

The Mazrui Dynasty: Serving Islam in East Africa

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Abstract

The Islamic presence in East Africa goes back to the Umayyad Caliphate, when the Omani al-Julandi family moved from Oman to East Africa for political and economic reasons. This movement was followed by other migrations from Southern Arabia. This led to the appearance of Muslim settlements and dynasties along the East African coastal region, which played a pivotal role in preaching Islam and introducing Arabian culture to the local communities. One of the Omani dynasties that established themselves along the East African coast was the Mazrui Dynasty,

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which ruled East Africa between 1741 and 1837. Though a number of studies have been conducted on the history of Islam in East Africa, the Swahili people, the Mazrui Dynasty and its descendants' prominent scholars, there is still a further need to discuss the Mazrui Dynasty in particular and their efforts on spreading Islam in East Africa. This study demonstrates the contributions of the Mazrui Dynasty to the spreading of Islam in East Africa by shedding light on the origins of Mazrui family, why they immigrated to East Africa, how the Dynasty was established in Mombasa while also examining some of the most important aspects of the promotion Islam in East Africa. The study demonstrates the significant interactions between Islamic civilization and East African societies throughout the era of the Mazrui Dynasty, which promoted the expansion of Islam and Arabian culture across the region.

Keywords: Islam, Arabia, Oman, East Africa, Mazrui Dynasty

Introduction

Islam arrived in East Africa during the reign of the fifth Umayyad Caliph, ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Marwan (65-86 AH / 685-705 CE). Sulayman and Saʿid, the sons of ʿAbbad al-Julandi, emigrated from Oman to the coasts of East Africa, fleeing the attacks of the Umayyad commander, al-Hajjaj ibn Yusuf al-Thaqafi.¹ The Kenyan scholar, Muhammad Saeed al-Beidh,² adds that Saʿid resided in Lamu (now in Kenya), while Sulayman was stationed in Mombasa (now in Kenya), and moved later to Zanzibar (now in Tanzania).³ Beidh supported this narrative by showing that an Umayyad coin dating back to the reign of ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Marwan had been discovered at Kizimkazi, Zanzibar, and another old Umayyad coin had been found with Shaykh Bwana Kitini al-Nabhani, one of the descendants of the Nabhani Dynasty (600-1100 AH / 1203-1688 CE) in Bate and Lamu Islands in Kenya.⁴ Later, the Muslim migration to East Africa increased significantly, and many Muslim settlements and cities emerged along the East African coast. These included Zeila, Mogadishu,

Merca, Barava, Kismayu, Lamu, Malindi, Mombasa, and Kilwa, among others. The Moroccan traveler, Ibn Batutah, visited the area in 1331, and noted that Mogadishu and Mombasa were large cities that were well established and inhabited by a cultured, religious, and well-organized Shafi'i Muslim population.⁵

In 1498, a Portuguese Christian pioneer, Vasco da Gama (1460-1524), arrived in Malindi, Kenya with Roman Catholic missionaries in his company on his way to India.⁶ The aim of Vasco da Gama and the Portuguese was to conquer East Africa to block the spread of Islam, and manage Indian Ocean maritime routes. To achieve these goals, the Portuguese sent more naval fleets, and the area came under Portuguese control from 1542 to 1698. The Portuguese also built Fort Jesus in Mombasa between 1593 and 1596 to be their military's command center in East Africa.⁷ In 1696, the Swahili Muslim rulers in East Africa sought assistance from the Imam of the Omani Ya'rubī Dynasty⁸ at the time, Saif ibn Sultan al-Ya'rubī (1692-1711), to help them retake their land from Portuguese forces. Al-Ya'rubī sent a powerful military to Mombasa and managed to defeat the Portuguese military at Mombasa's Fort Jesus in 1698, after two years of siege. The Portuguese tried to recapture Mombasa in 1699 from the Omani forces, but they were defeated again and their control over East Africa came to an end in the same year.⁹

The Portuguese period was followed by the Mazrui Dynasty (1741-1837). The Mazrui Dynasty was initially loyal to the Ya'rubī Dynasty in Oman, but when they learned that the Ya'rubī Dynasty had been overthrown by al-Busa'idi Dynasty in 1741, they declined to declare allegiance to the new rulers. Instead, they established their independent Mazrui dynasty in East Africa, with Mombasa as their capital city.¹⁰ The Mazrui Dynasty was followed by the al-Busa'idi Dynasty¹¹ (1837-1895), the British (1895-1963), and then an independent Kenya from 1963 onwards.

This study focuses on the Mazrui Dynasty period (1741-1837) because it is the period that marked the restoration of Muslim control over East Africa from the Portuguese in 1698/1699 and the greater expansion of Islam across East Africa. This expansion took the forms of proselytizing, conversion, the establishment of interior Muslim settlements, and

the building of mosques and introduction of educational institutions and charitable works.¹² This study also examines the contributions of the Mazrui Dynasty to maintaining Kadhi courts in East Africa, and ensuring that later, after the Dynasty was replaced in 1837, these courts remained well-supplied with trained kadhīs (judges).¹³ Later, descendants of the Mazrui Dynasty also included prominent scholars who led the Islamic reformist and awakening movements in East Africa. This study examines important, yet understudied, elements of the Mazrui Dynasty's contributions (1741-1837) to the development of Islam in East Africa. It contributes to a fuller history of Islam in Africa through this case study, which also highlights significant regional factors that aided the expansion of Islam in East Africa, and thus contributes to the wider study of Islam in Africa.¹⁴

Origins of Mazrui Family in East Africa

The Mazrui family in East Africa belongs to the Omani tribe of al-Mazrū'i. The singular is al-Mazrū'i, while the plural form as it is pronounced in the Arab Gulf states as al-Mazari'.¹⁵ In East Africa, the title is pronounced and written in Kiswahili as "Mazrui," for both the singular and plural forms, which is the form the name has taken in the majority of European language sources as well.¹⁶ Regarding the history of the tribe, some historians have indicated that the Mazruis belong to the 'Adnani tribe whose lineage is connected to Tha'lab ibn Wail ibn Qasit ibn Hanab ibn Aqsa ibn Da'mi ibn Jadila ibn Asad ibn Rabi'ah ibn Nizar ibn Ma'd ibn 'Adnan ibn Isma'il ibn Ibrahim.¹⁷ The famous scholar, Shaykh al-Amin Mazrui, suggests in his own book (*The History of The Mazrui Dynasty*) that the Mazruis who settled in East Africa can trace their lineage back to Saba' ibn Yashjub ibn Ya'rub ibn Qahtan, the well-known grandfather of the Qahtani tribes in Arabian Peninsula.¹⁸ Historical sources agree that the original home of Mazrui tribe in Oman was the Yemeni coastal city of al-Shihr in the Hadramout region, where a faction of the Mazrui family emigrated to Oman during the medieval period.¹⁹ In Oman, the Mazruis are scattered across all regions of the country, with significant concentrations in the al-Rustaq region and its

surrounding villages and settlements.²⁰ Those who emigrated to East Africa settled in Mombasa, Malindi, Takaungu, Gase; now in Kenya, and Zanzibar, Pemba and Dar es Salaam in Tanzania.²¹ Also noteworthy here is that, though the Mazrui family was originally belonged to Omani Ibadi School,²² they converted later to the Shafi'i School, the dominant Sunni School of Islamic jurisprudence in East Africa. This change occurred when the jurist Shaykh 'Abdallah ibn Nafi' al-Mazru'i (d.1846) adopted the Shafi'i School during his studies in Mecca and Medina from 1837 to 1846.²³ Since then, all the Mazrui families in East Africa have followed the Shafi'i School, and all their judges and scholars have ruled in accordance with Shafi'i jurisprudence, and their descendants are still Shafi'is to this day. Similarly, despite the fact that the Mazrui Dynasty was overthrown in 1837, its subsequent generations turned into a powerful community in the coastal cities of Kenya, where they served as liwalis (governors), administrators, kadhis, scholars, professors, economists, managers, educationists, doctors, lawyers etc.

