 7-3). A variety of woodworking tools can be seen in addition to the start of inlaid metal strips, following the pencil-drawn design. This method facilitated the creation of finer lines and more delicate designs.

Both types of woodblocks were created in all different sizes and shapes, according to the desired design. Some, like the floral pattern, were designed to repeat seamlessly throughout a large section of the textile. Others, such as the Arabic-script Swahili phrase and the peacock, were meant to be featured in the center of *kanga* designs. With both types of woodblocks, ink was applied to the elevated lines, whether wood or metal. The design prints in reverse, to reveal a mirror-image of the woodblock’s design. To print with more than one color, multiple blocks must be used. For inexpensive textiles like *kanga*, printed designs are applied to only one side of cloth, but ink tended to saturate through to the reverse side.

Often, it is easy to determine if *kanga* were printed using woodblocks. Since most woodblock-printed *kanga* were hand-stamped, the woodblocks themselves had to be small enough to be easily maneuvered by one person; this limits the typical size of each

⁷ “Printing,” *Extract of the Memorial Volume P. F. van Vlissingen*, 19.

woodblock. If designs or patterns are meant to appear continuous, often minor breaks, edges, or overlap can be observed (Fig. 7-4). An image from Vlisco's collection shows a hand-stamped *kanga* from the 1910s. Although the design is crisply printed, slight breaks in the lace-like border indicate where the woodblock began and ended. Similarly, around the center of the textile, the red stars that enclose yellow circles in the interior appear more closely packed in one row. Finally, the rays of light emanating from the lantern show small breaks on both the left and the right sides. These slight imperfections in a design meant to appear continuous indicate how the cloth was printed. With the advent of roller printing or screen printing, entire designs were quickly and seamlessly realized.

Although Vlisco's centennial publication states hand-block printing is the "slowest and most expensive" of all textile printing, around the turn of the twentieth century, it was actually more cost effective to produce small batches of printed textiles in this fashion.⁸ The British trade report on Zanzibar for the year 1895 explained the differences in printing method, labor, and quantities produced.⁹ A variety of designs were possible when printing with hand-stamped woodblocks. Woodblocks could be rearranged or recombined with others to produce new designs. Changes in placement, composition, or color of dyes made a multitude of designs possible. The cost of implementing a new printed design by hand was also minimal; the labor force simply

⁸ "Printing," *Extract of the Memorial Volume P. F. van Vlissingen*, 19.

⁹ "Report for the Year 1895 on the Trade of Zanzibar," by A. H. Hardinge, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports on Trade and Finance*, Foreign Office No. 1765 (London: Harrison and Sons, 1896), 9-10. Similar observations are made in the reports for the year 1897, 1898, and 1899; see "Report for the Year 1897 on the Trade and Commerce of Zanzibar," by Cave, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports*, No. 2129 (London: Harrison and Sons, 1898), 14; "Report of the Year 1898 on the Trade and Commerce of Zanzibar," by Cave, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports*, No. 2351 (London: Harrison and Sons, 1899), 14; and "Report for the Year 1899 on the Trade and Commerce of Zanzibar," by Kestell Cornish, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports*, No. 2520 (London: Harrison and Sons, 1900), 10.

picked up a different woodblock, dipped the woodblock in a different color dye, or aligned woodblocks in different ways to create new designs. For example, two 1903 *kanga* from Vlisco's archive show the reusing of a woodblock to create a similar border, but overall different *kanga* design. The first example shows a central motif of a three-story building, complete with a flag featuring a crescent and star [70-10]. The continuous border surrounding the building is a repeating design with a flower encased in a medallion, bordered by white, zigzagging lines to the top and bottom. This continuous border appears in another Vlisco *kanga* from the same year, but this design is characterized by a bow and botanical central design [70-19]. This recycling of elements (and woodblocks) kept the cost of production down for Dutch textile printers around the turn of the twentieth century.

Roller Printing. Roller printing was invented by the Scotsman Thomas Bell in 1785.¹⁰ A centennial publication from Vlisco, the Dutch textile printer, summarizes the process:

Revolving engraved copper rollers pick up the dye mixtures from the colour boxes and transfer them to the fabric travelling on other rollers fitted to the machine. The engraved copper rollers pick up the dye mixtures from the colour troughs all over the face of the roller, but as only the dye mixtures in the engraved parts must be transferred to the cloth, Bell solved an eventually difficult problem by mounting a sharp edged resilient blade so that it pressed obliquely on the roller midway between the points of contact with the colour and the cloth. This 'cleaning doctor'¹¹ to give it its universal name, removes all surplus colour from the smooth surface of the roller leaving the colour only in the engraved parts for transference on to the cloth. A separate engraved roller is required for each colour employed in a

¹⁰ "Printing," *Extract of the Memorial Volume P. F. van Vlissingen*, 19; Turnbull, *A History of the Calico Printing Industry of Great Britain*, 50. The French printer, Oberkampf of Jouy, also invented a printing machine in 1785; the two inventions were likely independent. Turnbull, *A History of the Calico Printing Industry*, 53.

¹¹ "In all probability ["doctor"] derives its name from "ductor" or "abductor" by the way in which it removes the superfluous color." Turnbull, *A History of the Calico Printing Industry*, 57.

design and machines exist which are capable of printing sixteen colour (from sixteen individual rollers) simultaneously.¹²

The 1844 reference book by George Dodd, *The Textile Manufactures of Great Britain*, clarifies the improvement from block printing to roller printing, “As the cylinder is continually revolving, and the cloth is continually passing in contact with it, the printing goes on uninterruptedly without stoppages or breaks, thus presenting a striking difference from block-printing.”¹³ British printing firms had replaced woodblock hand-stamping with roller-printing machines by 1888, but this adoption of a technological advance in printing did not help the British secure the small and exacting export market to east Africa.¹⁴ A 1954 British government report on the process of calico printing summarizes the advances adopted in the latter half of the nineteenth century:

The successes of the new method of printing brought many new entrants to the industry and expansion continued throughout the major part of the nineteenth century. ...[I]t was during this period that printing, which earlier had often been carried out in conjunction with spinning and weaving, became organised largely as a separate section of the cotton industry. Improvements were made in the printing machine, in the making and engraving of the copper rollers, and in ancillary equipment. Great advances were made in the manufacture and use of new dyestuffs and chemicals, and in new printing techniques, all enabling better results to be secured. The thirty years after 1850 were characterised by a great increase in output and in development generally.¹⁵

However, the push towards overproduction and undercutting competitor prices enabled and even encouraged the proliferation of machine-printed textiles for export to smaller, less lucrative markets, like east Africa. As historian Turnbull describes,

¹² “Printing,” *Extract of the Memorial Volume P. F. van Vlissingen*, 19-20.

¹³ George Dodd, *Textile Manufactures of Great Britain* (London: C. Knight, 1844), 67.

¹⁴ Turnbull, *A History of the Calico Printing Industry of Great Britain*, 89.

¹⁵ “Report on the Process of Calico Printing,” The Monopolies and Restrictive Practices Commission (London: Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1954), 15-16.

[From 1880, a] state of chronic overproduction then became apparent, at the very time when increased competition was being felt abroad. ... Undercutting became rife, even to below the costs of production.¹⁶

As greater numbers of inexpensive textiles were produced, the expansion into untapped markets became paramount. Historian Laura Fair has argued that members of the lower class in Zanzibar adopted new clothing styles in the years following abolition in 1897 to identify themselves with their free-born counterparts. Women in particular selected printed *kanga* textiles to better demonstrate their upward social mobility. According to Fair, this accounts for why east African women began to demand and consume large quantities of *kanga* textiles in the last decade of the nineteenth century.¹⁷ The global availability of inexpensive, printed cotton textiles in the second half of the nineteenth century certainly contributed to the rise of supply in *kanga* production.

Screen Printing. The next innovation in mechanical printing following copper roller printing was screen printing. Two methods of screen printing have been utilized in the printing of *kanga* textiles. The first uses a flat screen; the second utilizes a rotary screen, though the transfer of color is similar. Screens were formerly made from silk or copper gauze. Designs were devised by blocking out the desired sections with wax or lacquer. To print, screens were placed over the prepared cloth and dye pressed through the uncovered parts of the screen, transferring the colored design onto the prepared cloth. Each color is printed via a separate screen, as can be seen from a photograph

¹⁶ Turnbull, *A History of the Calico Printing Industry of Great Britain*, cited in "Report on the Process of Calico Printing," 16.

¹⁷ Laura Fair, "Dressing Up: Clothing, Class, and Gender in Post-Abolition Zanzibar," *Pastimes and Politics: Culture, Community, and Identity in Post-Abolition Urban Zanzibar, 1890-1945* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2001), 64-109.

from *kanga* printing at Friendship Textile Mill (*Urafiki*) in Dar es Salaam (Fig. 7-6).¹⁸ The plain, white cloth is passes under a series of screen-printing rollers; each cylinder inks a particular color according to the screen's pattern, in order from darkest to lightest. The first roller prints the black portions of the design, and the second roller prints the dark blue portions of the design. A collection of rotary screens for printing other *kanga* designs not currently in use are stored on one end. The advantages to screen printing are numerous. First, the work, when done by hand, is quicker than block printing. Second, the labor is not skilled, and finally, the production of screens is faster and costs less than wood blocks.¹⁹

Chronology of Vlisco's Full-Cloth *Kanga* Designs

Today, *kanga* are easily recognizable due to their relatively standardized composition, which features a central image surrounded by a wide, continuous border, most often completed by a Swahili phrase. Despite their somewhat fixed composition, the combinations of different colors, Swahili phrases, and designs make *kanga* textiles the subject of constant innovations. Designs are generally depicted in a bold, graphic style with little indication of three-dimensional space and colored by solid blocks of colors. Subject matter ranges from geometric and floral motifs to everyday objects including animals, fruit, and desirable commodities and commemorative or celebratory themes. The Swahili phrase can take many forms, including familiar proverbs, provincial wisdom, benevolent blessings, or defensive warnings. Women often carefully select

¹⁸ van Vlissingen & Co., "Screen Printing," *Extract of the Memorial Volume P. F. van Vlissingen*, 20.

¹⁹ Turnbull, *A History of the Calico Printing Industry*, 311.

each pair of *kanga* textiles for their applicability in saying, desirable motif, flattering color combination, and quality of material and printing.

But how did this relatively standardized composition take shape? What types of everyday objects are common? Did all of these genres of subject matter always grace *kanga* textiles? When and how was Swahili text first incorporated in this printed cloth's design, and when did script change from Arabic to Roman characters? Are all *kanga* designed in the same manner, regardless of intended market or destination? This chapter seeks to answer all of these questions by providing a chronology of *kanga* design from 1895-1967, based on over 5,000 examples in the Vlisco archives.²⁰

Vlisco kept records of their production for each intended market in the form of samples. From 1895-1939, 1,763 full-cloth samples labeled "khangas" exist. From 1947-1967, over 3,000 full-cloth samples labeled "khangas" exist, though individual designs number closer to 1,000. Designs were often printed in more than one colorway, accounting for the discrepancy between total number of samples and total number of individual designs. All other textile printers that produced *kanga* for the east African market during the colonial period are now out of production and their collections were

²⁰ Although basing my chronology on Vlisco's *kanga* production alone limits my conclusions to the *kanga* produced by one European printer, similar endeavors could be undertaken to widen the scope of *kanga* design history. For example, *kanga* samples preserved in Japanese company archives, such as C. Itoh & Co. and Marubeni Co., Ltd., now part of ITOCHU, could provide a nice foil for Vlisco's production from the late 1920s to the early 1980s. Thousands of domestically printed *kanga* samples still existed in the sample room at *Urafiki* (Friendship Textile Mill) in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, when I last visited in December 2011, dating from when the factory began producing in late 1967 to the present. However, a buy-out was due to take effect in January 2012 that would privatize the mill and leave the contents of the sample room in potential jeopardy. Other Tanzanian companies may possess their own archives or sample rooms, such as KTM (Karibu Textile Mill), Sungura (formerly Tanganyika Dyeing and Weaving Plant), both of Dar es Salaam, Morogoro Polytextile Mill in Morogoro, and Mwatex (Mwanza Textile Mill) in Musoma. Newer companies, such as MeTL, which owns 21st-century textiles and Afritex, now keep digital films of their *kanga* designs. Unfortunately, I understand all Kenyan textile mills are out of production, leaving the whereabouts of their archives and samples unknown. In the United Kingdom, no systematic collection of Calico Printers' Association products, including *kanga*, were saved when the companies went bankrupt in the 1960s. Therefore, the most all-encompassing and representative samples from 1895-1974 reside in Vlisco's archive, upon which this chapter is based.

not systematically saved. Vlisco's collection represents the longest and most complete history of *kanga* design and manufacture in existence today.

1895-1919: Testing the Waters and Finding Success with Hand-Stamped *Kanga*

In Chapter 3, I argued that records indicate the earliest printed cloth for the east African market was produced by the Dutch textile printer van Vlissingen & Co. (Vlisco) in 1876.²¹ Although many dozens of cloth samples are preserved in Dutch textile printers' sample books dating between 1884 and 1932, the earliest full-cloth samples produced by Vlisco clearly labeled "khanga" date from the year 1895. The advantages of forming conclusions based on full-cloth examples cannot be overstated; the entire cloth, including borders, original size, and complete composition and motifs are visible, requiring little of the guesswork as to how the original cloth appeared, which is often necessary when dealing with the small portions of designs.

I have already established that the bordered *kanga* composition was in existence by 1888.²² Hugely popular *kanga* designs, such as the spots-and-stripes, date to the 1890s, and a proliferation in variety of motif within a limited number of colorways characterizes the *kanga* production of other Dutch textile printers in the first two decades of the twentieth century.²³ From samples in their collection, Vlisco, on the other hand, entered the *kanga* market rather late.²⁴ In the first fifteen years of Vlisco *kanga* production from 1895-1909, Vlisco appeared to be assessing the demands of east African women and figuring out what cloth designs and colorways might sell. The Dutch

²¹ See Chapter 3, "The Historical Emergence of *Kanga* Textiles."

²² See Chapter 3, "The Historical Emergence of *Kanga* Textiles."

²³ See Chapter 4, "Popular Early *Kanga* Textiles in Sample, Image, and Word."

²⁴ The first Vlisco-produced cloth labeled "khanga" dates to 1895, though the first recognizable *kanga* dates to the 1910s.

textile printer likely found success in the 1910s with a series of recognizable *kanga* that display all the familiar characteristics of the bordered cloth frequently with the inclusion of Swahili text.

Between 1895 and 1898, printed cloths labeled “khanga” are dark indigo blue cloths with medium blue, white, grey, or marigold designs, similar to one example from 5 October 1895 (Fig. 7-7). Designs are characterized by small, repeating central motifs, mostly geometric in shape with interlocking border designs. The designs were hand-stamped using woodblock prints, as visibly discernible and indicated in Vlisco’s records. One striking feature is less common to later *kanga* cloth: a fringed edge. This immediately calls to mind the decorated *kaniki* cloths with printed designs and fringed edges examined in Chapter 3, also dated 1895.²⁵

Between 1899 and 1909, the Vlisco-produced “khanga” are hardly identifiable as we understand *kanga* today.²⁶ They all feature two colors, repeating designs, and some sort of floral motifs, but the similarities stop there. Almost all of the textiles printed in this

²⁵ See Figure 3-5 for the 1895 *kaniki* with fringe and stamped, white designs. The two appearances of dyed indigo-blue cloths with printed designs and fringed borders may help to date fifteen full-cloth *kanga* in Vlisco’s collection, which all feature small, repeating central motifs, mostly in geometric or floral designs with a contrasting border along the cloth’s short edge. Five of the samples have dark indigo-blue grounds with white designs, and ten of the samples have dark indigo-blue grounds with medium blue designs. Some have identical motifs in blue and white, further evidence of reusing woodblocks to create variations in finished textiles. These two early *kanga* textiles even feature the repeating cross and tangerine flower motif, conventionally used for the interior motif of *kisutu* textiles. As established in Chapter 4, the conventional *kisutu* design existed at least as early as 1886 (see Figure 4-4). The similarity to other dated early *kanga* textiles in Vlisco’s collection and the inclusion of a fringed edge likely date these fifteen cloths to the late 1890s, between 1895 and 1898. Between 1899 and 1905, Vlisco’s “khanga” textiles feature plain edges printed with a design of very narrow alternating stripes, which if seen from a distance, almost appear to replicate a fringed edge (see Figures 7-8, 7-9, and 7-11).

²⁶ No full-cloth samples of Vlisco-produced “khanga” exist for the year 1909. In the years 1907 and 1908, Vlisco-produced “khanga” are limited to five destined for the Rhodesian market. These Rhodesian *kanga* are substantially different in design and color, and have been omitted from this discussion, as I aim to focus on those *kanga* destined for Dar es Salaam, and to a lesser extent Zanzibar and Mombasa (Tanzania and Kenya). The *kanga*-related cloths made for sale in Mozambique (*capulana*), Rhodesia (present-day Zimbabwe), the Comoros, and Madagascar (*lamba hoany*) fall outside the parameters of this study, but certainly would benefit from extended research.

ten-year period feature an Indonesian batik-inspired border along each cloth's width. This holdover from Vlisco's first overseas market—the Dutch East Indies, or present-day Indonesia—reappears in subtle ways throughout the design history of *kanga* textiles. The cloths dating from 1899 have dark indigo grounds with an interlocking and all over marigold-colored floral design, completed by a batik-inspired border along the short edge (Fig. 7-8). No full-cloth samples exist for 1900, and in 1901, Vlisco "khanga" incorporate a myriad of batik-inspired designs, beyond the border across the cloth's width, from small, repeating shapes, peacocks integrated within a floral motif, a doubled *kemben*, and interlocking botanical designs with a *tumpal* along the short edge (Fig. 7-9). In 1902, one "khanga" is comprised of eight-pointed stars and other geometric shapes with the familiar Indonesian-like border along the cloth's width.

The twenty-seven *kanga* dating from 1903 take a decidedly different approach and appear more similar to today's conventional *kanga* composition. All twenty-seven *kanga* have dark, indigo-blue grounds with woodblock-printed white designs, and although many retain some variation of the batik-inspired border along the *kanga's* short edge, the central motif is very often framed by a continuous decorative border. Frequently the small, repeating central motif common to earlier Vlisco *kanga* has been replaced by one, large, centered object or symbol. The subject matter encompasses genres that were to become standard among *kanga*, such as animals, buildings, and geometric designs. Yet the animals displayed on these early *kanga* may not have been familiar to east African consumers; for example, the stag or buck, and the flanking Labrador retrievers, are common in western Europe but not in tropical east Africa. Other animals, such as the bush baby pictured on another 1903 example, would have been familiar to

local consumers (Fig. 7-10). The wide, continuous border of paisley and flowers is a common motif among later *kanga*, there is little relation between the central figure (the bush baby), flanking figures (the Labrador retrievers) and the border (paisley and flowers). Other animals, such as camels, Indian elephants, oxen (pulling a cart) and a reindeer pulling a wheeled sleigh feature on other 1903 *kanga*.²⁷ The appearance of unrelated animals is likely the product of mixing and matching separate woodblocks, perhaps originally intended for another market (likely a domestic one) to create new, though perhaps less successful, designs intended for an east African market. These motifs appear to have been less successful because such foreign animals and haphazard design combinations do not feature on *kanga* textiles from later years.

Vlisco archival holdings have nineteen *kanga* from 1905 that are similar to those from 1899, but the color palette has reversed and in some cases changed (Fig. 7-11). In the one 1905 example, which is representative of a dozen *kanga* textiles, the ground is now white and the designs are printed in dark indigo. Five others show rose designs on a white ground, and one final example has designs in dark purple.²⁸

²⁷ Indian elephants are much smaller than African elephants and can be discerned by a difference in ear shape and ability to train; Indian elephants can be ridden, as is illustrated in this design. Another very similar *kanga* with oxen pulling a covered wagon dates to 1911.

²⁸ Seven undated *kanga* from Group 76 combine innovations first seen in 1903 and 1905, and likely date somewhere within that three-year period. All of the examples have white grounds like those from 1905. In the undated *kanga*, the ink colors used are red, maroon, medium blue, and in one striking example, red and black. Because of the similarities between the undated *kanga* and dated examples from 1903 and 1905, it is likely these undated *kanga* were printed shortly after 1905; if so, the example of red-and-black designs printed on white cloth is likely the first Vlisco-produced full-cloth *kanga* that was printed using two separate ink colors. The borders are continuous throughout like the 1903 *kanga* textiles. In two examples, there is an attempt to locate the bush baby (familiar from a 1903 example) and the goats in space, by using flanking butterflies in the former and flanking palm trees in the latter. This attempt to convey a setting, at times including a foreground, mid-ground, and background, continued to be mined by Vlisco in the early years of production, though ultimately *kanga* textiles favor images on one plane. All of these *kanga* are hand-stamped with woodblocks, as indicated by Vlisco's records as well as the abrupt breaks in otherwise continuous border designs.

The one example from 1906 suggests Vlisco was still experimenting with small, intricate, and repeating design, reminiscent of Indonesian batik textiles. The continuous border, first seen in Vlisco-produced *kanga* from 1895, 1898, and again in 1903, is one recurring feature of later *kanga* textiles. No *kanga* exist for the years 1907, 1908, and 1909 in Vlisco's collection, except five destined for the Rhodesian market that diverge considerably in form and color.²⁹ Vlisco appears to have discovered successful *kanga* designs and compositions between 1910 and 1919, judging from the 272 *kanga* that date to those years, all produced in just one colorway.

The first full-cloth, dated, recognizable *kanga* textiles in Vlisco collection date from the 1910s. All of the 1910s *kanga* textiles are printed in three colors: yellow, red, and dark maroon. When seen from a distance, the maroon appears more or less black. One design features a luxurious interior with a couch in the latest fashion and patterned curtains tied back to reveal a mosque through the paned-glass windows (Fig. 7-12). One-point perspective is used to give the impression of recession into space, underscored by the grid-like floor. It is likely this depiction of illusionistic space did not meet with success on the market, because the vast majority of *kanga* show bold, graphic designs on a single plane without any indication of background. And although this entire design was planned as a whole, it was printed in parts, like all Vlisco *kanga* from 1910s, due to the parameters of hand-stamping. Imperfections in the lining up of woodblocks can be seen in one detail.

The unequal border—thicker at the short edges and thinner along the long edges—is typical of one approach to borders on *kanga* textiles. Sometimes the borders,

²⁹ Group 75 contains three Rhodesian “khanga” dated to 1907 and two from 1908. No *kanga* textiles appear to have been produced by Vlisco in 1909.

though differing in thickness, relate in design. A second type of border is illustrated by another 1910s *kanga* (Fig. 7-13). This thick, continuous border functions very much like a frame for the central motif; here, the inner portion shows a peacock perched on a branch.³⁰ The paisley-and-heart blossoms placed in each inner corner are also typical inclusions in *kanga* compositions. This border, though equidistant and continuous, is much more intricate than later *kanga* borders. The border resembles delicate lace, a stylistic approach favored in many other 1910s Vlisco *kanga*, but not an approach to border design that persists in later *kanga* textiles.

Still today, not every *kanga* textile carries a Swahili saying, though the appearance of a printed phase is more or less a defining feature of *kanga* textiles. I established in Chapter 3 that among the earliest known printed textiles destined for the east African market, some included Arabic-script Swahili phrases. In the 272 examples of *kanga* textiles from 1910s, a large variety is apparent. Some have no saying (Fig. 7-12); others have Swahili text printed in Arabic script (Fig. 7-13).³¹ Still others have block Roman-script Swahili text (Fig. 7-14).³² Somewhat surprisingly, Roman-script text also appears in a combination of uppercase and lower letters (Fig. 7-15)³³ and cursive or longhand (Fig. 7-16).³⁴

³⁰ Although not the same peacock as the woodblock mentioned earlier in the chapter, it is a popular motif that recurs relatively frequently on *kanga* textiles.

³¹ Prof. Dr. Roman Loimeier confirmed this text is indeed Arabic-script Swahili. Some also use Persian diacritical marks. Emails to author, 10 May, 13 May, and 16 May 2013.

³² *Daraja Ulaya London* translates as “European Bridge, London.” I am indebted to Prof. Delphine Njeweje for her assistance in translating the Roman-script Swahili text illustrated here.

³³ *Hiki Kikao ya Umpenzi* translates as “This is the meeting of love,” though *umpenzi* would now be spelled *mapenzi* (to refer to a lover) or *upendo* (to refer to the abstract concept of love).

³⁴ *Mkubwa Wa Mahaba Nihukumu Sharia* translates as “Romance will be the judge of me.”

The range of themes that appears on 1910s *kanga* also sets a precedent for incorporating elements that reflect global influences as experienced locally in east Africa. Omani-inspired objects point to the influence of the Omani Sultan and the upper class in Zanzibar throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. European-related objects are also often seen on *kanga* and reveal the impact of European colonialism on the region. Desirable commodities, whether domestically sourced or imported, were adopted into the daily life of east Africans; these goods became domesticated, complicating the dialectics of global/local or domestic/imported. I will argue that it is this confluence of influences that manifest and are managed by east Africans that make successful *kanga* designs an adequate mirror of lived realities.

Within the 272 *kanga* textiles from between 1910 and 1919, all of the influences mentioned above can be identified. Some are decidedly foreign, such as the Tower Bridge of London (Fig. 7-14). Others feature imported commodities, such as rifles and umbrellas, which as Prestholdt has argued are “domesticated” by east Africans (Fig. 7-17).³⁵ Many simply are associated with daily life, such as an electric lamp (Fig. 7-4). Others reference local objects, and in one case, places. As I established in Chapter 2, ivory was a valuable export commodity in east Africa, making these crossed, carved elephant tusks a likely reference to wealth and prosperity (Fig. 7-18). The mountains Kilimanjaro and Meru are the probable subject of another *kanga* (Fig. 7-19). Some combine elements, such as an example that features a crown-like shape, eight-pointed stars, and tangerine flowers in the corners (Fig. 7-20). Many of these early *kanga* have

³⁵ *Shabaha ya Askari Subrani* translates as “The aim of soldiers is patience (here).” Jeremy Prestholdt, *Domesticating the World: African Consumerism and the Genealogies of Globalization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 8.

intricate designs, whether in borders or throughout (Fig. 7-21). It will become evident that *kanga* textiles most often favor simpler designs, such as the central motif of the next image, but at this stage, a simple spotted interior is paired with intricate paisley borders and a triangular, *tumpal*-inspired border along the textile's width (Fig. 7-22). Not all *kanga* feature straight borders, either, though most tend to (Fig. 7-23).

As will be shown, the main design elements frequently found on later *kanga* textiles are already present in these examples from 1910s: a border (whether continuous, compounded, or integrated), a central motif, sometimes with inner-corner designs, and a Swahili saying, printed in either Roman or Arabic script. The range of subject matter depicted encompassed the global forces that played locally out in east Africa when these textiles were designed, printed, marketed, sold, purchased, and consumed.³⁶

1920-1939: Mechanical Production, New Colors, and an Established *Kanga* Market

Following the end of World War I, Vlisco shifted nearly all production of *kanga* textiles from hand-stamping with woodblocks to machine-printing with copper rollers.³⁷ The compositions and inclusion of Swahili text correlate and set a standard that is generally adhered to throughout the production of Vlisco-printed *kanga* from 1920 to 1967: those with thick, continuous, and even borders tend to have Roman-script text and a large, bold, central motif. Conversely, those with thin borders along the length and

³⁶ Beyond the 272 examples just discussed that date between 1910 and 1919, one *kanga* from 1911 exists, but it is so similar in composition, subject matter, and ink to those from 1903, it does not warrant further discussion. Similarly, three *kanga* produced for the Rhodesian market (one each for the years, 1912, 1914, and 1915 in Group 75) diverge from those likely printed for the east African market in color and design and have been omitted from this discussion.

³⁷ One group (#103) of eleven *kanga* textiles from the year 1929 is hand-stamped, but the remaining 1,170 were machine-printed using copper rollers.

wider, compound borders along the width tend to have Arabic-script text and all-over, repeating motif with a preference for small, intricate designs. Those with integrated borders make up a small minority, and depending on the larger trends in text, have either Arabic-script or Roman-script Swahili text.³⁸ Unfortunately, Vlisco-produced *kanga* textiles between 1920 and 1939 are not individually dated. Instead, the 1,181 full-cloth examples labeled “khanga” are grouped by the details of their manufacture.³⁹ As such, my conclusions are limited to evaluating the production of these two decades as a whole, rather than a year-by-year analysis.⁴⁰

In this section, I will discuss six groupings of *kanga* textiles printed between 1925 and 1939, according to Vlisco’s records. They are grouped according to colorways and number of inks used. Although samples are not individually dated, the advent of

³⁸ Intriguingly, some textiles labeled “khanga” from the 1930s do not conform to the increasingly standardized composition of *kanga*; many have all-over designs that favor the bold, simple shapes and clearly defined blocks of color common to *kanga*. A 1984 article published on the occasion of a small exhibition of *kanga* and *kitenge* textiles at the Commonwealth Institute in London helps to account for these anomalous textiles: “The appeal for original layout was put to the test in the 1930’s when *kanga* designs known as *kanga za mkumto* appeared. They were all-over, floral-patterned pieces without borders, the ‘guards’ and proverbs, hence their early disappearance and non-existence in the present market.” “*Kanga* textiles from Tanzania,” *African Textiles: The Magazine for the African and Arab Markets* (August/September 1984): 24. At this time, Vlisco may have been casting out for alternate markets, either within or beyond east Africa, or attempting to introduce a new style of printed cloth based on the popularity of the style of *kanga* design elements. The term “khanga” was still used to describe these all-over pattern cloths by the Dutch textile printer.

³⁹ Some of these cloths appear to be manufactured versions of other known cloth types. For example, seven machine-printed textiles dating between 1925 and 1933 closely mimic hand-woven *kikoi*. They are nevertheless classified as *kanga*. I suspect that “khanga” became a catch-all term at Vlisco for cloth produced for the east African market, replacing the older Dutch term adopted from the Malay word, “slendang.” According to one former employee of Vlisco writing in 1972, “Our exports to East African were primarily in Khangas, which curiously at the factory were formerly called “slendangs” a Malay word for loincloth, but in later years they internally in Helmond used the correct name. These cloths are worn by Muslim women and were usually sold in pairs, one to go over the head and one around the waist, but when the women go out, they usually wear a plain black fabric over the top of the colorful khangas, making the printed cloths hidden from view,” Gerritt Vollaard, “Vlisco Memories and Manufacturing,” my translation of manuscript, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands, October 1972, 3.

⁴⁰ Additionally, very often the specific destination of these textiles is not given, whereas with later samples from the 1950s and 1960s individual cities are identified. As will become apparent, the demands of specific markets produced variations in textile design within east Africa.

commemorative *kanga* cloths likely begins in 1935, when a *kanga* design was printed to celebrate the jubilee of King George V. Vlisco-printed *kanga* textiles from the interwar period show a broadening in the variety of ink colors and colorways and suggest subtle variations rather than dramatic shifts in design. Continuities in themes, a limited number of colors used on each *kanga*, and the use of both Arabic-script and Roman-script Swahili text remain similar to 1910s examples. Three distinct approaches to bordered-*kanga* composition solidify, and the preference for bold, graphic designs becomes clear.

518 *kanga* textiles in Vlisco's collection date between 1925 and 1933. Of those, the first grouping of fifty *kanga* all have pale or less-saturated dyed grounds, in colors ranging from soft red, pale yellow, light orange, soft purple, lavender, periwinkle, soft forest green, and mauve (Fig. 7-24,⁴¹ 7-25,⁴² and 7-26]. They are printed with a variety of three colors of ink, in a corresponding soft palette, creating a group of *kanga* textiles with a muted color scheme. The border composition, preference in motif, and inclusion of text conform to the distinctive approaches to *kanga* design described above; the compositions and inclusion of Swahili text correlate in this group: those with continuous, even borders tend to have Roman-script text, while those with compound borders—narrower along the length and wider along the width—tend to have Arabic-script text (Fig. 7-25 and 7-26). Almost 70% of this group either displays the paisley or the peacock feather as central motifs, and these have Swahili text printed in Roman script. All of the designs feature a large, dominant central motif most often accompanied by

⁴¹ *Fitina kuwa mwanye ao kuwa vijana* translates as “Intrigue is the opportunity for them to be young.”

⁴² *Nime hiyari khanga kuliko hariri* translates as “I have opted to have khanga over silk.”

smaller inner-corner accents and a related border. Overall, this grouping holds together in color palette and design composition.

The next grouping, also dating between 1925 and 1933, includes 203 *kanga* textiles. Bright orange, saturated red, rose, pale yellow, burnt yellow, and brown grounds characterize this group, with each example printed in two colors of ink on a dyed background (Fig. 7-27, 7-28, 7-29, 7-30, 7-31, and 7-32). Color combinations of equivalent intensities are chosen; for example, the bright orange ground is paired with black and neon green designs (Fig. 7-27 and 7-28). Similarly, the pale yellow ground is paired with white and soft purple (Fig. 7-30). The variety really lies in the breadth of the designs. Objects from automobiles (Fig. 7-27), ships (Fig. 7-28), flowers and horn instruments (Fig. 7-29), umbrellas (Fig. 7-30), geometric patterns (Fig. 7-31), to Omani-style coffee pots (Fig. 7-32) exist. There are those with text printed in Arabic script (Fig. 7-27, 7-28, and 7-30) and Roman script (Fig. 7-32)⁴³ and those without any text at all (Fig. 7-31). This group of 203 *kanga* favors Arabic-script Swahili text. Border designs vary as well: some have continuous, even borders (Fig. 7-29 and 7-32) while others have thicker borders along the cloth's width and thinner borders around the cloth's length (Fig. 7-30), though the tendency does seem to be toward thicker, continuous borders.⁴⁴

⁴³ *Kilichomfaa mtu ndio chake* translates as "That which assists a person is indeed his/her."

