WHICH ARABIC DIALECT ARE SWAHILI WORDS FROM?

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This article investigates the Arabic component of the Standard Swahili lexicon, aiming to identify the Omani Arabic dialect which comprises the dominant donor of loanwords to Swahili. I isolate words from this "donor dialect" from other Arabic dialects that have influenced Swahili, and compare this lexical archive with data on the dialectology of Omani Arabic phonology and verbal morphology. I find that, contrary to widespread assumptions, documented Arabic from Oman's mountainous interior, the source region of Omani settlers, has significant differences from the donor dialect. This holds true for fieldwork done in the nineteenth century and in the twenty-first. I characterize the donor dialect to the fullest extent possible, given the Swahili data, and find that it is closest to modern Zanzibari Arabic, which may be its descendant. I proceed to review how a better understanding of the donor dialect can clear up errors made in the literature of Swahili history and historical linguistics, and finally provide etymologies for twenty-two Swahili words that are likely borrowings from Omani Arabic but frequently attributed to other sources, due to being borrowings within Omani Arabic itself.

1. INTRODUCTION

Arabic has had an enormous impact on Swahili by donating a substantial fraction of its lexical items, adding at least four new phonemes to its consonant inventory,[1] and subtly influencing its morphology and syntax (Nurse & Hinnebusch 1993: 309–314). The Arab sultans who ruled the Swahili coast from Zanzibar were from Oman, so it is well known that Omani Arabic is the principal language with which Swahili was in contact. This contact lasted from at least as early as 1698, when the Omani Empire took power in Zanzibar, and persisted in diminished form until the revolution in 1968, when most Arabs left. However, there is a substantial amount of diversity within Omani Arabic, which is deeply understudied by Arabic specialists. Among Swahili specialists, there is a tendency to assume that the dialect in question was identical to the one documented by Reinhardt (1894) – in those relatively few cases where they even bother to distinguish it from Standard Arabic. This article is intended to help bridge the gap and identify the characteristics of what I will call the "donor dialect".[2]

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1 Namely, /x/, /ɣ/, /θ/, /ð/, and /r/, the last of which is disputed. It is found in native vocabulary, and its phonemicization may be Arabic-induced (Nurse & Hinnebusch 1993: 103) or caused by interdialectal borrowing (Schadeberg 2009: 89).

2 Many thanks to Roberta Morano for her insights and PhD thesis, and to two anonymous reviewers for their comments, which substantially improved this paper.

I analyse some particular features of this donor dialect of Omani Arabic, which was spoken in Zanzibar when the Kiunguja dialect of Swahili (that forms the basis for Standard Swahili) was emerging, with a focus on features that can be observed in Swahili words, especially when they differ from Reinhardt's account. In Section 2, I discuss non-Omani Arabic loans, and in Section 3 I discuss Omani Arabic, followed by a focus on the donor dialect in Section 4. I then offer some critiques in Section 5 and etymologies in Section 6, in order to show how attention to Omani Arabic in general can improve our understanding of Swahili historical linguistics and Indian Ocean cultural contact.[3]

2. LOANS FROM NON-OMANI ARABIC

Omani Arabic is not the only Arabic variety to have contributed lexical items to Swahili, so it is worthwhile to briefly discuss other Arabic lects. There are a few very early Arabic loans from an unknown source whose dating is reasonably secure by comparing the results of sound changes in the Sabaki group (Nurse & Hinnebusch 1993: 315–320). Among these loans is *ngamia* 'camel', from Old Swahili *ngamila*; removing the class 9 prefix, we would expect an Arabic form **gamĭl*, which is not attested in extant Arabic dialects (Behnstedt & Woidich 2011a: 307). Another early loan is *msikiti* 'mosque', where the /k/ is also assumed to reflect original /g/; the irregularity of this process suggests only sporadic contact with Arabs (Nurse & Hinnebusch 1993: 320). Although some Omani dialects do have [g] for StAr /ǧ/, there is no reason to assume that these items are necessarily Omani in origin.