Why the Mazrui Family Emigrated to East Africa

In 1696, the Swahili and Muslim leaders of Mombasa went to Oman to seek help to expel the Portuguese invaders. As a response, the Imam of the Omani al-Ya'rubi Dynasty at the time, Saif ibn Sultan al-Ya'rubi, sent land and sea military forces to Mombasa and directed them to besiege the Portuguese forces in Fort Jesus, Mombasa. The military conquered Mombasa in 1698 after a siege that lasted for two years and nine months. Although the Portuguese were defeated in the battle, they attacked Mombasa again in the hope of recapturing it. When Imam Saif ibn Sultan heard of this, he prepared another army in 1699, and assigned his commander, Mubarak ibn Gharib al-Mazru'i, as a leader for the new force. He also appointed Nasir ibn 'Abdallah ibn Muhammad al-Mazru'i as the governor of Mombasa after the defeat of the enemy. The second force reached Mombasa that the same year and defeated the Portuguese forces.²⁴ Soon after Portuguese defeat, Nasir became the governor of Mombasa, under the control of Imam Saif ibn Sultan al-Ya'rubi

in Oman. This event demonstrates that many of the first Mazruis arrived in East Africa either as commanders or members of the Omani military, which had come to liberate Mombasa from Portuguese occupation in 1699. Shaykh al-Amin Mazrui (d.1947) mentioned that the migration of Mazruis to East Africa began after the conquest of Mombasa by Imam Saif ibn Sultan al-Yaʿrubi in 1668, and that their migration continued to the region at a more rapid pace later. When the Sultan of Zanzibar and Muscat, Sayyid Saʿid ibn Sultan al-Busaʿidi (1791–1856), expelled the Mazrui family from Mombasa in 1837, their migration to Mombasa came to a halt due to the restrictions imposed on them by the government in Oman. As a result, paths of later migrations shifted toward Zanzibar and Pemba (now in Tanzania).²⁵

The Mazrui Dynasty's Service to Islam in East Africa: Ending the Portuguese Occupation

Portuguese forces attacked Mombasa multiple times and ultimately conquered it at the third attempt in 1589. Four years later, they began to build Fort Jesus, which was completed in 1596. The fort became the major maritime command station for the Portuguese on the East African coast.²⁶ As a result of Portuguese oppression, the Swahili Muslim leaders sent a delegation to the Imam of Oman in 1660, seeking military support. The delegation was led by Mwinyi Nguti, Mwinyi Mole bin Haji, Mwinyi Ndao bin Haji, Motomato wa Mtorogo and Kubo wa Mwamzungu. However, the Sultan of Oman at the time, Sultan ibn Saif al-Yaʿrubi (1649-1688) declined to interfere. A second delegation went to Oman in 1696 and was able to convince the incumbent Imam at the time, Saif ibn Sultan al-Yaʿrubi (1692-1711) to offer military assistance.²⁷ In response to that special request, a fleet with more than 3,000 men was sent to lay siege to Mombasa in 1696. After two years of siege, the Omani military managed to conquer Fort Jesus, the Portuguese fortified stronghold in Mombasa, on December 13, 1698.²⁸ The same year, Zanzibar, the last of Portugal's colonies in East Africa, also fell to the Imam.²⁹ The Portuguese, who retreated to Mozambique after their defeat, tried to reclaim Mombasa again in 1699, but the Imam sent another

army and the Portuguese forces were defeated again in Mombasa that the same year.³⁰



Figure 1. The entrance of Fort Jesus, Mombasa. The image was taken by the author on Sep 19, 2018.

Establishing an Islamic Dynasty and Culture in East Africa

The Mazrui governors in Mombasa were initially loyal to the Imams of the Yaʿrubi Dynasty in Oman. When the Dynasty was overthrown by al-Busaʿidi Dynasty under Imam Ahmad ibn Saʿid al-Busaʿidi (d.1783) in 1741, they established the Mazrui Dynasty in Mombasa for the following reasons:

- 1 They argued that the agreement to pledge allegiance to Imam Ahmad of Oman had been established through consultation, but rather had been imposed by force.
- 2 The new al-Busaʿidi Dynasty in Oman wanted to impose their governors on Mombasa and dominate their Mazrui subjects in East Africa without consultation.

- 3 The Mazrui governors wanted to be independent and had gained in confidence after defeating the Portuguese forces.

As a result, the Mazruis established an independent Mazrui dynasty in East Africa, with Mombasa as their capital city and Fort Jesus as their administrative headquarters.³¹ The Mazrui Dynasty was a Muslim dynasty that manifested its Islamic identity through supporting fellow Muslims across East Africa against the Portuguese, preaching Islam, and establishing new trade routes to the interior.³²

The Mazruis ruled the coast of East Africa for 138 years between 1698/1699 and 1837 through 11 governors, listed as follows:

- 1 Nasir ibn ‘Abdallah ibn Muhammad al-Mazru‘i. He was appointed by Imam Saif al-Ya‘rubi to be the governor of Mombasa after the expulsion of the Portuguese forces. He held the position until 1728, when he faced a rebellion from some of his soldiers and some Swahili natives in Mombasa. He was imprisoned in Fort Jesus and, while the rebellion was going on, the Portuguese managed to retake Mombasa. However, the leadership in Mombasa sought assistance again from the sixth Ya‘rubi Imam in Oman, Saif ibn Sultan II (1718-1741) who recaptured the city from the Portuguese in 1728.³³
- 2 Muhammad ibn ‘Uthman ibn ‘Abdallah al-Mazru‘i. Appointed by Imam Saif ibn Sultan II as governor of Mombasa in 1730 and continued until 1741. He became independent from the al-Busa‘idi Dynasty after the fall of the Ya‘rubi Dynasty in 1741. Consequently, he was the first independent Mazrui ruler in Mombasa.
- 3 ‘Ali ibn ‘Uthman ibn Muhammad al-Mazru‘i, the second independent ruler. He conquered Zanzibar in 1755, and his rule lasted from 1745 until 1762.
- 4 Mas‘ud ibn Nasir ibn ‘Abdallah al-Mazru‘i, the third independent ruler. He ruled between 1755 and 1779.
- 5 ‘Abdallah ibn Muhammad ibn ‘Uthman al-Mazru‘i, the son of the second governor, and the fourth independent ruler from Oman. He

ruled between 1779 and 1781, and was the first Mazrui ruler who was born in East Africa, whereas all his predecessors had been born in Oman.