⁴⁴ Around three dozen cloths with all-over designs and no borders also fall into this group (#83). Intriguingly, some have very narrow top and bottom borders and others have a line of text repeating through the middle, effectively breaking the design in two.

The last grouping from 1925-1933 that I will describe is comprised of 107 textiles labeled *kanga*, but many anomalies exist in this group.⁴⁵ What unites the textiles in the group is the use of only one ink color; that color, combined with either a white or dyed ground, creates two-color *kanga* textiles. The shape and size of borders varies among the textiles in this group; one uses paisley shapes along the width of the cloth, and simple lines and spots along the length (Fig. 7-33). Most of the cloths have unequal thicknesses in the two sets of borders, but the decorative elements in some ways relate the thicker, vertical borders with the thinner, horizontal borders (Fig. 7-34, 7-35, and 7-36). The first omits a central motif in favor of inner-corner accents as its main design (Fig. 7-33), whereas the others retain a large, central motif, including or omitting the inner-corner accents. Both Arabic-script and Roman-script Swahili texts appear, and in some cases no text is present. The eight-pointed star and paisley design elements suggest Indonesian batik and Indian woodblock textile precedents (Fig. 7-33 and 7-36),⁴⁶ while the rose water sprinkler bottle (Fig. 7-35), fez or *kofia* in Swahili, and the crescent point to an Omani influence from Zanzibar (Fig. 7-34).⁴⁷

Of the 620 *kanga* textiles that date between 1925 and 1939, the vast majority are grouped together in Vlisco's archive; these 500 *kanga* textiles are printed with two colors of ink, generally in the combinations pale orange-and-purple (Fig. 7-37), soft

⁴⁵ I will limit my discussion to conventional *kanga*, though it should be noted that many in this group (#85) have all-over designs, and some even with *kanga*-like compositions certainly were destined for other markets, such as the rooster crowing "Milamahazo dangwa," standing atop a globe with the banner "Mahery France", which is certainly a *lamba hoany*, printed for the Malagasy market. Other two-border "Khanga" with repeating central images were likely designed for the Mozambique market, and are today known as *capulana*.

⁴⁶ *Usimsifu mgema tembo* translates as "Do not praise the maker of palm wine."

⁴⁷ *Ahasante sana upate mali na mwana* translates as "Thank you very much, you must have fortune, baby."

purple-and-pale yellow (Fig. 7-38 and 7-39), red/orange-and-forest green (Fig. 7-40), or rose-and-navy (Fig. 7-41). Though most favor continuous borders, the border along the cloth's width is often thicker than the border along the cloth's length (Fig. 7-37, 7-38, and 7-41). This may indicate an initial shift towards a continuous border. Other border variations exist, such as the extremely wide border along the cloth's width (Fig. 7-40) and the integrated (Fig. 7-39).⁴⁸ A wide range of symbols, decorative motifs, and objects appear on *kanga* in this group. Eight-pointed stars continue to appear, though here, paired with inner-corner accents of medals with the printed text, "Sultan of Zanzibar" (Fig. 7-37). A familiar crown-like shape adorns another *kanga*, paired with inner-corner accents of palm trees and a border of repeating pineapples (Fig. 7-38). Others remain simply decorative and somewhat botanical, often including paisley and geometric shapes (Fig. 7-39, 7-40, and 7-41).

The most striking additions to the *kanga* repertoire appear in the 1930s. Although not individually dated, these three *kanga* celebrate current events and are the first *kanga* still in existence that can be classed as commemorative in nature.⁴⁹ Only a handful of years before, printed cloths with commemorative themes were manufactured for sale to West Africa.⁵⁰ The earliest commemorative portrait identified, according to art

⁴⁸ The central motif of this *kanga*, more like a void than any image, features coral-like fingers of purple ink stretching towards the center. These design elements are likely printed versions of bleeding ink decoration that is often used in Indonesian batiks, very often on *kemben*. Although *kemben* usually feature an elongated diamond shape, this oval shape may be a variation on a theme.

⁴⁹ There is evidence a *kanga* design was commissioned to commemorate the Anglo-Zanzibar War—the shortest war in history at a mere 38 or 40 minutes—on 27 August 1896, but without the textile sample to reference, it is impossible to say whether it was commemorative or simply capitalizing on current events; see Chapter 4 for further details.

⁵⁰ Paul Faber, *Long Live the President! Portrait-cloths from Africa* (Amsterdam: KIT Publishers, 2010); John Picton, "Technology, Tradition and Lurex: The Art of Textiles in Africa," in *The Art of African Textiles: Technology, Tradition and Lurex* (London: Barbican Art Gallery, 1995), 9-32; and Anne Spencer, *In Praise of Heros: Contemporary Commemorative Cloth* (Newark: Newark Museum, 1982).

historian John Picton, was known as “Mammy,” and likely shows a successful market woman. The cloth dates to 28 September 1929 and was printed by A. Brunnschweiler & Co., in Hyde, near Manchester, for the United Africa Company.⁵¹ Another fancy print captured the likeness of Nana Prempeh, the Asantehene of the Asante peoples, an Akan subgroup in present-day Ghana the following month, on 29 October 1929. The trend continued with an Ewe chief and the Prince of Wales in 1931, though commemorative cloths gained greatest significance after World War II when they played large roles in burgeoning independence movements.

The first commemorative *kanga* cloth printed for the east African market appears in two colorways and likely dates to 1935, as it celebrates the Silver Jubilee of King George V, which took place in that year (Fig. 7-42). The large, central motif is the Union flag, which also appears in the inner-corner accents. Celebrating the British monarch’s reign of twenty-five years would be appropriate, as Dar es Salaam, Mombasa, and Zanzibar, all likely markets for this *kanga*, were part of either a British-administered territory (Tanganyika), British colony (Kenya Colony) or British protectorate (Zanzibar). The English phrase, “God Save the King,” emblazoned where a typical Swahili phrase might otherwise be placed, is fitting, as the phrase is spoken as a respectful salute or is sung as the title and final line of the British national anthem. In later examples, English text is mostly limited to *kanga* commissioned to celebrate visitors to the region, such as the one printed for former president George W. Bush’s visit to Kenya in February 2008. The names of the British merchant-converter firm, Smith, Mackenzie & Co., and the

⁵¹ John Picton, “Technology, Tradition and Lurex: The Art of Textiles in Africa,” in *The Art of African Textiles: Technology, Tradition and Lurex*, edited by John Picton (London: Barbican Art Gallery, 1995), 29.

major east African Indian seller and distributor of *kanga*, Jivan Hirji, also appear in the inner-corner accents and give evidence to some of the players involved in creating, commissioning, marketing, and selling these early commemorative *kanga* textiles.⁵²

A second example of a commemorative *kanga* likely dates to 1936. This *kanga* celebrates the Silver Jubilee of the Omani Sultan of Zanzibar, Khalifa bin Harub, who was the ninth Sultan of Zanzibar (Fig. 7-43). Similar to the previous commemorative *kanga*, the phrase is printed in English, and the motifs directly relate to Sultan. The central motif is two crossed ceremonial swords and the curved dagger, known as *hanjari* in Swahili, a typical element of upper-class Swahili men's ceremonial attire, based on Omani precedents. The inner-corner motifs are turbans, in the style worn by the Sultan. Again, the names of Smith, Mackenzie & Company and Jivan Hirji are placed around each turban.

The third and final example of 1930s commemorative *kanga* likely dates to the following year, 1937. This *kanga* celebrates the coronation of King George VI on 12th May 1937 (Fig. 7-44). Although this is largely apparent from the text printed on the *kanga*, the text is in a combination of Swahili (*furaha ya*, which translates to “celebration of”) and English (coronation of). The use of both Swahili and English is notable here. Typical accoutrements of the British monarchy adorn the *kanga*, including a jeweled crown with velvet and ermine flanked by scepters, with orbs topped by crosses in the inner corners. The border is made up of alternate colored spots with crossed Union flags in the corners.

⁵² Jivan Hirji is also spelled Jiwan Hirji.

The introduction of commemorative *kanga* cloths in the 1930s provides precedence for later cloths that celebrate momentous events. This subgroup of *kanga* textiles becomes more common in the 1960s, when independence (*Uhuru* in Swahili), the election of the country's first president, and unification of Tanganyika and Zanzibar were all celebrated. The advent of commemorative *kanga* cloths also may have paved the way for *kanga* designed with propaganda purposes, such as those praising Tanzania's socialist policies (*Ujamaa* in Swahili) and self-sufficiency (*jitegemea* in Swahili) beginning in 1967. *Kanga* textiles have since been used for educational purposes.

Two groups of *kanga* dating from the period 1925-1939 are comprised of two-color varieties. In the first group, forty-eight examples are dyed either bright red or deep blue, and they feature designs in black ink only. The first example closely resembles a popular early *kanga* design, the spots-and-stripes.⁵³ The cloth has a simple striped border, a central ground with donut shapes, and Arabic-script Swahili text (Fig. 7-45). Another cloth from this group has a compound border composition, with wide, paisley designs along the width, and a narrow, contrasting border along the cloth's length (Fig. 7-46). The cloth's central ground has alternating stripes and with zig-zag details and Arabic-script text. I suspect these four designs of stripes, spots, zigzags and paisley are re-printings or updated versions of earlier, popular *kanga*. In any case, they appear quite different from the third *kanga* illustrated from this group (Fig. 7-47). A final

⁵³ See Chapter 4, "Popular Early *Kanga* Textiles in Sample, Image, and Word," for a complete discussion.

example is a standard interwar *kanga* design, with a thick, continuous border, a central motif, inner-corner accents, and a printed Roman-script Swahili phrase.⁵⁴

The second group dating from the period 1929-1939 is comprised of two-color *kanga* textiles that introduce new ink colors. While many textiles are red and blue, the seventeen *kanga* in this group are dyed either bright mint green or bright fuchsia and have designs printed in black ink (Fig. 7-48 and 7-49).⁵⁵ Both continuous- and compound-border compositions exist, and design elements are fairly typical, encompassing geometric shapes, floral designs, paisley, and everyday objects, here, exemplified by an Omani-style coffee pot and cups presented on a tray. The inner-corner accents also relate to the central motif: “haluwa” is a confection common to the Swahili Coast, though may be more widely known as Turkish Delight. The phrase, too, plays on the central motif of coffee and the inner-corner accents of candy and translates to “Love, like candy and coffee, is to be savored.” The monogram tucked into the inner corners, between the *haluwa* block and the outer border references the widely successful *kanga* designer, seller, and distributor, Jiwan Hirji, who also served as the local agent of the British merchant-converter firm, Smith Mackenzie.

The compositions of these two examples characterize the two competing approaches to *kanga* design in the 1920s and 1930s: the compound and the continuous. The first has thin borders along the long edges and wider, and thicker, compound borders along the short edge; these uneven borders tend to have Arabic-

⁵⁴ *Ndege wa zahabu karushwa kwa hishma na adabu* translates as “My precious loved one was flown away with honor and respect.”

⁵⁵ *Mpendaye haluwa na kahawa kuonja* translates as “The one who loves candy has tasted coffee,” meaning “The one who has tasted sweetness has also tasted bitterness.”

script text (Fig. 7-48). The second has thick, continuous and even borders (though here with differing designs), a central motif, inner-corner accents, and Roman-script Swahili text is commonly seen (Fig. 7-49). Though the continuous-bordered *kanga* is more familiar to consumers today, this design did not win out over the compound-bordered *kanga* for some time. The general preference also seems to embrace bold, simplified, and striking graphic designs printed with two ink colors.⁵⁶

This section has attempted to record typical features Vlisco *kanga* textiles produced in the 1920s and 1930s: while two relatively standardized compositions can be seen, exceptions continue to exist with uneven borders, no sayings whatsoever, and in some cases, phrases in English. Most *kanga* designs were printed with between one and three colors of ink on either a dyed color or bleached white ground. Although a limited set of themes and designs persist, including Indonesian batik, Indian paisley, everyday objects, Omani- and European-inspired motifs, the advent of commemorative designs appears from the mid-1930s. In most examples from these two decades, a unified or related design exists between the two major areas of *kanga*, the border (regardless of the proportions) and the central motif. This, together with correlating color combinations, unites to characterize *kanga* textiles as cohesive artistic designs during the 1920s and 1930s.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Based on the 1,181 *kanga* dating between 1925 and 1939 in Vlisco's collection, over 700—a clear majority—were *kanga* printed with two ink colors, which together with a bleached white or dyed color ground, created three-color *kanga*.

⁵⁷ One group of textiles fits neither neatly before nor after the interruption in production caused by World War II. And while the large span in time, 1920-1960, tells us little about the specifics in design innovation, it does confirm continued demand (or at least resurgence or reintroduction) of an old design. As established in Chapter 4, *kisutu* is either a precursor to or one of the earliest designs of *kanga* textiles, still familiar today. It should come as no surprise, then, that machine-printed versions were made from 1920, and variously printed throughout the next four decades. Although popular in Zanzibar and known in Dar es Salaam, these sixteen *kisutu* were intended for Mombasa. The conventional *kisutu* design is printed in two ink colors, red and black, in equal proportion on white industrially manufactured cloth. It has

1947-1967: The Boom and Bust of Vlisco *Kanga* Production

Vlisco *kanga* production was interrupted by World War II, and no textiles were printed in the Netherlands for the export market between 1940 and 1945. The Dutch textile printer resumed work around 1946; the earliest *kanga* produced after the war date to 1947. Between 1947 and the end of *kanga* production for east Africa in 1967, Vlisco retains over 3,000 full-cloth samples in their collection and archive.⁵⁸ Of these, around one thousand unique designs exist, as popular designs were often printed in more than one colorway.⁵⁹ The vast majority of these bear a Vlisco design number, a Smith Mackenzie design number, the date of production, type of production (corresponding to cloth type, number of inks used, and method of printing), and destination. Using the date of production, the intended market, as well as visual analysis of the textiles themselves, this section seeks to chart design developments in Vlisco's *kanga* production after World War II.

Vlisco's postwar production can be divided into three sub-sections: the first era, dating between 1947 and 1952, sees production resume following World War II. The second era, dating between 1953 and 1959, chronicles the boom of Vlisco *kanga* production. With the large number of designs and colorways printed, a discernible shift

a composition divided into thirds, with the inner portion comprised of alternating small crosses and tangerine flowers, and the outer two portions comprised of mirrored vertical strips of varying design. Generally, the motifs are small, intricate and repeating. A slim, horizontal border at the top and bottom edges may complete the design, and no Swahili saying is incorporated. Within this group of sixteen Vlisco-printed *kisutu* textiles, various colorways are tried, including black-and-white, red-and-white, and black-and-red. The proportions are also toyed with, expanding the central portion and compressing the borders along the width. Without more detailed dates, the lasting point to be made was this early design enjoyed periodic resurgences printed by Vlisco between 1920 and 1960.

⁵⁸ Vlisco continued to produce *lamba hoany* for the Malagasy market until 1974, and a few popular *kanga* designs were reprinted in 1968, 1969, 1970, and 1971.

⁵⁹ This accounts for the discrepancy between total number of samples (3,000+) and total number of designs (about 1,000).

in demands particular to markets in Dar es Salaam and Mombasa becomes apparent, while the market in Zanzibar functions as a secondary market, absorbing designs from both coastal cities. The third era, dating between 1960 and 1967, illustrates the final years of *kanga* production, when Vlisco imports slowed and eventually stopped entirely. The newly independent nation of Tanganyika (1961), then Tanzania (1964), turned toward its own version of socialism, *Ujamaa*, and adopted protectionist policies beginning in 1967 that spelled the end of European exports of *kanga* textiles.

1947-1952: Resuming production following World War II

Vlisco resumed *kanga* production in 1946 or 1947 following the end of World War II. Immediate postwar *kanga* were printed for three major markets: Dar es Salaam, Mombasa, and Zanzibar, though between 1947 and 1952 no regional preferences can be discerned. *Kanga* designs during this period show Arabic-script Swahili text, regardless of destination, borders and grounds filled with patterning, and the compound-bordered composition. The disappearance of Roman-script Swahili text is one notable change in *kanga* between 1947 and 1952. As established in the previous sections, Arabic-script Swahili text has a tendency to appear on Vlisco-printed *kanga* with compound-borders, all-over patterning or at the very least a preference for small, intricate, and repeating—overall busy—designs. Like before the war, most *kanga* were printed with two colors of ink, and combined with either a bleached white ground or a dyed color ground, creating three-colored *kanga* textiles. A large array of colors continue to be seen, though the background colors favor white, black, maroon, rose, red, orange, or bright yellow in this immediate postwar period. Popular subject matter continued from pre-war *kanga* and includes floral, botanical and geometric designs, Indonesian batik and Indian paisley motifs, and Omani-related objects.

One of the earliest post-war *kanga* in Vlisco's collection is a Smith Mackenzie sample from 24 May 1947, printed for the Zanzibar market. The design exists in three colorways: maroon-and-marigold on white, red-and-green on yellow, and navy-and-red on tinted blue (Fig. 7-50).⁶⁰ The central design of a geometric blossom and the Arabic-script phrase sits on top of a checked ground to create a busy, patterned design. The border is small, intricate and repeating and jogs in at the corners to create a more ornate frame around the inner motif. Another early postwar sample is dated 28 July 1947, also destined for Zanzibar (Fig. 7-51). The all-over central motif of alternating cross and tangerine flowers is a familiar design seen regularly on *kisutu*. Here, the design fills the entire central portion, and the *kanga* is completed with an Arabic-script saying and a mottled paisley border with ovals and spots for the border's ground. The design is printed in three popular colorways: navy-and-red on white, maroon-and-marigold on white, and its reverse, marigold-and-maroon on white and again no interior expanse is left without small, repeating designs. A Smith Mackenzie sticker points to the merchant-converter firm that commissioned this particular design and likely all of the Vlisco-printed *kanga*. Their diamond logo, familiar from the 1920s *Mambo Leo* advertisements discussed in Chapter 5, is a regular feature of full-cloth *kanga* samples in Vlisco's collection and archive.⁶¹

Kanga production in the immediate postwar period shows more subtle variations than dramatic shifts, and many textiles display established themes, designs, and

⁶⁰ The tinted-blue ground comes and goes in popularity of *kanga* textiles. Whereas bleached white and dyed, bright yellow seem to be consistently demanded colors, tinted blue enjoys periodic resurgences in popularity. For example, the tinted-blue ground was popular in the 1910s around World War I, as documented in Chapter 4. In the autumn of 2011, this tinted-blue ground again was widely available.

⁶¹ See Chapter 5, "The *Kanga* Trade: Global Networks of Manufacturers, Distributors, Sellers, and Consumers," for an extended discussion of the role of merchant-converter firms in the *kanga* trade.

compositions pioneered in previous decades. One Vlisco *kanga* from 1949 is reminiscent of production in the 1910s; although the 1949 version is machine-printed and the 1910s examples were all hand-printed, the two textiles share a color palette of red-and-yellow on a burgundy ground (Fig. 7-52 and 7-53). Furthermore, shared subject matter and composition exists between the two production dates, which suggest more continuity than wholesale change throughout twentieth-century *kanga* production. The central motif is an artichoke-like bud, with inner-corner accents and a compound border. In the 1949 example, paisley designs are used for the accents, whereas in the 1910s version, the artichoke-like bud motif is repeated. Borders are repeating geometric designs and differ between the long edge and the short edge. The 1949 version, in line with other immediate postwar *kanga*, has an Arabic-script saying.

Another postwar *kanga* from 12 October 1951 has major design elements comprised of dozens of small, closely aligned dots (Fig. 7-54). This approach to design harkens back to Indian tie-dyed designs likely introduced by Indian immigrants from Gujarat in the late nineteenth century.⁶² This approach to creating familiar designs, which here include an eight-pointed star and paisley shapes, recurs throughout the history of *kanga* textiles. The four colorways shown here were printed for the Dar es Salaam market. Postwar *kanga* textiles have designs, compositions, and subject matter that were part of an established vocabulary of *kanga* characteristics. For much of *kanga* textiles' twentieth-century history, the demand for new designs meant that a constant retooling of familiar subject matter occurred within the confines of established compositional preferences; so while wholesale reprinting of earlier designs was likely

⁶² See Chapter 3, "The Historical Emergence of *Kanga* Textiles," for a discussion of late nineteenth-century *kanga* designs adopting design elements from Indian woodblock printing and tie-and-dye.

uncommon, only subtle changes or updating were necessary to revamp an older design into the newest *kanga* textile.

On the other hand, a few designs of *kanga* gained wide popularity and warranted reprinting in a variety of colorways over a handful of years.⁶³ Vlisco's records indicate that this practice became much more common following World War II. One example has a rose as its central motif, framed by a tangerine flower outline, which sits atop a grid background (Fig. 7-55). The design conforms to the immediate postwar tendency of all-over decoration on *kanga* textiles and an Arabic-script Swahili text. Concentric circles serve as inner-corner motifs, and the border of similar tangerine-flower shapes on small, white flowers finishes this design. The design was printed in twenty-seven different colorways throughout the years 1950, 1952, 1954, 1955, 1956, 1957, and 1958, including two- and three-color varieties. The large number of re-printings indicates these designs were especially popular and can thus serve as particularly effective examples when charting the history of Vlisco-printed *kanga* designs.

One example from 1951 hints at a shift in preference that occurred between late 1952 and early 1953 (Fig. 7-56). As has been shown, *kanga* from the immediate postwar period (1947-1952) can be characterized by a preference for all-over design, Arabic-script text, and most often printed in three colors (two colors of ink with either a bleached-white or dyed-color ground). The example from 12 October 1951 retains Arabic-script text, but the first-half of the central motif shows a Roman-script Swahili word, *pole*, which translates as "sorry;" it is often spoken a compassionate response,

⁶³ Chapter 3 discussed the budding paisley *kanga*, Chapter 4 discussed the spots-and-stripes *kanga*; both were hugely popular designs in the 1890s. Two examples from the period 1925-1933 include the four-color paisley and botanical *kanga* (Fig. 7-24) and the peacock feather and paisley *kanga* (Fig. 7-25) that were printed in a palette of soft colors, both discussed in the previous section.

especially in the phrase, *pole sana*, which means “very sorry” or “condolences.” This use of both Arabic-script and Roman-script on one *kanga* foreshadows a wider shift in text; the following year, *kanga* printed for the Dar es Salaam market almost exclusively display Swahili text in Roman script, while *kanga* printed for the Mombasa market retain the use of Arabic-script Swahili text.

1953-1959: *Kanga* boom and divergent markets

Judging from the number and variety of full-cloth *kanga* textiles in Vlisco’s collection, the *kanga* business positively boomed from 1953 until 1961, and numbers of Dutch *kanga* exports remained strong until 1967.⁶⁴ The re-introduction of Roman-script Swahili sayings on *kanga* textiles began in late 1952, when *kanga* destined for the Dar es Salaam market began to be printed with narrow, capital Roman-script letters. Already by late 1953, many of these Dar es Salaam-bound *kanga* have thick, block-capital Roman-script letters, similar to the easily readable lettering familiar on *kanga* today. Arabic-script text did not disappear, however; it was retained in *kanga* printed for the Mombasa market throughout the 1950s.⁶⁵ The willingness of Vlisco to produce *kanga* based on the divergent tastes within east Africa points to a boom in production. Based

⁶⁴ Between 1953 and 1961, Vlisco produced over fifty new *kanga* designs per year. Between 1962 and 1967, production of new *kanga* designs declined from around two dozen to just a handful; “Design Numbers for Khanga,” hand-written list of design numbers with corresponding years of production, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. In 1953, Dutch exports of *kanga* textiles to Tanganyika jumped from about one million to about three million. After 1954, Dutch exports remained steady around one million until dropping off in 1968 and ceasing completely in 1969. It should be noted that Dutch exports were completely dwarfed by Japanese exports, which peaked in 1955 with over thirteen million *kanga* exported to Tanganyika.

⁶⁵ Arabic-script Swahili text continue to appear on *kanga* printed for the Dar es Salaam market throughout the 1950s on hugely popular reprinted designs, such as rose blossom just discussed (Fig. 7-55), the mother duck with ducklings (Fig. 7-62), and the flower blossom (Vlisco design #5103). The original designs of these Arabic-script *kanga* for the Dar es Salaam market likely date to before the late 1952/early 1953 shift to Roman-script text, when the vast majority of new designs for the Dar es Salaam market begin adopting Roman script.

on the full-cloth samples in Vlisco's collection, I estimate that over three times the number of designs and colorways were printed during this period, compared with the immediate postwar period; this period also produced more than two times the number of *kanga* printed in the 1960s.⁶⁶ The vast majority of hugely popular designs, printed in between ten and nearly thirty different colorways, were all destined for the Dar es Salaam market.⁶⁷

Within this boom in *kanga* production, variations in the script of Swahili text as well as larger compositional preferences coalesce into differing regional textiles, with Mombasa as the gateway to Kenyan *kanga* consumption and Dar es Salaam as the gateway to Tanganyikan (and later Tanzanian) *kanga* consumption. The difference in approach to composition, text, and overall design was established in the interwar period: those with thick, continuous, and even borders tend to have Roman-script text and a large, bold, simple motif. Conversely, those with compound borders (narrow borders along the length of the cloth and wider borders along the width of the cloth) tend to have Arabic-script text and all-over, repeating motif with a preference for small, intricate designs. These differences began to describe regional textile preferences from late 1952; Dar es Salaam *kanga* displayed the continuous border, Roman script and large, bold motifs, whereas Mombasa *kanga* showed the compound border, Arabic script and small, intricate motifs. *Kanga* textiles destined for Zanzibar were typical of

⁶⁶ According to Vlisco's record of *kanga* design numbers and corresponding years of production, the Dutch textile printers manufactured 171 unique designs during the six-year period 1947-1952, 547 unique designs during the seven-year period 1953-1959, and 249 unique designs during the eight-year period 1960-1967; "Design Numbers for Khanga," hand-written list of design numbers with corresponding years of production, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands.

⁶⁷ The popular rose design [#5301] was printed in at least 27 different colorways (see Fig. 7-59). At times, these popular designs were also destined for Zanzibar, but less frequently and never without a primary market in Dar es Salaam. Where possible, I illustrate and describe popular designs that are indicative of larger market trends.

both Mombasa tastes and Dar es Salaam demands; based on the designs and intended markets of *kanga* in Vlisco's collection, the island constituted a cross-over market or bridge between the two coastal, mainland urban centers. *Kanga* textiles with integrated borders made up a small minority, and depending on the destination, have either Arabic-script (for Mombasa) or Roman-script (for Dar es Salaam) Swahili text. Dar es Salaam was by far the largest market for Vlisco-produced *kanga* textiles. Judging from the destinations noted on each *kanga* in the Vlisco archive, the nineteenth-century urban fashion center of Zanzibar was reduced to a secondary market by the mid-twentieth century, eclipsed by the growing metropolitan center of Dar es Salaam.

A shift from Arabic-script Swahili text on *kanga* to Roman-script Swahili text occurred in the second half of 1952 and the beginning of 1953. During this period, many *kanga* commissioned for the Dar es Salaam market had the Swahili phrase printed in slim, capital Roman letters. An example from January 1953 shows the reintroduction of Roman script (Fig. 7-57).⁶⁸ The composition has a continuous border made up of two designs; the inner is a line of repeating circles and the outer of repeating paisley shapes. The central motif is an almond shape, filled with a solid center, a contrasting solid border, and finally a thick, outer band filled with circles. Considering the Swahili phrase, which translates to "The eye of the envious child does not see him/her," this somewhat abstract design might refer to an eye. The inner-corner accents are basic flower blossoms. Conversely, Arabic-script continued to dominate those *kanga* commissioned for the Mombasa market. An example from June 1953 shows a similarly abstract design (Fig. 7-58). However, where the Dar es Salaam motif is clear, crisp, and

⁶⁸ *Jicho la hasidi mwanangu lisimwone* translates as "The evil eye shall not see my child."

quite simple, the Mombasa has more intricate lines that make for a busier, overall design. The central motif is round and filled with concentric circles of broken lines, somewhat like the iris of an eye. The inner-corner motifs and border are both paisley shapes, though different in design. Before long, the slim, Roman-script letters gave way to thicker, bolder lettering on *kanga* textiles printed for the Dar es Salaam market. One example from December 1953 typifies this on what must be one of the most popular *kanga* designs in Vlisco's collection (Fig. 7-59).⁶⁹ This *kanga* design, with a central motif of two roses joined in a medallion with a similar rose border, a plain ground, and a Roman-script Swahili phrase was printed in no less than twenty-seven different colorways. Originally printed in 1953, it retained its popularity for almost a decade; new colorways were printed until 1962.

Like the addition of commemorative *kanga* in the mid-1930s, first *kanga* textiles dedicated to advertising appear in the 1950s.⁷⁰ The earliest example dates to January 1953 and has a boat as its central motif (Fig. 7-60).⁷¹ Although dhows, boats, and ships have been the subject of many *kanga* since the turn of the century and likely before, this boat is somewhat different.⁷² Emblazoned on its hull is the name "Mackenzies." This

⁶⁹ *Lela na majnuni* as spelled does not directly translate. If the intended words are *Lea ni majununi* translates as "To raise (children) is madness (lit: mad person(s))."

⁷⁰ *Kanga* textiles from the 1930s certainly include Jiwan Hirji's monogram, and at times even his full name alongside the merchant-converters Smith, Mackenzie & Co. Although advertising might have been these firms' underlying purpose, the majority of the *kanga* design was dedicated to another purpose, commemoration. Parts of *kanga* textiles in sample books from the first decade of the twentieth century show the letter "H" repeatedly. This likely refers to the Hamburg-based merchant-converter firm, Hansing & Co., and may have served an advertising purpose, but without complete designs it is impossible to confirm.

⁷¹ *Uendapo mbele shuru...* translates as "When you go you should..."

⁷² Vlisco prints *kanga* in the 1910s with recognizable ships; a variety of ships printed on *kanga* can be seen in various Dutch printers' sample books from around the turn of the twentieth century; and a *kanga* commissioned to capitalize on contemporary events in December 1888 may have illustrated a ship in

without a doubt refers to the British merchant-converter firm Smith, Mackenzie & Co., Ltd., active in the *kanga* trade since at least 1920. I interviewed two women in their 60s who recalled the excitement with which Smith Mackenzie ships were met upon arrival. They told me these ships were easy to recognize, as they had the name “Mackenzie” emblazoned across the side. They also eagerly anticipated the delivery of imported goods, including “Makens” (a Swahili-ized spelling) or *kanga ya makensi* (Mackenzie *kanga* textiles). *Kanga ya makenzi* were reputed to be the best quality *kanga*, and commanded higher prices than competitors’ *kanga*, “Cepea” (a phonetic spelling of CPA, the British Calico Printers’ Association) or C. Itoh, the Japanese merchant-converter firm.⁷³ Imported Dutch goods handled by the British merchant-converter firm arrived by ship; what better way to capitalize on the celebrated arrival of newly imported commodities for sale than by popularizing their method of delivery? This *kanga* was printed in three colorways and was destined for both the Dar es Salaam and Tanga markets, both coastal port towns (Fig. 7-60).⁷⁴ The border is made up of repeating life rings, appropriate for the nautical theme of the textile. As an early 1953 *kanga*, it also uses the narrow Roman-script lettering that gave way to bolder block lettering later in the year.

addition to the canons mentioned. William O’Swald and Company, *The Story of the House of O’Swald: 1831-1931* (Hamburg: Broschek & Co., 1931), 30.

⁷³ Information summarized from informal interviews with a clerk at the National Library of Tanzania on 8 October 2011 and with Edna Mahimbo on 18 October 2011 in Dar es Salaam; Hashim A. Nakanoga, interview by author, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, 28 October 2011; and Ukera K. Peera, interview by author, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, 14 December 2011.

⁷⁴ Tanga is located along the northern coast of present-day Tanzania and functioned in the 1950s as Tanganyika Territory’s second most important port after Dar es Salaam. Much of the sisal cultivated was exported through Tanga. A few *kanga* in Vlisco’s collection and archive list Tanga as a destination, but far less than Zanzibar, Mombasa, or Dar es Salaam.

Another publicity *kanga* is an example in August 1953, when Coca-Cola sponsored a Zanzibar football match and this celebratory *kanga*, which boldly advertises the soda company as a sponsor (Fig. 7-61). The central motif is a trophy cup enclosed in a diamond shape. A Swahili phrase adorns the diamond shape's lower right border with the words, *jaribu tena*, which means "try again." The inner-corner motifs are tickets to the match and include the number, price, and location of the event. The border, though broken where the horizontal and vertical sections meet, is created from a repeating botanical design. Most appropriately for its promotional purposes, this *kanga* has neither Roman-script Swahili nor Arabic-script Swahili in the typical place for a printed phrase; rather, the words "Coca-Cola Cup" are emblazoned in the familiar cursive script used in the soda company's logo.

Kanga designs largely tend to revolve around floral and geometric decorations, and they often also display familiar objects, fruit, animals, and other references to European- or Omani-related inclusions, but specific shifts in preference for certain themes can be discerned throughout this era. This section will show the changing preference for these themes in differing locations throughout the 1950s. First, familiar animals peaked in popularity between 1952 and 1953, straddling the shift in preference from Arabic-script to Roman-script Swahili text for the Dar es Salaam and Zanzibar markets. In 1953, fruit and other food items were briefly in vogue for the Dar es Salaam market. Continuing in the years 1953 and 1954, a variety of objects were in fashion on *kanga* printed for the Dar es Salaam and Zanzibar markets. It is difficult to generalize about such wide-ranging subject matter, but these objects were desirable commodities related to international influences; they were certainly familiar to east Africans in the

1950s, whether or not they owned them personally. Next, around the mid 1950s abstract floral or geometric designs were preferred in Mombasa, and large flowers or abundant trees with fruit were preferred in Dar es Salaam. Although desirable commodities persisted on Dar es Salaam *kanga*, they were greatly outnumbered by this new trend in blooming vegetation. Zanzibar functioned as a crossover market; it shared designs with both mainland coastal cities. However, there was absolutely no overlap in designs between Mombasa and Dar es Salaam, and the latter serves as the largest market for Vlisco-produced *kanga* by far. Finally, towards the end of the decade, *kanga* textile commissioned for the Zanzibar and Mombasa markets fell, and tastes in Dar es Salaam turned toward simple geometric shapes.