The vast majority of Arabic loans into Swahili date to the last three centuries and are from Omani Arabic (Nurse & Hinnebusch 1993: 315). However, the introduction of Islam and literacy in Arabic script (for both Swahili and Arabic) have inspired ongoing borrowing from Qurʾānic Arabic in religious and literary contexts. In many cases, these may not fit Swahili phonotactic requirements, and in the context of a Muslim sermon could easily be considered code-switching, but others have become fixed in the language. For example, OAr seems to be nearly unique in using *zēṭūn* (R: 85) / *zaytūn* (M: 196) / *zaytū́n* (N: 15) to mean 'guava' rather than 'olive'; Swahili, however, uses the Portuguese borrowing *pera* for 'guava' and has *zeituni ~ zaituni* for 'olive', from StAr *zaytūn*, implying that the Omanis did not bring olives to Africa and, as a result, Swahili turned to a different variety of Arabic for a borrowing. It is possible that some borrowings of this type are from Yemeni Arabic, but the dialects of Yemen are so diverse and their putative contribution to Swahili so small that this cannot be tested.

Finally, modern engagement with the wider Islamic world has inspired Swahili lexicographers to coin words based on Modern Standard Arabic, like *thaura* 'revolution' or *rais* 'president' (Schadeberg 2009: 85). Their recent origins are usually betrayed not only by their meanings but also by their morphology: the former preserves a diphthong that Omani Arabic would not, and the latter breaks the rules of Swahili phonotactics with a word-final consonant. Other cases are much harder to identify, especially when existing Swahili words of Arabic origin are merely modified. This phenomenon has probably been happening continuously throughout

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3 In lexical comparisons, Sw = Swahili, StAr = Standard Arabic, OAr = Omani Arabic. Morano (2019), Nakano (1994), and Reinhardt (1894) are referred to as M, N, and R respectively when referencing lexical items with a page number. All OAr items from M and R are in their original transcription; for R, where this transcription does not match Arabist standards, it is followed by a normalized transcription preceded by 'norm'. Items from N are given in original transcription, but doubled vowels are written with a macron instead. Items from Jayakar (1889) are given in my romanization, as his lexicon only uses Arabic script.

Swahili history, bringing words like Sw *desturi* 'custom' (from OAr *destūr* (R: 55)) closer to the StAr ideal by replacing them with modified versions like *dasturi* (from StAr *dastūr*; this form is already found in Madan 1903: 53).

3. OMANI ARABIC DIALECTOLOGY

Fieldwork on Omani Arabic *sensu stricto* has been extremely limited, complicating the search for the donor dialect. Reinhardt (1894) wrote a lengthy grammar of a dialect spoken by the sedentary Banū Xarūṣ, based on informants who had recently moved from Rustāq and Al-ʿAwābī in Oman to Zanzibar. He assures us that this dialect is the one that two-thirds of the Arabs there spoke, and which was used in the royal court (Reinhardt 1894: vii). Morano (2019) did fieldwork in Al-ʿAwābī to assess the current state of that same dialect, providing the most thorough and accurate description of any relevant dialect of OAr to date. Jayakar (1889) wrote a brief grammatical sketch and lexicon of the dialect spoken in the capital of Muscat, but he uses Arabic script exclusively and only gives occasional references to dialectal variation. Holes (2011) provides a helpful modern sketch grammar but attempts to cover all Omani dialects simultaneously, leaving many regional details unclear. Finally, Nakano (1994) provides a dictionary (with enough example sentences to reconstruct a sketch grammar) of the dialect spoken in Zanzibar prior to the revolution in 1964, which may be a descendant of the donor dialect. Gintsburg (2018: 92) conducted interviews with native Zanzibari Arabs, but only mentions that their speech was very similar to Reinhardt's and Nakano's descriptions, without distinguishing between these dialects.