- 6 Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿUthmān al-Mazrūʿī, brother to the fifth governor, and the fifth in the list of independent governors from Oman. He ruled between 1781 and 1814.
- 7 ʿAbdallah ibn Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Mazruʿī, the son of the sixth governor, and the sixth independent governor. He ruled between 1814 and 1823.
- 8 Sulayman ibn ʿAli ibn ʿUthman al-Mazruʿī, the seventh independent ruler. He governed between 1823 and 1826.
- 9 Salim ibn Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Mazruʿī, the eighth independent ruler. His ruled from 1826 to 1835.
- 10 Khamis ibn Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Mazruʿī, the ninth independent ruler. He was brother of the eighth independent governor and ruled from 1835 until 1836, when he was replaced by the son of his brother.
- 11 Rashid ibn Salim ibn Ahmad al-Mazruʿī, the eleventh independent governor. He ruled between 1836 and 1837 and was the last governor of the Mazrui Dynasty in Mombasa.³⁴ When al-Busaʿidi forces conquered Mombasa in 1837, he moved to Takaungu, 50 km north-east of Mombasa, and established a local administration at Takaungu. His son, Mubarak ibn Rashid al-Mazruʿī, extended his local authority to Gaze or Gase village, 48 km south of Mombasa, as a local ruler between 1869 and 1896. He led a series of revolts against the al-Busaʿidi Dynasty, to whom he never offered tribute and he never recognized al-Busaʿidi sovereignty over East Africa, and their attempts in the 1850s and the 1870s to force him into submission were both failures. He continued his resistance until 1896 when he was defeated by the al-Busaʿidi army with military support from the British East Africa protectorate (1895-1920).³⁵

The Mazrui Dynasty ruled all the coastal regions of East Africa. Their territories extended from Ras Ngomeni (in Kenya) in the north,

to the Pangani River (in Tanzania) in the south, in an area estimated by Shaykh al-Amin Mazrui as 12,380 square miles.³⁶ Thus, most of the Swahili region inhabited by the Arabs and Swahilis was under their rule. Their influence stretched into the interior of the Swahili region by 60 miles to the west. All the Mjikenda tribes were under their rule, and some of the Wazigua tribe living north of Pangani River. They also extended their rule to Pemba and the Zanzibar islands (now in Tanzania). Pemba became their center for importing agricultural products, grain, fruits, honey and sugar. The Mazruis almost became rulers of Lamu Island (now Lamu County in Kenya), not through conquest but in response to an appeal by the inhabitants. While Pate Island (now in Lamu County, Kenya) never officially come under their dominion, it was effectively part of their territory.³⁷ The British Captain W.F. Owen, who visited Mombasa on September 7, 1824, noted that the Mazruis had mustered an army of 25,000 to fight against their al-Busa'idi rivals.³⁸ Consequently, according to Shaykh al-Amin Mazrui, the Dynasty that gathered such an army could not have numbered less than 1,000,000 inhabitants, if we consider that 2.5% of a population is the maximum number it is possible to enroll under a dynasty that has no compulsory service.³⁹

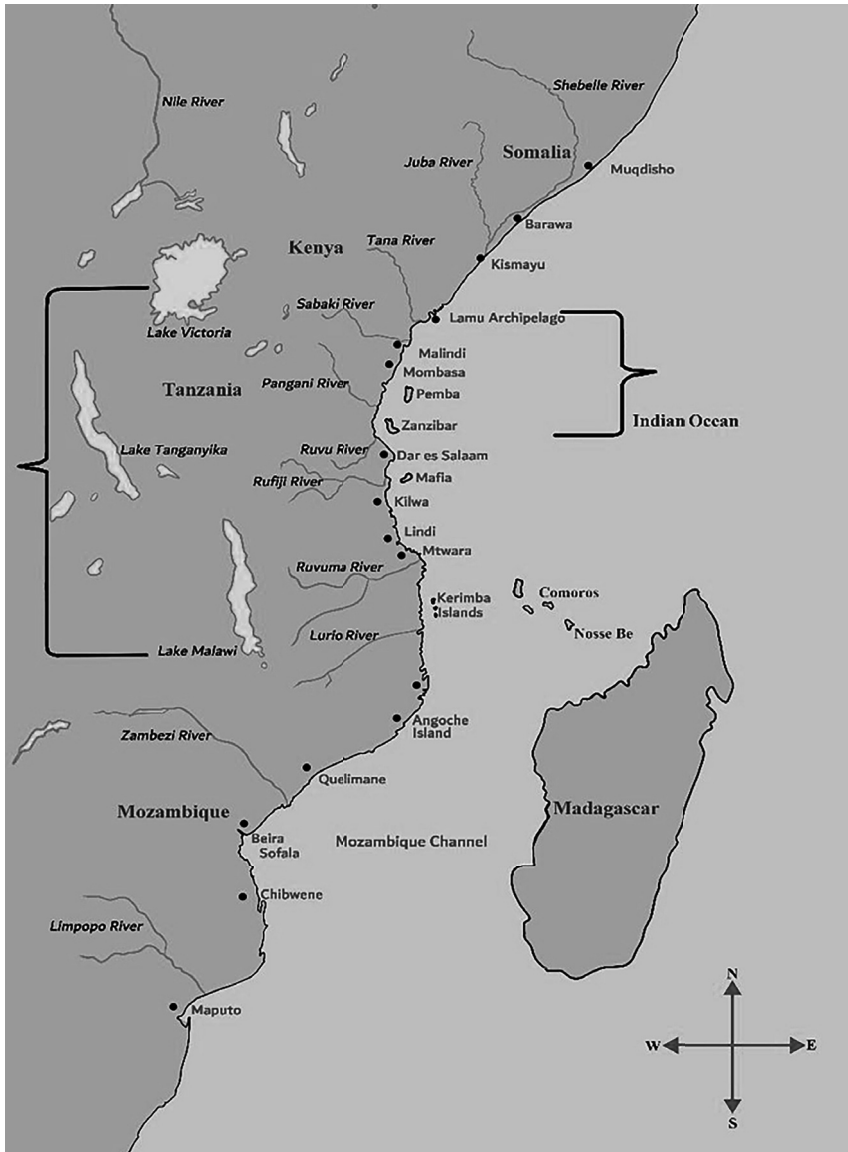


Figure 2. The Map of East Africa Coastal Areas. The right bracket shows the coastal areas that were under direct or indirect control of Mazrui Dynasty, as per Sheikh Al-Amin Mazrui. The left bracket indicates the hinterland areas that were influenced by Mazrui’s cultural and Islamic expansions. The map is designed by the author.

Preaching Islam in East Africa

The Mazrui's conquest of East Africa from the Portuguese provided an opportunity for Muslim missionaries and preachers, who returned to areas previously under Portuguese control.⁴⁰ Thus, Muslim missionary activity began to extend into the deep interior, and more native African communities started to embrace Islam en masse. The new converts in turn supported both their Arab and non-Arab Muslim brethren to spread Islam ever further inland, penetrating deeply into the interior, across forests, jungles and swamps until it reached the Congo Basin and the lakes plateau in Kenya and Tanganyika. As Islam spread, minarets rose in all the villages along the coastal road that leads to the lakes of Nyasa,⁴¹ and Tanganyika,⁴² where there was not a single village in those areas without a significant Muslim population among the Swahili and Arab communities. The Omani Ya'rubī and Mazrui intervention was not only an important factor in abolishing Portuguese control in East Africa, but it also made Muslim missionary activity and created the conditions for Islam to thrive without obstacles after two centuries of Portuguese restrictions.⁴³ Thus, one of the crowning achievements of the Ya'rubī and Mazrui eras was that they saved the Swahili region from the Portuguese attempts to prevent Islam from spreading and interacting with the Swahili culture and the native Bantu peoples of East Africa.⁴⁴

Maintaining an Islamic Judicial System

Kadhi Courts, or *Qadhi* Courts, are Islamic Shafi'i law courts that existed along the East African coast for centuries before the arrival of the colonial powers. The courts were established by the coastal Muslim communities to: a) issue rulings on religious issues, such as, Ramadan moon sightings, Eid celebration days and the Hajj calendar; b) manage the Muslim communities' affairs on issues relating to marriage, woman rights, child maintenance, divorce and other Islamic legal matters; c) document all legal and business transactions; d) settle individual and communal disputes through a reconciliation mechanism that involved all social stakeholders.⁴⁵ The jurisdiction of the Kadhi Courts over Muslim

cases under the Swahili rulers, the Mazrui Dynasty and the Zanzibar Sultanate's territories was unlimited. However, under British rule the government restricted their jurisdiction in 1931 to three issues of personal status: marriage, divorce and inheritance. This limitation continued following independence into the current Kenyan constitution.⁴⁶