Around 1952 and 1953, animals peaked in popularity for the Dar es Salaam and Zanzibar markets. Domesticated animals outnumber wild animals on *kanga*, and all animals were likely familiar to east African *kanga* consumers. Animals ranging from the ever-popular peacock, recurrent roosters, chickens, fish, cats, even ramming goats, lions, and elephants appear. By far, the most popular *kanga* to depict animals is the mother duck and ducklings design, designed between 1948 and 1952⁷⁵ and sold continuously throughout the 1950s. According to one former employee of Vlisco writing in 1972,

The Khanga trade was characterized by a continuous demand for new designs, in contrast with West African markets, where a large part of the textile trade is driven in traditional patterns, which might for many decades be ordered again. Designing new Khanga designs for East Africa was for years a regular occupation of our artists, but this was done mainly on

⁷⁵ The earliest date listed on existing samples is 7 April 1953, though according to Vlisco's list of design numbers and their corresponding years of production, #5104 was first printed between 1947 and 1952. The design bears an Arabic-script Swahili phrase and likely dates to before the late 1952/early 1953 shift in preference to Roman-script Swahili text; this further corroborates an initial design date of the mother and ducklings *kanga* as prior to 1953.

descriptions from the customers themselves, which in Helmond were made on paper and developed in accordance with the technical requirements for engraving and printing. The creations of recent years is one that was ordered for some ten years; it is the “duck” design, which follows an image that was first brought under Design No. 5104R and later is order No. 5853R.⁷⁶

If the second design number is factored in, this design was in print until at least 1961, or likely a full decade or more. The design has a central motif of a duck and her four ducklings (Fig. 7-62). The inner-corner accents have a simple floral blossom in a plain ground. The border has two parts, an inner band has a chain-linked design and the outer band is a design of overlapping leaves. At the corners of the inner chain-linked border, the monogram of Jiwan Hirji is cleverly integrated. The two-part borders are continuous, and the phrase is written in Arabic script.

In 1953 and early 1954, fruit and other food items were briefly popular on *kanga* printed for the Dar es Salaam market. Examples include braches of mangoes, stalks of corn, a pot of food cooking over a fire, fish strung on a line, a lone pineapple, grilled corn, cut jackfruit, a pineapple being cut, and another pineapple ripe for the picking. The most popular example of this subject matter is the pineapple and knives *kanga* (Fig. 7-63).⁷⁷ First printed in December 1952, the design was printed in at least sixteen colorways between that year and 1958. The central motif is a pineapple flanked by two sharp knives. This composition is surrounded by two circles, which set it apart from the ground. Small, eight-pointed stars are arranged at equal distances throughout the ground. The Swahili phrase, again printed in narrow, slim Roman-script letters, is centered below medallion with the pineapple and knives, and the phrase translates as

⁷⁶ Vollaard, “Vlisco Memories and Manufacturing,” 3.

⁷⁷ *Wajua kitu kitamu kiki wapi* translates as “You all know where the sweet thing is.”

“You all know where something delicious is,” which plays on the sweetness of pineapple but may also allude to other forms of sweetness. The text is set off from the background with a box around the lettering in two-color varieties, and in three-color varieties, both the box and lettering are colored differently than the ground. Although another variation on a floral border comes as no surprise, the undulating outline departs from more conventional straight borders.

A number of desirable commodities were all the rage on *kanga* textiles printed for the Dar es Salaam and Zanzibar market in 1953 and 1954. Objects as different as a Lee Enfield rifle, accessories such as pocket watches, fezzes or *kofia*, hand fans, eye glasses, diamond necklaces and rings, methods of transportation such as planes, cars, dhows, and other boats, and domestic goods such as furniture, clocks, electric fans, tableware, Omani-style coffee pots, rose water sprinkler bottles, pen and inkwell, and lock and key were depicted. By far the most popular *kanga* featuring a desirable commodity is one from December 1953 that depicts a bowtie as its central motif (Fig. 7-64).⁷⁸ The design was printed between 1953 and 1956 in at least twenty different colorways, which feature two, three, and even four colors per *kanga*. The design is quite simple: the central motif is a checked bowtie, surrounded by concentric circles.⁷⁹ The use of a bowtie and a Swahili phrase that translates as “The characteristics of a lover should be stylish” indicate a preference for smartness in dressing and comportment.

⁷⁸ *Sifa ya mpenzi awe mardadi* translates as “The characteristics of a lover should be stylish.”

⁷⁹ The number of circles depends on the number of inks used. A Roman-script Swahili phrase is outlined below, and stands out from the ground because it is outlined and also printed in reverse coloring (where the background between the letters is colored, leaving the letters to reflect the ground’s color in thick, block capitals). The border is made up of two parts; the inner portion is comprised of small closely aligned squares, and the outer portion is repeating blossoms with curved lines and small squares.

The composition, script, and themes on *kanga* textiles in the mid-1950s are roughly divided along market lines. For example, smaller, more intricate and mostly repeating abstract floral or geometric designs are popular in the Mombasa market and all feature Arabic-script Swahili text, such as one example from October 1955 (Fig. 7-65). The design was subsequently printed in 1956 and 1958 in six colorways. It favors the compound-border composition, with breaks between the horizontal and vertical borders. Other Mombasa-bound *kanga* retain narrow borders along the length of the cloth and wider borders along the width of the cloth. Mombasa-bound *kanga* are overall busier in design, often with small designs repeating over the entire ground, like the tangerine flowers scattered across the cloth in this example. This contrasts with the *kanga* printed for the Dar es Salaam market, which prefer large, bold central motif, often favoring flowers or abundant trees with fruit, and finished with Roman-script Swahili phrases, such as one example from August 1954 (Fig. 7-66).⁸⁰ In contrast to the compound borders favored by the Mombasa market, the Dar es Salaam market preferred the continuous, even borders. The large, central motif is of a coconut tree, and this design was printed in ten colorways in 1954, 1955, and 1957.

Kanga expressly made for the Zanzibar market resemble either Mombasa *kanga* (with compound borders, Arabic script, smaller and overall more intricate designs) or Dar es Salaam *kanga* (with continuous borders, Roman script, large, simple, bold designs). Indeed, some of the Mombasa and Dar es Salaam *kanga* were also marketed to Zanzibar, but no overlap existed between Mombasa and Dar es Salaam. In a few rare cases, Mombasa-bound *kanga* also went to Mogadishu. All of the hugely popular

⁸⁰ *Tamtam mahonda ukini kosa uta konda* translates as “Sweet, sweet, if you miss me, you will grow skinny.”

kanga, judged from the number of colorways printed of the same design, were designed and printed for the Dar es Salaam market, and thus they utilize Roman-script Swahili phrases and large, bold, simple designs.

A variety of commodities were depicted on *kanga* designed for the Dar es Salaam and Zanzibar market between 1954 and 1958, including a tall, roughly cylindrical African drum and horn instrument, Omani-style coffee pot, personal belongings like a comb or pick, purse, or fez (*kofia* in Swahili), food such as bananas, papayas, mangos, melons, and grapes, to automobiles and buildings. A very popular example uses a postcard as its central motif, surrounded by an eight-pointed star (Fig. 7-67).⁸¹ The postcard has postmarks dated 30 April 1954 for both Dar es Salaam and Zanzibar and a map of the world with a route highlighted. This route likely related to the Roman-script Swahili phrase that translates as “My love is coming in a flying ship,” which also correlates to the message written on the postcard, which translates, “My dear Fatuma, (Dar es Salaam) From the moment I left you, your love is affecting me. Though I am far away from you, my spirit is with you. Yours truly, Rajabu.” The love letter was presumably sent to the young woman, Fatuma, from the suitor, Rajabu, while he was abroad.⁸²

Returning to the trend of advertising on *kanga*, the East African Brewers, Ltd. likely commissioned a *kanga* design in 1954 (Fig. 7-68). This very popular design combines a company’s logo, their product, and their consumers’ enjoyment in one cohesive *kanga*

⁸¹ *Mpenzi wangu aja katika meli ya kuruka* translates as “My love is coming on a flying ship.”

⁸² The Swahili text reads, “*Mapenzi Fatuma, Daressalam, Tangu nime toka kwako mapenzi yako yanani sumbuwa ingawa mimi ni mbali na wewe lakini roho zangu iko kwako. Mimi wako mabibi, Rajabu.*” The inner corners each have a bouquet of potted flowers, which cut into the otherwise straight border. The continuous border is comprised of a thick line, repeating squares, and tangerine-like flowers, though here with eight petals rather than the more familiar seven-petal variety. The Swahili phrase is outlined and printed in Roman script.

composition, which was printed in thirteen different colorways in 1954, 1955, and 1958. The central motif shows the forearms of two people, raising their glasses to toast. The English words, “Cheerio Darling,” can be seen in the upper portions of the heart, which surrounds the scene.⁸³ In the lower portion of the heart, the brewery’s logo of an elephant’s profile with the letters “I.P.A.” refers to their product: Indian Pale Ale beer. The English text around the logo says “East African Brewers, Ltd., Pale Ale.” This central portion of the logo is alternately repeated in the border, surrounded by a tangerine flower. A square with spots alternates with this tangerine logo. The inner-corner motifs each have a beer bottle, again with the company’s full logo. A Roman-script Swahili phrase, which translates as “My love, welcome, let us have a good time together,” also contributes to the leisure-themed *kanga* design.⁸⁴

Today *kanga* are commonly printed to celebrate holidays such as Eid (observed by Muslims) or Christmas (observed by Christians). This practice may have begun in the mid 1950s, as the earliest *kanga* expressly dedicated to Christmas in Vlisco’s collection dates to September 1955 (Fig. 7-69). Printed in three colorways, this Christmas *kanga* was sold in Zanzibar and Dar es Salaam.⁸⁵ Its central motif is a large, multicolored Christmas tree, festooned with candles, baubles, and a shining star. Around this potted evergreen are small, alternating-colored “cakes,” conveniently labeled in English.⁸⁶ The Swahili phrase is printed in Roman script and may relate to a

⁸³ It may be of little consequence that the word “cheerio” is chiefly used by the British as a farewell, and the word “cheers” is used to denote a toast or as an informal way to thank.

⁸⁴ *Mapenzi karibu tustarehe* translates as “My love, welcome, let us have a good time together.”

⁸⁵ It is somewhat surprising that a Christmas-theme *kanga* would be sold in Zanzibar, where the vast majority of people are Muslim.

⁸⁶ The English word “cake” translates as *keki* in Swahili.

proverb recommending care, as the direct translation has little to do with Christmas: “A carpenter needs to saw slowly so he does not cut his finger.”⁸⁷ The English words “Christmas Greetings” are printed below the lowest branches of the tree. Inner-corner motifs are diamond-shaped and the continuous border features eight-pointed stars and ornate motifs.

Another example of commemorative *kanga* cloths dates from 1956 and celebrates the visit of British Princess Margaret to Tanganyika in October (Fig. 7-70). Similar to the mid-1930s commemorative *kanga*, the motifs and printed phrase all directly relate to the British royal family. Fittingly, the printed phrase is written here in English, “Welcome Princess Margaret.” The central motif is a rose, symbol of England and the aristocracy. The inner-corner motifs are crossed flags: the Union flag and the Royal Standard of the United Kingdom. Akin to the 1930s commemorative cloths, the major agent and *kanga* designer’s name also appears underneath each set of crossed flags. But in the two decades that elapsed, “Jivan Hirji” has now become “Jiwan Hirji & Sons, Ltd.” The continuous border is comprised of crosses with equal arms, symbol often associated with the British crown jewels and monarchy, surrounded by variously colored stripes. Apart from the English phrase, this *kanga* conforms to the characteristic demands of the Dar es Salaam market, whereas a second commemorative *kanga* celebrating Princess Margaret’s visit in 1956 was produced for Mombasa and Zanzibar, and it follows design preferences characteristic of the Mombasa market (Fig. 7-71). Instead of one, large central motif on a plain ground, this *kanga* has six floral blooms equally spaced throughout the central ground. The ground is decorated with the name “Princess

⁸⁷ *Saramala pasuwa pole pole usijikhate kidole* translates as “A carpenter must saw slowly so that he does not cut his finger.”

Margaret,” with each letter alternating in the three ink colors. The border repeats the crossed flag motif, but a simplified “x” is used on one flag and the other is divided into quarters, similar to the Royal Standard, but has Vlisco’s monogram and the abbreviated name of the Zanzibar branch office of Smith Mackenzie. These crossed flags alternate with a crown, topped by the cross with equal arms, motifs that are bordered by small, intricate and repeating decorations. The text, however, is no longer printed in Arabic-script; each letter is printed in a different color and the first part of the phrase translates to “Welcome to Unguja (the island of Zanzibar) visitor,” which relates to the overall celebrator *kanga* design.⁸⁸

Designs in the late 1950s were primarily printed for the Dar es Salaam market and tastes once again shifted. The animals of the early 1950s and the abundant fruit and flower blossoms of the mid 1950s gave way to increasingly abstract and geometric designs in the latter part of the decade. But whereas Mombasa preferred similar themes during the mid-1950s, the designs and compositions of these late 1950s *kanga* are in line with established Dar es Salaam preferences. Namely, these include a large, bold, and simple central motif, Roman-script Swahili phrases, and a continuous, even border. These defining characteristics mark late 1950s *kanga* textiles as products of Dar es Salaam tastes. An exemplary and very popular late 1950s *kanga* printed for Dar es Salaam has a large, abstract geometric shape as its central motif (Fig 7-72). The shape is similar to a thick “t” or a cross with arms of equal length, with a pointed “x” shape passing through the middle. Inside this shape, a diamond encloses an eight-petal tangerine flower, which encloses another cross. A similar small, eight-petal tangerine

⁸⁸ *Karibu Unguja Mgeni...* translates as “Welcome to Unguja (the island of Zanzibar), visitor...”

flower is repeated at equal lengths across the central ground. The Roman-script Swahili phrase is boxed and outlined, and communicates to a wide audience: “Greetings to your neighbors.”⁸⁹ Overall, this is a very simple design, with bold, thick lines and shapes and no intricate features. A final example of popular late 1950s *kanga* textiles again shows preference for abstract geometrical shapes (Fig. 7-73). The design is made up of small, closely aligned circles, much like the examples from 1951; both borrow designs first introduced to *kanga* textiles by Indian tie-dyed cloth designs or *bandhani* in the late nineteenth century.⁹⁰ The large, central motif is an oval shape, with the inner oval enclosing a simple flower with flanking leaves and the outer oval filled with repeating, concentric circles. The Roman-script Swahili translates as “The wedding of our son is crowded.”⁹¹ The composition shows preference for Dar es Salaam *kanga* characteristics, and the overall design is unified by the use of the closely aligned circles used to create each motif.

A final word on the colorways of *kanga* textiles may be instructive. Although any number of color combinations can be seen on *kanga*, Vlisco’s production following World War two tended to feature dyed grounds of saturated color, very often yellow, orange, marigold, red, brown, black, medium green, navy or medium blue, or bleached white, and at times, bright fuchsia. The ground color often dominates the textile’s color scheme. Designs routinely make use of one or two bold colors of ink to create two- or

⁸⁹ *Salamu jirani yako* translates as “Greetings to your neighbors.”

⁹⁰ See Chapter 3 for a discussion of late nineteenth-century *kanga* designs adopting design elements from Indian woodblock printing and tie-and-dye.

⁹¹ *Harusi ya kijana watu wamejazana* translates as “The wedding of our son is crowded,” implying the event is a great success. The entire phrase is outlined by a box. The repeating concentric circle motif of the outer oval is repeated on the continuous inner border. The continuous outer border repeats two types of floral blooms, and the inner-corner accents are an abstracted, star-shaped bloom.

three-color *kanga*. Only rarely are four-color *kanga* seen, and they appear busy compared to the more streamlined use of only two or three colors. Designs are created so that ink colors are bold and consistent; there are no gradations to create shading or other tonal variations in colors.

1960-1967: Independence, the shift toward *Ujamaa*, and the end of Vlisco *kanga* production

Vlisco *kanga* production began to slow in the 1960s, leading to no new designs printed for Dar es Salaam, Mombasa, or Zanzibar after 1967.⁹² The trend favoring simple geometric shapes continued in the early 1960s, though a handful of commodities, animals, fruit, and flowers continued to appear. The majority of *kanga* printed were for the Dar es Salaam market. Those that were commissioned for either the Zanzibar or Mombasa market during the early 1960s all possessed Roman-script Swahili sayings. Arabic-script sayings, dominant only a decade before, completely disappeared from *kanga* textiles in the early 1960s. As established markets for *kanga* textiles shrunk due to political changes in the middle of the decade, Vlisco increasingly cast about for additional markets. *Kanga* textiles originally marketed to Mombasa or Dar es Salaam were also sent to Madagascar, and in a few cases, Somalia, Mozambique and Rhodesia.⁹³ Along with the diffusion in market, designs also became less standardized.

⁹² Production of new *kanga* for the three markets—Dar es Salaam, Zanzibar, and Mombasa—stopped in 1967; popular older designs were reprinted in 1968, 1969, 1970, and 1971. Vlisco continued to produce *lamba hoany* for the Malagasy market until 1974. These samples are housed with the *kanga* samples.

⁹³ Many *kanga* were sent to more than one market, and a few were sent to Somalia, Mozambique and Rhodesia. Malagasy *lamba hoany* continue to feature largely in Vlisco's production for the east African market and are easily identified by their color palette (largely marigold-and-maroon on bleached, white grounds), use of Roman-script Malagasy, and destination, which include Madagascar, Mulhouse, Paris, Bordeaux, and Marseille.

One notable thematic addition that largely dates to the 1960s is the advent of overtly political designs on *kanga* textiles. In addition to the standard themes and designs that routinely appeared on these cloths, the independence movement fueled new celebratory designs. Nationalistic symbols and maps of the newly independent country and larger continent emerged as subthemes within the larger repertoire of *kanga* motifs. The first photograph also appeared in 1960, marking a major design addition; previously, only line drawings and solid blocks of color appeared on these printed textiles.

For the Zanzibar and Dar es Salaam markets, changes in political policy following independence limited European-produced commodities. As was briefly discussed earlier, Tanganyika gained its independence in December 1961, and following Zanzibar's violent revolution in 1964, the two unified to become the present-day country of Tanzania.⁹⁴ Following the Arusha Declaration of 1967, and the establishment of Tanzania's own brand of socialism, *Ujamaa*, protectionist policies effectively closed trade opportunities with Western Europe. This political change sought to limit competition between domestically produced goods and imported commodities; it certainly gave an advantage to Tanzania's first vertically integrated textile mill, Friendship Textile Mill (*Urafiki* in Swahili), which began production in late 1967 in Dar es Salaam. With British *kanga* exports ceasing in the late 1950s and Dutch *kanga* exports following suit in the late 1960s, these political changes in east African spelled the end of the European-produced *kanga*.

⁹⁴ See Chapter 5 for a more complete discussion of Dar es Salaam's history.

Designs overtly political in nature are more commonly seen on *kanga* from the early 1960s, but one lone precedent in Vlisco's collection dates from May 1953 (Fig. 7-74). It was printed in three colorways, all for the Dar es Salaam market. The central medallion features the head of a giraffe with the accompanying text, "Tanganyika Territory." A giraffe (*twiga* in Swahili) was used as the emblem of Tanganyika and continues to be used by Tanzania. The Roman-script Swahili phrase translates as "Today is joyous for our Tanganyika" and is consistent with the shift from Arabic script earlier that year, and the continuous border composition preferred in Dar es Salaam.⁹⁵

Politically inspired *kanga* became more common in the early 1960s, which coincided with the peaceful transfer of power from British colonial administration to self-governing by TANU (Tanganyika [later Tanzania] African National Union). TANU, and its successor CCM (*Chama cha Mapinduzi* or Party of the Revolution)⁹⁶ have been the ruling political party since 1961. While today CCM *kanga* are a familiar sight around election time, Vlisco-produced *kanga* in the early 1960s were less obviously aligned with one political party. One example was printed in eight colorways in 1960 and 1961; the earliest version is from March 1960 (Fig. 7-75). The central motif depicts the geographical outline of the African continent, with the cities of Mombasa, Zanzibar, Dar es Salaam and Lindi labeled. The words, *Africa Si Ulaya*, are emblazoned inside the continent; the phrase translates to "Africa is not Europe" and the conventional Roman-script Swahili text below translates to "Tanganyika is ours;" both were certainly politically

⁹⁵ *Leo furaha kwetu Tanganyika* translates as "Today is joyous for our Tanganyika."

⁹⁶ CCM was created in 1977 when the two ruling parties of mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar united. The mainland Tanzanian political party, TANU, joined with the Zanzibari political party, Afro-Shirazi Party (ASP). CCM and its mainland predecessor TANU have won all elections and controlled the country since independence in 1961.

charged declarations.⁹⁷ As the intended market was Dar es Salaam, the addition of giraffes as inner-corner accents is fitting. The border is comprised of a row of repeating palm trees, and the Roman-script Swahili phrase finished the design.

Another nationalistic printed cloth in July 1960 warrants mention. Although it does not conform to typical *kanga* compositions, this is the first printed textile marketed to Dar es Salaam in Vlisco's collection that reproduces a photograph (Fig. 7-76). It celebrates Bibi Titi Mohamed, one of the women central to the independence movement in Tanganyika.⁹⁸ The lack of true borders and Swahili phrase combined with the repeating medallions suggest that this was not a typical *kanga*; it is similar to early *kitenge*, or printed cloth with all-over repeating patterns, or Mozambique *capulana*, which usually feature two rows of repeating medallions between borders along the long edges (or above and below the medallions).⁹⁹ Around the portrait, flowers are linked by laurel branches, with the Swahili word, *Uhuru*, or independence.

One political *kanga* that achieved great popularity is one bearing a map of Tanganyika (Fig. 7-77). First printed in October 1962, this *kanga* was produced in thirteen different colorways over the next year. A Roman-script Swahili phrase announces the new nation, "Hello visitor, welcome to our Republic of Tanganyika."¹⁰⁰

Large towns and cities are marked out on the map of Tanganyika, and the national logo

⁹⁷ *Africa si Ulaya* translates as "Africa is not Europe" and *Tanganyika ni kwetu* translates as "Tanganyika is ours."

⁹⁸ For an in-depth study of Bibi Titi Mohamed and other women who largely contributed to Tanganyikan independence, see Susan Geiger, *TANU Women: Gender and Culture in the Making of Tanganyikan Nationalism, 1955-1965* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1997).

⁹⁹ *Kitenge*, based on fancy print designs popular throughout West and Central Africa, were imported by the textile agent and firm, Jiwani Hirji & Sons, Ltd. in the 1960s. See Chapter 5 for further details.

¹⁰⁰ *Hoi hoi mgeni karibu kwetu jamhuri Tanganyika* translates as "Hello visitor, welcome to our Republic of Tanganyika."

of a giraffe is placed in a medallion in the middle of the nation. Within the medallion, two laurel branches are linked by a central bow. Underneath, a banner bearing the English words, “Republic of Tanganyika,” completes the medallion. Behind the outline of the nation, lines squares and rectangles create a very busy ground, and a continuous border of thick stripes finish the design.

Political *kanga* are difficult to market across national borders, and as attitudes toward imported goods changed, Vlisco began casting out for new consumers across east Africa in the 1960s. One example, first printed in September 1963, was manufactured in eighteen different colorways throughout 1963, 1964, 1966, and 1968 (Fig. 7-78).¹⁰¹ The design is very abstract and this quality may have appealed to a wider array of markets, because it was sold in Dar es Salaam, Mombasa, and even Madagascar. Up until this point, Dar es Salaam and Mombasa had never shared *kanga*; similarly, no overlap whatsoever existed with the Madagascar market.¹⁰² The central motif has flattened ovals, equally spaced and diagonally positioned at ninety-degree angles from one another. The ground has irregular shapes fit snugly together like pieces of a puzzle, and the borders are comprised of alternating thick stripes. A Roman-script Swahili phrase is boxed out from the busy background, which translates as “Late, late, today I have never been (late).”¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ The tinted-blue ground is reprised in this design, and at least one colorway—the green and aqua inks on bleached white cloth—bears the monogram of Jiwan Hirji & Sons. As a Dar es Salaam-based firm, this sample likely was commissioned for that market, where the monogram would be recognized.

¹⁰² *Kanga* printed for the Madagascar market are today known as *lamba hoany*. Judging from Vlisco’s extensive production of *lamba hoany*, these textiles were almost always printed in the same color palette of maroon-and-marigold on bleach white cloth, bore text in the Malagasy language written in Roman script, and regularly featured depictions of people, a subject avoided in the Dar es Salaam, Mombasa, and Zanzibar markets until independence-related commemorative *kanga* around 1960.

¹⁰³ *Chelewa chelewa, leo nime wahi* translates as “Late, Late, today I have never been (late).”

The trend for marketing designs across traditionally separate markets continued in another design from February 1964 (Fig. 7-79). This hugely popular design—second only to the 1950s rose *kanga*—was printed in twenty-five different colorways in the years 1964 and 1969. It was sent to Dar es Salaam and Marseille, the latter presumably for transshipment to Madagascar. A Roman-script Swahili phrase has been integrated into the border of the central oval, which translates as “Shoulder to shoulder, let us not separate my relatives.”¹⁰⁴ This motif, though quite different from the postwar *kanga* designs—actually refers back to the earliest *kanga* designs, when small, intricate, and all-over floral designs from Indonesian batiks met with Indian woodblock designs, namely paisley. Even the large central expanse with bleeding lines of ink has origins in batik. While this might not be what many have come to associate with the printed textile’s design and composition, it in fact fits neatly within *kanga*’s long history of design.

The preference for geometric and abstracted designs continued in Vlisco-produced *kanga* from the early 1960s. Mombasa and Zanzibar comprised even smaller portions of Vlisco’s *kanga* production, and Roman-script Swahili phrases finally displaced Arabic script entirely. New themes during the 1960s included independence and those politically or nationalistically oriented. Vlisco’s production slowed throughout the decade, and designs were marketed across and number of historically distinct markets in the middle years of the decades. Vlisco finally ceased production of new *kanga* designs for the Dar es Salaam, Mombasa and Zanzibar markets in 1967.

¹⁰⁴ *Bega kwa bega tusitupane ndugu zangu* translates as “Shoulder to shoulder, let us not separate my relatives.”

An Introduction to *Kanga* Designers

Throughout the last century or more, approaches to the design of *kanga* textiles have changed. Turn-of-the-century sources repeatedly warned against ill-considered designs; an entire shipment might fail to sell if the design failed to tickle the fancies of consumers.¹⁰⁵ Careful planning took place before new designs were produced. This process was sometimes lengthy, involving *kanga* designers, merchant converters and manufacturers all working in tandem. Some *kanga* designers sent instructions and scraps with sample motifs, while others drew their own mock-ups. Most recently, computer-design programs are used by *kanga* designers, streamlining the process, as computer-generated designs can be sent directly to factories for printing. In this section, I will introduce four *kanga* designers and their approach to creating new *kanga* designs. First, I will introduce Mr. K. G. Peera, a colonial-era designer, who was primarily active between 1930 and 1975. Next, I will explore Professor Hashim A. Nakanoga's methods, as an independence-era designer primarily working in the 1970s. Following, I will outline Mr. Furahi Kasika's expertise, a liberalizing-era designer who began working in the early

¹⁰⁵ "Report for the Year 1895 on the Trade of Zanzibar," by A. H. Hardinge, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports on Trade and Finance*, Foreign Office No. 1765 (London: Harrison and Sons, 1896), 12-13; "Report for the Year 1897 on the Trade and Commerce of Zanzibar," by Cave, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports on Trade and Finance*, Foreign Office No. 2129 (London: Printed for His Majesty's Stationary Office by Harrison and Sons, 1898), 14; "Report on the Island of Pemba for the Year 1900," by O'Sullivan-Beare, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports: Africa*, No. 2653 (London: Printed for His Majesty's Stationary Office by Harrison and Sons, 1901), 15-16; "Report for the Year 1900 on the Trade and Commerce of Zanzibar," by Cave, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports: Africa*, No. 2718 (London: Printed for His Majesty's Stationary Office by Harrison and Sons, 1901), 13; "Report for the Year 1902 on the Trade and Commerce of Zanzibar," by Cave, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports: Africa*, No. 3063 (London: Printed for His Majesty's Stationary Office by Harrison and Sons, 1903), 6-8; "Report for the Year 1905 on the Trade and Commerce of the Island of Pemba," by Farler, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports: Zanzibar*, No. 3716 (London: Printed for His Majesty's Stationery Office by Harrison and Sons, 1906), 3-4; "Report for the Year 1908 on the Trade of and Commerce of Zanzibar," by Kohan, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports: Zanzibar*, No. 4312 (London: Printed for His Majesty's Stationery Office by Harrison and Sons, 1909), 6, 10-11; and "Zanzibar" by Kohan, in "Report for the Years 1909-10 on the Trade and Commerce of Zanzibar," *Diplomatic and Consular Reports: Zanzibar*, No. 4716 (London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1911), 10.

1990s. Finally, I will review Mr. Vijay Patankar's approach, a contemporary *kanga* designer who has been working since 2000 in this shift toward digital production.

Kanga textiles are most often demanded and worn by women, so it may be surprising that all of my case studies chronicle *kanga* designers who are male. Women have also made successful careers as *kanga* designers, likely taking part in the family business in first half of the twentieth century or employed as artists in textile mill design departments. Teresa Njombe and Rose Simkoko are two of the original designers employed by Friendship Textile Mill (*Urafiki*) in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, where they have been working since 1968.¹⁰⁶ Fatma Shaaban Abdullah is a Zanzibari artist who often received *kanga* design commissions from political parties.¹⁰⁷ She has also written on *kanga* and other arts in Zanzibar. British expatriate Margaret Hawker was born in India, and lived in Zanzibar with her husband from 1952 to 1964. She was commissioned by merchants to design *kanga* from 1960-64.¹⁰⁸ Today, *kanga* design is taught in universities, such as the University of Dar es Salaam and Bagamoyo School of Arts in Tanzania, and these courses are open to both men and women.

¹⁰⁶ Simon A. Clarke, "Motif, Pattern, Colour, Text in Contemporary *Kanga* Cloth: An Analysis and Personal Response" (PhD diss., University of Central England in Birmingham, 2005), 150.

¹⁰⁷ See for example Fatmah Abdallah's [sic] *kanga* design illustrated in Judith von D. Miller, "Khangas, Kikoy and Kitenge," in *Art in East Africa: A Guide to Contemporary Art* (London: Frederick Muller, 1975), 57. The *kanga* textile's central motif and border show the Arusha Declaration torch, and the Swahili text, *Twalipenda Azimio la Arusha*, translates as "We love the Arusha Declaration." The same *kanga* textile is illustrated in Louise E. Jefferson, *The Decorative Arts of Africa* (New York: Viking Press, 1973), figure 90. Julia Hilger, "The *Kanga*: An Example of East African Textile Design," in *The Art of African Textiles: Technology, Tradition and Lurex*, edited by John Picton (London: Barbican Art Gallery, 1995), 45.

¹⁰⁸ Fatma Shaaban Abdullah, "*Kanga* Textiles from Tanzania" (London: Commonwealth Institute, 1984), n.p.

Mr. K. G. Peera, Colonial-Era Designer

Mr. K. G. Peera, whose full name is Mr. Kassamali Gulamhussein Peera, was a prolific *kanga* designer from the 1930s through the 1970s, though he continued to create designs up until his death as a centenarian in 2011. He was known by the nickname Miwani Mdogo, which means “Little Spectacles” in Swahili. He comes from a family involved in the textile trade in Zanzibar, discussed in Chapter 4. Peera was born on 4/5 January 1911 or 1912 in Zanzibar and died on 9 December 2011 at the age of 99 or 100. Around 1928/1930, Peera and his elder brother entered the textile business, beginning with just two pieces of *kikoi*, a hand-woven loincloth frequently worn by men along the Swahili Coast. At the height of their success, they owned and ran a 2000-square meter store with a variety of textile products. Both brothers functioned not only as sellers of textiles, but in particular as designers of *kanga*.

Peera did not draw his designs for new *kanga* by hand. Rather, he had a knack of looking at patterns and translating them to an effective *kanga* design. He looked to anything with pattern, such as women’s dresses or scarves, and if inspired, he offered to buy the item of clothing in question and replaced it with a *kanga* in stock or a shilling for the owner’s trouble. He explained, “Sometimes they would think I was looking at the woman, but really I just admire the pattern and plan how it could be made into *kanga!*”¹⁰⁹ Peera’s *kanga* designs are not hand-drawn by him; rather, they are a combination of old mock-ups, innovations with bits of new cuttings, and hand-written instructions for colors, sizes, and other modifications. In short, Peera’s sketches are shorthand for full designs, which provided detailed instructions for employees at textile

¹⁰⁹ K. G. Peera and Ukera K. Peera, interview by author, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, 11 November 2011.

printers to create hand-drawn and painted mock-ups of new *kanga* designs. These mock-ups were sent back to Peera for alteration and improvement. Once Peera was satisfied with the design, an official order was placed for the new *kanga* textiles.