Each of the works that have been drawn upon have important drawbacks that limit their applicability. Reinhardt's data are from only two informants, and he made the transcription into Latin script offsite, likely introducing errors in the short vowels. Jayakar (1889) and Holes (2011) describe Omani dialects that are significantly different from the donor dialect. Though not up to modern scholarly standards, the nineteenth-century works provide a unique perspective due to their age. By contrast, Morano (2019) is so far removed in time from the donor dialect that diachronic change and contact between Omani dialects, as well as influence from the more prestigious Standard and Gulf Arabic varieties, has blurred distinctive features. Nakano's data are from non-site fieldwork with a single informant for a total of twenty hours, and the frequent Swahili loans make one suspect that certain native Arabic words have been Swahilized. Finally, despite the fact that primary documents in premodern Swahili exist, these are of little use, as they were written in Arabic script by scribes who had full literacy in StAr and respected Arabic orthographic norms for the most part (Luffin 2007: 23).

Holes (1989) gives an overview of all dialects within what is usually considered "Omani Arabic" (that is, excluding the Dhofari and Shihhi dialects). The donor dialect, as well as all the documented dialects of Al-ʿAwābī and Zanzibar, fall into the sedentary H1 group, spoken in the interior of Oman, in Holes's classification scheme. This fits the historical record, which attests to Zanzibar being controlled in the late eighteenth century by Ḥināwī tribes based in Rustāq and loyal to the Ālbūsaʿīdī dynasty (Bhacker 1992: 20–23). Reinhardt's (1894) claim that the dialect he documented was a Bedouin lect seems to have been a simple error (Morano 2019: 36).

4. NARROWING DOWN THE DONOR DIALECT

Swahili and Arabic are extremely different languages, and many potentially distinctive features of the donor dialect are lost. Most hallmarks of the H1 dialect group, like the preservation of StAr /q/ and /k/, the shape *qahwa*, and /š/ as the feminine singular pronominal suffix, are good examples of this: Swahili borrows /q/ as /k/, usually forces open syllables where possible (so *kahawa* 'coffee'), and borrows almost exclusively on a lexical rather than a morphological level (Nurse & Hinnebusch 1993: 309). To the extent that finer details inconsistent with the Bantu base are actually preserved, like broken plurals (Lodhi 2000: 97) or antepenultimate stress, this reflects educated Muslim usage that is drawn from StAr. I therefore focus on phonological features, along with a brief discussion of verbal morphology.

4.1 Phonology

One of the useful features of this dialect group is that StAr /ǧ/ is pronounced as /g ~ y ~ ɟ/, depending on the dialect (Holes 1989: 451). Reinhardt describes the <g> of his notation as being similar to the <g> of German *Gelt* and *gieb*, which is characterized as post-palatal in Standard German (Krech et al. 2009: 92). Nakano (1994: ii) says that his <g> represents "a palatalised [g'] near to [ɟ]"; whether this is meant to describe a post-palatal is unclear. Morano (2019), however, describes a "voiced velar stop [g]", which would be interpreted by an African as Swahili /ɠ/. Whatever the exact realization, /g/ in the donor dialect was clearly somewhat palatal and equated with the native Swahili phoneme /ɟ ~ d͡ʒ/ by Africans.[4] Two notable exceptions are *gari* 'car' (from OAr *gāri*) and *gunia* 'sack' (from OAr *gūnyje* norm. *gūnīye*). Jayakar (1889: 652) provides a solution, as he describes recent borrowings in OAr as being always pronounced with original [g], regardless of how StAr /ǧ/ was realized in that dialect – essentially, a marginal loan phoneme. Reinhardt (1894) misses other marginal phonemes that were likely present, like the emphatic /ṃ/, lending credence to this interpretation.

    Holes (2011: 479) claims the merger of StAr /ḍ/ into /ð̣/ is "normal" for all Omani dialects. However, Reinhardt (1894: 5) gives a description of the pronunciation of ḍād, which he considers simply an emphatic form of /d/, and skips ð̣āʾ (which he does, however, list in the alphabet). Morano (2019) has a merger into /ḍ/ as well. To take the word 'earth' as an example, StAr has ʾarḍ, matching OAr *arḍ* (R: 56; M: 252). This does not explain Sw *ardhi*, so the donor dialect was like Nakano (1994) in this respect, who has *arð̣* (N: 86) (merged as /ð̣/).