The Mazrui Dynasty (1741-1837) in Mombasa supported the Kadhi courts in East Africa in three regards: 1) maintaining the Kadhi courts in a similar manner to the Swahili Muslim rulers before the establishment of the dynasty; 2) supervising the appointment of Kadhis to the different coastal cities and regions; 3) producing qualified Mazrui scholars and shaykhs who then served as Kadhis or Chief Kadhis before and after the establishment of the British colonial presence in East Africa in 1895. The key figures in this regard are as follows:

- 1 Shaykh 'Ali ibn 'Abdallah ibn Nafi' al-Mazru'i (1825-1894). He was born in Mombasa in 1825 and studied under his father and other prominent shaykhs. When al-Busa'idi forces took over Mombasa from Mazrui Dynasty in 1937, he moved to Yemen and then Mecca for study. He stayed in Mecca with his father and brother from 1837 until 1846, where he studied in both Mecca and Medina. He came back to Mombasa in 1846 and then returned to Mecca again in 1854 for more studies. In 1856, he travelled to Zanzibar and Pemba and was appointed as Kadhi of Mombasa by the Sultan of Zanzibar at the time, Sayyid Majid ibn Sa'id al-Busa'idi, where he served as Kadhi of Mombasa between 1856 and 1870. In 1887, he was imprisoned by the Sultan of Zanzibar, Barghash ibn Sa'id al-Busa'idi (r.1870-1888), as punishment for preaching Sunni Shafi'i Islam among the coastal cities and criticizing Ibadi theology. His successor, Sultan Khalifah ibn Sa'id al-Busa'idi (r.1888-1890) released him from prison in 1888. Shaykh 'Ali was a well-versed scholar and Kadhi who wrote several books on Prophetic traditions, Islamic jurisprudence, Islamic theology and the biography of the Prophet Muhammad. He died in Mombasa in 1894.⁴⁷
- 2 Shaykh Sulayman ibn 'Ali ibn Khamis al-Mazru'i (1867-1937). He was born in Mombasa in 1867 and became famous as "Shaykh

Suleiman Mazrui.” He studied under the great scholars of Mombasa and Zanzibar, became Kadhi of Mombasa from 1910 to 1932, and worked as Chief Kadhi of the Kenya Colony from 1932 until his death in 1937. He was a prominent, influential reformist scholar who wrote several books in Islamic studies.⁴⁸

- 3 Shaykh al-Amin ibn ‘Ali ibn ‘Abdallah al-Mazru‘i (1890-1947). He was born in Mombasa in 1890 and was well-known in East Africa as “Shaykh al-Amin Mazrui.” He studied under, and was raised by his uncle, Shaykh Suleiman Mazrui, as his father (first on this list) died in 1894 when he was only four years old. In addition to his studies in Mombasa, he educated at the famous al-Swafa Islamic center in Lamu, and also travelled to Zanzibar several times to study as well. He served as the Kadhi of Mombasa between 1932 and 1934, acting Chief Kadhi of Kenya Colony between 1934 and 1937, and then Chief Kadhi of Kenya Colony between 1937 and 1947. Shaykh al-Amin Mazrui, as he was known in East Africa, was one of the great Muslim reformist scholars of the region. He educated thousands, established several Muslim educational institutions, established two reformist journals, travelled widely to proselytize, and authored more than twelve books in both the Arabic and Swahili languages in Islamic studies.⁴⁹
- 4 Shaykh Ma‘mun ibn Sulayman al-Mazru‘i (1895-1969). He is the son of the former Kadhi, Shaykh Sulayman Mazrui, and was raised in a scholarly family. When Shaykh al-Amin Mazrui was elevated to Acting Chief Kadhi of the Kenya Colony in 1934, he appointed him as Acting Kadhi of Mombasa between 1934 and 1937. In 1937 he was appointed by the colonial government to the position Acting Kadhi of Mombasa, and then served as Kadhi of Mombasa until 1960. He also served as Chief Kadhi of the Kenya Colony in 1958.⁵⁰
- 5 Shaykh Muhammad ibn Qasim ibn Rashid ibn ‘Ali al-Mazru‘i (1912-1982). He was born in Mombasa in 1912 and was known throughout East Africa as Shaykh Muhammad Kassim Mazrui. He was appointed to the judiciary in 1946, serving as a Kadhi of Malindi (1947-1962) and Lamu (1962-1963). He was elevated to the position of Chief Kadhi of

the Kenya Colony in 1963 until he retired in 1967. He was the first Chief Kadhi of independent Kenya, which had gained its independence in 1963. Shaykh Muhammad Kassim was a famous scholar and reformer who wrote several books in Islamic studies and contributed to the establishment of many educational and academic centers in Mombasa and across East Africa. He died in Mombasa in 1982.⁵¹

- 6 Shaykh Hammad ibn Muhammad Qasim (Kassim) al-Mazru'i, the son of the previous Shaykh Muhammad Kassim Mazrui. He was born in Lamu in 1950 and studied in Kenya, Saudi Arabia and Nigeria. He served as the Kadhi of Lamu (1992-1995), Kadhi of Nairobi (1995-2002) and then served as the Chief Kadhi of Kenya between 2002 and 2010. He is a religious and political scholar who still contributes to the Muslim community in Kenya.⁵²

Islamic Educational and Charitable Works of the Mazrui Dynasty

The Mazrui Dynasty and their scholars have established multiple educational centers in Mombasa, Takaungu and Gaze in the Kenyan coastal region. In Mombasa, the well-known Madrasatu al-Ghazali al-Islamiyyah was established by the aforementioned Chief Kadhi of Kenya, Shaykh al-Amin Mazrui. This institution has produced a large group of East African scholars, with many graduates going on to serve as Kadhis and Chief Kadhis in their home countries.⁵³ In addition, the Mazruis have contributed to numerous charitable endeavors, such as building mosques, and allocating endowments for Qur'anic and religious schools throughout the coastal cities of East Africa. Shaykh Mubarak ibn Rashid al-Mazru'i, the ruler of Gaze and Takaungu, built the Makadara Mosque in the Kibokoni area of Mombasa and another important mosque in the Gaze region, south of Mombasa. The Mazruis also built a third mosque in the heart of Mombasa's old town, which is known to this day as the "Mazrui Mosque."⁵⁴ They also built a fourth mosque in Takaungu, the al-Shakhsi Mosque. Later, new religious educational facilities were added to the mosque complex to accommodate different educational and social activities.⁵⁵

Mazrui Scholars and Islamic Reformist Movements in East Africa

It was Mazrui scholars from the Mazrui community in Kenya that led the Islamic revival and awakening movements in East Africa during the 19th and 20th centuries. They were influenced by the writings of the major Muslim reformers of the time, and their efforts focused on reforming and promoting a Muslim way of life, culture and attitude. Though Mazrui reformist scholars were influenced by international intellectual currents, they were also rooted in their local context and had their own approaches. Like their peers elsewhere in the Muslim world, they navigated between advocating for intellectual and scientific advancement based on Western science, while warning against “blind imitation” and adopting Western cultural values. Likewise, they also promoted the educational advancement of women and the teaching of modern subjects in Muslim *madrasas*. At the same time, they also published and established Islamic journals and publications that were specific to the East African context.⁵⁶ The Mazrui reform movement foregrounded the Islamic revival in East Africa, while al-Amin Mazrui, the latest Mazrui reformer, also transcended the more local reformist context to engage with international African, Global South, and more marginalized perspectives.⁵⁷ The following are the most famous Mazrui reformist scholars:

1. Shaykh al-Amin Mazrui (1890-1947)

Shaykh al-Amin Mazrui; the Chief Kadhi of the Kenya Colony (1937-1947), was influenced by the leaders of reform movements from the wider the Muslim world including Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1838-1897), Muhammad ‘Abduh (1849-1905) and Muhammad Rashid Rida (1865-1935).⁵⁸ He was a pioneer of the revival movement in East Africa in the 1930s that aimed transform the condition of Muslim communities in the region by ridding them of those aspects that were deemed to be regressive and contrary to the spirit of Islam, such as ignorance, poverty, backwardness and certain kinds of polytheistic practices.⁵⁹ He was the first East African scholar of any social stature to fully embrace

the modernist Islamic perspective, and to write about it and promote it publicly and widely.⁶⁰ In order to reach a wider public, he established two weekly newspapers. The first was *al-Sahifa*, published in Swahili using the Arabic script, in 1930. It was distributed for free and lasted for 16 months. The second was *al-Islah*, which was first published in 1932. It was written in Swahili using the Latin script together with Arabic, and focused on religious as well as political issues. It was published weekly and lasted for only twelve months.⁶¹ Both of these publications ran regular editorials aimed at a mass audience to encourage the acceptance of modernist ideas in realms such as education while retaining the core of their traditional values. Shaykh al-Amin's writings focused on the importance of Islamic education in the Muslim community in response to calls for supporting secular education. He also emphasized the importance of the Arabic language as a tool for learning about Islam and also encouraged the teaching of Arabic and including religious education in secular schools. He also supported the idea of writing Swahili using the Arabic script in order to connect Swahili to Arabic. He warned Muslims against the perils of blindly adopting Western cultural values and European secular education. Shaykh al-Amin also supported the education of women, which Muslim society had ignored, and called for the teaching of modern subjects in *madrasas*. His aspirations went beyond his East African context, and he was in contact with traditional intellectual centers in the Hadramout and Oman as well as modernist theology and jurisprudence coming out of al-Azhar University in Egypt, and elsewhere. He also contributed to modernist Egyptian publications, such as *al-Manar* and *al-'Urwa al-Wuthqa*.⁶²

Like Muhammad 'Abduh, Shaykh al-Amin was apprehensive about the growing influence of Western thought and habits among Muslims, particularly among the youth. Fearing for the future, he was deeply concerned that young Muslims had to be convinced of the validity and relevance of Islam in an increasingly secularized society. In his approach, drawing on modernist views, Shaykh al-Amin argued that Islam had a role to play in people's secular, or material, life as well as in their "other-worldly" life. In addition to being the means to ensure an everlasting life in the hereafter, it Islam was also as a discipline whose law served

practical and worldly ends. Like his peer ‘Abduh, he felt that there was a need for both reason and revelation, and that Islam did not require a rejection of worldly affairs. Rather, Muslims had to concern themselves both with life in this world and life after death. He was concerned that people were imitating unbelievers, while neglecting the teachings of their religion and its obligations and duties. Similar to ‘Abduh and Rida, Shaykh al-Amin argued that it was necessary for Muslims to absorb Western scientific knowledge and technology in order to progress. To support his point, he employed the same approach to the Egyptian modernists in arguing that Islam, in its infancy, had also once had been rational and scientific, but was now in need of reform. As such, it was Muslims who had once had been masters of such “modern” subjects as algebra, astronomy, chemistry, medicine, logic, and philosophy. Thus, Muslims of the East African coast would not be sinning in studying and mastering these sciences.⁶³ Ahmed Idha Salim summarized the impact of Shaykh al-Amin writing,

*Undoubtedly, [Shaykh al-Amin] was the most outstanding Muslim scholar and reformer to appear in Kenya. His contribution to Islam and Muslim scholarship has been the most enduring. His regular seminars produced many scholars who helped spread Islam further, not only in Kenya but in East Africa as a whole. He himself traveled, preached, encouraged and supported efforts to build madrasas and mosques. He wrote, published and distributed the first religious textbooks in Kiswahili on different aspects of Islam and Islamic history.*⁶⁴

Shaykh al-Amin also argued vigorously against the teachings of the Ahmadiyya community in East Africa that at the time was disseminating the teachings of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Qadiani (1835-1908). Shaykh al-Amin wrote three books in Kiswahili warning Muslims against the Ahmadiyya community and its activities. In order to refute both Ahmadi arguments and those of Christian missionaries, who had both published Swahili Qur’anic translations with concerning commentaries (according to him), he began a project to translate the Qur’an into the Kiswahili

language himself, but died in 1947 before its completion.⁶⁵ It was his well-known student, the then Chief Kadhi of Kenya, Shaykh Abdulla Saleh al-Farsy (1912-1982), who would complete this project and publish the now famous Swahili Qur'anic translation, *Qurani Takatifu*, which was first publications in 1969, and re-published in new editions multiple times due to high demand.⁶⁶

2. Shaykh Muhammad Kassim Mazrui (1912-1982)

Shaykh Muhammad studied under Shaykh al-Amin Mazrui, and continued his Islamic revivalist and modernist project in East Africa. Besides his work as Kadhi and then as Chief Kadhi of Kenya between 1963 and 1967, his publications display the rational principles that the reformist movement relied upon and propagated.⁶⁷ He disseminated most of his revivalist ideas through his writings; especially his series *Hukum za Sharia*. In part three of the series, he wrote an article about Islam and politics and noted that the role of a politician is to guide the government in legislating proper laws and practicing good governance. He also stressed the significance of voting and the responsibility of each individual to vote wisely. He noted that, “your single vote can determine the election of a proper candidate who could serve the entire Islamic nation in a prosperous manner.” He clearly pointed out that the role of government is not only to serve religion but also to take charge of the welfare of the society.⁶⁸ Like Shaykh al-Amin, he also supported women’s education and held special seminars for Muslim women separately.⁶⁹

The impact of Shaykh Muhammad Kassim is evidenced through his many books, publications, students, his seminars in mosques and public conferences and gatherings. He translated the first two chapters of the Qur’an into Kiswahili, and wrote several books on Islamic Law. He also write a history of the Rightly Guided Caliphs, a history of slavery in Islam and other religions, in addition to his numerous articles, which he published in the 1930s through the *Al-Islah* and *Al-Sahifa* journals. Additionally, he published a newspaper in Kiswahili titled *Sauti Ya Haki*, the “Voice of the Right,” and issued rulings on several socially controversial issues.⁷⁰ In turn, Shaykh Muhammad’s many students went on to

become reformist leaders across East Africa, or Kadhis and Chief Kadhis within the Kenyan judiciary.⁷¹

3. Ali Mazrui (1933-2014)

Ali Mazrui was born in Mombasa in 1933. He was the son of the aforementioned scholar and Chief Kadhi of then Kenya Colony, Shaykh al-Amin Mazrui. Ali Mazrui attended school in Mombasa, then taught at the Mombasa Institute of Muslim Education (MIOME),⁷² before leaving for Huddersfield Technical College, UK, in 1955 after he won a scholarship from the Colonial Government.⁷³ Mazrui then obtained his B.A. degree from Manchester University in 1960, his M.A. from Columbia University in New York in 1961, and his PhD in Political Science from Oxford University in 1966. He was both an academic and political writer on the subjects of *African* and Islamic studies and North-South relations. His positions included director of the Institute of Global Cultural Studies at Binghamton University, New York, and director of the Center for Afro-American and African Studies at the University of Michigan. In addition to his academic appointments, Mazrui also served as president of the African Studies Association (USA), and as vice president of the International Political Science Association and special advisor to the World Bank. He has also served on the board of the American Muslim Council in Washington, D.C. Ali Mazrui's research interests included African politics, international political culture, political Islam and North-South relations. He is the author or co-author of more than thirty books and also published hundreds of articles in major scholastic journals and media outlets. He also served on the editorial boards of more than twenty international scholarly journals. Mazrui was widely consulted by heads of state and governments, international media and research institutions for political strategies and alternative thoughts.⁷⁴ He contributed to various disciplines such as political science, Islamic studies, African studies, cultural studies and literature. This has earned him the name "multiple Mazrui." Yet his most significant contributions were in African and Islamic studies.⁷⁵