As established in Chapter 5, the networks involved in the *kanga* trade bring together manufacturers, distributors, designers/sellers, and finally consumers. Peera, as a designer and seller of *kanga*, worked primarily with Japanese merchant-converters who in turn commissioned *kanga* textiles from Japanese manufacturers. In fact, his son was an agent for the Osaka-based merchant-converter firm H. Nishizawa Shoten, Ltd. between 1961 and 1975, which meant placing orders of new designs was relatively easy.¹¹⁰ The designs were transmitted back and forth between Indian designer in east Africa and printer in Japan through the hands of the Japanese merchant-converter firm, which had branch offices in east Africa and headquarters in Japan. Although Peera worked primarily with the Japanese (specifically the merchant-converter firm Nishizawa and the textile printer, C. Itoh), other designers in the colonial era worked with Europeans. Jiwan Hirji, for example, was the main agent for the British merchant-converter firm Smith, Mackenzie & Co., Ltd., which commissioned the printing of *kanga* textiles by Vlisco in the Netherlands. A Vlisco employee confirms that customers—here referring to Indian designers and sellers in east Africa—were the source of new designs, even if in-house artists were tasked with creating the initial mock-up:

Designing new Khanga designs for East Africa was for years a regular occupation of our artists, but this was done mainly on descriptions of the customers themselves, which were made on paper and developed in

¹¹⁰ From 1961 to 1964, Peera's son was based in Zanzibar, and from 1964 to 1975 he was based in Dar es Salaam. K. G. Peera and Ukera K. Peera, interview.

accordance with the technical requirements for engraving and printing in Helmond.¹¹¹

One of Peera's designs, now in the British Museum, will clarify the steps involved in commissioning a new *kanga* design. This example features a purple-and-yellow striped border with a matching floral central motif (Fig. 7-80). In Peera's hand, this object is labeled twice on the reverse side: once as Design No. 54, and once as Sketch N. 205. Both labels are correct, but in reference to different parts and different times—the design number refers to the finished design represented by a Japanese hand-drawn and painted paper sample, while the sketch number refers to an idea for a new *kanga*, represented by a combination of recycled Japanese hand-drawn and painted paper samples, cuttings of other patterns, and hand-written instructions for color combinations, border sizes, and other necessary design information.

In the example at hand, Design No. 54 refers to the finished paper sample, most likely hand-drawn and painted by designers at C. Itoh & Co., a Japanese textile trading and manufacturing firm (known today as ITOCHU). Because of Peera's creative impetus, impeccable eye, and knowledge of the tastes of *kanga*-buying women, he was able to sell instructional sketches to local agents of textile manufacturers, which became much easier when his son was hired by the Japanese merchant-converter firm H. Nishizawa Shoten, Ltd. in 1961. Peera explained, "I sent designs to Japan and India; other people thought it was strange, because they thought Zanzibar was the whole world!"¹¹² One of the British Museum paper samples bears further confirmation of this working relationship: the pink, burgundy and marigold design of diamonds and paisley

¹¹¹ Vollaard, "Visco Memories and Manufacturing," 3.

¹¹² K. G. Peera and Ukera K. Peera, interview.

still retains the original selvage edge, which states: REG. DESIGN FOR K. G. PEERA (MIWANIMDOGO) C.ITOH KHANGA (Fig. 7-81). The *kanga* textile itself was printed in Japan and exported to east African on the specifications of Peera.

Peera often reused these mock-ups to create new *kanga* designs. In this example, Sketch N. 205 refers to this reuse, in conjunction with new pattern cuttings (note the polka dotted paper addition and the pink floral textile addition), hand-written instructions and notations made on the design sketch itself. Mr. Peera was very thorough; each portion is labeled with a letter or number that is fully explained in the hand-written notes attached. This example shows instructions in English; the English translations were written by his son from original instructions written in Gujarati, Peera's first language. These sketches and attached English instructions were sold to local representatives of textile manufacturers and returned in the form of printed cotton textiles—*kanga*.

Mock-up samples could be drawn and painted from Peera's sketches, cuttings of patterns, and detailed hand-written instructions. Usually these paper samples featured a quarter of the overall *kanga* design, as *kanga* are most often quadratically symmetrical. These paper samples, complete with selvage edge and sometimes a design number, were sent to Peera for modification, improvement, and final approval for printing. Once approved, a printed textile sample was sent to Peera for advertisement purposes, an order was be placed, and a full shipment followed, for exclusive sale by the designer.

The designer—Peera—was given the whole order of each new *kanga* design to sell. He and his brother may have retained the entire order, ensuring only they had the ability to sell the new design, or they may have sold bales or individual pairs to smaller *kanga* sellers. It likely depended on the success of each particular design as well as the

overall size of their business; the Peera brothers began retailing textiles around 1930, and by the 1960s, their business had grown to encompass large wholesale orders. After receiving large wholesale order, the Peera brothers could easily supply smaller traders.

Peera's son fondly remembers cuttings of patterns from textiles, paper, and old *kanga* everywhere as a child.¹¹³ Many inspirations for shapes and designs come from everyday objects, such as beans, grain, *pili pili* (chili peppers), bananas, oranges, flowers, such as tangerine blooms and jasmine blossoms, and cashew nuts, more universally recognized as paisley. The Swahili sayings printed on *kanga* came from a variety of sources. Sometimes, Peera and his wife would sit around the kitchen table thinking up new sayings. Other times, the Peera brothers would pay two to three shillings or offer new *kanga* in exchange for new sayings Zanzibari women would provide, whether at their shop in Zanzibar or while on sales trips to *shambas* (farms/rural areas).¹¹⁴

K. G. Peera fled revolutionary violence in Zanzibar in 1964 with only a suitcase of his *kanga* designs.¹¹⁵ He made Dar es Salaam his home for the last half century. Peera died on 9 December 2011 in Dar es Salaam, under a month shy of his 100th (or 101st)

¹¹³ K. G. Peera and Ukera K. Peera, interview.

¹¹⁴ K. G. Peera and Ukera K. Peera, interview.

¹¹⁵ Twenty of these designs were gifted to me following K. G. Peera's death in December 2011; six of which I donated to the British Museum. I believe it is his son's hope that Mr. Peera's contribution to the history of *kanga* and his life's work will be memorialized through his life story and these remaining designs. It is my sincere hope that some posthumous recognition will come to Mr. Peera; one has already been featured in a publication. See Christopher Spring, *African Textiles Today* (London: British Museum, 2012), 128. A few were displayed, along with a photograph of Mr. Peera taken just four weeks before his death, in the temporary exhibition, *Social Fabric: African Textiles Today*, at the British Museum, London. The exhibition was on view from 14 February – 21 April 2013. One *kanga* in the British Museum's collection, collected in 2003 and likely printed as recently, bears the selvage edge inscription, "Mali ya Miwani Mdogo (Saidina) Rivatex Eldoret Made in Kenya," further crediting Mr. Peera. This *kanga* likely features a popular older design originally created by Mr. Peera, reprinted by the Rivatex factory in Eldoret, Kenya. See British Museum acquisition number Af2003,21.19.

birthday.¹¹⁶ Peera remains wholly unknown outside of east Africa, though he has not gone without recognition in Zanzibar. Within the last five years, Peera was honored with the Dhow Award for Contribution to Zanzibar, the first person of South Asian-descent to be recognized with this honor.¹¹⁷ He was credited with giving Zanzibar the gift of *kanga*, and some of his extant designs (in the form of the finished printed cotton textile) went on display at the National Museum and House of Wonders in Stone Town. His son was interviewed by Zanzibari television and accepted the award on his father's behalf, as Peera was too frail to travel to Zanzibar. It is said that Peera's designs are still prized by those who remember him and his renown, and any of his original *kanga* (marked by his name in the selvage edge) are snapped up by those knowledgeable few.¹¹⁸

Professor Hashim A. Nakanoga, Independence-Era Designer

Professor Hashim A. Nakanoga worked as a textile designer at Friendship Textile Mill (*Urafiki*) in Dar es Salaam in the 1970s and has since trained many students in the art of textile surface design at the University of Dar es Salaam. The Friendship Textile Mill was a joint venture between the Tanzanian and Chinese governments. It was the first vertically integrated textile mill, which processed raw cotton, manufactured cloth, and printed *kanga* (and *kitenge*) textiles. *Urafiki* began production in late 1967 and is still producing textiles today.

¹¹⁶ When I met him in November 2011, he was still sharp and clever, even complimenting me on my paisley scarf, which he assured me would make a wonderful *kanga* design. We conversed in a combination of Swahili, Gujarati, and English, with the assistance of Peera's son, Ukera K. Peera, about all the aspects of his life in the *kanga* business.

¹¹⁷ K. G. Peera and Ukera K. Peera, interview.

¹¹⁸ Farouque Abdela, interview by author, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, 30 November 2011. I hope my research and publications will help to write Peera and his family back into the history of *kanga*. There are undoubtedly others—such as the Jiwan Hirji family—who deserve to be recognized for their dynamic role and lasting contribution to the textile trade in east Africa. Further research will help restore their contributions for posterity.

Nakanoga began his working adult life as an accounts trainee for a motor vehicle company owned by Ford in 1969. As he described his opportunities at that time, “I thought it would be good to further my studies; there is no end in third-party business, so I could either go into government or further studies.”¹¹⁹ The following year, Nakanoga pursued his Bachelor of Arts degree in Fine Arts from Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda, and graduated in 1974. During his studies, he worked part-time at *Urafiki* in Dar es Salaam designing textiles. Upon completion of his Fine Arts degree, Nakanoga was recruited by *Urafiki* for fulltime employment. In total, Nakanoga worked in the textile industry for nine years before joining the faculty in the Department of Fine and Performing Arts at the University of Dar es Salaam in 1979. He then continued his education at the Scottish College of Textiles in Edinburgh in 1982 through the support of the British Council, where he received a Diploma in Textile Design. Nakanoga officially retired from the University of Dar es Salaam in 2007 but still teaches there on short-term contracts.

Drawing on his experience designing textiles at *Urafiki* throughout the 1970s, Nakanoga has since taught surface design of printed textiles to students at the University of Dar es Salaam for over thirty years. He came of age during the independence era in Tanzania, and his conception of good *kanga* design is bound up in his understandings of the textile as a symbol of national pride. He explains, “*Kanga* is not given its due respect. As far as I’m concerned, the government would be fine if it declared *kanga* a national dress. I travel, go anywhere in the world, if I see a *kanga*, I

¹¹⁹ Hashim A. Nakanoga, interview by author, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, 28 October 2011.

ask the person, where from is your *kanga*? *Kanga* is Tanzanian dress.”¹²⁰ Fittingly, he holds *kanga* and its design in high regard and deeply relates the two to the nation of Tanzania.

Nakanoga insists that students must be taught the characteristic features of *kanga* textiles, including four borders, a central motif, Swahili phrase.¹²¹ Exceptions, such as the conventional composition of *kisutu*, exist, but by and large Nakanoga advocates for innovations within conventional attributes of *kanga*. Indeed, by the 1970s, *kanga* in Tanzania had embraced a simplified composition, where each cloth featured a thick, continuous border, surrounding a bold, simplified, central motif, often completed with a Roman-script Swahili saying centered just below the central motif above the lower border.

Trained in the 1970s, Nakanoga teaches the importance of hand-drawing *kanga* designs. In introducing the elements of *kanga* design, Nakanoga instructs students on how to compose a hand-drawn, quarter of the intended *kanga* design. Lessons begin with floral and geographic motifs and progress to fruits, animals, and other representative elements. He insists that the border and central motif should complement one another, as should the chosen colors combinations. When asked about color combinations, Nakanoga offered this explanation:

Kanga has striking colors, whereas *kitenge* has more subdued colors. African colors are in *kanga*, colors not common to Europe. European designs avoid black, but in Africa black is very common. In Europe, a contrast is there, but very carefully done when black is used. Western-influenced color schemes are seasonal, harmonious. [This] takes the richness out of the look [of] *kanga*. You can use any color, [it] just depends

¹²⁰ Nakanoga, interview, 28 October 2011.

¹²¹ Hashim A. Nakanoga, interview by author, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, 1 November 2011.

on the combination. Africa has all the colors in the world. Selection is what matters.¹²²

Kanga textiles in the 1950s and 1960s focused on a palette based on a deep, saturated yellow, paired with other darker colors, such as green, black, blue, red, or brown. Nakanoga described a change in *kanga* design in the 1980s, when the 1980s, florescent colors and new combinations were embraced. This shift parallels the opening up of Tanzania, the liberalizing of its economy, and the abandonment of many failed socialist policies. In response to these shifts in color preference and combination, Nakanoga remarked, “Colors [on *kanga*] need to be striking, not jarring. Not shouting, but not boring. It is a difficult balance.”¹²³

Nakanoga encourages his students to look for inspiration all around them, specifically their experiences as Tanzanians living in Tanzania. He often contrasts older designs, likely referencing his experience in the 1970s, with changes in color and design preference during the later 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s, when Tanzania liberalized its economy and looked to forces outside its borders. Nakanoga laments new *kanga* designs that neglect the intended market—Tanzanians: “Older [color] combinations were deep, down to earth. Now designers have been abroad and forget they are designing for Tanzanians, in Tanzania.”¹²⁴

One of Nakanoga’s most recent designs was created on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary celebration of the University of Dar es Salaam (Fig. 7-82). Nakanoga made use of recognizable elements that refer to the University. For instance, the dome in the

¹²² Nakanoga, interview, 1 November 2011.

¹²³ Nakanoga, interview, 28 October 2011.

¹²⁴ Nakanoga, interview, 1 November 2011.

central motif is taken from a familiar building on the campus of the University of Dar es Salaam, Nkrumah Hall (Fig. 7-83). Within the circle of the number 50, Nakanoga integrated the University's logo, which is a hand holding a fiery torch next to a book, on a background of green land and wavy lines representing water (Fig. 7-84). The text within the central medallion translates as "The University of Dar es Salaam celebrating 50 years."¹²⁵ The border design replicates the University's logo in abstracted circles, providing for continuity between central motif and border. The Swahili phrase translates as "Increasing knowledge, building the future, 1961-2011."¹²⁶

Nakanoga conceptualizes *kanga* design as a product of local tastes and demands. In my interview with Nakanoga, we discussed typical motifs commonly found on *kanga*, including the paisley design. Nakanoga, like many other Tanzanians, called this shape *korosho*, which translates from the Swahili as "cashew nut." As my intention was to trace the history of *kanga* design, I pressed this *kanga* designer on the origins of this typical design element. I insisted this was a design introduced from abroad. Nakanoga politely disagreed.¹²⁷ Cashews are a domestic cash crop and familiar foodstuff in Tanzania, he justified the recurrence of the motif as a locally grown feature. Although I agreed that the cashew or paisley shape has been adopted into the repertoire of *kanga* design precisely because the shape resonates locally, Nakanoga held firm to his understanding that the shape was a creation based on a Tanzanian crop. He even

¹²⁵ The text in the central medallion, *Chuo Kikuu Cha Dar es Salaam, Maadhimisho ya Miaka 50* translates as "The University of Dar es Salaam, Celebrating 50 years." The anniversary *kanga* was on sale at the University of Dar es Salaam bookstore in November 2011.

¹²⁶ *Kukuza maarifa, kujenga mustakabali 1961-2011* translates as "Increasing knowledge, building the future, 1961-2011."

¹²⁷ Nakanoga, interview, 28 October 2011.

compared the advent of European *kanga* manufacture to Dutch mechanical production of Javanese batik: where the Dutch took Javanese batik from Indonesia and created a manufactured version, so too did Europeans take *kanga*.¹²⁸ The ownership here is given to Tanzanians, with Europeans playing a supporting role of capitalizing on the artistic creation of a preexisting form of dress. Similarly, Nakanoga advocates for the spelling “*kanga*” over “*khanga*,” because the former is Swahili and conforms to Bantu linguistic origins, whereas the latter suggests a borrowing from another language.¹²⁹ The credit, again, serves to underscore Nakanoga’s understanding and belief in the textile genre as inherently Tanzanian.

And although every Tanzanian knows *kanga*, Nakanoga draws a fine distinction between consuming *kanga* and designing *kanga*: “To know [*kanga*] and to understand [*kanga*] are very different.”¹³⁰ In the course of my interviews, I found the same limitations; women who wear *kanga* may or may not dwell on its meaning, history, or implication, whereas those who design *kanga* think very carefully about the combinations of design, color, and Swahili phrase.

Nakanoga was deeply influenced by the era in which he came of age—the 1960s when Tanzania gained its independence and embraced its own version of socialism, *Ujamaa*. His first role as a practicing *kanga* designer at *Urafiki* in the 1970s and subsequent post as Professor of Fine Arts at the University of Dar es Salaam have influenced his approach to and instruction of *kanga* design. Nakanoga still advocates

¹²⁸ Nakanoga, interview, 28 October 2011.

¹²⁹ Nakanoga, interview, 28 October 2011.

¹³⁰ Nakanoga, interview, 1 November 2011.

drawing and hand-coloring a quarter of each new *kanga* design, and taking influences from the local world around him—Tanzania.

Mr. Furahi Kasika, Jr., Liberalizing-Era Designer

Mr. Furahi Kasika, Jr. epitomizes a liberalizing-era designer. He has been designing *kanga* for almost twenty years, active from the early 1990s and continues today.¹³¹ He is self-taught, without any formal schooling in textile surface design or fine arts. Although he is employed at *Urafiki*, the demand for new designs there has shrunk. He indicated that he produces only three designs per month for the textile factory.¹³² He also functions as a freelance designer, selling a further eight or nine *kanga* designs per month to local textile factories, including MeTL (Mohammed Enterprises Tanzania, Ltd.), a conglomerate which owns 21st century Textiles, Ltd. of Morogoro and Afritex of Dar es Salaam, or other textile printers in Dar es Salaam, like African Pride and NIDA.

Kasika uses a combination of technologies to create his *kanga* designs and can be seen as a transitional figure between the independence and contemporary eras. He sketches one-quarter of his intended *kanga* design in pencil and adds color by painting with watercolor to indicate color combinations (Fig. 7-85). It takes about one day to create each new *kanga* design; and he indicated he gathers inspirations from his dreams as well as from consumers of *kanga* textiles.¹³³ The hand-drawn sketch with watercolors seen here was acquired from the design studio of MeTL in Dar es Salaam. It features a mosque in the corner with repeating crescent and moon designs

¹³¹ Kasika also designs *kitenge*, as evidenced by the three sample drawings in the author's collection, acquired from MeTL textile designers, Mr. Rahim Ladha and Mr. Vijay Patankar on 9 November 2011.

¹³² Furahi Kasika, Jr., interview by author, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, 16 November 2011.

¹³³ Kasika, interview.

throughout the interior. The border is comprised of repeating rose water sprinkler bottles. Although it is not clear whether this is one of Kasika's designs, it is similar to his working methods.¹³⁴ After completing the drawing and application of color, Kasika either delivers the sketch to textile designers at textile mills or digitizes his mock-up. After scanning, he may retouch details with the help of editing programs. Finally, he prints his final mock-up and delivers to new *kanga* design to buyers at local textile mills.

As a liberalizing-era design, Kasika designs to order and tries to capture the demands of *kanga* consumers. He indicated that floral *kanga* are often successful, and the time of year greatly influenced his design scheme.¹³⁵ For instance, if elections are approaching, Eid, or harvest, different motifs are likely to be in demand. Kasika pointed out that one well-known *kanga* design, *maskiti* or mosque, was originally designed by him in 1998 for the Islamic holiday of Eid (Fig. 7-86). This *kanga* was still in production at *Urafiki* in October 2011 and could be seen worn by women in Dar es Salaam (Fig. 7-87). Kasika's long-term goal is to claim ownership of his designs and be credited for his contribution to *kanga* design. Whereas in past, a successful designer might insist on his or her name gracing the selvage edge, today this is less commonly seen.

Mr. Vijay Patankar, Contemporary Designer

Mr. Vijay Patankar is a *kanga* designer employed by MeTL, Mohammed Enterprises Tanzania, Ltd. MeTL began as a trading house in the 1970s and has been producing textiles since 2002 in the mills of 21st-century Textiles Ltd., of Morogoro, Afritex, Ltd., of Dar es Salaam, Musoma Textiles, of Musoma, and most recently,

¹³⁴ This design lacks a signature or stamp to indicate the designer. Other design samples acquired from MeTL have Kasika's name stamped on the reverse, though these patterns are for *kitenge* textiles, not *kanga* textiles.

¹³⁵ Kasika, interview.

Novatexmoque LDA in Mozambique. As a large conglomerate company, textile production is only one interest among many. Across the three Tanzanian textile mills, eight to ten designs can be produced daily, totaling between 200 and 300 designs monthly.¹³⁶ The managers at MeTL headquarters indicated that *kanga* and *kitenge* designs make up about 90% of their business, though they also produce bedsheets, canvas, and suiting.¹³⁷ Both cotton and polyester textiles are being produced, depending on market demands and price.

As an employee of MeTL, Patankar is responsible for optimizing designs for printing. Patankar was trained in textile surface design in Jetpur, India.¹³⁸ Although he certainly designs new *kanga* himself, he does so with the aid of computer-design programs. In this way, individual objects, motifs, or other elements incorporated into a *kanga* design are scanned or designed electronically, then effectively copied and pasted to create a recurring design (Fig. 7-88). A photograph shows the finished *kanga* textiles and the digital design side-by-side. Another large portion of his job is to digitize materials or drawings provided by or purchased from freelance designers. By scanning the hand-drawn portion of a new *kanga* design, Patankar constructs the entire design by duplicating and flipping the quarter section originally provided. A central design motif might be added and usually a Swahili phrase. In this way, new *kanga* can be designed in mere minutes; from scratch, Patankar estimates it takes him only two hours to

¹³⁶ MeTL headquarters, interview by author, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, 2 November 2011.

¹³⁷ MeTL headquarters, interview.

¹³⁸ Vijay Patankar, interview by author, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, 9 November 2011.

produce a new design. He also indicated he completes about 180 new digital designs each month.¹³⁹

With the integration of digital design programs, Patankar laments the loss of the artist's hand. He prefers to start with a hand-drawn design, as he indicated they have more feeling.¹⁴⁰ It is easy to change any element within a *kanga*, from the color combinations or colorways to border design or central motif, but it is harder for the designs to retain overall cohesion if each element is simply a carbon copy.

As a contemporary designer, meeting the demands of the buyer is paramount. The buyer in this case might be wholesale customers or MeTL's in-house management, not an individual consumer of *kanga*. Those involved in the textile trade will take cues from consumers on color combinations, colorways, motifs, and sayings, but contemporary designers such as Patankar design *kanga* on the order of large buyers and wholesalers.¹⁴¹ Patankar and his employers at MeTL do not involve themselves in the selling of their products; they fulfill the orders of wholesalers, who supply smaller numbers to retailers. The managers estimate that 80% of their textile products are sold through stalls on Uhuru Street.¹⁴²

It is likely that copying has always occurred, but with computer programming and local factories, the speed at which designs can be copied digitally and printed on cloth is down to one week. Now that designs are stored digitally, it is very easy to request the reprinting of an old design, or make minor changes to popular designs before

¹³⁹ Patankar, interview.

¹⁴⁰ Patankar, interview.

¹⁴¹ MeTL headquarters, interview.

¹⁴² MeTL headquarters, interview.

commissioning another order. Although hand-drawn *kanga* designs are still in use, the turn towards digitization may eventually render these mock-ups unnecessary.

This chapter has relied on over 5,000 full-cloth *kanga* samples produced by the Dutch textile printer, Vlisco, between 1895 and 1967. I have shown that the tenets of *kanga* design were already firmly in place by the 1910s. Trends in colorways, subject matter, composition, and Swahili text have been analyzed to show that *kanga* design has drawn from a limited number of influences, which shows more innovation in variation than wholesale change.

I established that Arabic-script Swahili was used alongside Roman-script Swahili text throughout the first half of the twentieth century. *Kanga* produced in the immediate postwar years of 1948 to 1952 show a preference for Arabic-script Swahili text, but in late 1952 and early 1953, a shift to Roman-script Swahili text can be seen on *kanga* destined for the Dar es Salaam market. Arabic-script Swahili text was retained on Mombasa-bound *kanga* until about 1960, when Roman-script Swahili text displaced all Arabic-script.

I determined three approaches to *kanga* compositions that have been in use throughout the twentieth century: those with thick, continuous, and even borders tend to have Roman-script text and a large, bold, central motif. Conversely, those with thin borders along the length and wider, compound borders along the width tend to have Arabic-script text before 1953 and all-over, repeating motif with a preference for small, intricate designs. Those with integrated borders make up a small minority, and depending on the larger trends in text, have either Arabic-script or Roman-script Swahili text. These differing approaches to *kanga* composition coalesced in the 1950s to

describe different regional markets; continuous-bordered *kanga* were more characteristic of Dar es Salaam textiles, while compound-bordered *kanga* were more characteristic of Mombasa textiles.

While geometric, floral, and *kanga* depicting commodities have been standard since the textile genre developed in the mid 1880s, new themes and subject matter entered the realm of *kanga* design throughout the twentieth century. In the mid-1930s, the first commemorative *kanga* textiles were printed, the first *kanga* dedicated to advertising purposes date to the 1950s, and *kanga* with nationalistic or political themes become frequent in the 1960s.

Figures



Figure 7-1. Woodblock with Arabic-script Swahili text, likely early twentieth century. A) View of underside with mirrored text. B) Top view. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photographs by James Ryan.



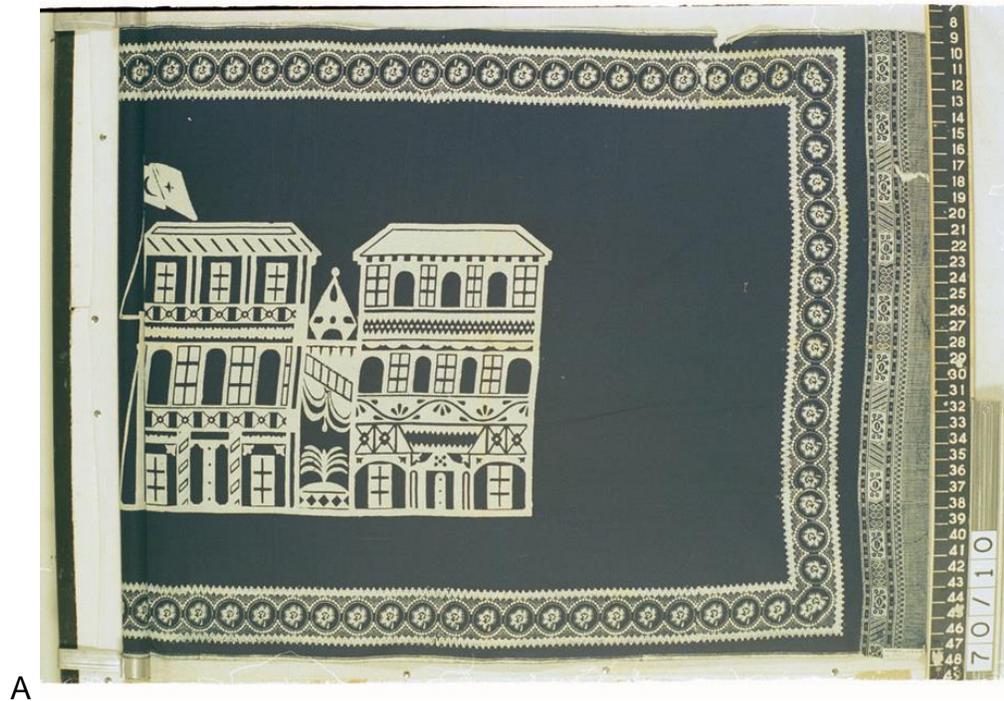
Figure 7-2. Woodblocks with floral and peacock designs made from copper strips. A) View of underside with mirrored designs. B) View of embedded copper strips. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photographs by James Ryan.



Figure 7-3. Woodblock with copper strip designs in process of creation. Note the array of woodworking tools and hand-drawn design. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photograph by Mackenzie Moon Ryan.



Figure 7-4. Vlisco hand-block printed *kanga*, 1910s. Note the slight overlap in design. 00081-00149, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands.



A



B

Figure 7-5. Two Vlisco hand-block printed *kanga*, 1903. Note the same continuous border used in both, evidence of re-using woodblocks. A) 00070-00010. B) 00070-00019. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands.



Figure 7-6. Rotary screen printing of *kanga* at Friendship Textile Mill (*Urafiki*), Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, 20 October 2011. Each color is printed using a separate screen. A) Bleached cloth about to be printed with first two rotary screens. B) Detail of second screen applying dark blue to *kanga* design. C) Rotary screens not currently in use. Photographs by James Ryan.



Figure 7-7. Vlisco hand-block printed *kanga*, 5 October 1895. Earliest full-cloth *kanga* in Vlisco's collection. Note the fringed edge. 00074-00002, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photograph by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.

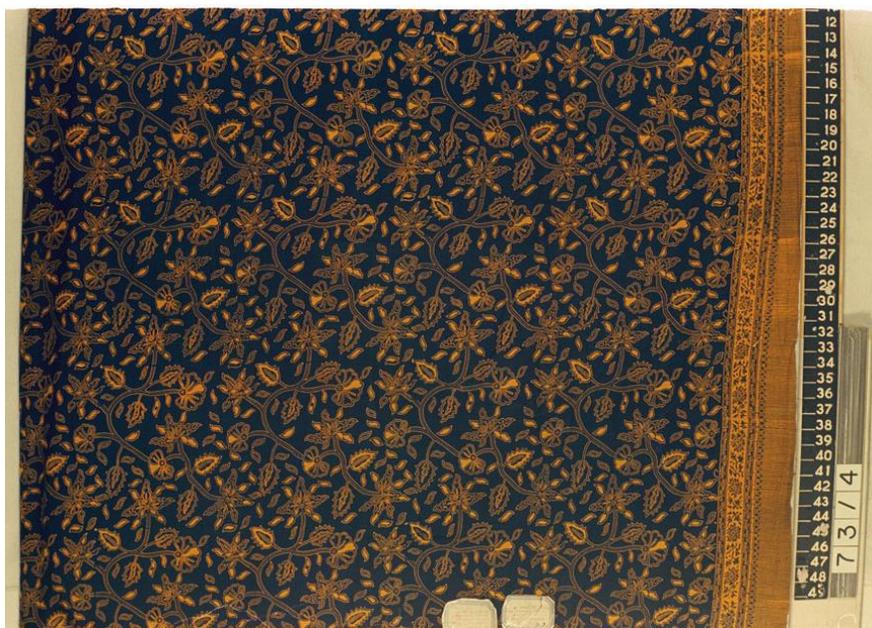


Figure 7-8. Vlisco hand-block printed *kanga*, 22 December 1899. Note the similarities to batik design. 00073-00004, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands.

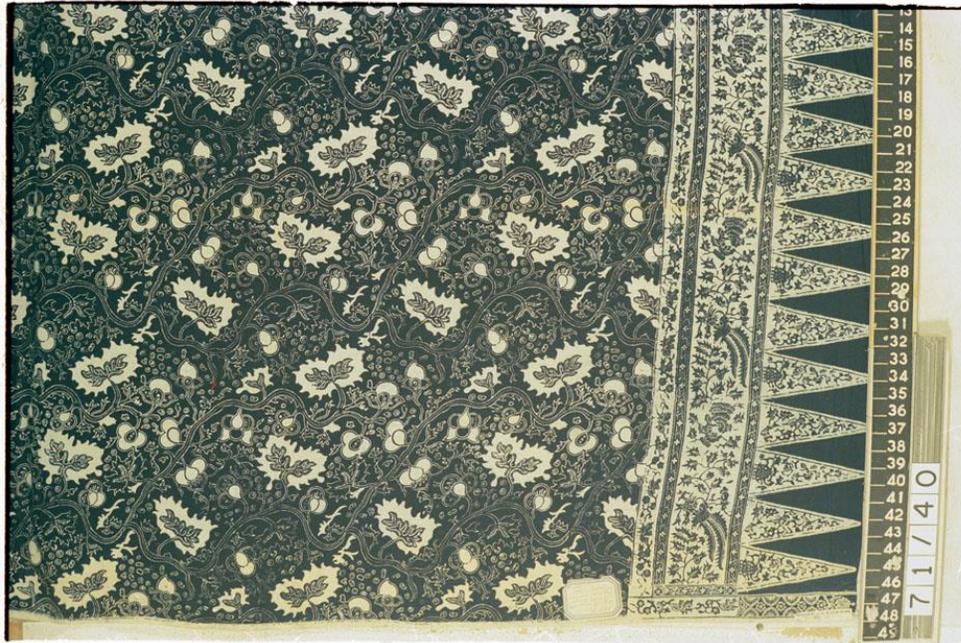


Figure 7-9. Vlisco hand-block printed *kanga*, 12 July 1901. Note the similarities to batik design, including *tumpal*. 00071-00020, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands.



Figure 7-10. Vlisco hand-block printed *kanga*, 1903. Note the use of a continuous border. 00070-00021, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands.



Figure 7-11. Vlisco hand-block printed *kanga*, 10 March 1905. Note the similarities to batik design. 00072-00006, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands.



A



B

Figure 7-12. Vlisco hand-block printed *kanga*, 1910s. A) Entire cloth, with compound border and one-point perspective. B) Detail of break in design due to woodblock. 00081-00214, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photographs by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.



Figure 7-13. Vlisco hand-block printed *kanga*, 1910s. Note the use of a continuous border and Arabic-script Swahili text. "The peacock says..." 00081-00102, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands.



Figure 7-14. Vlisco hand-block printed *kanga*, 1910s. Note to combination of Tower Bridge and lace-like designs, and the use of a compound border and Roman-script Swahili text. "European bridge, London." 00081-00202, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photograph by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.



Figure 7-15. Vlisco hand-block printed *kanga*, 1910s. Note the geometric designs, the use of a continuous border and sentence-case Roman-script Swahili text. "This is the meeting of love." 00081-00059, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands.



Figure 7-16. Vlisco hand-block printed *kanga*, 1910s. Note the writing desk, cushioned and patterned chairs, lace-like designs, use of a continuous border and cursive Roman-script Swahili text. "Romance will be the judge of me." 00081-00244, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands.



Figure 7-17. Vlisco hand-block printed *kanga*, 1910s. Note the crescent and star, crossed umbrellas, crossed rifles, target, and tree branch central motif, use of a compound border and cursive Roman-script Swahili text. “The aim of soldiers is patience (here).” 00081-00106, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands.



Figure 7-18. Vlisco hand-block printed *kanga*, 1910s. Note the crossed tusks, use of a compound border and Arabic-script Swahili text. 00081-00127, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands.