    Omani Arabic has innovated the long vowels *ē* and *ō* from the collapse of the diphthongs *ay* and *aw* (Holes 2011: 480). We therefore see Sw *jeshi* 'army' from OAr *gēš* (R: 175) (StAr *ǧayš*) and Sw *jozi* 'nut' from OAr *gōz* (N: 16)[5] (StAr *ǧawz*). However, unless anomalous borrowing of common words from StAr is invoked, the donor dialect must have preserved diphthongs erratically in some monosyllabic words, like *shauri* 'advice' (from donor dialect **šawr*, not *šōr* (R: 37)). This kind of erratic preservation is described by Morano (2019), who records *ṣawt* 'voice' (M: 66), which matches Sw *sauti*, in contrast with *ṣōt* (R: 14; N: 3); also as *ṣōṭ* (R: 91). Morano (2019: 67) finds that monophthongization is positively correlated with presence of ʾimāla (see below), being more prevalent in younger speakers. The importance of these erratic

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    4 Two examples are offered two paragraphs later in the discussion of monophthongization.
    5 Norm. from *góoz*, which is seemingly unattested in Reinhardt 1894.

diphthongs to identifying the donor dialect remains unclear in the absence of any serious study focused on how and why monophthongization occurs in Arabic dialects.

ʾImāla is a phenomenon of vowel raising that occurs, usually after /i/, in some Arabic dialects. For example, OAr *myje* norm. *mīye* 'hundred' (R: 84) is found in place of StAr *miʾa*. This process is active in Reinhardt's data, applied both to native vocabulary and to recent borrowings, but is less pervasive and sociolectally determined in Morano (2019), and entirely absent from Nakano (1994). As part of this phenomenon, many feminine nouns have a raised final vowel without any clear trigger in Reinhardt's and Morano's data, like OAr *barwe* 'letter' (R: 57), which is absent in Nakano (e.g. *bárwa* (N: 59)). Swahili bears no signs of ʾimāla in its borrowings (e.g. *mia* and *barua*). Holes (2011: 481) specifies that this type of ʾimāla is absent from "the speech of those originating from the mountains", but Morano (2019: 67) paints a more complicated picture, in which uneducated elders from rural Wādī Banī Xarūṣ lack ʾimāla, but it is used by younger informants. If Reinhardt's dialect is really ancestral to Morano's, ʾimāla would need to have been completely lost and then gained again, which is not especially parsimonious. Alternatively, ʾimāla may be spreading from urban centres like Rustāq, and the donor dialect would predate that spread.

In various cases, Reinhardt (1894), Nakano (1994), and the donor dialect disagree on vowel quality. Assessing these differences is challenging due to Reinhardt's poor description of OAr phonology, in which he occasionally makes claims that contradict everything known about peninsular Arabic dialects (e.g. that /ā/ is always 'pure' except in *allāh* norm. *aḷḷāh* 'God', and thus apparently not after other emphatics) and seems uninterested in identifying phonemes. His clearest description is for short /a/, which he says is realized 'pure' (presumably [a]) next to /ḥ x ġ q ʿ r/, colored 'toward *ā̌*' (presumably [ɑ]) next to emphatics, and is *e* (presumably [æ]) elsewhere (Reinhardt 1894: 6). This is a different system from that of Nakano (1994: iii), who says that short /a/ is [ɑ] near both emphatics and uvulars, [a] after dentals and /š/, and [æ] elsewhere. Morano (2019: 63) describes yet another system, which is almost identical to Nakano's but merges his [æ] into [a]. As a result, in the dialects of Reinhardt and Nakano some words clearly have different vowels (e.g. OAr *rang* (N: 96), *reng* (R: 72), the former of which matches the donor dialect,[6] whence Sw *rangi* 'color'). Some words, however, are likely identical despite differing transcriptions (e.g. OAr [ælf] 'thousand' *álf* (N: 109), *elf* (R: 84), whence Sw *elfu*).