Ali Mazrui was considered an international political reformist who became famous for his political theories on Africa, Islam and the world at large. He conceptualized “Africa’s triplet heritage,” which described modern Africa according to three key influences: a) the colonial and imperialist legacy of the West; b) the spiritual and cultural influence of Islam spreading from the east; and c) Africa’s own indigenous legacy.⁷⁶ He also conceptualized the theory of “The Paradoxes of Africa.” Mazrui theorized six paradoxes that he considered were central to understanding Africa. These were as follows: a) Africa is the first home of humankind but the last to be made truly habitable; b) Africans are not the most brutalized of peoples, but they are the most humiliated; c) African societies were the most exposed to westernization in 20th century; d) Africa is not the poorest region in resources but it is the least developed continent; e) Africa is the second-largest inhabited continent but it is highly fragmented; f) Africa is central in its geographical position, but politically and militarily marginal.⁷⁷ Ali Mazrui was a well-known scholar and commentator on Islam and Islamism who advocated for the rights of Muslims around the world and called upon Western powers to build a relationship with the Muslim world, while rejecting all kinds of violence and terrorism.⁷⁸ In his book, *Islam: Between Globalization & Counter-Terrorism* he called for reconciliation and a better understanding between Muslims and the United States and added, “But if the United States fails to find creative ways of meeting the Islamic challenge, and descends to the equivalent of feeding Muslims to the lions, then the American empire may experience as decisive a decline as the Roman Empire once sustained.”⁷⁹ In *Resurgent Islam and the Politics of Identity*, Mazrui analyzed the global causes for political radicalization among Muslims as: a) imperialism which oppressed Muslim countries; b) the State of Israel and its brutal occupation of the Palestinian territory; the annexation of Jerusalem; and the United States’ enormous material, diplomatic and uncritical support of the Jewish state; c) multiple humiliations of Muslims in so many countries, such as Afghanistan, Palestine, Bosnia and Kosovo, Kashmir, Chechnya, Southern Philippines, Southern Thailand and elsewhere.⁸⁰

His works envisaged a peaceful co-existence among world cultures and civilizations away from regional and international conflicts and drew upon an Islamic, African and Arab identities in his writings. Mazrui criticized all exclusivism or supremacy movements and theories; thus, he opposed Radical Islamists, Imperialism, Marxism, Zionism, Neoconservatives in the United States of America.⁸¹ Mazrui advocated for Pan-Africanism and demanded the independence of the African peoples and their liberation from their colonizers politically, economically and scientifically.⁸²

Criticisms of the Mazrui Dynasty

Although the Mazrui Dynasty had overseen a number of political, civilizational and cultural achievements across East Africa, some critics accused them of engaging in the slave trade, allying themselves with the British and monopolizing the Kadhi Courts. Some Western writers indicated that the Mazrui family, who was a major coastal family owning many slaves, attacked Koromio, between Malindi and Mombasa, in 1852 and Fuladoyo in 1883, to gain the return of their fugitive slaves who had fled from their masters. They also added that in the 18th century, the Mazrui and Nabahani clans' influence on the coast bore responsibility for encouraging a switch in the system of land tenure from being kinship and clientage-based to becoming reliant on land alienation and chattel slavery, that is, establishing a plantation form of production, though communities in both Mombasa and Lamu resisted this change with some success.⁸³ If the accusation that Mazruis were involved in slavery was indeed true, then it may have been at the individual or family level because the Mazrui Dynasty did not involve itself historically in the slave trade, which became rampant during the reign of their successor; the Sultanate of Zanzibar.⁸⁴ Furthermore, the events described happened after the Mazrui Dynasty was removed from Mombasa in 1837.

The Mazrui Dynasty was also accused of allying with the British in their fight against the al-Busa'idi Dynasty in the 19th century, and that they came to an agreement with a British Captain William Owen in 1824 to become a British protectorate. Two years later the British colonial

administration nullified the so-called Owen-Mazrui agreement and opted to preserve their relationship with the al-Busa'idi Dynasty in Oman over the Mazrui Dynasty in Mombasa.⁸⁵ Arguably, here it was the Mazrui Dynasty that was forced to reach an agreement with Captain Owen in 1824 in order to shield themselves against al-Busa'idi attacks, and ultimately the British sided with their enemies, favouring their relationship with the al-Busa'idi Dynasty.

Another challenge which faced the Mazruis after removal of their Dynasty in 1837 was being suspected of monopolizing the appointment of Kadhi and Chief Kadhi positions in Kenya during the reign of Sultanate of Zanzibar, the British Colony, and then in the independent Kenya. Other communities in the coastal region accused the Mazruis of not allowing other Swahili Muslim communities to serve in Kadhi Courts as they did. This issue caused tensions between the Mazrui family and some of the other Arab and Swahili families in Mombasa and Lamu.⁸⁶ These accusations may have merit if we consider the ratio of Mazrui Kadhis and Chief Kadhis in relation to the number of Kadhis and Chief Kadhis from other Arab and Swahili families. There were five Mazrui Chief Kadhis out of 12 Chief Kadhis in Kenyan history, since the inception of the position of Chief Kadhi post under the British authority in 1902, in addition to several official Kadhi posts which existing during and after the Sultanate of Zanzibar.⁸⁷

Conclusion

This study has examined the history of the Mazrui Dynasty in East Africa (1741–1837), beginning with the Mazrui military commanders who came to East Africa with the Omani Ya'rubi military forces, who reclaimed Mombasa from the Portuguese in 1699. The Mazrui governors in Mombasa were initially under the Ya'rubi Dynasty in Oman from 1699 to 1741, but when that Dynasty was overthrown by the al-Busa'idi Dynasty of Oman in 1741, they broke away and established an independent dynasty in East Africa. The dynasty ruled East Africa and the major coastal cities until 1837, when they were defeated by al-Busa'idi forces from Oman with support from the British East Africa Protectorate. The

study has highlighted the contributions of the Mazrui Dynasty and its descendants to Islamic and Muslim life and culture in East Africa in the following regards:

- 1 The Mazrui military commanders under the Ya‘rubi Imams in Oman successfully ended the Portuguese rule in East Africa in 1699.
- 2 The Dynasty established an Islamic culture-based dynasty (1741–1837), which extended from Ras Ngomeni (now in Kenya) in the north to the River Pangani (now in Tanzania) in the south, with Mombasa as the capital city.
- 3 The Dynasty preached Islam to the East African native communities, and Islam penetrated the interior and reached the Congo Basin and lakes plateau in Tanganyika and Kenya.
- 4 The Dynasty maintained and supplied the Kadhi Court system for centuries, which existed in East Africa’s coastal regions for religious, legal and social purposes.
- 5 The Dynasty promoted educational and charitable works in Mombasa, Takaungu and Gaze in the Kenyan coastal region and throughout the state.
- 6 The most notable contribution of the Mazrui Dynasty is that it left behind a vibrant Mazrui community of descendants, which produced prominent scholars who had a great impact on reviving and awakening the Muslim community in the East Africa context through their writings, publications, establishment of educational centers and inspiring their students and followers. Although they were influenced internationally by the modernist Muslim reformists, the Mazruis had their own local approaches and particularities which enriched the scholarly and intellectual milieu of East Africa and led to the emergence of an Islamic reformist movement among East Africa’s Muslim scholars.
- 7 Some scholars and critics have accused the Mazrui Dynasty and families of involvement in slavery, allyship with the British and monopolization of the Kadhi Courts. This study has argued that Mazrui families may well have been involved in slavery, but not at

the level of the state and dynasty, if this happened at all. It was the Mazrui Dynasty that was forced by the al-Busa‘idi threat to seek out British protection. Though Mazrui Chief Kadhis were more common than Chief Kadhis from other communities, this was due to their experience in the Kadhi Court system and Islamic Law.