Figure 7-19. Vlisco hand-block printed *kanga*, 1910s. Note the depiction of Mounts Kilimanjaro and Meru, use of a compound border and Arabic-script Swahili text. “Kilimanjaro.” 00081-00068, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands.



Figure 7-20. Vlisco hand-block printed *kanga*, 1910s. Note the crown-like shape, use of ornate compound borders and Arabic-script Swahili text. 00081-00133, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands.



Figure 7-21. Vlisco hand-block printed *kanga*, 1910s. Note the ornate feather design, use of integrated borders and no text. 00081-00160, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands.



Figure 7-22. Vlisco hand-block printed *kanga*, 1910s. Note the spotted ground, paisley and triangular compound border, and no text. 00081-00103, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands.



Figure 7-23. Vlisco hand-block printed *kanga*, 1910s. Note the use of integrated borders and no text. 00081-00005, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands.



Figure 7-24. Vlisco machine-printed *kanga*, 1925-1933. Note the lighter color palette, the use of continuous borders and Roman-script Swahili text. "Intrigue is the opportunity for them to be young." 00082-00029, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands.



Figure 7-25. Vlisco machine-printed *kanga*, 1925-1933. Note the peacock feather and paisley designs, the use of continuous borders and Roman-script Swahili text. "I have opted to have khanga over silk." 00082-00017, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands.



Figure 7-26. Vlisco machine-printed *kanga*, 1925-1933. Note the circular, floral and paisley designs, the use of compound borders and Arabic-script Swahili text. 00082-00041, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands.



Figure 7-27. Vlisco machine-printed *kanga*, 1925-1933. Note the brighter color palette, automobile, leaf, and geometric designs, the use of compound borders and Arabic-script Swahili text. 00083-00035, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands.



Figure 7-28. Vlisco machine-printed *kanga*, 1925-1933. Note the ship, the use of a continuous geometric border and Arabic-script Swahili text. 00083-00024, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photograph by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.



Figure 7-29. Vlisco machine-printed *kanga*, 1925-1933. Note the horn instrument and floral design, the use of a continuous border and Arabic-script Swahili text. 00083-00004, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands.



Figure 7-30. Vlisco machine-printed *kanga*, 1925-1933. Note the umbrella and medallion central designs, the use of a paisley border, and Arabic-script Swahili text. 00083-00032, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands.



Figure 7-31. Vlisco machine-printed *kanga*, 1925-1933. Note the diagonal striped interior design, the use of a geometric border, and no text. 00083-00074, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands.



Figure 7-32. Vlisco machine-printed *kanga*, 1925-1933. Note the coffee pot and medallions design, the use of a continuous border with crosses and tangerine flowers, and Roman-script Swahili text. "That which assists a person is indeed his/hers." 00083-00162, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands.



Figure 7-33. Vlisco machine-printed *kanga*, 1925-1933. Note the paisley designs, the use of a compound border, and Arabic-script Swahili text. 00085-00093, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands.



Figure 7-34. Vlisco machine-printed *kanga*, 1925-1933. Note the *kofia*, crescent and star, and paisley designs, the use of a compound border, and Roman-script Swahili text. "Thank you very much, you must have fortune, baby." 00085-00092, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands.

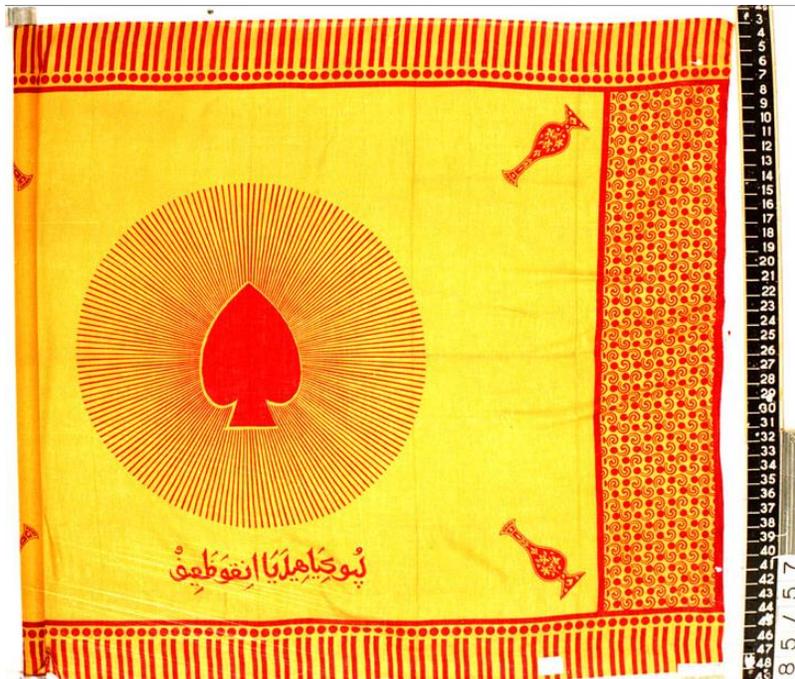


Figure 7-35. Vlisco machine-printed *kanga*, 1925-1933. Note the spade and rose water sprinkler bottle designs, the use of a compound border, and Arabic-script Swahili text. 00085-00057, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands.



Figure 7-36. Vlisco machine-printed *kanga*, 1925-1933. Note the eight-pointed star and tangerine flower design, the use of a compound border, and Roman-script Swahili text. "Do not praise the maker of palm wine." 00085-00079, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands.



Figure 7-37. Vlisco machine-printed *kanga*, 1925-1939. Note the eight- and nine-pointed star and medal design, the use of a compound border, and Arabic-script Swahili text. 00084-00020, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands.



Figure 7-38. Vlisco machine-printed *kanga*, 1925-1939. Note the crown-like shape and pineapple motifs, the use of a compound border, and Arabic-script Swahili text. 00084-00133, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands.



Figure 7-39. Vlisco machine-printed *kanga*, 1925-1939. Note the budding paisley shapes, the use of an integrated border, and Arabic-script Swahili text. 00084-00169, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands.

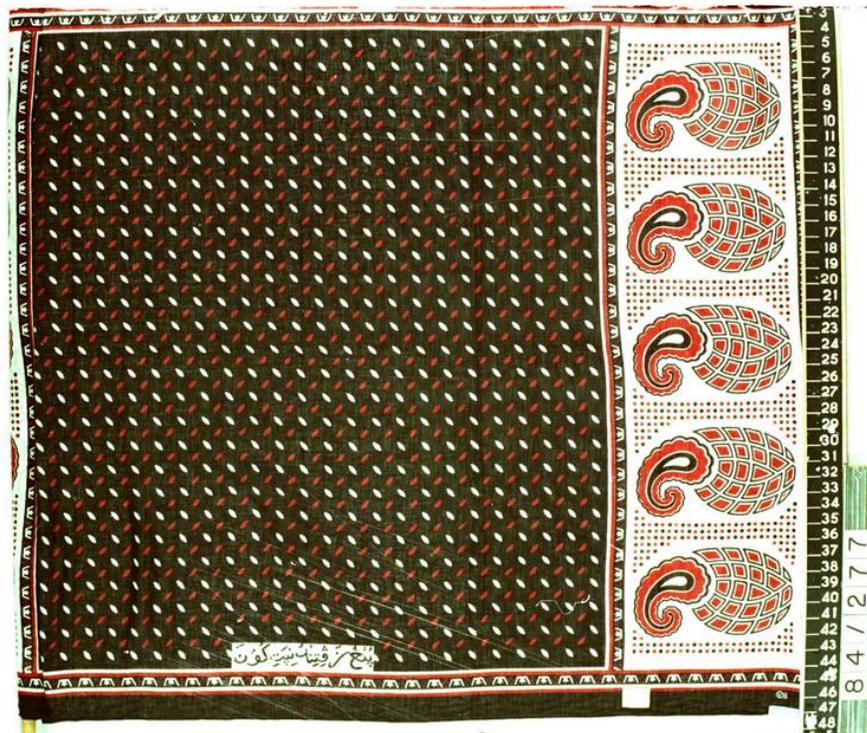


Figure 7-40. Vlisco machine-printed *kanga*, 1925-1939. Note the paisley shapes, the use of a compound border, and Arabic-script Swahili text. 00084-00277, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands.



Figure 7-41. Vlisco machine-printed *kanga*, 1925-1939. Note the mangoes, the use of a continuous though uneven border, and Arabic-script Swahili text. 00084-00320, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands.





B



C

Figure 7-42. First known commemorative *kanga*, produced on the occasion of King George V's Silver Jubilee on 6 May 1935, machine-printed by Vlisco, distributed by Smith, Mackenzie & Co., likely designed by Jivan Hirji, 1935. Note the Union flag motif, the use of continuous though uneven border, and English text, "God Save the King." A) black-red-and-white colorway, 00084-00060. B) orange-navy-and-white colorway, 00084-00037. Photograph by MacKenzie Moon Ryan. C) Detail of medallion, indicating commemorative occasion. Photograph by MacKenzie Moon Ryan. Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands.



Figure 7-43. Commemorative *kanga*, produced on the occasion of the Omani Sultan of Zanzibar Khalifa bin Harub’s Silver Jubilee, machine-printed by Vlisco, distributed by Smith, Mackenzie & Co., likely designed by Jivan Hirji, 1936. Note the crossed swords, *hanjari*, flags, and turban motif, the use of a continuous border, and English text, “1911-1936 Silver Jubille of H. H. Sultan Khalifa bin Harub.” 00084-00104, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands.



Figure 7-44. Commemorative *kanga*, produced on the occasion King George VI’s coronation, machine-printed by Vlisco, distributed by Smith, Mackenzie & Co., likely designed by Jivan Hirji, 1937. Note the crown, scepter, orb, and crossed Union flag motifs, the use of a continuous border, and a combination of Roman-script Swahili and English text, “Furaha ya coronation of King George VI, 12th May 1937.” 00084-00117, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands.

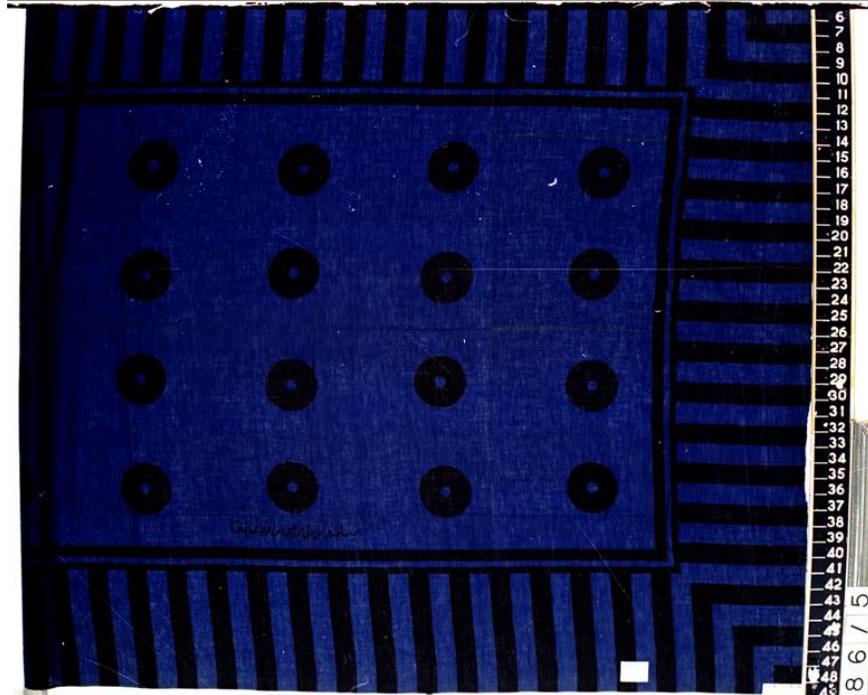


Figure 7-45. Vlisco machine-printed *kanga*, 1925-1939. Note the appearance of the early spots-and-stripes design, here with Arabic-script Swahili text. 00086-00005, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands.



Figure 7-46. Vlisco machine-printed *kanga*, 1925-1939. Note the paisley, stripe, and triangle design, the use of compound borders, and Arabic-script Swahili text. 00086-00026, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands.



Figure 7-47. Vlisco machine-printed *kanga*, 1925-1939. Note the crescent and star, flower, and geometric motifs, the use of continuous borders, and Roman-script Swahili text. "My precious love one was flown away with honor and respect." 00086-00040, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands.



Figure 7-48. Vlisco machine-printed *kanga*, 1925-1939. Note the floral, stripe, and triangular motifs, the use of compound borders, and Arabic-script Swahili text. 00089-00012, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands.



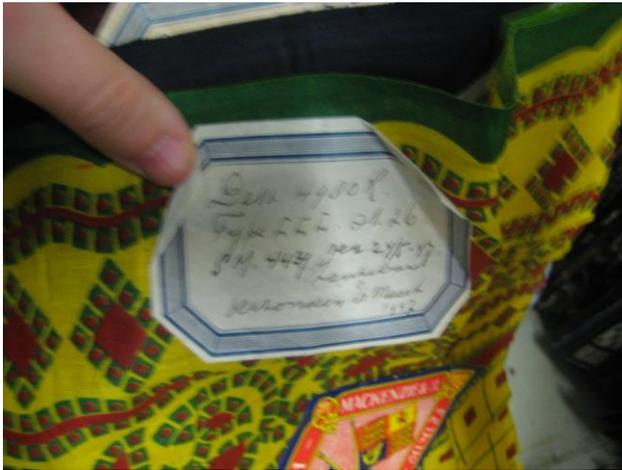
Figure 7-49. Vlisco machine-printed *kanga* designed by Hussein Jiwan Hirji, 1925-1939. Note the appearance of Hussein Jiwan Hirji's monogram, coffee set, floral and paisley designs, the use of compound borders, and Roman-script Swahili text. "The one who loves candy has tasted coffee." 00089-00006, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands.



A



B



C

Figure 7-50. Vlisco machine-printed *kanga* in three colorways, 24 May 1947, Zanzibar. Note the all-over design with floral and geometric shapes, the use of continuous borders, and Arabic-script Swahili text. #4980, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photographs by James Ryan.



A



B

Figure 7-51. Vlisco machine-printed *kanga* in three colorways, 28 July 1947, Zanzibar. Note the all-over design with crosses, tangerine flowers, and paisley, and Arabic-script Swahili text. #4909, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photographs by James Ryan.



Figure 7-52. Vlisco machine-printed *kanga* in one colorway, 18 August 1949. Note the budding artichoke and paisley design, compound border, and Arabic-script Swahili text. #4975, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photographs by James Ryan.



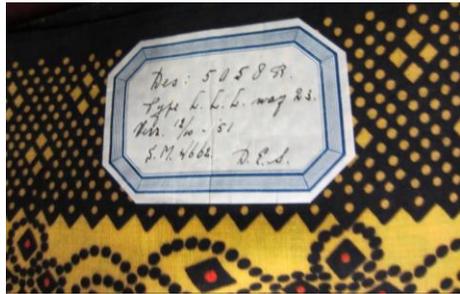
Figure 7-53. Vlisco hand-printed *kanga*, 1910s. Note the budding artichoke design, compound border, and no text. 00081-00086, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands.



A



B



C

Figure 7-54. Vlisco machine-printed *kanga* in four colorways, 12 October 1951, Dar es Salaam. Note the eight-pointed star, *bandhani* design, and Arabic-script Swahili text. #5058, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photographs by James Ryan.



A

B



C

Figure 7-55. Vlisco machine-printed *kanga* in twenty-seven colorways between 17 November 1950 and 1958, Dar es Salaam. Note the all-over design, the rose motif, and Arabic-script Swahili text. #5023, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photographs by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.



Figure 7-56. Vlisco machine-printed *kanga* in four colorways, 12 October 1951, Dar es Salaam. Note the all-over design, the paisley border, the Roman-script Swahili word *pole* in the central oval, and the Arabic-script Swahili text. #5057, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photographs by James Ryan.

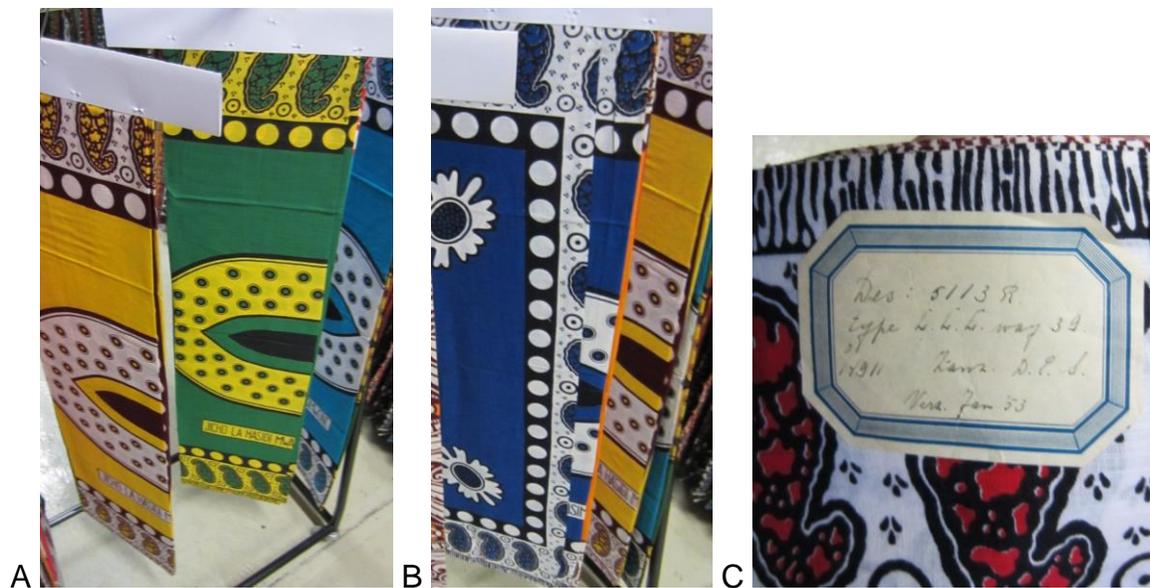


Figure 7-57. Vlisco machine-printed *kanga* in seventeen colorways between January 1953 and 1956, Dar es Salaam and Zanzibar. Note the simplified central design, the continuous paisley border, and the Roman-script Swahili text. “The evil eye shall not see my child.” #5113, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photographs by James Ryan.



Figure 7-58. Vlisco machine-printed *kanga* in three colorways between 12 June 1953 and 1954, Mombasa. Note the intricate central design, the paisley accents and border, and the Arabic-script Swahili text. #5250, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photographs by James Ryan.

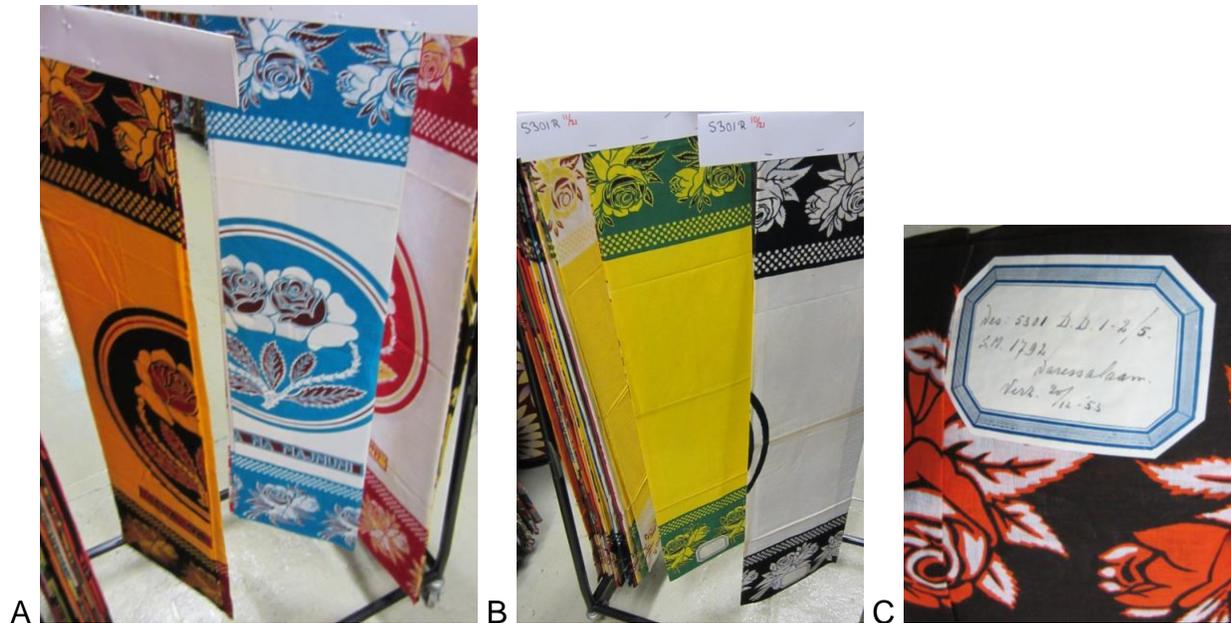


Figure 7-59. Vlisco machine-printed *kanga* in twenty-seven colorways between 20 December 1953 and 1962, Dar es Salaam. Note the simplified central design, the roses motif, and the Roman-script Swahili text. “To raise (children) is madness (?)” #5301, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photographs by James Ryan.



Figure 7-60. Advertising *kanga*, machine-printed by Vlisco in three colorways for Smith, Mackenzie & Co., Ltd., January 1953, Dar es Salaam and Tanga. Note the ship emblazoned with the company's name, the life ring motif, and the Roman-script Swahili text. "When you go you should..." #5131, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photographs by James Ryan.



Figure 7-61. Advertising *kanga*, machine-printed by Vlisco in three colorways for Coca-Cola, 25 August 1953, Zanzibar. Note the football trophy cup and ticket, the company's cursive logo takes the place of Swahili text. #5257, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photographs by James Ryan.



Figure 7-62. Vlisco machine-printed *kanga* in sixteen colorways between at least 1953 and 1958, Dar es Salaam. Note duck and duckling central motif, the continuous leaf border, the inclusion of Hussein Jiwan Hirji's monogram, and Arabic-script Swahili text. #5104 and #5853, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photographs by James Ryan.



Figure 7-63. Vlisco machine-printed *kanga* in sixteen colorways between 9 December 1952 and 1958, Dar es Salaam. Note the pineapple and knife design with a floral, integrated border and Roman-script Swahili text. "You all know where the sweet thing is." #5122, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photographs by James Ryan.

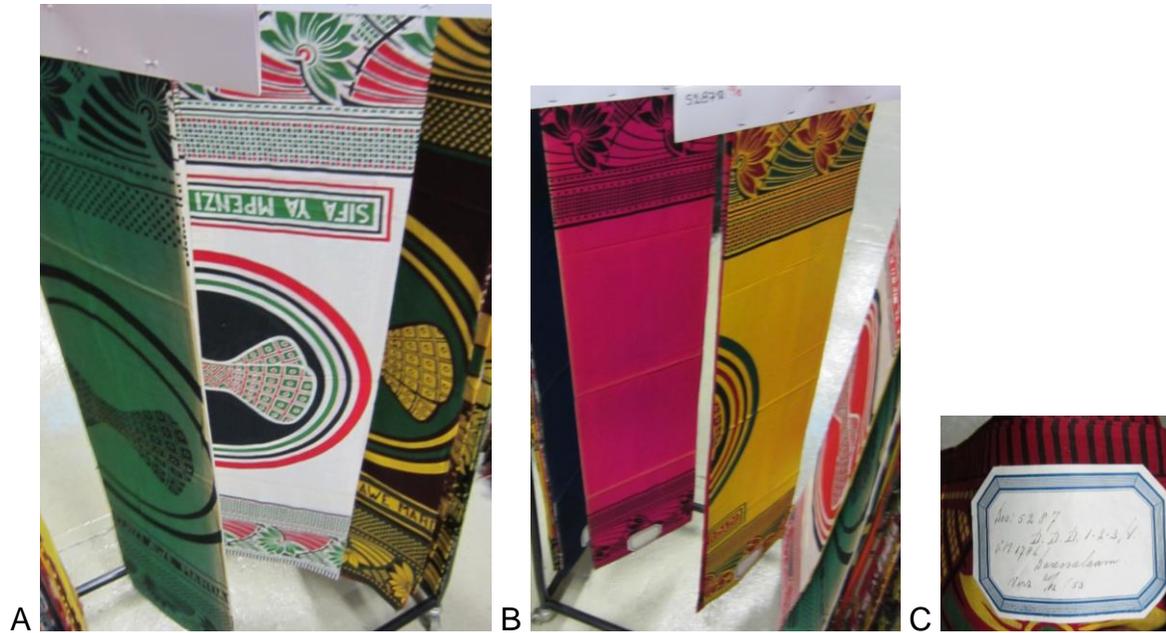


Figure 7-64. Vlisco machine-printed *kanga* in twenty colorways between 20 December 1953 and 1956, Dar es Salaam. Note bowtie and abstracted floral design with continuous borders and Roman-script Swahili text. “The characteristics of a lover should be stylish.” #5287, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photographs by James Ryan.



Figure 7-65. Vlisco machine-printed *kanga* in six colorways between 18 October 1955 and 1958, Mombasa. Note the all-over tangering flower design, the intricate, compound borders and Arabic-script Swahili text. #5028, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photographs by James Ryan.

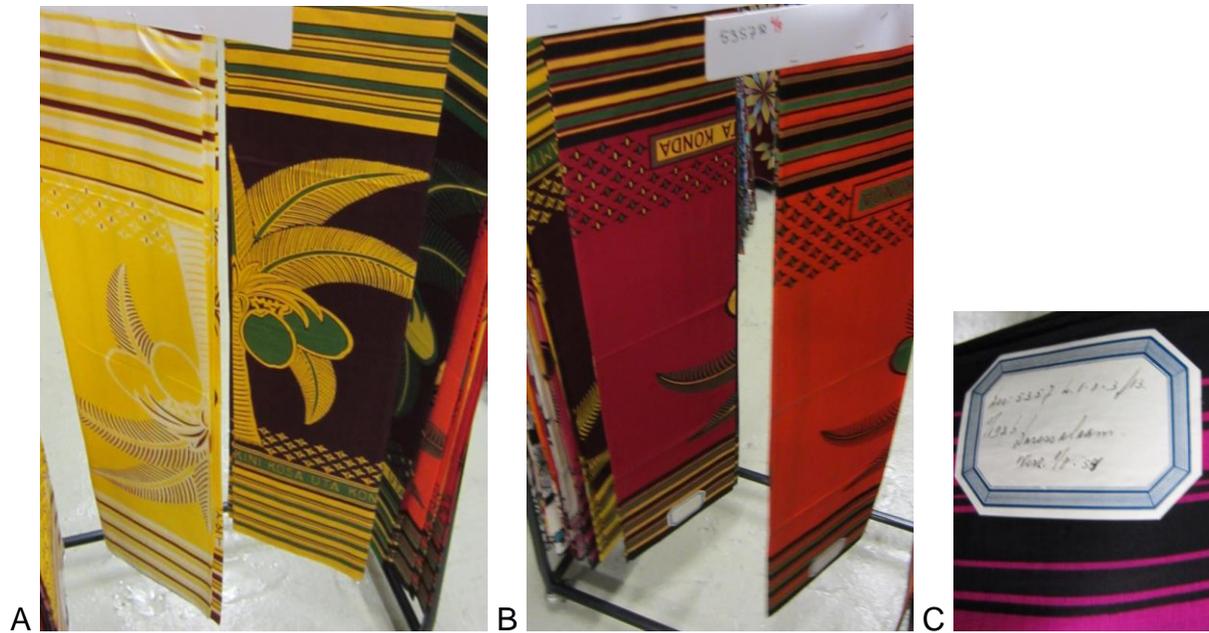


Figure 7-66. Vlisco machine-printed *kanga* in ten colorways between 1 August 1954 and 1957, Dar es Salaam. Note the coconut tree design with continuous, striped borders and Roman-script Swahili text. “Sweet, sweet, if you miss me, you will grow skinny.” #5357, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photographs by James Ryan.



Figure 7-67. Vlisco machine-printed *kanga* in eleven colorways between 11 April 1954 and 1958, Dar es Salaam. Note the postcard, tangerine flower border and Roman-script Swahili text. “My love is coming on a flying ship.” #5331, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photographs by James Ryan.

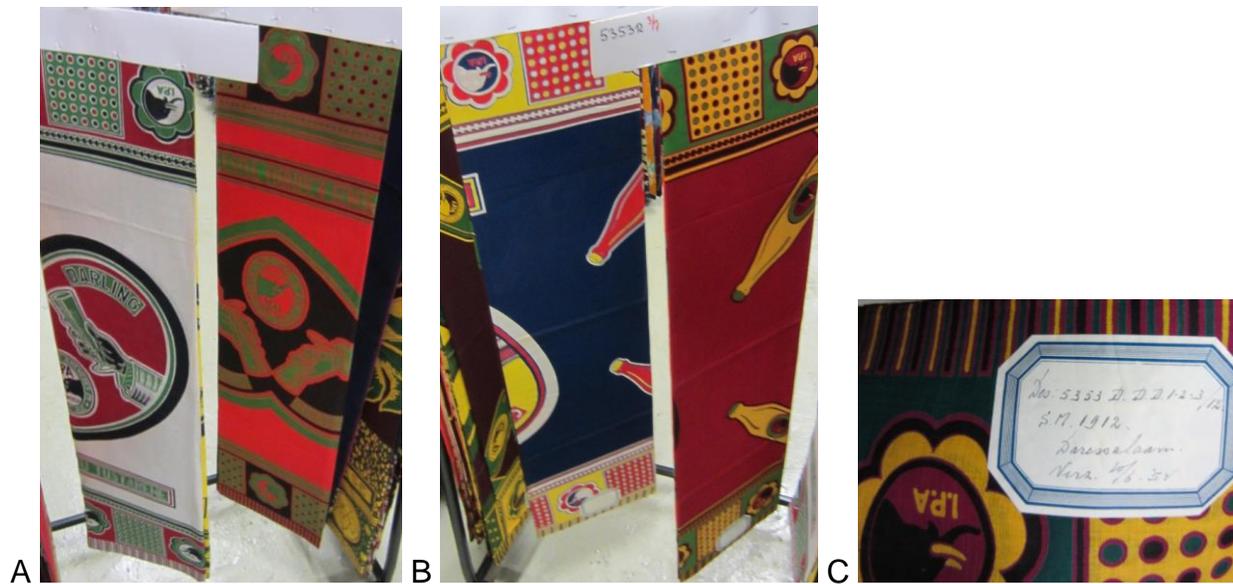


Figure 7-68. Advertising *kanga*, machine-printed by Vlisco in thirteen colorways for East African Brewers. Ltd., between 10 June 1954 and 1958, Dar es Salaam. Note the company's elephant logo and product throughout, use of English "Cheerio Darling" within the central heart motif, and Roman-script Swahili text. "My love, welcome, let us have a good time together." #5353, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photographs by James Ryan.



Figure 7-69. Christmas *kanga*, machine-printed by Vlisco in three colorways, 28 September 1955, Zanzibar and Dar es Salaam. Note the Christmas tree and small "cakes" throughout ground, use of English "Christmas Greetings" and Roman-script Swahili text. "A carpenter must saw slowly so that he does not cut his finger." #5419, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photographs by James Ryan.



Figure 7-70. Commemorative *kanga*, produced on the occasion of Princess Margaret's visit, machine-printed in eight colorways in 1956 by Vlisco, likely designed by Jivan Hirji, Dar es Salaam. Note the English text, "Welcome Princess Margaret" in place of Swahili text. #5500, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photographs by James Ryan.



Figure 7-71. Commemorative *kanga*, produced on the occasion of Princess Margaret's visit, machine-printed in three colorways in 1956 by Vlisco, likely distributed by Smith Mackenzie, Zanzibar and Mombasa. Note the Roman-script Swahili text. "Welcome to Unguja, visitor." #5507, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photographs by James Ryan.



Figure 7-72. Vlisco machine-printed *kanga* in seventeen colorways between 25 February 1958 and 1962, Dar es Salaam. Note the cross-and-x shape, the striped border, and the Roman-script Swahili text. “Greetings to your neighbors.” #5588, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photographs by James Ryan.

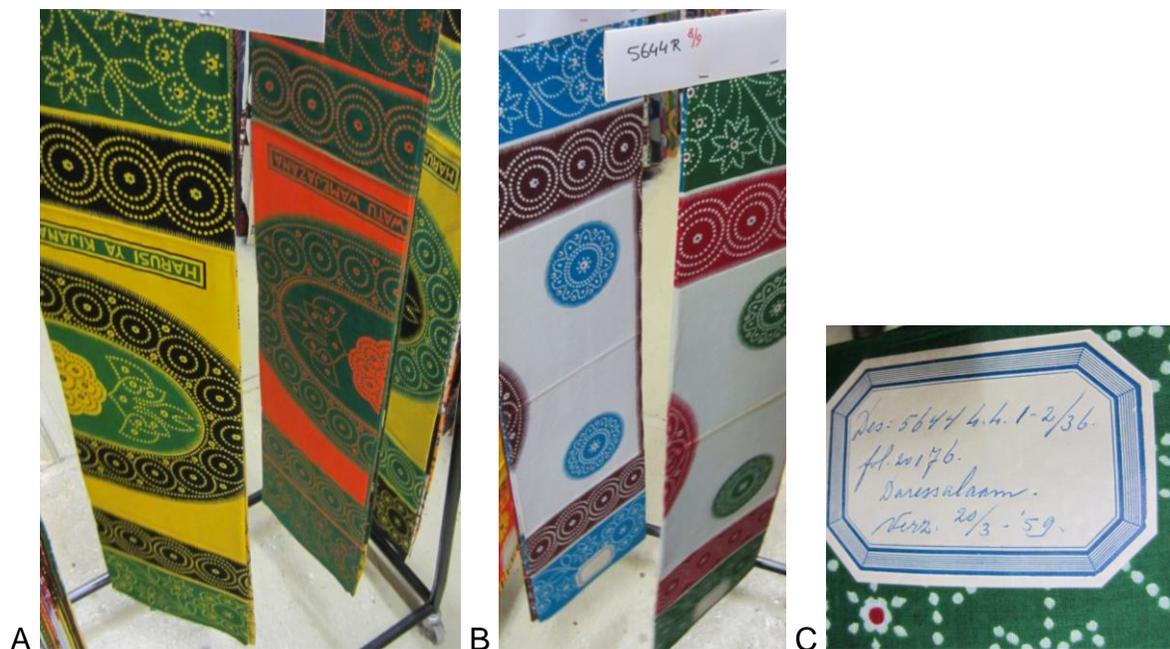


Figure 7-73. Vlisco machine-printed *kanga* in nineteen colorways between 20 March 1959 and 1961, Dar es Salaam. Note the geometric and floral designs akin to *bandhani* and Roman-script Swahili text. “The wedding of our son is crowded.” #5644, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photographs by James Ryan.