In cases of vowel quality disagreement, Nakano (1994) tends to be closer to the donor dialect than any other documented dialect. However, there are cases where the donor dialect differs from both Nakano and Reinhardt (e.g. Sw *sukari* 'sugar', *sákkar* (N: 16), *sekker* (R: 48), *sukkar* (M: 273), StAr *sukkar*). Cases like these are interpreted as borrowings in Morano's dialect from StAr, so words like Sw *sukari* are most likely otherwise undetected non-Omani loans. In a few, relatively rare, cases, the donor dialect's vowels are closer to Reinhardt than to Nakano: Sw *fedha* 'silver', *fáḍḍa* (N:88), *feḍḍa* (R: 99), *foḍḍa* (M: 318); Sw *duka*[7] 'shop', *dikkǻn* (N: 46), *dukkān* (R: 76; M: 282). If the donor dialect is the ancestor of Nakano's dialect, we might interpret these as natural sound changes, and given Nakano's single informant, some

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6 This is also the usual vocalism for this borrowing in the Gulf and southern Arabian dialects (Behnstedt & Woidich 2011b: 310), matching the original form in Persian (Steingass 1892: 588). One could posit that Sw *rangi* is borrowed directly from Persian instead, but direct Persian contact was entirely absent, making this considerably less likely (Schadeberg 2009: 82).

7 The loss of the final *-n* is likely due to original Sw **dukani* being rebracketed, using the locative suffix *-ni*.

could even be idiolectal; both *dukkān* and *dikkān* are attested in the modern dialect of Rustāq, for example (Behnstedt & Woidich 2011b: 402).

4.2 Morphology

Verbal morphology differs significantly between StAr and OAr, but this is mostly concealed in Swahili verbs of the borrowed paradigm, which are drawn directly from the masculine singular imperative form. Vowels are added to preserve open syllables according to a regular system of vowel harmony. Some scholars, relying solely on StAr, were confused by the lack of the initial vowel in forms such as[8] Sw *miliki* 'rule', from OAr *mlik* (rather than StAr *imlik*). This led Krumm (1940: 92) to advance a hypothesis about the Swahili verb being instead from the imperfective with the prefix dropped. Such a phenomenon would require Swahili speakers to analyse Arabic verbal forms on a morphemic level in a linguistically unmotivated manner, which would be at odds with the known details of the contact situation. Tucker (1947: 215–216) recognized that the Arabic imperative was the source of Sw verbs but continued to rely exclusively on StAr, causing him to wonder why in many cases "one would expect a different pattern" from what is actually observed in Swahili.

Although there are not enough detailed field data to identify the donor dialect on this basis, the Omani verbal system explains many features that confused earlier scholars. For example, Sw *dhani* 'think' does not match imperative forms in StAr at all, but it is explained by OAr *ḍann* (M: 117; *ḏ̣ann* in the donor dialect). Similarly, treating Sw borrowings of Form X verbs as being from the perfect, Tucker (1947: 219) is ignorant of the fact that in OAr the imperfective (and thus the imperative) has the same stem (Morano 2019: 129). There are still some cases that cannot be explained through OAr verbal morphology, but these are likely originally nominal borrowings, as Sw generally treats nominal and verbal stems identically (e.g. *dhikiri* 'a type of prayer, (to) recite that prayer').

5. ETYMOLOGICAL ERRORS FROM IGNORING OMANI ARABIC

It is remarkable how, despite the plethora of studies on Arabic borrowings in Swahili, many of them have made glaring mistakes. Lodhi (2000: 6–18) gives a survey of previous attempts to catalogue borrowings in Swahili, offering a critique of each one. Not only in the dictionaries, whose primary focus is naturally not etymology, but also in the specialist works, he finds many errors of attribution with respect to Arabic items: Krumm (1940) makes a multitude of basic errors, even confusing Arabic and Persian words;[9] Zawawi (1979) claims that obviously native Bantu words like *moyo* 'heart' and *moto* 'fire' are borrowed from Arabic; and Bosha (1993) lists *mchai* 'tea plant' as being borrowed via Arabic despite the lack of /č/ in the donor dialect.