Endnotes

- 1 Mahmud al-Huwayri, *Sāhil Sharq Ifrīqiyyā* (Cairo: Dār al-Ma‘ārif, 1986), 22; Jamal Zakariya, *Dawlat al-Būsa‘id fi ‘Ummān wa-Sharq Ifrīqiyyā* (al-‘Ayn: Markaz Zāyed li-al-Turāth wa-al-Tārikh, 2000), 27.
- 2 Muhammad Saeed al-Beidh was a famous scholar and preacher in Kenyan coastal areas who wrote several books on Arabic, Islamic studies and Swahili history, using both Arabic and Swahili languages. He died in 2013. See his biography at <https://www.islamicpluralism.org/2172/a-loss-of-one-of-the-great-sons-of-east-africa>, accessed May 21, 2023.
- 3 Muhammad Saeed Al-Beidh, *Tayy al-Marāhil fi Tārikh al-Sawāhil* (Lamu: Dār al-Mirāth al-Nabawī, n.d.), 12.
- 4 Ibid., 12.
- 5 Ibn Batutah, Muhammad ibn ‘Abdallah, *Rihlat Ibn Baṭūṭah* (Beirut: Dāru Iḥyā’ al-‘Ulūm al-‘Arabi, 1987), 257.
- 6 David B. Barrett et al., *Kenya Churches Handbook* (Kisumu: Evangelical Publishing House, 1973), 21.
- 7 Mark Cartwright, “The Portuguese in East Africa,” *World History Encyclopedia*, July 15, 2021, accessed March 20, 2023, <https://www.worldhistory.org/article/1798/the-portuguese-in-east-africa/>
- 8 The Ya‘rubī Dynasty was an imamate dynasty which existed in Oman between 1624 and 1741. It was established initially in Oman but extended later to the Arabian Gulf, parts of Persia and East Africa. See ‘Abdallah Ibn Muhammad al-Tai, *Tārikh ‘Ummān al-Siyāsī* (Kuwait: Maktabat al-Rubai‘ān li-al-Nashr wa-al-Tawzī‘, 2008), 47.
- 9 Al-Amin Bin ‘Ali Mazru‘i, *The History of the Mazru‘i Dynasty of Mombasa*, Translated and annotated by J. M. Ritchie (London: The British Academy, Oxford University Press, 1995), 29-30.
- 10 Ibid., 29-122.
- 11 The al-Busa‘idi Dynasty was an imamate state which established in Oman in 1741 after the fall of the Ya‘rubī Dynasty. It was originally established in Muscat, but extended later to parts of the Arabian Gulf and East Africa. See al-Tai, *Tārikh ‘Ummān*, 87.
- 12 Jamila ‘Abdu Ma‘shi, *Juhūd al-Mazārī‘a fi Nashr al-Islām fi Sharq Ifrīqiyyā: Dirāsa Tārikhīyya Ḥadāriyya* (Mecca: Umm al-Qura University, M.A. Thesis, 2014), 11-346.
- 13 The term *Kadhi* is a word derived from the Arabic word *Qāḍī*, which refers to Islamic legal judge. A Chief *Kadhi*, in the British colonial and Kenyan judicial systems. It is effectively the equivalent of the position of Grand Mufti or Shaykh al-Islam in some Muslim countries.

- 14 See, for example, Ahmed Idha Salim, *The Swahili-Speaking Communities of the Kenya Coast, 1895-1965* (University of London: PhD Thesis, 1968), 19-418; Susan F. Hirsch, *Pronouncing and Persevering: Gender and the Discourses of Disputing in an African Islamic Court* (Chicago: The university of Chicago press, 1998), 16-240; Nehemia Levtzion and Randall L. Pouwels, eds. *The History of Islam in Africa* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2000), 251-302; Twalib Bwana Abbas, *The Kadhi Courts in Kenya judiciary, History, Procedure and Practice* (Mombasa: 2006) 1-70; Roman Loimeier and Rüdiger Seesemann, eds. *The Global Worlds of the Swahili: Interfaces of Islam, Identity and Space in 19th and 20th-century East Africa* (Berlin: Lit; 2006), 1-363; Kai Kresse, *Philosophing in Mombasa: Knowledge, Islam and Intellectual Practice on the Swahili Coast* (Edinburgh: Edinburg University Press, 2007) 11-287; Shamil Jeppie, Ebrahim Moos and Richard Roberts, eds. *Muslim Family Law in Sub-Saharan Africa; Colonial Legacies and Post-Colonial Challenges*, (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010), 10-388; John Chesworth, "Kadhi's Courts in Kenya: Reactions and Responses," in *Constitutional Review in Kenya and Kadhis Courts*, eds. A. Tayob and J. Wandera (Cape Town: University of Cape Town, 2011), 3-17; Roman Loimeier, *Muslim Societies in Africa: A Historical Anthropology* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), 210-247; Kevin Wanyonyi, *The Kadhi Courts in Kenya, Towards Enhancing Access to Justice for Muslim Women* (Lund University: M.A. thesis, 2016), 13-73.
- 15 Hamad al-Jasir, *Mu'jam Qabā'il al-Mamlaka* (Riyadh: Manshūrāt al-Nādi al-Adabī, 1981), 748.
- 16 For this reason, I have preferred the term "Mazru'i" throughout this study.
- 17 Midad ibn Sulayman al-Hana'i, *al-Tārīkh wa-al-Bayān fī Qabā'il 'Ummān* (London: Dār al-Ḥikma, 2010), 280.
- 18 Mazru'i, *History of the Mazru'i Dynasty*, 15-20.
- 19 'Abdallah Muhammad al-'Alawi, *Nashr al-Nafaḥāt al-Miskiyya fī Akhbār al-Shajara al-Muḥammadiyya* (Manuscript) (Tarim: Maktabat al-Aḥqāf), Vol.1, 6-7.
- 20 Mazru'i, *History of the Mazru'i Dynasty*, 20; Salim Hammud al-Sayyabi, *Is'āf al-A'yān fī Ansāb Ahl 'Ummān* (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islāmi, 1965), 79.
- 21 Mazru'i, *The History of the Mazru'i Dynasty*, 21
- 22 The *Ibādi* sect is one of the offshoots of the *Khawārij* theological sect which appeared during early days of Islam. The sect has had a historical presence in Oman and in some areas of North Africa, and arrived in Zanzibar with *Ibādi* immigrants from Oman. See Manī' ibn Hammad al-Juhani et al, *al-Mawsū'a al-Muyassara fī al-Adyān wa-al-Madhāhib wa-al-Aḥzab al-Mu'āsira* (Riyadh: Dār al-Nadwa al-'Ālamiyya, 1998), Vol. 1, 62.
- 23 Abdullah Saleh Farsy, *Baadhi ya Wanavyuoni wa Mashariki ya Afrika* (Zanzibar: Book Room, 1972), 9-11; Ghalib Yusuf Tamim, *Sh. Ali bin Abdalla bin Nafi Mazru'i: The Pioneering Role Model of the East Africa Muslim Reformer*, (Nairobi: Signal Press Limited, 2013), 10.