Figure 7-74. Early independence-themed *kanga*, machine-printed by Vlisco in three colorways, 5 May 1953, Dar es Salaam. Note the giraffe motif and Roman-script Swahili text. “Today is joyous for our Tanganyika.” #5185, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photographs by James Ryan.

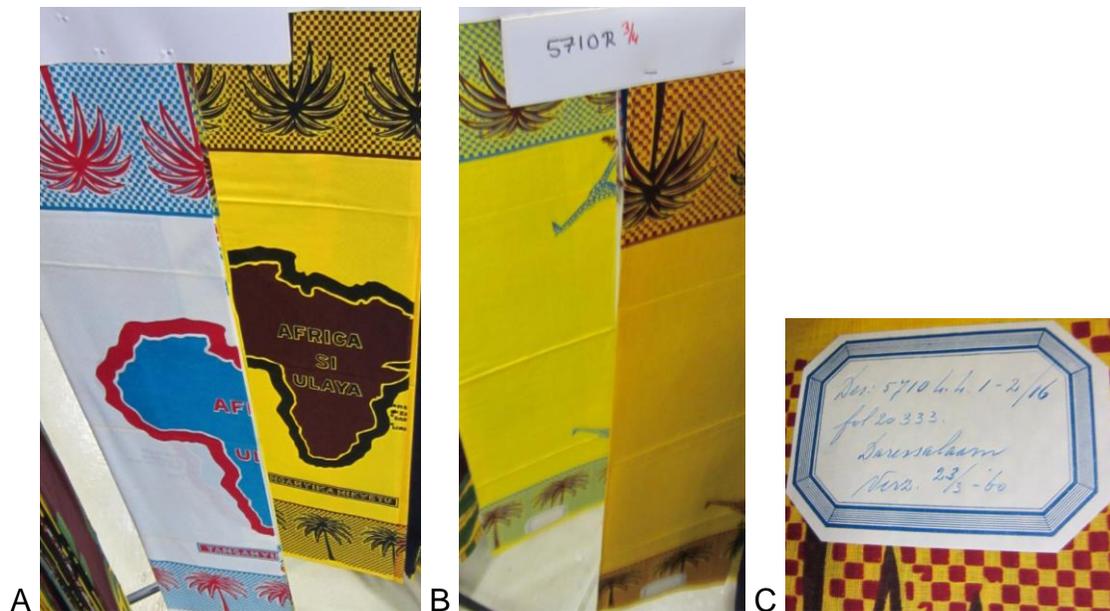


Figure 7-75. Independence-themed *kanga*, machine-printed by Vlisco in eight colorways, 23 March 1960, Dar es Salaam. Note the map of Africa with the Swahili, *Afrika si Ulaya*, which translates to “Africa is not Europe,” the giraffe motif and Roman-script Swahili text. “Tanganyika is ours.” #5710, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photographs by James Ryan.



Figure 7-76. Independence-themed cloth, machine-printed by Vlisco with photo of Bibi Tit Mohammed, 5 July 1960, Dar es Salaam. The Roman-script Swahili word, *Uhuru*, translates to “Independence.” #5737, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photographs by James Ryan.

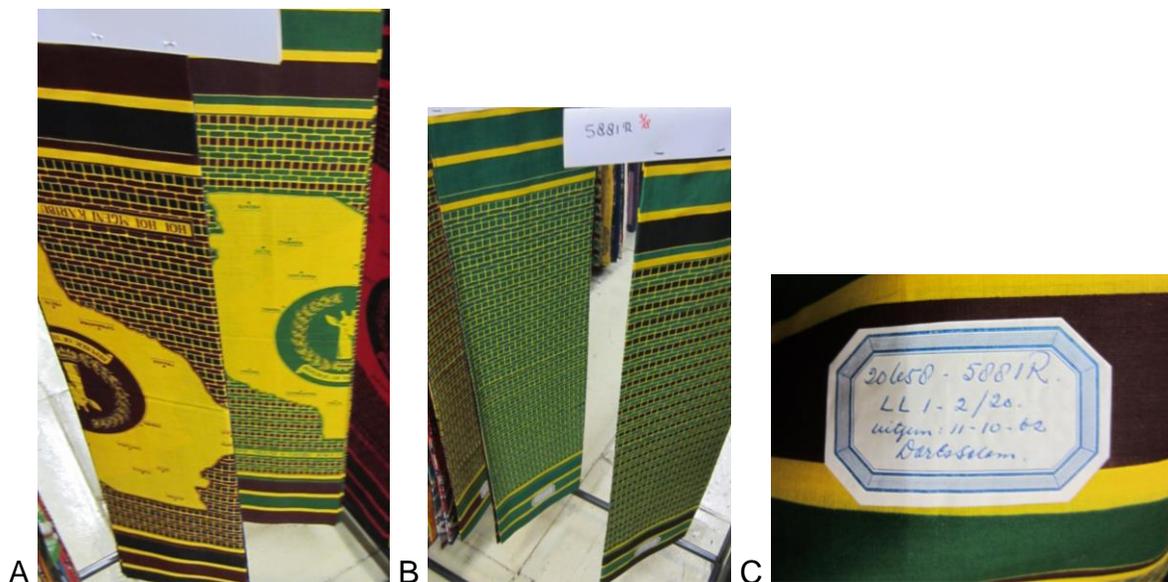


Figure 7-77. Independence-themed *kanga*, machine-printed by Vlisco in thirteen colorways between 11 October 1962 and 1963, Dar es Salaam. Note the map of Tanganyika with towns indicated and the Roman-script Swahili text. “Hello visitor, welcome to our Republic of Tanganyika.” #5881, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photographs by James Ryan.

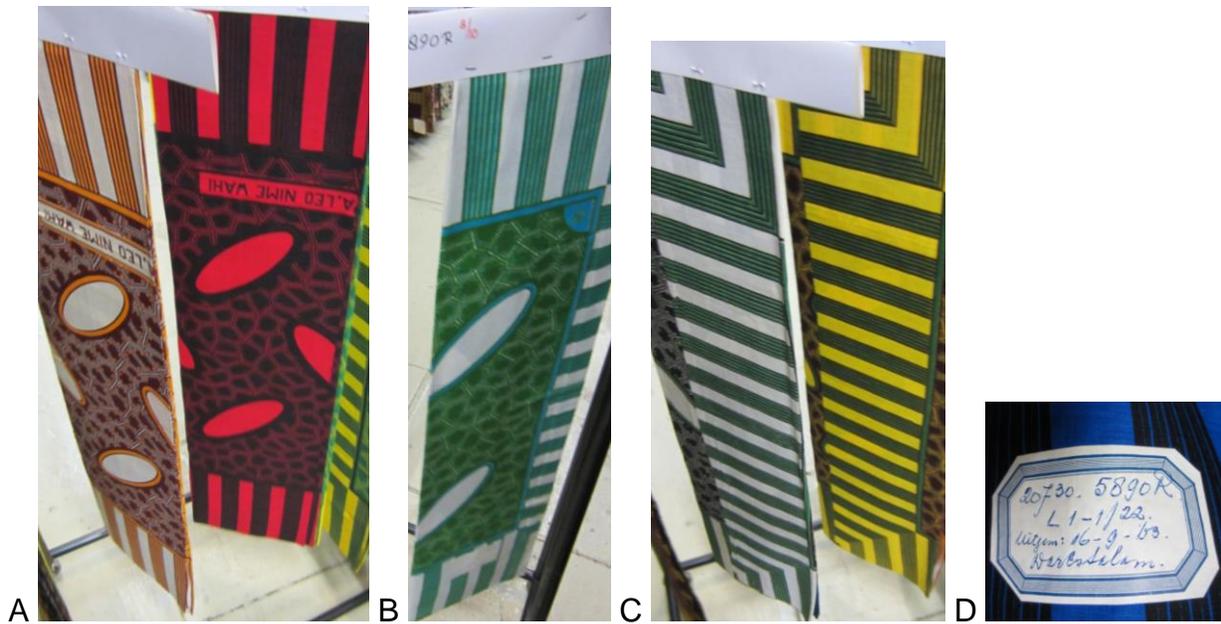


Figure 7-78. Vlisco machine-printed *kanga* in eighteen colorways between 16 September 1963 and 1968, Dar es Salaam, Mombasa, Madagascar. Note the all-over abstract design, striped border, Hussein Jiwan Hirji monogram, and Roman-script Swahili text. “Late, late, today I have never been late.” #5890, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photographs by James Ryan.



Figure 7-79. Vlisco machine-printed *kanga* in twenty-five colorways between 21 February 1964 and 1969, Dar es Salaam, Marseille. Note the paisley motifs, the integrated border, similarity to batik, and Roman-script Swahili text. “Shoulder to shoulder, let us not separate my relatives.” #5907, Vlisco Museum, Helmond, The Netherlands. Photographs by James Ryan.



A



B

Figure 7-80. *Kanga* design by K. G. Peera, ca. mid-1960s, Zanzibar/Dar es Salaam. A) Front, showing design and notations. Photograph by the British Museum. B) Back, showing Design No. 34 and Sketch No. 205. Photograph by James Ryan. 2012,2026.3, Collection of the British Museum, Donated by James and MacKenzie Ryan. © Trustees of the British Museum.



A



B

Figure 7-81. *Kanga* design by K. G. Peera, ca. mid-1960s, Zanzibar/Dar es Salaam. A) Entire design with attached instructions written in Gujarati. Photograph by the British Museum. B) Detail, showing selvage edge, “REG. DESIGN FOR K. G. PEERA, (MIWANIMDOGO) C. ITOH KHANGA.” Photograph by James Ryan. 2012,2026.1, Collection of the British Museum, Donated by James and MacKenzie Ryan. © Trustees of the British Museum.



Figure 7-82. *Kanga* designed by Hashim A. Nakanoga on the occasion of the University of Dar es Salaam's 50th anniversary, 2011, Dar es Salaam. Roman-script Swahili text: "Increasing knowledge, building the future, 1961-2011." Collection of James and MacKenzie Ryan. Photograph by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.



Figure 7-83. Nkrumah Hall at the University of Dar es Salaam, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Photograph by Alexander Landfair.



Figure 7-84. *Kanga* designed by Hashim A. Nakanoga, for sale at the University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, 30 October 2011. Photograph by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.



Figure 7-85. *Kanga* design with crescent and star, mosque, and rose water sprinkler bottle motifs, possibly by Furahi Kasika, Jr. Acquired 9 November 2011 at MeTL Textile Design offices, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Collection of James and MacKenzie Ryan. Photograph by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.



Figure 7-86. Mosque *kanga* design in production at Friendship Textile Mill (*Urafiki*), Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, 20 October 2011. Designed by Furahi Kasika, Jr. Photograph by James Ryan.



Figure 7-87. Woman wearing mosque *kanga*, designed by Furahi Kasika, Jr., Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, 20 October 2011. Photograph by Achilles Mujunangoma Bufure.



Figure 7-88. *Kanga* and its electronic design by Vijay Patankar, MeTL Textile Design office, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, 9 November 2011. Photograph by MacKenzie Moon Ryan.

CHAPTER 8 CONCLUSION

This project has attempted to shed light on the design and manufacturing history of *kanga* textiles in Zanzibar and Dar es Salaam in the colonial era. By focusing on one particular textile genre, popular throughout east Africa, the story of its creation, design, and manufacture has included consumers, designers, sellers, distributors, and manufacturers the world over. This research has sought to chronicle the emergence of *kanga* textiles and the global networks of players who contributed to its manufacture and trade in the colonial era. Prior to this study, this textile genre's history has been approximate at best, at odds with *kanga*'s continuous popularity and ubiquitous nature throughout the region.

This study has found that *kanga* textiles emerged from a lineage of industrially woven cotton textile precursors, including the plain white *merikani*, the indigo-dyed *kaniki*, and printed *leso* or handkerchiefs imported from around the world. The sewn garment *leso ya kushona* stimulated tastes in printed cloth worn as wrap garments by east African women. Indonesian wax batik designs introduced by Dutch printers, Indian woodblock and tie-dye motifs introduced by Indian immigrants to east Africa, and basic hand-stamped decorations made by east African women all combined to create the earliest bordered *kanga* textiles by 1886. Text was variously included; it was printed in Arabic-script Swahili from the earliest known examples, and Roman-script Swahili text appeared at least by 1910. The two scripts co-existed until the late 1950s, when Roman-script Swahili text finally supplanted Arabic-script Swahili text for the printed phrases on *kanga* textiles.

My research also established that throughout the colonial era in Zanzibar and Dar es Salaam, *kanga* textiles were printed mainly by Dutch, British, and Japanese manufacturers, with British Indian (later Indian) and East Asian competitors variously involved. These manufacturers were united with east African consumers through a network including German, British, and Japanese merchant converters and Indian designers and sellers in Zanzibar, Dar es Salaam, and Mombasa. Designs continued to mine the earliest inspirational sources, and *kanga* textiles have been the subject of more variations on established themes than wholesale shifts in design. Three approaches to *kanga* composition exist, with compounded, continuous, or integrated borders. New themes, beyond the conventional floral, geometric, or commodity designs, were pioneered in the 1930s with commemorative *kanga*, the 1950s with advertising *kanga*, and the 1960s with political *kanga*.

Much more of this textile's story is yet to be written, including the effects of Tanzania's socialist policies, colloquially known as *Ujamaa*, from 1967 and the nationalization of the Tanzanian textile industry (NATEX) in 1975. Imported *kanga* were welcomed again after 1985, and *kanga* textiles have been manufactured and imported by various industrialized nations, with local production in Tanzania struggling to keep pace. Today, textile-related degree programs are being offered to train a new generation of textile professionals.¹ The combination of textile degree programs, along

¹ The Vocational Education and Training Authority (VETA) in Chang'ombe, Dar es Salaam, began offering a two-year diploma course in Textile and Fashion Design in fall 2009, which teaches students about the textile industry and equips them with the necessary practical skills to gain employment in sector. Beginning in fall 2011, the College of Engineering and Technology (CoET) at the University of Dar es Salaam began offering a Bachelor of Science in Textile Engineering and another in Textile Design and Technologies. Both the VETA diploma and the UDSM programs were founded with the support of the Tanzania Gatsby Trust. Before the addition of these degrees, textile surface design was taught in the Department of Fine and Performing Arts at the University of Dar es Salaam and at the Bagamoyo College of Arts, but no other specific preparation was offered to train textile professionals.

with cotton cultivation, aims to retain Tanzanian-grown cotton for domestic production and consumption. The current institutionalizing of *kanga* design, production, and related clothing can be seen as an attempt to save the struggling interrelated fields of cotton cultivation, cloth production, and clothing manufacture in Tanzania. Acclaimed as east African, *kanga* textiles are today being hailed as the savior to the Tanzanian cotton, cloth, and clothing industry.

Kanga textiles have been used as the raw material for wrapped and tailored garments by east African women since their emergence and today are gaining wider repute as fashionable—and distinctly east African—cloths. Like the cloths' printed designs, each sewn *kanga* clothing style draws upon globally circulating forces that particularly resonate with east African tastes and desires in each period. Around 1900, sewn *kanga* garments were inspired by upper class Omani fashions of the day. In the mid-1960s, the style of *kanga*-tailored garments was informed by national independence movements and the “Black is Beautiful” movement, which corresponded with the Civil Rights movement in the United States.² Today, Dar es Salaam is in the midst of a burgeoning professional fashion world, modeled on designer houses, famed designers, and seasonal collections typical of international fashion houses. A few designers have been active since the 1970s, but most participants in the growing fashion industry based in Dar es Salaam are from a younger generation, only active in the last decade. Many of these designers are committed to using locally popular cloths, such as *kanga*, which they believe marks them and their designs as distinctly east

² Klytus Smith, *The Harlem Cultural/Political Movements, 1960-1970: from Malcolm X to “Black is Beautiful”* (New York: Gumbs and Thomas Publishers, 1995). Garments made from the all-over patterned *kitenge* or wax-print were more common in the United States. Judith von D. Miller, “Khanga, Kikoy and Kitenge,” in *Art in East Africa: A Guide to Contemporary Art* (London: Frederick Muller, 1975), 57.

African in character. Since 2008, Dar es Salaam has hosted an annual fashion week, modeled on the array of fashion weeks in cities across the globe. To date, Swahili Fashion Week has taken place four times, showing collections from designers from across the larger region of east Africa.³ This emerging professional fashion scene in Dar es Salaam can best be understood by turning to three individual designers: Ailinda Sawe, Kemi Kalikawe, and Vida Mahimbo.

Ailinda Sawe represents the older, established generation of fashion designers in Dar es Salaam. Born in the early 1950s, Sawe's grandfather was a tailor and she learned to sew from her mother and excelled at needlework in primary school; later she earned a higher diploma at Manchester Polytechnic (now Manchester Metropolitan University).⁴ She has been active since the 1970s and focuses on Tanzanian clients who seek tradition-based garments. She is the proprietor of *Afrika Sana*, a boutique for her fashion designs and accessories that opened in 1993. In 2001 along with her husband Ndesumbuka Merinyo, she undertook extensive research on the traditional modes of dress of dozens of ethnic groups across Tanzania, and incorporates aspects of this research into her fashion designs to better meet the desires of her clientele. Through her designs, she seeks to display the national character of Tanzania, and she

³ Furthermore, *kanga* textiles are also becoming more visible outside of east Africa through their use in the ready-to-wear collections of international fashion designers. Clothing lines such as Suno (New York), Lalesso (Cape Town), Chichia (London), and Mremeaux (Toronto) have consciously and successfully utilized *kanga* textiles in their garments, and as such, are spreading knowledge about these textiles to their clients. Through their increased appearance in the West, *kanga* textiles are becoming internationally associated with east Africa while simultaneously maintaining local importance regionally.

⁴ Ailinda Sawe, interview by author, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, 23 November 2011.

is often commissioned to design uniforms for staff and garments for others representing Tanzania.⁵

Sawe also takes commissions for wedding dresses, dresses for kitchen parties (equivalent to western bridal showers) and send-off parties (a pre-wedding celebration which marks the bride leaving her family to join her husband's). In these designs, Sawe combines imported fabrics (satins, polyesters, tulle, and cottons in solids) with fabrics that connote African designs (*kanga*, *kitenge*, batik, tie-and-dye, etc.). Through the combination of fabrics, Sawe adroitly blends clothing styles particular to east Africa but drawing on the vocabulary of international designs. She designs for men and women alike, and conceives of runway looks holistically: her designs include jewelry and accessories, including bags, hats, headbands and headwraps. Sawe employs ten tailors (*fundi* in Swahili) in her workshop, who construct garments based on her designs. She also employs a handful of workers at her boutique in the Sinza area of Dar es Salaam. Sawe's slogan—Dressing the Nation—suggests both her aim and her approach to fashion design.

Kemi Kalikawe represents one branch of the younger, up-and-coming generation of fashion designers in Dar es Salaam. She was born in the early 1980s is self-taught, though she has a degree in interior design from a Kenyan university. Her designs appeal to a younger target market in Tanzania, especially patrons seeking Western-style garments utilizing east African fabrics. She strives to integrate local fabrics into garments that transcend Tanzania and conceived uses of African garments. For instance, Kalikawe integrates flairs of brightly colored and patterned *kanga* or *kitenge*

⁵ Sawe, interview, 23 November 2011.

into professional business attire, or melds east African cloth with imported lace, polyester, satin, or other fabrics to create cocktail dresses. Her tailored garments tend to attract affluent women in their twenties and thirties. Kalikawe employs a handful of *fundi* or tailors to construct her garments after she completes the designs.

Kalikawe founded Naledi Fashion House in 2008, which accepts interns and others seeking experience in fashion design. Most recently, Kalikawe launched the Naledi Fashion Institute in 2011, an educational organization that trains a range of fashion professionals, including designers, illustrators, journalists, photographers, stylists, among others. Her belief is that the professional fashion scene in Dar es Salaam must be nurtured from the ground up, and she strives to use her experience, expertise, and network to help others hone their interest in the fashion world through education and experience.⁶

Vida Mahimbo represents another branch of the younger, up-and-coming generation of fashion designers in Dar es Salaam. Mahimbo was also born in the 1980s and studied business management at the University of Dar es Salaam. Whereas Kalikawe is focused on developing the fashion scene in Dar from the bottom up, Mahimbo instead sets her sights on the international fashion world. Her aim is to create comfortable and flattering styles for real women's bodies, by celebrating curves rather than disguising them. She has three collections: *Kanga Jeans*, *Vida Mahimbo* and *UHURU*. All three brands cater to a high-end market; Mahimbo manufactures her garments in Italy under the Karisma Fashion Group, "mixing Italian technology with African talent," and the resulting quality is substantially higher than locally produced

⁶ Kemi Kalikawe, interview by author, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, 12 November 2010, 13 October 2011, and 14 December 2011.

garments. She has boutiques in the exclusive Slipway shopping center in Mvasani Peninsula of Dar es Salaam and in Stonetown, Zanzibar, which further underscores her affluent and often international target market.

The Vida Mahimbo brand focuses on elite safari or resort wear. This line encompassing jersey cotton dresses, swim suits, and screen-printed feminine tee-shirts and tank tops with African and east African motif, including abstracted women carrying pots, Maasai warriors, hyenas, and the African continent. Her *Kanga Jeans* brand stemmed from a desire to “develop a pair of jeans that would combine the needs of Europe and Africa.”⁷ The jeans and shorts feature prints common to *kanga* textiles printed on colored denim. *UHURU* is a brand of men’s and women’s tee shirts founded in conjunction with fellow Dar es Salaam-based designer Ally Rehmtullah.⁸ The brand commemorates fifty years of Tanzanian independence, which was celebrated in December 2011 (*Uhuru* is Swahili for independence). Mahimbo showcased at Africa Fashion Week in New York in July 2011, and strives to become known internationally, bringing east African prints and motifs to a global audience through her fashion designs.

Through these brief introductions to three Dar es Salaam-based designers, three separate goals in the emerging professional fashion scene in Tanzania can be discerned: tradition-based garments, blending of Western cuts with east African fabrics, and branding east African fabrics and motifs to international audiences. Ailinda Sawe is inward looking: she takes her inspiration from national and cultural designs and clothing traditions, and seeks to popularize regional styles by offering clients a modern twist on

⁷ Vida Mahimbo, interview by author, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, 8 October 2011.

⁸ Ally Rehmtullah, interview by author, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, 26 September 2011.

tradition-based garments. Kemi Kalikawe takes inspiration from Western cuts but seeks to ground them in Tanzania by using east African fabrics. In this way, she seeks to open new realms for *kanga*, introducing these inexpensive fabrics to professional and cocktail attire. Vida Mahimbo, finally, represents designers seeking international appeal, by marketing garments, in quality and style in line with Western expectations, but making use of east African prints and motifs. Fifty designers from across east Africa showcased at the fourth annual Swahili Fashion Week in November 2011, proving these three professional fashion designers are just a glimpse of the creative talent in east African fashion active today. By looking to these three fashion designers, differing motivations, aspirations, and use of *kanga* in their designs are can be clearly seen in the emerging professional fashion scene in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

This study has examined the global forces and variety of players involved in the creation, design, and manufacture of a particular textile genre, *kanga*, popular throughout east Africa. The history of *kanga* textiles brings together a wide range of players, who have worked together and competed to create, market, sell, and consume this industrially manufactured textile. I have illustrated how this regionally popular cloth, often worn as wrap garments by east African women, actually evolved from expanding trade networks and an enlarging global economy centered in nineteenth-century Zanzibar. Throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the manufacture and design of these textiles continued to be affected by both global and local politics. Based on colonial government reports, archival materials, published travelogues, import statistics, turn-of-the-century studio photographs, interviews, hand-drawn designs, dozens of sample pattern books and thousands of extant *kanga* textiles, I have argued

that the creation of this textile genre can only be attributed to the interactions between a global network of players, who converged in Zanzibar in the nineteenth century and subsequently centered in Dar es Salaam following World War I.

The broader aim of this project is to locate cultural and economic networks and examine their effect on a regionally popular commodity. Rather than focusing on the cultural specificity of this textile genre, or the meaning invested in the cloth through use, this study has explored the convergence of interests that led to the creation and subsequent manufacture of this textile genre in the colonial era—in essence, the history of the cloth up until the moment of purchase by the final consumer, rather than the life of the cloth following that purchase. As this dissertation has argued, many disparate groups worked together, and competed with one another, to create and subsequently manufacture these textiles to capture the market in fashionable cloth consumption across east Africa during the colonial era.

Kanga textiles, in their history as well as visual impact, reproduce traces of the various players involved in their creation and subsequent manufacture. As political realities changed, so too did demands for graphic representations printed on these inexpensive, fashionable textiles. By emphasizing the changing dynamics of not only the historical moment but also the convergence of players involved in the *kanga* trade, this dissertation has posited that *kanga* textiles are at once a reflection of the global forces that competed to capture the market for this east African textile genre during the colonial era. As the primary research presented in this work has demonstrated, the history of this commodity points to global competition played out first in Zanzibar and subsequently in Dar es Salaam in women's fashionable consumption.

This dissertation has shown how a printed cotton textile encountered agents, designs, manufacturers and consumers from across the globe. Research on this regionally popular textile's history brings into sharp focus the global nature of trade, from Western Europe to Japan, Indonesia to east Africa and India to the United States. This project on the design and manufacturing history of *kanga* textiles encapsulates the interconnected nature of economies, commodities, design, and fashion.

APPENDIX A
DISCUSSION OF KANGA TEXTILES IN EARLY TWENTIETH-CENTURY BRITISH
COLONIAL TRADE REPORTS

Report for the Year 1895 (Zanzibar):

Another important branch of this trade is in connection with what are known in the local market as “Kangas,” printed handkerchiefs measuring about 50 by 72 inches, which form the principal garments of native women. At one time a large business was done in these with both Manchester and Glasgow, the goods received being roller-printed and good in quality and pattern, but of recent years a demand has set in for a cheaper article, and it has been met by the import by German firms of a common block-printed “Kanga,” made in Holland, which has almost entirely superseded the superior and more expensive English variety, although the cloth itself is still supplied from Manchester. The printing of these handkerchiefs is in Holland performed by hand by a very cheap class of labour, consisting chiefly of old women and children, and Dutch manufacturers are willing to supply different patterns in comparatively small quantities, whereas the only business house in Great Britain that has, as far as is known, been approached with a view to taking up this particular line, has only been willing to do so on the understanding that merchants here would order such large quantities of each variety that the latter were afraid that they would be unable to dispose of them, and therefore declined the offer. Whether English could compete with Dutch labour at the price at which these goods are sold is a question that can only be decided at home, but there is little doubt that it is a matter well worth the serious consideration of the British manufacturer, more especially as the trade is one which is bound to increase with the extension of civilization into the interior of Africa. The enclosed samples will be sufficient to show the class of article which is mostly in demand.*

*Forwarded to Manchester Chamber of Commerce.¹

Enough has been said in the foregoing pages to show that British manufacturers are slowly but surely losing ground in the East African markets. [It may be contested, and with a certain amount of truth, that as her products have not been rejected on the score of quality, her commercial position is unassailed, but this is an argument which, however satisfactory it may be in itself, will hardly compensate the British exporter for his direct loss of profits. The demand—except in a few instances, such as

¹ “Zanzibar: Report for the Year 1895 on the Trade of Zanzibar,” by A. H. Hardinge, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports on Trade and Finance*, No. 1765 (London: Harrison and Sons, 1896), 9-10. Other textiles are also described at length, including *Americani*, *Membai*, *Gumpty*, *Hindessa*, *Madduf*, *Kaniki*, *Bandera*, *cambric*, *twill*, *Vilemba*, and *Vikoi*. See “Report for the Year 1895 on the Trade of Zanzibar,” 8-10.

“Americani,” which has obtained so firm a footing in certain portions of East Africa that it cannot be ousted even by financial considerations—is for, above all, a cheap article.] Indeed, there are in all probability few markets in the world which so consistently import the cheapest obtainable class of goods as that of Zanzibar, and unless the British manufacturer will come down from his pedestal and produce an article, as his foreign competitors do, that will meet the practical requirements of the buyers, it is likely that a trade which might be fairly profitable to him will drop more and more into other hands. There is another point also, apart from any question of price, in which British trade suffers by comparison with our foreign rivals, and that is the enterprise and care which are necessary to obtain a hold on this market, and when once obtained, to keep it. The mercantile firms of Zanzibar are constantly receiving from foreign manufacturers elaborate foreign sample and price lists, from which they can select the particular article which they consider will best meet the native fancy, but the British exporter apparently considers that no advertisement is necessary, for English houses in Zanzibar seldom receive any particulars of what he is prepared to offer. It appears also to be a popular idea that goods sent out from England will find a ready sale, without regard to the form in which they arrive. This is a complete error, for the native is a very particular person indeed; he wants his coil of brass wire to be in one complete length, and so many coils in a case; there must be exactly the same number of yards in every piece of cloth; each bar of soap should cut into an equal number of equal pieces. These details may appear to be unworthy of consideration, but it is just a careful observation of some of these small points that has helped foreign trade to succeed where British trade has failed.²

Report for the Year 1896 (Zanzibar):

Piece-goods continue to hold the first place of all articles imported to Zanzibar, and enormously exceed (as was the case in the year 1895) in import value any other class of goods. Under this heading come “*kangas*,” or printed handkerchiefs, which form the principal dress of Swahili women, and of the trade in these articles Germany practically holds the monopoly. Those made in England are machine-printed, and much more expensive than those imported by German firms, which are block-printed in Holland. With this report is sent a sample* of the above, with a device printed upon it representing the firing of one of Her Majesty’s ships upon the Sultan’s palace, advantage having been taken of this incident to enhance the value of the article.

*Sent to Manchester Chamber of Commerce.³

² “Zanzibar: Report for the Year 1895 on the Trade of Zanzibar,” 12-13.

³ “Zanzibar: Report for the Year 1896 on the Trade of Zanzibar,” by A. H. Hardinge, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports on Trade and Finance*, No. 1961 (London: Harrison and Sons, 1897), 8-9. The other

Report for the Year 1897 (Zanzibar):

Another important branch of the piece-goods trade is in connection with printed cotton handkerchiefs, or "*kangas*," measuring about 50 by 72 inches, two of which, with a scarf round the head, constitute the ordinary dress of a Swahili woman. The reasons that these are supplied, as they are, almost entirely from Continental countries, is that in England, where the printing process is effected by means of somewhat expensive machinery, it is found that the work cannot be carried on at a profit unless a considerable number of handkerchiefs, perhaps 3,000 or 4,000 of each pattern are disposed of, whereas in Holland, where a system of block printing by hand is adopted, a much greater variety of pattern can be produced at comparatively little extra cost. The work is in the latter case undoubtedly inferior, but that is a detail which, so long as she can be dressed in the latest fashion, the native lady is quite prepared to overlook. The cloth which these handkerchiefs are made is still supplied from Manchester, and perhaps some cheaper system of printing may yet be devised there which will enable the British manufacturer to recover this trade from his Dutch competitor. Two of the latest modes in "*kangas*"* are forwarded herewith, but it must not be supposed that a woman with any proper respect for herself or for her family will be seen in these patterns in three months' time. Nothing but an intimate knowledge of the local market can determine what designs are most likely to meet the popular taste.

*Sent to Association of Chambers of Commerce.⁴

Report for the Year 1898 (Zanzibar):

The supply of "*kangas*" (the printed cotton handkerchiefs worn by native women) has been confined, as heretofore, almost exclusively to Holland; the British manufacturers are apparently able to compete with the Dutch as far as their prices are concerned, but, owing to more expensive methods of printing, require such large numbers to be taken of each separate design that importers, to avoid the risk of having a considerable portion of their

cotton piece goods mentioned are: American and English grey cotton sheetings, superior American grey cotton drill and the corresponding English type; other piece goods mostly received from Great Britain: white shirtings "*Vikoi*" or loincloths, Muscat scarves, white drill, Khaki drill, Khaki flannel and flannelette, cricketing flannels, tweeds, canvas, and Turkey-red twills, and from Bombay: gunny bags and indigo-dyed cottons or Kaniki. See "Report for the Year 1896 on the Trade of Zanzibar," 8-10.

⁴ "Zanzibar: Report for the Year 1897 on the Trade and Commerce of Zanzibar," by Cave, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports: Africa*, No. 2129 (London: Printed for His Majesty's Stationary Office by Harrison and Sons, 1898), 14.

stock left on their hands when the fashion changes, prefer to place their orders in Holland.⁵

Report for the Year 1899 (Zanzibar):

A very large trade continues in the printed cotton handkerchiefs worn by native women, and known as "*kangas*." The cost of printing these articles in Manchester is very great compared with those printed by the Dutch system. They are printed there on large copper rollers, which are, of course, not to be obtained in the first place by any means as cheaply as the wooden blocks used for the purpose in Holland, but if the latter are not required for use a second time no great loss is entailed. Owing to their more expensive methods of printing, British manufacturers require such large numbers to be taken of each separate design that they become a drug in the market. Manchester printers require an amount of about 12 bales (value from, say, 250*l.* to 265*l.*) of one design in *kangas*, whereas Dutch printers require only two bales of the same pattern. In spite of this advantage, and though in former years the bulk of *kangas* imported were of Dutch manufacture, yet in the past year fairly large quantities have arrived from Manchester, and patterns designed in Zanzibar have been approved in England and preferred to those which were block-printed in Holland on account of their being clearer and better. ... Before leaving the subject of these articles it may be mentioned that the native is greatly taken with any bright and striking device, and clearness in the printing of these cloths or handkerchiefs is a matter of great importance. In the year 1896 a fanciful picture of the bombardment of the Palace had a good sale along the coast, and the native is much taken with devices of bicycles, flags, &c.⁶

Report for the Year 1900 (Pemba):

There are many articles in general use here, to the supplying of which British firms might profitably devote their attention. Thus the trade in the gaily-coloured cotton cloths, locally known as *kangas*, in which the women array themselves, and for which there is an immense demand throughout East Africa, is at present wholly in the hands of German and French firms in Zanzibar. The secret of success in the *kanga* trade is to keep up a continual supply of novelties in the matter of design and colouring. The mode of procedure adopted by the German and French firms in Zanzibar is this: they cause hundreds of hand-coloured samples to be prepared at home, and

⁵ "Zanzibar: Report of the Year 1898 on the Trade and Commerce of Zanzibar," by Cave, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports: Africa*, No. 2351 (London: Printed for His Majesty's Stationary Office by Harrison and Sons, 1899), 14.

⁶ "Zanzibar: Report for the Year 1899 on the Trade and Commerce of Zanzibar," by Cave, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports: Africa*, No. 2520 (London: Printed for His Majesty's Stationary Office by Harrison and Sons, 1900), 10.

these they submit to the leading Indian dealers, who select therefrom such as they judge will be most likely to sell, and who, themselves, frequently suggest new patterns or modifications in the sample designs. The importing firms book orders from the Indian dealers for given quantities of the patterns selected or suggested by them, to be delivered within such period or at such intervals as may be arranged. The Indians take good care to let the native women know whenever fresh consignments of *kanga* are due, and the goods are placed on the market with the least possible delay after being landed. There is much rivalry amongst the women as to who shall soonest appear arrayed in the latest thing in *kangas*, which sell at a high premium during the early days of their novelty. Thus newly-arrived *kangas* will fetch as much as 4s. for the set of two, during, say, the first week, after which time the price declines, as the articles goes out of fashion, until a pair of the same cloths can be had eventually for 1s. 4d., which is the lowest figure at which the Indians sell them. Zanzibar is the Paris of East Africa, and the Zanzibar belles are admittedly the glass of fashion. To keep up their reputation for smart dressing involves the frequent purchase of new *kangas*, of which, I understand, a Zanzibar girl will possess as many as two to three dozen sets at one time. *Kangas* which have begun to be out of fashion in Zanzibar will in their turn, constitute the height of fashion in Pemba and on the coast, where they will sell at a premium until superseded by a later consignment from Zanzibar, and so on. I am informed that the bulk of the *kangas* imported into East Africa are printed in Holland. There appears to be no reason why British firms should not successfully make a bid for their share of the *kanga* trade, by adopting methods similar to those practised by German and French firms.⁷

Report for the Year 1900 (Zanzibar):

Another important branch of the piece-goods trade is in connection with "*kangas*," or printed cotton handkerchiefs, some 72 by 50 inches, two of which, together with a scarf round the head, constitute the every-day attire of native women. These are mostly imported from Holland, where the block-printing process is not only cheaper than the roller printing in the United Kingdom, but permits of a great variety of pattern at a comparatively slight increase of cost. A British firm has, however, recently succeeded in placing on the market a "*kanga*" which, while it is sold at the same price as the Dutch article, namely, 12 rs. 12 a. per korj of 20, is much superior to it in point of quality and finish; the difference between the two systems of printing can easily be seen in the two samples* which accompany this report; an order for 2,000 of these handkerchiefs of the same pattern is the lowest that the manufacturer can accept, but in view of the manifest

⁷ "Report on the Island of Pemba for the Year 1900," by O'Sullivan-Beare, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports: Africa*, No. 2653 (London: Printed for His Majesty's Stationary Office by Harrison and Sons, 1901), 15-16.

advantages which they possess over those foreign make, there should be no difficulty in disposing of that number, so long as the pattern and colour strike the public fancy. A few samples* are send herewith of handkerchiefs which command the readiest sale at the present moment; the most popular this year consist of fancy designs in red, black, or yellow, but it is quite possible that in a few months' time the fashion will have entirely changed, and it is, therefore, always advisable for manufacturers to submit their patterns to their local agents, who from their intimate knowledge of the market are in a better position to determine what particular designs are most likely to meet the popular taste.

*Sent to the Association of Chambers of Commerce.⁸

Report for the Year 1901 (Zanzibar):

Between 1900 and 1901, imports of Dutch *kanga* increased enormously.

Accounting for the surge, the trade report noted this:

It is difficult entirely to account for this enormous increase [from 4,500*l.* in 1900 to 50,006*l.* in 1901], though it is no doubt partly owing to the greater demand for native "Kanzus" and "*Kangas*," the ordinary dress of the Swahili men and women, who are by no means slow to take advantage of any improvement in their circumstances by (what is to them) an extravagant outlay on an improvement in their attire.⁹

Report for the Years 1901 and 1902 (Pemba):

Next in importance to rice, amongst Pemba imports, comes the item piece-goods, which term is to be understood as meaning chiefly the coloured cotton cloths, locally known as "*kangas*," which are worn by the women. During 1902 goods of that description were imported into Pemba to the value of over 15,000*l.*, being nearly 20 per cent. of the value of the total imports for the year.¹⁰

⁸ "Report for the Year 1900 on the Trade and Commerce of Zanzibar," by Cave, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports: Africa*, No. 2718 (London: Printed for His Majesty's Stationary Office by Harrison and Sons, 1901), 13.

⁹ "Report for the Year 1901 on the Trade and Commerce of Zanzibar," by Kestell-Cornish, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports: Africa*, No. 2893 (London: Printed for His Majesty's Stationary Office by Harrison and Sons, 1902), 5.

¹⁰ "Report for the Years 1901 and 1902 on the Island of Pemba," by O'Sullivan-Beare, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports: Africa*, No. 3031 (London: Printed for His Majesty's Stationary Office by Harrison and Sons, 1903), 4-5.

Report for the Year 1902 (Zanzibar):

In the statement of imports...it is hoped, may be of some use to the home manufacturer by assisting him to select the particular class of articles for which there is a demand on this market, but one branch of the import trade, namely, that in piece-goods, is of such importance that some further reference to it may perhaps be permitted. ... A considerable business is carried on in "Kangas," printed cotton handkerchiefs about 72 by 50 inches in size; ... but even if the printing can be more cheaply executed in other countries the material is usually supplied by British houses. Fashions in this particular article of clothing are continually changing, and the manufacturer should consult his local agent as to the colour and design which may be expected to strike the popular fancy.¹¹

In addition to fashions continually changing, trade reports make note of how particular the African consumer could be:

It cannot be too often pointed out that, to command a ready sale among the natives of East Africa, goods put on the local markets must, before all things, possess the quality of cheapness. The ordinary Swahili is a genial soul, of easy temperament; he lives from hand to mouth and has generally spent his income long before he has earned it, and consequently, when he finds himself under the disagreeable necessity of buying something, and particularly when that something is neither food nor raiment, he makes the cheapest selection that he can find. But he is also somewhat fanciful as to the way in which it is made up; his piece of cloth must fold into a certain number of equal lengths, his bar of soap must not flake and should be of a consistent size, the handkerchiefs in which his female relations are attired must, from their point of view if not from his, be of the latest fashion, and so on. These details could be obtained from local agents with an intimate knowledge of native requirements, and it is only by a strict attention to them, and by the production of an article which combines attractiveness with cheapness, that the British manufacturer can expect to maintain and improve his position in the East African market.¹²

Report from the Year 1903 (Zanzibar & Pemba):

¹¹ "Report for the Year 1902 on the Trade and Commerce of Zanzibar," by Cave, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports: Africa*, No. 3063 (London: Printed for His Majesty's Stationary Office by Harrison and Sons, 1903), 6-7.

¹² "Report for the Year 1902 on the Trade and Commerce of Zanzibar," by Cave, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports: Africa*, No. 3063 (London: Printed for His Majesty's Stationary Office by Harrison and Sons, 1903), 8.

[L]arge quantities of *kangas* (*i.e.*, large coloured kerchiefs which form the chief costume of the native women) are still hand printed in the Netherlands, and until British manufacturers can discover some means by which they can turn out smaller quantities than it at present pays them to do from expensive copper rollers, and so keep up with the constant demand for new patterns, they are not likely to succeed in ousting the Dutch manufacturers.¹³

Report for the Year 1904 (Zanzibar):

The importation of *kangas* is almost entirely in the hands of German firms, who have managed to obtain a hold over the Indian merchants partly by the (in some cases disastrous) means of allowing them very long credits, and partly by being able to quote them at lower rates, which they are in a position to do from the advantages they have with regard to shipping.¹⁴

...A good deal has been said in the past about the lack of enterprise shown by British firms as compared with their foreign (notably German) rivals, but it is I think clear, looking at the position British trade is shown by the accompanying statistic to hold, that however just this criticism may have been it is now, in so far as Zanzibar is concerned, unmerited.¹⁵

Report for the Year 1904 (Pemba):

Until within the past four years German held a monopoly of the trade in *kangas*, not only in Zanzibar and in Pemba, but also throughout East Africa generally. Most of the *kangas* shipped from Germany are printed in the Netherlands, where, it appears, the process of printing them can be most cheaply carried out. Lately, however, France has begun to compete with Germany in supplying these goods. A considerable proportion of the *kangas* imported into Pemba during the past four years had been shipped from Marseille; but, doubtless, the *kangas* of French origin had also been printed in the Netherlands. The trade in *kangas* is a matter well worth the attention of British manufacturers of cotton goods. It must be remembered that *kangas* are universally worn not only in Zanzibar and in Pemba, but also throughout British Central Africa, throughout all East Africa, in Uganda

¹³ "Report for the Year 1903 on the Trade and Commerce of Zanzibar and Pemba," by Sinclair, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports: Africa*, No. 3263 (London: Printed for His Majesty's Stationery Office by Harrison and Sons, 1904), 5.

¹⁴ "Report for the Year 1904 on the Trade and Commerce of Zanzibar," by Sinclair, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports*, No. 3517 (London: Printed for His Majesty's Stationery Office by Harrison and Sons, 1905), 4.

¹⁵ "Report for the Year 1904 on the Trade and Commerce of Zanzibar," Sinclair, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports*, No. 3517 (London: Printed for His Majesty's Stationery Office by Harrison and Sons, 1905), 8.

and on the West Coast as well. The aggregate value of the *kanga* trade throughout Africa must amount to a very large sum per annum.¹⁶

Report for the Year 1905 (Zanzibar):

It is clear from the customs statistics that, had it not been for an unfortunate outbreak of bubonic plague, the year 1905 would have been an exceptionally good one for Zanzibar from a trade point of view.¹⁷

The imports of cotton and woollen goods, principally the former, included under the heading of piece-goods, rose from 306,406*l.* in 1904 to 330,029*l.* in 1905, although there was a decrease of 12,000*l.* in the value of the unbleached cloth known as Americani. The value of *kangas* imported from the United Kingdom was 40,781*l.* as against 29,183*l.* in 1904, and from the Netherlands 29,422*l.* as against 27,400*l.* The import of kaniki from the United Kingdom also shows an increase, 28,018*l.* as against 22,729*l.* in 1903. Kaniki to the value of 13,409*l.* came from British India. Of the white shirting 12,648*l.* came from the United Kingdom and 4,522*l.* from British India. Cheap blankets came from the Netherlands and Germany, and practically the whole of the grey shirting from British India. The total imports of piece-goods from the United Kingdom rose from 76,358*l.* in 1904 to 108,201*l.* in 1905, and from British India from 101,292*l.* to 110,663*l.*¹⁸

Report for the Year 1905 (Pemba):

The piece-goods chiefly consist of *kanga*, *i.e.*, a large square of cotton cloth, 6 feet 6 inches by 4 feet 6 inches, printed in colours, two *kanga* forming the complete dress of a native woman. Of these there is an enormous sale not only in Pemba but all over East Africa, for the women are very fanciful about the latest fashion in pattern or colouring, and if a man wishes for peace in his house he must present his wife or wives with a new pair of *kanga* at least once a month. These *kangas*, though imported by German firms, are almost entirely made in the United Kingdom and the Netherlands. A few years ago the Netherlands almost monopolised this item of trade, but of late the British export of these *kangas* has far exceeded the exports of the Netherlands and Germany together. A big German firm,

¹⁶ "Report for the Year 1904 on the Trade of Pemba," by O'Sullivan-Beare, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports: Zanzibar*, No. 3375 (London: Printed for His Majesty's Stationary Office by Harrison and Sons, 1905), 4-5.

¹⁷ "Report for the Year 1905 on the Trade and Commerce of Zanzibar," by Sinclair, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports*, No. 3677 (London: Printed for His Majesty's Stationary Office by Harrison and Sons, 1906), 3.

¹⁸ "Report for the Year 1905 on the Trade and Commerce of Zanzibar," by Sinclair, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports*, No. 3677 (London: Printed for His Majesty's Stationary Office by Harrison and Sons, 1906), 4.

which has many branches all over British and German East Africa and in Zanzibar, buys the whole of the *kanga* made by a Scotch manufactory. It must be remembered that native women prefer quiet colours, the favourite at the present moment being a cotton cloth of a pale lilac with a wide black border, and in the centre some design in black. I have seen traction engines, a hand of playing cards, or simple black starts, and many other designs. I should think animals, excepting dogs or pigs, would prove attractive, especially lions or leopards. The sale price of *kanga* is 1 ruppe (or 1s. 4d.) each, or 2 rs. (2s. 8d.) the pair. Lately there has been introduced a thin flannel *kanga* of bright colours, stripes alternately black and pink, 1½ inches wide, with a narrow line of yellow between them. These are smaller than the cotton *kanga*, being made in rolls 2 feet wide. Two lengths of 5 feet 9 inches sewn together make a *kanga* of 4 feet wide and 5 feet 9 inches long. The price is 4 rs. or 5s. 4d. each, and pair 8 rs. or 10s. 8d. As these are too expensive for the very poor, I should think that cotton *kanga* made with similar stripes would have a large sale. Of course the flannel *kanga* are made with stripes of many different colours, one with alternate brown and dark blue stripes and a narrow line of black between is much liked. I enclose a piece of this stuff equal to a single *kanga*, price 4 rs. It is called "sufi" by the natives.*

*Sent to the Commercial Intelligence Branch of the Board of Trade, 73 Basinghall Street, E.C.¹⁹

Report for the Year 1906 (Zanzibar):

Kangas...are imported from the Netherlands; this is due to the fact that although the cloth is made in the United Kingdom the patterns are stamped on it in the Netherlands, where this can be done much cheaper than in the United Kingdom.²⁰

Report for the Year 1907 (Zanzibar & Pemba):

Imports from Germany increased...in 1907, and it must be borne in mind that nearly the whole of the import and export trade with the Netherlands...and consisting chiefly of cotton goods and tobacco, as well as a large portion of the piece-goods trade with the United Kingdom,

¹⁹ "Report for the Year 1905 on the Trade and Commerce of the Island of Pemba," by Farler, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports: Zanzibar*, No. 3716 (London: Printed for His Majesty's Stationery Office by Harrison and Sons, 1906), 3-4.

²⁰ "Report for the Year 1906 on the Trade of and Commerce of Zanzibar," by Richards, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports: Zanzibar*, No. 3940 (London: Printed for His Majesty's Stationery Office by Harrison and Sons, 1907), 4. A similar point is made again in 1907, see the paragraph on "piece-goods" in "Zanzibar" by Sinclair, "Report for the Year 1907 on the Trade and Commerce of Zanzibar and Pemba," *Diplomatic and Consular Reports: Zanzibar*, No. 4058 (London: Printed for His Majesty's Stationery Office by Harrison and Sons, 1908), 4.

passes through the hands of German merchants in Hamburg and their agents here.²¹

Report for the Year 1908 (Zanzibar):

“The handling of *Kangas* remains in a large measure with the German commission houses, whose advantage is due to their long association with the Indian wholesale trader, to whom they allow a very liberal credit. They are enabled to introduce frequent changes of design to keep pace with the fashion, while a market is found in German East Africa, where no British firm is represented, for any remaining surplus after the demand in Zanzibar has been exhausted.²²

A 1908 trade report clarifies the usual process for importing goods for sale in Zanzibar:

Imports from Europe are effected almost entirely by the local commission houses, and by them are distributed to wholesale Indian traders who supply the retailers. It is well to note that it is the usual practice for local houses in Zanzibar to place their orders with their head offices in Europe, and inquiries should therefore in the first instance be directed to the latter... It is not customary for Indian merchants to have direct dealings with exporting firms in Europe, and commission houses here find it necessary to allow credit. ... Firms wishing to open business relations with Zanzibar should remember that the African native is extremely conservative in his taste for the articles with which he is acquainted and refuses to accept any innovation in them. The introduction of a new commodity for native use is always attended by a risk of failure, since, owing to the extremely capricious nature of the native demand, it is very difficult to foresee the manner in which an unknown article will be received. The essential features that goods intended for this market should possess are cheapness and showiness; quality is, in most cases, an altogether minor consideration. Cheap cutlery, watches and chains, mirrors, enamel ware, crockery, umbrellas and bicycles are amongst the articles for which there is a constant demand and in which the share of the United Kingdom might be profitably extended. It is, however, necessary, as has been pointed out above, that the manufacturer, before making any attempt to introduce his

²¹ “Zanzibar” by Sinclair, in “Report for the Year 1907 on the Trade and Commerce of Zanzibar and Pemba,” *Diplomatic and Consular Reports: Zanzibar*, No. 4058 (London: Printed for His Majesty’s Stationery Office by Harrison and Sons, 1908), 6.

²² “Report for the Year 1908 on the Trade of and Commerce of Zanzibar,” by Kohan, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports: Zanzibar*, No. 4312 (London: Printed for His Majesty’s Stationery Office by Harrison and Sons, 1909), 6.

goods, should make himself thoroughly acquainted with the local requirements.²³

Report for the Years 1909-10 (Zanzibar and Pemba):

Piece-goods were imported in 1909 and 1910 to the value of 220,566*l.* and 180,797*l.* respectively; these figures are the lowest recorded in the last 15 years. The trade in manufactured cotton goods has steadily declined in recent years as a result of the extension of direct steamer communication between Europe and India and the East African ports, and the consequent rapid development of these ports as distributing centres at the expense of Zanzibar. Considerable stocks were held over from 1908, and this had the result of checking importations during the years under review. Table 10 gives the detail of piece-goods imported between 1908-10. It will be seen that the share of the United Kingdom and India represents an average of 60 per cent. of the total imports while the United States of America and the Netherlands rank next in order of importance. ... The loss in transshipment trade would not, however, appear to have any disturbing effect upon the imports of *kaniki*, *kangas* and piece-goods imported under the heading of "Sundries." Zanzibar, in the estimation of all East African natives, sets the fashion in the two former articles of female dress, and any surplus which remains after the local demand is satisfied finds a ready sale on the mainland. The fact that a decrease in the import of these articles took place in 1910 is ascribed to the over-stocked condition of the local bazaar.²⁴

Piece-goods are chiefly imported from the United Kingdom in transshipment [*sic*] through Zanzibar.²⁵

Report for the Years 1911-12 (Zanzibar and Pemba):

As the centre of the Arab power, Zanzibar from the beginning of the nineteenth century until quite recently dominated the trade of East Africa. The island contributes comparatively little to the actual commerce of the world beyond a very considerable export of cloves, worth on an average

²³ "Report for the Year 1908 on the Trade of and Commerce of Zanzibar," by Kohan, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports: Zanzibar*, No. 4312 (London: Printed for His Majesty's Stationery Office by Harrison and Sons, 1909), 10-11. Similar points are made in the 1909-10 report. "Report for the Years 1909-10 on the Trade and Commerce of Zanzibar," *Diplomatic and Consular Reports: Zanzibar*, No. 4716 (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1911), 10.

²⁴ "Zanzibar" by Kohan, "Report for the Years 1909-10 on the Trade and Commerce of Zanzibar," *Diplomatic and Consular Reports: Zanzibar*, No. 4716 (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office by Harrison and Sons, 1911), 4-5. *Americani*, *kikoi*, Turkey-red twills, cotton underclothing, print handkerchiefs, and hand-woven cloths from Muscat are also discussed in this report.

²⁵ "Pemba" by Money, "Report for the Years 1909-10 on the Trade and Commerce of Zanzibar," *Diplomatic and Consular Reports: Zanzibar*, No. 4716 (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office by Harrison and Sons, 1911), 28.

300,000*l.* per annum, but it serves as a gigantic go-down or storehouse for the whole East African coast, where both imports and exports are received and distributed.²⁶

Piece-goods. —Piece-goods were imported in 1909 and 1910 to the value of 200,556*l.* and 180,979*l.* respectively, and those figures were the lowest recorded for the previous 15 years, during which the trade in manufactured cotton goods had steadily declined. But in 1911 the value of piece-goods imported by 209,495*l.*, and in 1912 the value rose to 240,902*l.*, the latter figure being the highest under this heading since 1908. This revival may be considered satisfactory when the rapid development of the mainland ports as distributing centres at the expense of Zanzibar is taken into consideration. For instance, the imports of cotton textiles into German East Africa have practically doubled during the last six years, from 320,184*l.* in 1905 to 635,986*l.* in 1911, and the largest item in the list of articles imported into British East Africa during 1912 was cotton manufactures, which rose from 261,141*l.* to 394,715*l.*, an increase of 51 per cent. in value, whereas the quantitative expansion was as much as 64 per cent. over the previous year. In Tables 7 and 8 will be found full details of the cotton goods imported and exported during 1910, 1911 and 1912. It will be observed that the Netherlands is the chief rival of the United Kingdom and India in supplying this article, but it is probably that many of the cottons printed in the Netherlands are manufacturer in Manchester.²⁷

The trade prosperity of the island is almost entirely dependent on the success of the clove harvest, but, excepting the depression which took place in 1910, there would appear to have been a steady increase in the yearly aggregate trade of the island during the last five years. ... *Piece-goods* were imported to the value of 20,668*l.* as compared with 16,139*l.* in 1911.²⁸

Report for the Year 1913 (Zanzibar):

²⁶ "Zanzibar" by Beak, "Report for the Years 1911-12 on the Trade and Commerce of Zanzibar," *Diplomatic and Consular Reports: Zanzibar*, No. 5176 (London: His Majesty's Stationary Office by Harrison and Sons, 1913), 5.

²⁷ Italics in original. "Zanzibar" by Beak, "Report for the Years 1911-12 on the Trade and Commerce of Zanzibar," *Diplomatic and Consular Reports: Zanzibar*, No. 5176 (London: His Majesty's Stationary Office by Harrison and Sons, 1913), 7.

²⁸ Italics in original. "Pemba" by Sheldon, "Report for the Years 1911-12 on the Trade and Commerce of Zanzibar," *Diplomatic and Consular Reports: Zanzibar*, No. 5176 (London: His Majesty's Stationary Office by Harrison and Sons, 1913), 27.

Piece-goods. 1912: £122,164 and 1913: £85,149. The decrease is probably due to more direct importation by mainland coast ports.²⁹

Report for the Year 1914 (Zanzibar):

Piece-goods. 1913: £191,023 and 1914: £134,361. The trade in piece-goods was largely in the hands of German firms, who held sole agencies for the British and Dutch manufactures principally in demand. On the outbreak of war all orders which had been placed in England and Holland were held up, and it was some time before merchants succeeded in getting into touch with manufacturers. These facts, combined with the cessation of trade with German East Africa, account for the fall in imports.³⁰

Report for the Year 1915 (Zanzibar):

There were decreases in the case of several other articles, attributable generally to the reduced shipping facilities and exportation restrictions imposed consequent on the war.³¹

Report for the Year 1916 (Zanzibar):

The value of imports rose [between 1915 and 1916]. The following increases in imports are ascribed to the opening of ports in German East Africa ... while the following [increases in imports] were due to the same cause or to the requirements of troops on the mainland or of His Majesty's Ships: piece-goods (£247,996).³²

Report for the Year 1917 (Zanzibar):

The value of imports rose [between 1916 and 1917]. The occupied territory of German East Africa is responsible for the increase in value of the following imports: ... piece-goods (£192,083).³³

Report for the Year 1918 (Zanzibar):

²⁹ "Report for 1913," by F. B. Pearce, *Zanzibar*, No. 823 (London: Printed under the authority of His Majesty's Stationery Office by Barclay and Fry, Ltd., 1914), 9.

³⁰ "Report for 1914," by F. B. Pearce, *Zanzibar*, No. 843 (London: Printed under the authority of His Majesty's Stationery Office by Barclay and Fry, Ltd., 1915), 8-9.

³¹ No figures are provided in the yearly report for 1915, but decreases in imports across the board were likely. "Report for 1915," by F. B. Pearce, *Zanzibar*, No. 886 (London: Printed under the authority of His Majesty's Stationery Office by Barclay and Fry, Ltd., 1916), 6.

³² "Report for 1916," *Zanzibar*, No. 925 (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1917), 5.

³³ "Report for 1917," *Zanzibar*, No. 973 (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1918), 3.

Trade was active throughout the year, the total value of exports and imports constituting a record; there was, however, considerable over-importation, especially of piece-goods, during the last six months of the year; merchants were consequently unable readily to dispose of stocks, and some of the smaller firms became pressed for funds.³⁴

Report for the Year 1919 (Zanzibar):

The value of imports decreased [between 1918 and 1919]. ... Owing to the lack of shipping facilities at mainland ports the distributing trade of Zanzibar has increased considerably in recent years. The average stock on hand in the transit warehouses during 1919 was £750,000.³⁵

Report for the Year 1920 (Zanzibar):

The value of imports during the year [1920 decreased] ... due to a decrease in the quantity of raw cotton imported for re-exportation and in the quantity of cotton piece-goods of which large stocks had accumulated in 1919. ... The principal imports were cotton piece-goods Rs. 6,317,450, rice and grains Rs. 4,154,499, and copra Rs. 1,670,075.³⁶

Report for the Year 1921 (Zanzibar):

The total inward and outward trade of the Protectorate for the year 1921 amounted to 117,647 tons valued at Rs. 6,46,96,995, being an increase on the previous year of 19.3 per cent. in weight and 12.5 per cent. in value. ... The principal items showing increases are cotton piece-goods, rice and grain, motor spirit and petroleum, raw cotton and bullion and specie. ... The warehousing of goods for subsequent re-export is an important factor in the trade of the Protectorate, and it is satisfactory to note that in 1921 the heavy stocks accumulated during recent years have been considerably reduced and trade conditions are now much more healthy.³⁷

Report for the Year 1922 (Zanzibar):

The total foreign trade of the Zanzibar Protectorate for the year ended 31st December, 1922, amounted to 124,211 tons weight, valued at Rs. 5,88,19,524, being an increased on the previous year of 5.58 per cent. in weight and a decrease of 9 per cent. in value. The quantity of merchandise

³⁴ "Report for 1918," *Zanzibar*, No. 1000 (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1919), 11.

³⁵ "Report for 1919," *Zanzibar*, No. 1052 (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1920), 6.

³⁶ "Report for 1920," *Zanzibar*, No. 1091 (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1921), 6.

³⁷ "Report for 1921," *Zanzibar*, No. 1125 (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1922), 7-8.

handled in 1922 constitutes a record since 1902, when the total trade was estimated at 130,255 tons weight.

...the values of the principal articles imported during the last three years [in rupees].

Cotton Piece Goods. 1920: 63,17,450. 1921: 67,77,098. 1922: 69,24,044.³⁸

Report for the Year 1923 (Zanzibar):

During the year ended 31st December, 1923, the foreign trade of the Zanzibar Protectorate amounted to 125,709 tons weight, valued at Rs.6,33,50,945, representing an increase on the previous year of 1.21 per cent. in weight and of 7.70 per cent. in value. ... It is difficult to offer any forecast of the trade prospect for the present year as it is not yet possible to estimate with any degree of assurance the deliveries to be expected during the clove season commencing in July next, or to anticipate the probably trend of prices in this commodity. The year, however, must witness a considerable reduction of both export and import business, especially as large stocks are now held in the country, and as no immediate probability of expansion in the collecting and distributing trade is discernible.³⁹

Report for the Year 1924 (Zanzibar):

During the year under review, the foreign trade of the Protectorate amounted to 124,220 tons weight, valued at Rs.6,01,20,000, representing a decrease of 1.2 per cent. in weight and 5.1 per cent. in value, as compared with the previous year. The total imports (including trans-shipment goods, bullion and specie, and goods imported on Government account) amounted to 81,815 tons weight valued at Rs.2,96,43,000, being a decrease of 1 per cent. in weight and an increase of 1.7 per cent. in value, as compared with 1923. ... Owing to the influence of the clove harvest on trade, it is impossible to give a dependable forecast of this year's trade prospects, but given an average crop there is no reason to anticipate any considerable change in the trade of 1925 from that of the year under review.⁴⁰

Tanganyika Trade Report 1921:

The value of this item accounted for 41.2% of the total value of imports. The decrease in value, as compared with 1920, was mainly due to the declining

³⁸ "Report for 1922," *Zanzibar*, No. 1163 (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1923), 5-6.

³⁹ "Report for 1923," *Zanzibar*, No. 1209 (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1924), 6-7.

⁴⁰ "Report for 1924," *Zanzibar*, No. 1254 (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1925), 6-7.

in the value of the rupee which affected the value of the imports from India (direct or through Kenya and Zanzibar) of grey unbleached, dyed and coloured cottons, representing about 70% of the total import value of these lines from all countries. Grey unbleached cottons form the largest portion of the percentage and include a large proportion of Japanese manufacture. The trade with India in dyed and coloured cottons has appreciably increased.⁴¹

Tanganyika Trade Report for the year ended December 31st 1922:

Cotton Piece Goods. This item accounted for 42.6% of the total value of imports as compared with 41.2% in 1921. The decrease in the value of this class of imports is shown by the comparative weights imported, which are (excluding blankets) 1921 34,897 cwts 1922 42,827 cwts. Of the total 59% represents Grey unbleached (Americani and chadder) goods. Quite 70% of the Americani imported was of Japanese manufacture although it is shown in the comparative statement as from India Kenya or Zanzibar. The imports of grey unbleached Americani direct from the United Kingdom increased from £598 in 1921 to £4367 in 1922, whilst approximately a further 7% of the imports of this item from Kenya and Zanzibar represent British made goods.⁴²

Tanganyika Trade Report for the year ended December 31st, 1923:

This item has increased in value very considerably although its percentage to the whole import trade is decreased. The goods comprising this were, in order of value, (a) Grey unbleached (Americani and chadder) mainly of United Kingdom, Japanese and British Indian manufacture, (b) White bleached (bafta, white shirting, drill and duck) mainly from the United Kingdom, (c) Printed piece goods, manufactured principally in the United Kingdom and Holland, (d) Dyed piece goods, chiefly from the United Kingdom, British India and Holland, (e) Coloured piece goods of United Kingdom, British India, Germany and Holland manufacture, (f) Blankets from the United Kingdom and British India.⁴³

Tanganyika Trade Report for the year ended December 31st, 1924:

The value of these has increased by nearly £100,000 but the percentage to the total imports remains about the same. The goods comprising this were,

⁴¹ "Import Trade: Cotton Piece Goods," *Tanganyika Trade Report for the year ended 31st December 1921*, 1.

⁴² "Import Trade: Cotton Piece Goods," *Tanganyika Trade Report for the year ended December 31st 1922*, 1.

⁴³ "Import Trade: Cotton Piece Goods," *Tanganyika Trade Report for the year ended December 31st 1923*, 1.

in order of value (a) Grey unbleached (Americani and chadder) mainly of United Kingdom, Japanese and British Indian manufacture, (b) Dyed piece goods, chiefly from the United Kingdom, British India, Germany and Holland, (c) Coloured piece goods of United Kingdom, British India, Germany and Dutch manufacture, (d) White bleached (bafta, white shirting, drill and duck) mainly from the United Kingdom, (e) Printed piece goods, manufactured principally in the United Kingdom and Holland, (f) Blankets from the United Kingdom, British India, Germany and Holland.⁴⁴

Tanganyika Trade Report for the year ended December 31st 1925:

The value of these increased by £143,010, the percentage however, to the total imports being lower. The goods comprising this were, in order of value, value (a) Grey unbleached (Americani and chadder) mainly of United Kingdom, Japanese and British Indian manufacture, (b) Dyed piece goods, chiefly from the United Kingdom, British India, Germany and Holland, (c) Coloured piece goods of United Kingdom, British India, Germany and Dutch manufacture, (d) White bleached (bafta, white shirting, drill and duck) mainly from the United Kingdom, (e) Printed piece goods, manufactured principally in the United Kingdom and Holland, (f) Blankets from the United Kingdom, British India, Germany and Holland.⁴⁵

Tanganyika Trade Report for the year ended December 31st 1926:

These embrace 25.9% of the total imports in 1926. They are classified under five items, viz:--

(1) Grey unbleached, (2) White bleached, (3) Printed, (4) Dyed in the piece, (5) Coloured wholly or in part and in dyed yarn.

(1)—Grey Unbleached.

The amounted to 40.7% of piece goods imports and include Grey sheetings, Bordered grey, Grey drill and Long cloth.

GREY SHEETINGS are locally named Americani Asili, Americani Gamthi, or Americani Uleiti.

Americani Asili is the name given to the original goods imported from America. It has been largely displaced on the market by Japanese and Indian "Americani" but the import still represent about 8% of the total. It is imported in bales of 25 pieces. A piece measures 30 yards long and 32

⁴⁴ "Import Trade: Cotton Piece Goods," *Tanganyika Trade Report for the year ended December 31st 1924*, 2.