- 24 Ibid., 29-30.
- 25 Ibid., 21-22.
- 26 Timothy J. Stapleton, *A Military History of Africa* (Westport: Praeger Publishers, 2013), 114.
- 27 Mwaruvie, J.M. “The Ten Miles Coastal Strip: An Examination of the Intricate Nature of Land Question at Kenyan Coast,” *International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* 1, no. 20 (2011), 176-182.
- 28 Ghalib Yusuf Tamim, *Bustani la Ma-Ulama* (Nairobi: Signal Press, 2016), 93.
- 29 ‘Abdu, *Juhūd al-Mazāri‘a*, 15; Zakariya, *Dawlat al-Busa‘id fi ‘Ummān*, 42.
- 30 Mazru‘i, *The History of the Mazru‘i Dynasty*, 30.
- 31 Ibid., 24-26.
- 32 ‘Abdu, *Juhūd al-Mazāri‘a*, 22-426.
- 33 Mazru‘i, *The History of the Mazru‘i Dynasty*, 31-32.
- 34 This is how their names appeared in order on a hanging plaque in the “Mazrui House,” within the Fort Jesus premises, Kenya, with the title “Omani *Walis* of Al-Mazrui Family in Mombasa (1741-1837). This list, which was prepared by the Omani National Documents and Archives Authority, omitted the 1st and 10th governors in the list because the 1st governor was under the authority of the Ya‘rubi Dynasty in Oman, while the 10th governor was sacked after ruling for one year and replaced with his successor in 1836.
- 35 Salim, *The Swahili-Speaking Communities*, 43-44; Randall L. Pouwels, “Sh. al-Amin B. Ali Mazrui and Islamic Modernism in East Africa, 1875-1947,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 13, no. 3 (1981), 329-345.
- 36 Mazru‘i, *The History of the Mazru‘i Dynasty*, 22-24.
- 37 Ibid., 22-24.
- 38 Owen, Capt. F.W., *Narratives of Voyages to explore the shores of Africa, Arabia and Madagascar* (London: Richard Bentley, 1833), Vol.1, 367.
- 39 Mazru‘i, *The History of the Mazru‘i Dynasty*, 24.
- 40 ‘Abdu, *Juhūd al-Mazāri‘a*, 233-303.
- 41 It is also called “Lake Malawi” and located between Malawi, Mozambique and Tanzania. The Nyasa people are belong to African Nyasa tribe which is found in South-Eastern Africa mainly in Malawi, South-Western Tanzania and parts of Northern Mozambique. They are also referred as the Kimanda, Kinyasa and Manda. See Muhammad Zuhdi Yakan, *Almanac of African Peoples & Nations* (Piscataway: Transaction Publishers, 1999), 580.
- 42 Lake Tanganyika is an African great lake which is shared by Tanzania, DRC, Burundi and Zambia. See: Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lake_Tanganyika, accessed March 25, 2023.

- 43 ‘Abd al-Fattah Muqallid Ghunaim, *al-Islām wa-al-muslimūn fi Sharq Ifrīqiyyā* (Cairo: ‘Alām al-Kutub, 1997), 196-199.
- 44 ‘Abd al-Rahman Ahmad ‘Uthman, “al-Dawr al-‘Ummāni fi Taqwiyat wa-Ta’sil al-Islām fi Sharq Ifrīqiyyā,” *Dirāsāt Ifrīqiyya*, issue no. 14 (1996), 30.
- 45 Manswab Abdulrahman, “Quḍāt al-Mazāri‘a Qabl Istiqlāl Jamhuriyat Keenya wa-ba‘d,” *Proceedings of International Conference on Reformation and Renewal in the light of Prof. Ali Mazrui’s Legacy and the Future of Reforms in the Muslim World* (Khartoum: International University of Africa, Centre for research and African Studies, February 2019), 122-123.
- 46 John Chesworth, “Kadhi’s Courts in Kenya: Reactions and Responses,” 3-17.
- 47 Farsy, *Baadhi ya wanavyuoni*, 9-11; Salim, *The Swahili-Speaking Communities*, 288-289; Abdulrahman, “Quḍāt al-Mazāri‘a,” 121-154.
- 48 Farsy, *Baadhi ya wanavyuoni*, 11-12; Manswab, “Quḍāt al-Mazāri‘a,” 132-134.
- 49 Farsy, *Baadhi ya wanavyuoni*, 42-43; Manswab, “Quḍāt al-Mazāri‘a,” 135-138; Abdulkadir Hashim, “Qadhis’ Intellectual Legacy on the East African Coast: The Contributions of Al Amin ibn Ali Al-Mazrui, Muhammad Kassim Al-Mazrui and Abdullah Saleh Al-Farsy,” *Proceedings of the International Symposium on Islamic Civilisation in Eastern Africa, Kampala: Uganda*, eds. Abdu B.K. Kasozi and Sadik Ukney (Istanbul: Organization of Islamic Conference, Research Centre for Islamic History, Arts and Culture, 2006), 204-216.
- 50 Hassan Mwakimako, “Conflicts and Tensions in the Appointment of the Chief Kadhi in Colonial Kenya, 1898-1960s.,” in *Muslim Family Law in Sub-Saharan Africa; Colonial Legacies and Post-Colonial Challenges*, eds. Shamil Jeppie, Ebrahim Moosa and Richard Roberts (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010), 123-124; The Colony and Protectorate of Kenya, *The Official Gazette of the Colony and Protectorate of Kenya*, (Nairobi: Government Press, June 8, 1937), accessed March 30, 2023, https://books.google.co.ke/books?id=6HMz-Tua9B7AC&pg=PA678&lpg=PA678&dq=Sheikh+Maamun+Suleiman+Mazrui&source=bl&ots=pCDdHB_WjO&sig=ACfU3U2ovAtbsVb7aa-NN6TVdHL_4EJBBA&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjtdyFg43-AhWSoVwKHeGJDZk4FBD0aXoECAUQA#v=onepage&q=Sheikh%20Maamun%20Suleiman%20Mazrui&f=false
- 51 Farsy, *Baadhi ya wanavyuoni*, 43; Manswab, “Quḍāt al-Mazāri‘a,” 139-142.
- 52 Tamim, *Bustani la Ma-Ulama*, 45; Manswab, “Quḍāt al-Mazāri‘a,” 142-143.
- 53 Personal interview with Shaykh Hammad Muhammad Kassim Mazrui (Mombasa: September 20, 2018); Hashim, “Qadhis’ Intellectual Legacy,” 206.
- 54 Sa‘id ibn ‘Ali al-Mughiri, *Juhainat al-Akhbār fi Tārīkh Zanjbār* (Cairo: ‘Issa al-Bābi al-Halabī wa-Shurakā’uh, n.d.), 281
- 55 Personal interview with Ustadh Ghalib Yussuf Tamim (Nairobi: September 27, 2018).

- 56 Salim, *The Swahili-Speaking Communities*, 327-345; Hashim, "Qadhis' Intellectual Legacy," 204- 214; Manswab, "Quḍāt al-Mazāri'a," 134-142; Mohammed H. Abdulaziz, "The impact of Islam on Development of Swahili Culture," *Proceedings of the National Seminar on Contemporary Islam in Kenya*, eds. Mohamed Bakari and Saad S Yahya (Mombasa: Mewa Publications, 1995), 172.
- 57 Winifred E. Akoda "The Contribution of Ali Mazrui to African Historical Scholarship," *International Journal of Humanities Social Sciences and Education* 2, no. 6 (2015), 65-69.
- 58 Salim, *The Swahili-Speaking Communities*, 327.
- 59 Mohammed H. Abdulaziz, "The impact of Islam on Development of Swahili Culture," 172.
- 60 Pouwels, "Sh. al-Amin B. Ali," 329-345.
- 61 Salim, *The Swahili-Speaking Communities*, 328; Hashim, "Qadhis' Intellectual Legacy," 205- 206; Manswab, "Quḍāt al-Mazāri'a," 135-138.
- 62 Pouwels, "Sh. al-Amin B. Ali," 329-345.
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