⁴⁵ "Import Trade: Cotton Piece Goods," *Tanganyika Trade Report for the year ended December 31st 1925*, 2.

inches wide, which weighs from 5 to 5 ½ lbs. and is priced in the bazaar at Shillings 11 to 12.

American Gamthi was originally made in Bombay for the Indian market and later exported to East Africa to compete with Asili. It is a little darker in colour than, and inferior in quality to, the American made article. Each Indian Mill has its own brand. In bales of 25 pieces, each piece measures 30 yards by 32 inches, weighs 6 lbs., and is priced in the bazaar at Shs. 10.75. In the heavier weights this article has also, since 1919, been steadily displaced on the market by Japanese "Americani" and now amounts to little more than 10% of the imports.

Japanese Americani has steadily obtained the dominant position in the market and now embraces more than 80% of the total imports. To ensure regular delivery to fulfil contracts it is shipped by every available steamer either direct, via Bombay or via Aden. It is remarkable that the Japanese manufacturer can purchase his cotton lint in India, transport it to Japan and return it here as a manufactured article at a lower price than the Bombay Mills can market the competitive article. Japanese bales contain 30 pieces measuring 30 yards by 36 inches weighing from 8 to 10 lbs. each which are priced in the bazaar at from Shs. 15 to 17 each according to weight.

American Uleiti is the British article made to compete with the original American importation. Its import is now however negligible. The grey unbleached shown as imported from the United Kingdom and Holland is Kikoi and not Americani.

Americani generally is used for making native shirts (Khanzus), Sails for fishing boats, Mattresses, Pillows, etc., and is also used as loin cloth and shoulder shawls by natives in the interior.

BORDERED GREY is termed Chader in Hindi and Shuka Gamthi in Swahili. India supplies 90% of the imports of this article. Various qualities, lengths, and brands are imported. Each piece is really a pair with a two cord break "taraza" in the centre, a mark to facilitate the cutting into two pieces. It is bordered with black, red or coloured stripes. It is packed in corjas (scores) of 10 pairs to 20 single pieces (one pair measuring from 3 ½ to 5 yards by 48") weighing from 6 ¼ to 16 lbs. and priced at from shillings 11 to 27 according to quality. These chaders are used as loin cloths by the natives. Larger sizes measuring from 5 to 5 ½ yards by 50" to 55" and weighing from 18 to 20 lbs. per score, which have no borders, are priced at from shillings 40 to 42 and are used as bed-sheets or blankets.

Shukas imported from England or Holland are known as Shuka Ulaya or Kikois. Kikois were originally imported from Mascat where they were made of superior quality on hand looms. The British made Kikoi although not so fine in quality, being cheaper, obtained the market; but the Dutch article has

since obtained a very strong footing. They are also made with a break "taraza" (marked by a red or black line) in the centre, and have coloured borders with a grey centre and red stripe, and are imported in bales of 5 to 10 scores. Each piece, which is really a pair, measures from 4 to 4 ½ yards by 38" to 48" and the price of a score in the bazaar varies from shillings 30 to 45.

GREY DRILL is termed Marduff and also has the added title of Asili, Gamthi or Uleiti according to country of origin. The American Marduff (Aili) the original article, still has the best sale. The Indian imitation also sells, but the demand for the English article is steadily diminishing, and Japanese "Duck" is now competing from the market. A bale contains 15 pieces each 40 yards by 27", weighs from 12 ½ to 14 lbs. and is priced in the bazaar at from shillings 32 to 38.

Marduff is used for Dhow sails, Tents and native cloths. Owing to the declining of the caravan traffic there is a diminishing demand.

LONG CLOTH is termed Nenklak by Indians and Uleiti by Natives. It is chiefly used as loin cloths. The importation is not very considerable. One bale contains 25 pieces, each measuring 40 yards by 36". A piece is priced in the bazaar at from 25 to 26 shillings. Formerly imported from India this material is now chiefly supplied by the United Kingdom.

(2)—White Bleached.

Under this heading (which accounted for 6.2% of piece goods imports) are imported White

Shirting, Nainsook, Dorio, Muslin and Shuka.

WHITE SHIRTING is termed Basto in Hindi and Bafta in Swahili. The United Kingdom supplies nearly 40% of the total importation. A major portion of the "white bleached" shewn as imported from British India comprises Dhotis which are worn by the Hindus. Few Indian Mills are supplied with bleaching machines, consequently the imports from India are limited. Holland supplied 60% of the importation. Bafta is made in breadths varying from 28" to 36". The standard length is 40 to 42 yards and it is sold on the basis of a 40 yard piece. Qualities vary and the bazaar price ranges from 22 to 40 shillings per piece. A special Bafta termed "Dondo" is imported from England heavily impregnated with starch and size and is used for native shrouds. This sells at Shillings 13 to 14 per piece. Ordinary Bafta is used by all nationals and is made into Khanzus, shirts, bed-sheets, caps, trousers, etc. A bale or case contains 50 pieces.

NAINSOOK, DORIA AND MULMUL are termed by the Natives Nensu, Doria and Melimeli respectively. The pieces range in size from 18 to 24 yards by 24" to 52". These materials are made in England but chiefly imported via India. They are used for making Khanzus of a better class, shirts, caps with silken embroidery, veils, curtains, mosquito nets, etc.

(3)—Printed Piece Goods.

Of the total imports of cotton piece goods 15.9% come under this sub-heading. They chiefly consist of Khangas and Chintz.

Khangas are rectangular pieces of cotton used as wraps, etc., by native women covered with varied and ever-changing designs. Formerly hand printed in India they are now imported from England and Holland, the imports from the former exceeding the latter by about 50 per cent. The fascination of a new design for the native women is as great as that of the European lady for a new model frock, so that the danger of the importer being left with old and unsaleable designs on his hands is ever present. Designs, which are frequently suggested locally, particularly from Zanzibar, may include birds, leaves, flowers, words, sentences or even proverbs. A score of Khangas consists of four pieces each embracing five Khangas and may have two or four borders or none. The prices per score in the bazaar are; without border Shillings 22 to 27, two bordered shillings 31 to 33, and four bordered shillings 36 to 48.

Chintz is of Dutch or English manufacture, the latter being sometimes imported via India.

Besides being used for Khangas by the better class native women it is used extensively in European households for curtains, covers, etc.

(4)—Dyed Piece Goods.

These comprise 22.8% of piece goods imports and include Kaniki, Khaki, Crepe, and Red Turkey.

KANIKI. These are also worn by native women. Originally they were manufactured in India from Americani, badly dyed indigo, and termed Kaniki Gamthi. They were later replaced by a European article, of faster colour, made in England and dyed in England, Holland, or Switzerland. First known as Kaniki Ulaya they afterwards took the names of the importing firms e.g. "Usagara, Hansing, O'Swald &c." The article now imported is however of a better quality known as Kaniki Mkaa and comes chiefly from United Kingdom and Holland, although the Bombay Mills having improved

their quality and dyeing are again increasing as competitors. The proportion of imports from the United Kingdom is about 30%.

A Kaniki Sufi known as Kaniki Kio which is a high glazed black cloth with a fine rep appearance imported chiefly from Manchester, and also now coming from Holland, measures 46" by 132" is packed in blue paper and in tin lined cases, weighs 12 lbs. per score and is priced in the market at shillings 46 per score.

A Kaniki is nearly the same in size as a Khanga. The imports of Khangass up to 1914 considerably exceeded those of Kaniki, but the superior wearing quality of the latter is becoming more and more appreciated and its imports have increased by nearly 50 per cent. Kaniki is also used by some of the native women to make the veils which they wear in Arab fashion. A bale of Kaniki, 46" by 66" the piece, contains 25 score and the price of a score in the bazaar in shillings 17 to 20.

A recently introduced Kaniki from England and Holland, known as Kaniki Ufito, heavier in weight than the ordinary Mkaa, although higher in value, is finding increasing favour in the interior owing to its durability. A score of these is sold at shillings 56 to 84 in the bazaar.

KHAKI is imported from England and Holland and is used for native uniforms, boat and rickshaw cushion covers, shirts, etc. A piece is 40 yards by 28" to 30" and retails at cents 75 to shillings 1/50 per yard. Another khaki known as Khudurangi or Hodrunji formerly imported from Mascat is now replaced by an article imported from England and Germany and is used for making native Khanzus. A piece, sufficient for two Khanzus is 8 yards in length and sells in the bazaar at shillings 7 to 7/50.

CREPE is imported almost entirely from Japan in a variety of colours. A piece of 20 yards by 30" is sold at from shillings 8 to 8 ½ in the bazaar. Besides being used for making European dresses and children's clothing it is also made into turbans and Khanzus for the more fashionable native women.

TURKEY RED formerly imported from India and known as Madrasi in Hindi and Bandera in Swahili has now been largely replaced by an imitation made in Japan. A little is still imported from India and Italy. A piece is 25 yards by 27" to 32". A case contains 60 to 100 pieces which fetch from shillings 9 to shillings 14 in the bazaar. It is chiefly used as bunting ceremonial decorations.

(5)—Coloured Piece Goods

14.4% of piece goods imports were under this head. These include Mascat Cloth, Chader—Kunguru and Check.

MASCAT CLOTHS were formerly hand made and imported from Mascat in dhows. They were costly articles having borders of silk and golden tassels at the ends. The British manufactures substituted a similar article in cotton which being cheaper appealed to a larger community and the Dutch manufacturers followed suit. These two countries now share the market in this article but Germany is commencing to complete. There are different colours and qualities sold, distinguished by definite names, e.g. Dhebwani, Bhura, Singapatti, Ismaili and Subhaya. Dhebwani is used as Arab turbans and the others as native women's clothes. The size varies from 44" to 48" by 74" to 76". A bale contains 5 or 10 score. The price in the market varies from shillings 30 to 50 per score.

CHADER-KUNGURU are chiefly imported from India. The size is 36" to 44" by 4 to 5 yards per pair. A bale contains 20, 25 or 30 score and a score is priced at from shillings 24 to 36. This article is used chiefly for making mattresses.

CHECK imported from India is used for similar purposes to Chader-Kunguru. Checks imported from the United Kingdom and Japan are used for making shirts, window curtains, etc., the former being superior in quality.⁴⁶

Tanganyika Territory: Trade Report for the year ended December 31st 1927:

Of the total imports of these goods Grey unbleached amounted to 31.8%, White bleached 7.6%, Printed 17%, Dyed in the piece 24.5% and Coloured 19.1%.

The value of Grey unbleached decreased from £332,879 to £299,973; whereas the weight increased from 40,277 cwts. To 43,841 cwts. and the yardage from 13,915,979 to 14,836,444. The consumption of Americani is therefore still on the increase. The reduction in value can be attributed chiefly to the lower price of cotton in India.

The value of cotton piece goods (other than Grey unbleached) increased from £484,697 to £644,942 or 33%. This increase is to some extent due to over-stocking towards the end of 1927, stocks being carried over for consumption in 1928. This can be seen from the Bonded Stocks held at December 31st, 1927 as shown in statement (h). The continued granting of

⁴⁶ "Import Trade: Cotton Piece Goods," *Tanganyika Trade Report for the year ended December 31st 1926*, 2-5.

long credit terms, chiefly by foreign firms, largely accounts for this overstocking.⁴⁷

Tanganyika Territory: Trade Report for the year ended December 31st 1928:

[fragmented]

This, the most prominent of the items included, Grey ... [?]unting to 24.6%, White bleached 7.3%, Printed 20.5%, Dyed in [the piece ...] % and Coloured 23.5%.

...of Grey unbleached decreased from £299,973 to £228,472. In ... Kikois were included under the heading of Grey unbleached. These ...cluded in bleached or coloured piece goods according to quality.

...piece goods decreased from £231,574 to £224,087. Prints and Coloured ...om £341,524 to £407,949. The increase in the importation of Khangas ...ws the enhanced prosperity of the natives.

...rtion of Grey unbleached and Coloured piece goods are ...Halland. It is to be regretted that so far the efforts of ...ulted in their acquisition of a larger share of this trade.

...the details of the various classes of native piece goods ... for 1926.

...are steadily diminishing year by year, whilst the exports ...is is a gratifying freature of the increased activity of the ... country can, in this respect, be not only self-supporting ...or in the supply of food to adjacent Territories.⁴⁸

Tanganyika Territory: Trade Report for the year ended December 31st 1929:

Of the total imports of Cotton Piece Goods, Grey unbleached amounts to 27.8 per cent., White bleached 110.2 per cent., Printed 18.6 per cent., Dyed in the piece 23.6 per cent., and Coloured 19.8 per cent.

The value of Grey unbleached increased from £228,472 to £251,040. The import from United Kingdom has increased from £163 to £1,552, or the small share of 0.6 per cent. of the total import. This small percentage is again to be regretted.

⁴⁷ "Import Trade: Cotton Piece Goods," *Tanganyika Territory: Trade Report for the year ended December 31st 1927*, 2.

⁴⁸ "Import Trade: Cotton Piece Goods," *Tanganyika Territory: Trade Report for the year ended December 31st 1928*, 2.

White bleached increased from £67,744 to £91,778, whereas dyed piece goods and coloured piece goods decreased from £224,087 to £213,498, and from £217,896 to £178,877 respectively.

Printed piece goods decreased from £190,053 to £168,191; of which the value of khangas amounts to £114,174. The other printed piece goods consisting of chintz, poplin, jean, shirting, flannel, etc. Chintz was mostly imported from United Kingdom, Germany, Holland and Italy and the other items are entirely imported from Japan, being mainly used by the natives as khangas. These Japanese piece goods (poplin, jean, shirting and flannel) are imported in lengths containing 30 to 50 yards; whereas a score of khangas consists of 5 pieces, each being capable of division into 4 khangas of about 2 yards each.

Japanese printed stuff (kitenge) has not border and it measures 46in. to 30in., whereas a khangas measured from 46in. to 60in. As the breadth of the Japanese stuff is narrow, two pieces are sewn together to enable it to be used mostly as khangas by the native women. This material is also used as a substitute for cretonne for curtains, chair covers, etc.⁴⁹

Tanganyika Territory: Trade Report for the year ended December 31st 1930:

Of the total imports of Cotton Piece Goods, Grey unbleached amounts to 28.2 per cent., White bleached 9.1 per cent., Printed khangas 15.2 per cent., Printed other 6.9 per cent., Dyed 26 per cent. and Coloured 14.6 percent.

The value of Grey unbleached decreased from £251,040 to £196,776, but the actual decrease in weight was only 126 cwts. The imports of this item from India decreased by 4,914 cwts., but those from Japan increased by 5,531 kwts.

Imports of White bleached decreased from £91,778 to £63,462. Those from the United Kingdom decreased from £35,626 to £22,941, while those from Japan increased from £3,725 to £9,154.

Printed khangas decreased from £114,174 to £105,834. Printed piece goods other than khangas decreased in value from £54,017 to £48,201 although these was an increase in quantity from 1,829,743 yards to 1,907,203 yards. The imports from Japan rose from 402,226 yards to 836,697 yards.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ "Import Trade: Cotton Piece Goods," *Tanganyika Territory: Trade Report for the year ended December 31st 1929*, 2.

⁵⁰ "Import Trade: Cotton Piece Goods," *Tanganyika Territory: Trade Report for the year ended December 31st 1930*, 2.

Tanganyika Territory: Trade Report for the year ended December 31st 1931:

Of the total imports of Cotton Piece Goods, Grey unbleached amounts to 35.6 per cent., White bleached 9.1 per cent., Printed khangas 10.7 per cent., Printed other 5.2 per cent., Dyed 28.6 per cent. and coloured 10.8 per cent.

The value of Grey unbleached decreased from £196,776 to £175,974 whereas the weight and linear yards increased from 37,640 cwts. to 40, 572 and from 12,944,975 yards to 13,845,780 respectively. The imports of this item from India decreased from 3,637,484 yards to 3,430,702 yards. Those from Japan increased from 8,961,021 yards to 10,084,431 yards.

Imports of White bleached decreased from £63,462 to £45,044. The imports of this item from the United Kingdom and Holland decreased from 1,235,781 yards to 527,803 yards and from 929,543 yards to 603,104 yards respectively, while those from Japan increased from 595,442 yards to 1,260,516.

Printed Khangas decreased from £105,834 to £53,127. The imports of this item from the United Kingdom and Holland decreased from 2,359,317 yards to 1,230,798 yards and from 1,123,742 yards to 865,746 yards respectively.

Printed Piece Goods, other than khangas, decreased from £48,201 to £25,466. The imports from Japan rose from 836,697 yards to 946,392 yards, whereas imports from the United Kingdom and all other countries show a considerable decrease.

Imports of Dyed in the piece decreased from £181,281 to £141,034. The imports from the United Kingdom decreased from 2,111,146 yards to 1,445,717 yards. Those from Japan increased from 253,292 yards to 1,563,602 yards.

The import of Coloured Piece Goods decreased from £101,346 to £53,421. The imports from the United Kingdom decreased from 382,701 yards to 130,782 yards> Those from Japan increased from 1,386,677 yards to 1,667,713 yards.

From the above figures it will be seen that at a time when imports generally are decreasing those of Japanese piece goods are increasing. The Japanese manufacturers have their representatives constantly touring East Africa and, realizing that in a time of money shortage the native prefers quantity to quality, have catered for his demands by putting cheap articles on the market.⁵¹

⁵¹ "Import Trade: Cotton Piece Goods," *Tanganyika Territory: Trade Report for the year ended December 31st 1931*, 2.

Tanganyika Territory: Trade Report for the year ended December 31st 1932:

Of the total imports of Cotton Piece Goods, Grey unbleached amounts to 27.2 per cent. White bleached 8.4 per cent., Printed khangas 12.9 per cent., Printed other 9.8 per cent., Dyed 30.0 per cent., and Coloured 11.7 per cent.

Comparing the imports of Grey unbleached with 1931 we get a reduction in volume and a reduction in value accentuated by lower prices:---

	1932		1931
Yards ...	11,032,031	...	13,845,780
Value, £ ...	122,172	...	175,974
Average per yard, Cents	... 22	...	25 ½

Imports from India decreased from 3,430,702 to 1,672,933 yards; whilst those from Japan only decreased from 10,084,431 to 9,225,948 yards.

Imports of White bleached decreased in value from £45,044 to £37,584. Those from the United Kingdom and Holland decreased from 527,803 to 444,963 yards, and from 603,104 to 322,292 yards respectively, while those from Japan increased from 1,260,516 to 1,683,754 yards.

Printed Khangas increased from £53,127 to £58,098. Those from the United Kingdom rose from 1,230,798 to 1,968,695 yards, while from Holland they decreased from 865,746 to 556,922 yards.

Printed, other than Khangas, increased from £25,466 to £43,896. The increases were, from the United Kingdom from 197,868 to 344,005 yards, and from Japan from 946,392 to 3,135,324 yards. Those from Holland and Italy decreased.

Imports of Dyed in the piece increased in yardage from 7,643,677 to 9,621,161, but the values were down from £140,034 to £135,010. The imports from Japan increased in yardage from 1,563,602 to 5,460,629. Those from the United Kingdom showed a small increase and those from India and Holland were considerably down.

Imports of Coloured Piece Goods although slightly higher in yardage gave a total lower value. Here again those from Japan showed a marked increase.

Imports of Cotton Piece Goods generally maintained their position and accounted for 24 per cent. of the total, as compared with 19.8 per cent. in 1931.

Cheap Black Drill from Japan has to some extent displaced American in the native choice. Also cheap printed jeans and dyed poplins, chiefly from Japan, have had a strong tendency to displace Khangas from the United Kingdom and Holland.

An important proportion of the increase of Japanese imports from 10.7 per cent. of the total to 16.4 per cent. represents increased importation of cheap cotton piece goods.⁵²

Tanganyika Territory: Trade Report for the year ended December 31st 1933:

–The Imports of cotton piece goods were made up as follows:–

	1931		1932		1933	
£1,000	Million Yards	£1,000	Million Yards	£1,000	Million Yards	£1,000
Grey unbleached	13.85	176	11.03	122	10.14	103
Dyed in the piece	7.64	141	9.62	135	11.87	153
Printed, khangas	2.10	53	2.54	58	2.38	51
Printed, other	1.44	25	3.68	44	3.87	43
Coloured	3.19	53	3.71	53	4.73	58
Bleached	2.72	45	2.66	38	3.04	36

In spite of the increased competition from artificial silk, i.e. from 457,290 yards in 1931 and 1,032,178 yards in 1932 to 1,460,193 yards in 1933, the imports of cotton piece goods increased by about 2 ½ million yards each year, though lower prices resulted in decreases in the total values of £44,000 and £7,000 respectively. The native taste would appear to be turning towards colour, as indicated by the considerable increases in dyed and coloured cloths and the further reduction in the imports of unbleached goods, which for the first time on record have fallen from first place.⁵³

Tanganyika Territory: Trade Report for the year ended December 31st 1934:

The imports of cotton piece goods were made up as follows:

(table shows numbers for 1932-1934)

The annual increase of about 2 ½ million yards is again shown in the year's figures, but the 1934 total value is higher by about £50,000 than that for 1933, indicating an upward movement in average prices. The marked increase in the demand for coloured and printed goods continued during the

⁵² "Import Trade: Cotton Piece Goods," *Tanganyika Territory: Trade Report for the year ended December 31st 1932*, 3.

⁵³ "Import Trade: Cotton Piece Goods," by J. H. McQuade, *Tanganyika Territory: Trade Report for the year ended December 31st 1933*, 4.

year, the specialized khanga trade remaining fairly steady and bleached and dyed cottons showing decreases.

The rayon imports in 1934 were 1,204,505 linear yards, valued at £21,572, as compared with 1,460,193 linear yards and £26,126 in 1933.⁵⁴

Tanganyika Territory: Trade Report for the year ended December 31st 1935:

The imports of cotton piece goods were made up as follows:

(table shows numbers for 1933-1935)

There was an increase of about 6 ½ million yards in the imports of cotton piece goods, as compared with an annual increase of only 2 ½ million yards over the previous three years. The total value was higher by nearly £110,000. There are indications of a relative improvement in the demand for the higher priced goods—a desirable development which suggests, and is fostered by, an increase in the general prosperity of the native population. For example the khanga trade, of which British manufacturers retain the major share, improved by 56 per cent in quantity and 53 per cent in value as compared with an increase of only 14 per cent in the quantity and value of the cheaper dyed and unbleached goods. The general fall in the imports of coloured goods was not shared by British coloured cottons, which were 54 per cent higher in value than in 1934, notwithstanding the increased competition from artificial silk piece goods. These latter rose from 1,204,505 linear yards in 1934 to 1,667,639 linear yards in 1935, the respective values being £21,572 and £27,485.⁵⁵

[1936-1939 Tanganyika Territory Trade Reports not available]

Tanganyika Territory: Trade Report for the year 1940:

(table shows numbers for 1938-1940)

The total imports were little less than in 1938 and in very much the same proportions except for a fall in khanga imports. Dyed goods, which came in first in 1937 and 1939, were second to unbleached calico in quantity though again first in value. The percentage gains or losses of the chief suppliers, in terms of square yards, as compared with the previous year were:---

	Grey Unbleached	Bleached	Khangas	Other printed	Dyed	Coloured
UK	-17	+1	+5	+47	-28	+22

⁵⁴ "Import Trade: Cotton Piece Goods," by J. H. McQuade, *Tanganyika Territory: Trade Report for the year ended December 31st 1934*, 9.

⁵⁵ "Imports: Cotton Piece Goods," by J. H. McQuade, *Tanganyika Territory: Trade Report for the year ended December 31st 1935*, 10.

Br. India	+1100	+529	-27		+226	+749	+177	
Japan	-33		-35	-35		-41	-44	-62
Holland		---	---		-66	---	---	
	-39							

Prices were higher, the average declared c.i.f value per square yard for the three leading lines having increased by the following percentages:

	UK	British India	Japan
Dyed	59	13.5	35
Unbleached	60	20	25
Printed other	12.5	4	42 ⁵⁶

Tanganyika Territory: Trade Report for the year 1941:

---The import of cotton piece goods were made up as follows:---

(table shows numbers for 1939-1941)

Never before had the import of cotton piece goods reached a value of a million pounds; the total of £1,246,000 in 1941 was more than 50 per cent above the 1937 figure and more than double the value in any year since then. The quantity was also the highest on record, but if combined with the 1940 total gives an average approximately equal to the mean annual imports in normal pre war years. India was the main supplier, but the United Kingdom more than maintained its supply of printed goods. Prices were markedly higher. The following table shows the average relative unit values per square yard on the basis of a 1939 value of 100 unbleached calico (actual value 18.76 cents per square yard) and also in parentheses, for each item separately, the 1940 and 1941 values as compared with a price of 100 in 1939:---

	1939	1940	1941
Unbleached	100	132	180
Bleached	128(100)	167(130)	216(169)
Dyed	129(100)	188(146)	242(188)
Printed, other	137(100)	197(146)	245(179)
Coloured	162(100)	225(139)	255(158)
Printed Khangas	166(100)	210(127)	280(169) ⁵⁷

Tanganyika Territory: Trade Report for the year 1942:

---The imports of cotton piece goods were made up as follows:---

(table shows numbers for 1940-1942)

⁵⁶ "Import Trade: Cotton Piece Goods," by J. H. McQuade, *Tanganyika Territory: Trade Report for the year 1940*, 12-13. (Incomplete edition).

⁵⁷ "Import Trade: Cotton Piece Goods," *Tanganyika Territory: Trade Report for the year 1941*, 7-8. (Incomplete edition).

Once again the imports of cotton piece goods were valued over a million pounds, being only £9,000 less than in 1941, but the quantity was very considerable less. India supplied the bulk, but the United Kingdom continued to hold its own.

Prices again rose steeply. The following table shows the average relative unit values per square yard on the basis of a 1939 value of 100 for unbleached calico (actual value 18.76 cents per square yard) and also, in parentheses, for each item separately, the 1940, 1941 and 1942 values as compared with a price of 100 in 1939:---

	1939	1940	1941	1942
Unbleached				302
Bleached				384(301)
Dyed				428(331)
Printed, other				314(229)
Coloured				371(230)
Printed Khangas				322(194) ⁵⁸

[1943 Tanganyika Territory Trade Reports not available.]

Beginning in 1944 edition, change format of Import Trade to report only values.

⁵⁸ "Imports: Cotton Piece Goods," *Tanganyika Territory: Trade Report for the year 1942*, 8. (Incomplete edition).

APPENDIX B
KANGA IMPORTS TO COLONIAL TANGANYIKA AND INDEPENDENT TANZANIA,
1929-1981

- Countries listed in order of the number of *kanga* exported, from greatest to least
- Countries bolded exported in excess of one million *kanga* for year indicated
- Countries in regular text exported in excess of one-hundred thousand *kanga* (but less than one million) for year indicated
- Countries italicized exported less than one-hundred thousand *kanga* (but greater than 5,000) for year indicated
- Countries exporting less than 5,000 *kanga* have been omitted

1929: **UK, Holland**, *Germany, British India, Japan*

1930: **UK**, *Holland, Germany*

1931: **UK**, *Holland, Germany*

1932: **UK**, *Holland, British India*

1933: **UK**, *Holland, Japan, British India, Germany*

1934: **UK**, *Holland, Japan, British India*

1935: **UK**, *Holland, Japan, British India*

1936: **UK**, *Holland, Japan, British India*

1937: **UK, Holland**, *Japan, British India*

1938: **Holland, Japan, UK**, *British India*

1939: **Holland**, *UK, Japan, British India, Germany, Zanzibar*

1940: *UK, Japan, British India*

1941: —only totals mentioned—

1942: *UK, British India, Japan*

1943: *UK, British India*

1944: *UK, British India*

1945: *UK, British India*

1946: **UK**, *Holland, British India*

1947: **UK**, *Holland*

1948: —only totals mentioned—

1949: *UK, Japan, Netherlands, India*

1950: **Japan, UK, Netherlands**, *India*

1951: **Japan, UK, Netherlands**

1952: —only totals mentioned—

1953: **UK, Netherlands**, *Japan, India*

1954: **UK, Netherlands**, *India, Japan*

1955: **Japan, Netherlands, UK**, *India*

1956: **Japan**, *Netherlands, UK, India, UK Gov't*

1957: **Japan**, *Netherlands, UK*

1958: **Japan, Netherlands, UK**
1959: **Japan, Netherlands, India**
1960: **Japan, Netherlands**
1961: **Japan, Netherlands**
1962: **Japan, Netherlands**
1963: **Japan, Netherlands**
1964: **Japan, Netherlands, India, UK**
1965: **Japan, India, Netherlands, China**
1966: **India, Japan, China, Hong Kong, Netherlands**
1967: **Japan, China, Hong Kong, Netherlands, India**
1968:¹ **Japan, China, Hong Kong, India, Netherlands**
1969: **Japan, China, Hong Kong, India**
1970: **China, Japan, Hong Kong, India, Israel**
1971: Japan
1972: **Japan**
1973: **Japan**
1974: **Japan**
1975: Japan
1976: Japan
1977: Japan (?)
1978: Japan (?)
1979: Japan (?)
1980: Japan (?)
1981: **Japan**

Data garnered from the following publications:

Tanganyika Territory Blue Books (1929-1948)

East Africa Trade Report (1949-1950; 1953-1960)

East African Customs and Excise: Trade and Revenue Report for Tanganyika, Uganda and Kenya (1951-1954)

East African Community Annual Trade Report (1961-1976)

Annual Trade Statistics Report of Tanzania (1972-1981)

¹ *Kanga* redefined as “clothes” in records from 1968 on.

APPENDIX C
AVERAGE RETAIL PRICE OF *KANGA* IN DAR ES SALAAM, 1951-1996

Average Retail Price of African Consumer Goods – Dar es Salaam: Khanga (unit: pair)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Shillings</u>
Dec 1951	14.17
Dec 1952	??
Dec 1953	13.25
Dec 1954	13.19
Dec 1955	12.06
Dec 1956	12.88
Dec 1957	11.09
Dec 1958	11.80
Dec 1959	11.90
Dec 1960	13.00
Dec 1961	12.60
Dec 1962	11.70
Dec 1963	12.50
Dec 1964	13.40
Dec 1965	17.75
Dec 1966	17.00
Dec 1967	18.00
Dec 1968	17.53
Dec 1969	18.25
Dec 1970	18.25
Dec 1971	18.25
Dec 1972	19.95
1973	no records
1974	no records
1975	no records
1976	no records
1977	no records

<u>Date</u>	<u>Price in Shillings</u>
	Jan 1978 48.20
Dec 1978	48.20
	Jun 1979 55.75
Dec 1979	70.00
	Jun 1980 77.00
Dec 1980	77.80
	Jun 1981 n/a
Dec 1981	110.00
	Jun 1982 110.00
Dec 1982	n/a
	Jun 1983 111.65
Dec 1983	n/a
	Jun 1984 160.00
Dec 1984	n/a
	Jun 1985 n/a
Dec 1985	n/a
	Jun 1986 n/a
Dec 1986	480.00
	Jun 1987 586.65
Dec 1987	620.00
	Jun 1988 674.00
Dec 1988	890.00
	Jun 1989 1,036.65
Dec 1989	1,500.00
	Jun 1990 1,400.00
Dec 1990	1,600.00
1991	1,566.67
1992	1,800.00
1993	1,900.00
1994	n/a
1995	2,070.00
1996	3,640.00

*Records from 1997-2002 do not reference *kanga* sold in Dar es Salaam

Data garnered from the following publications, with the years noted:

1951-1958: "Average Retail Price of African Consumer Goods, Dar es Salaam." *Tanganyika Statistical Abstract 1959*. East African Statistical Department, Tanganyika Unit. Dar es Salaam: The Government Printer, 1959.

1959-1962: "Average Retail Price of Goods Consumed by Wage Earners, Dar es Salaam." *Tanzania Statistical Abstract 1962*. 1963 edition created by Francis de Silva with hand-written notations, to amend 1962 published edition. Dar es Salaam: The Government Printer, 1962.

1963-1965: "Average Retail Prices of Certain Consumer Goods, Dar es Salaam." *Tanzania Statistical Abstract 1966*. Central Statistical Bureau, Ministry of Economic and Development Planning. Dar es Salaam: The Government Printer, 1968.

1966-1969: "Average Retail Prices of Goods Consumed by Wage Earners, Dar es Salaam." *Tanzania Statistical Abstract 1970*. Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Development Planning. Dar es Salaam: The Government Printer, 1972.

1970-1972: "Average Retail Prices of Goods Consumer by Wage Earners, Dar es Salaam." *Tanzania Statistical Abstract 1973*. Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Development Planning. Dar es Salaam: The Government Printer, 197[?].

1978-1982: "Average Retail Prices of Some of the Consumer Goods in Dar es Salaam." *Tanzania Statistical Abstract 1982*. Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs. Dar es Salaam: 1983.

1983-1986: "Average Retail Prices of Some of the Consumer Goods in Dar es Salaam." *Tanzania Statistical Abstract 1987*. Bureau of Statistics, Planning Commission, President's Office. Dar es Salaam: 1989.

1987-1990: "Average Retail Prices of Some of the Consumer Goods in Dar es Salaam." *Tanzania Statistical Abstract 1990*. Bureau of Statistics, President's Office, Planning Commission. Dar es Salaam: 1992.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

MacKenzie Moon Ryan was born in 1984 in Marshall, Minnesota. She earned her Bachelor of Arts from Hamline University in St. Paul, Minnesota, in 2006, where she double-majored in art history and history and graduated *magna cum laude* and Phi Beta Kappa. She earned her Master of Arts from the University of Florida in art history in 2008. She has studied twice at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) at the University of London, first in 2004-2005 and subsequently in 2009. While at the University of Florida pursuing her doctorate, she has been a Graduate School Fellow in the School of Art + Art History in the College of Fine Arts (2008-2013), a Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellow in the Center for African Studies (2009, 2009-2010, 2010-2011), and an American Dissertation Fellow in the American Association of University Women (2012-2013). She earned her Doctor of Philosophy in art history from the University of Florida in 2013. She is an Assistant Professor of Art History at Rollins College in Winter Park, Florida.