However, Lodhi also makes frequent errors. For example, he states that Sw *karafuu* 'cloves' has been widely misinterpreted as an Arabic loan, and says it is fact from Sanskrit *karanfūl (Lodhi 2000: 177) – the problem being that he evidently invented this word, as no similar word is found in the comprehensive Sanskrit dictionary (Monier-Williams 1899).[10] StAr *qaranfūl* is widely attested, on the other hand, and *karafuu* presumably dates to a time before cloves

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8 All verbs are quoted in the (masculine) singular imperative for all three languages, unless otherwise noted.
9 This example is not mentioned by Lodhi (2000), who only critiques the basic cultural errors made in the book.
10 Lodhi glosses this ghost word as "the karan flower/bud", indicating a compound with Hindi *phūl* 'flower' (not Sanskrit *phulla*). Not only is Hindi confused with Sanskrit and /pʰ/ confused with /f/, the *karan element is what is still absent from Monier-Williams (1899).

were first cultivated on Zanzibar around the beginning of the nineteenth century (Bhacker 1992: 126).[11] More recent works, such as by Schadeberg (2009), have given much more careful consideration to historical context and yet seem completely unaware of Arabic dialectology as a field, making no attempt to even distinguish OAr from StAr.

Making a case for Swahili as a "cosmopolitan" language, Mugane (2015: 9) states, "Speakers of Swahili borrowed words from other languages, and those words reveal the nature of their contacts, much as a visitors' book at a wedding contains the names, signatures, and dates of all who were there." Mugane claims that many Omani Arabic words are direct loans from Persian or Portuguese (even those found in StAr, like *bandari* 'port' (from Arabic *bandar*); see page 50). He also attributes words in a wildly inaccurate manner, claiming that *kufuli* 'lock' (page 48) and *rangi* 'color' (page 51) are from Hindi; both are from Arabic, whence Persian and Hindi borrowed them, just like Swahili. Moreover, he is sometimes inconsistent for a single word (Sw *sukari* 'sugar' is attributed to English on page 43 and to Sanskrit/Persian on page 50 – the latter account is ultimately correct, but Arabic is still the most likely proximate donor). Mugane then draws conclusions about historical contacts and economic patterns that are equally inaccurate, for example, based on his erroneous etymology for *kufuli* (on page 48) that "[t]he Indian sensed there was a market for padlocks and soon stocked them." It is beyond the remit of this article to enumerate all the errors in Mugane (2015), but to use his metaphor, it seems that some scholars studying Swahili are badly misreading the metaphorical visitors' book.

6. SOME SWAHILI ETYMOLOGIES BEST EXPLAINED THROUGH OMANI ARABIC

A large set of Swahili words have variously been attributed to direct loans from non-Arabic languages. Schadeberg (2009) assigns many etymologies to Persian, "Hindi" (by which he means any Indian language), or "Indian Ocean Arabic" (an infelicitous category without any clear linguistic meaning), without even considering that they may have been loaned along with the bulk of Swahili's loanword component: from Omani colonists. In fact, "there is no convincing evidence of any actual Persian presence in East Africa" (Schadeberg 2009: 82), with a "relatively small set originating in Indian languages […] and probably fairly recent, because it is phonologically uniform" (Nurse & Hinnebusch 1993: 329). The possibility that these words came instead from other languages of the Indian Ocean still exists, of course, but where Omani Arabic provides a good formal fit, Occam's razor should lead us to consider that the language which had by far the most extensive contact with Swahili is indeed the most likely source for these words.

What follows is a non-exhaustive summary of some words commonly used in Standard Swahili and often attributed to direct contact with various peoples trading in the Indian Ocean, when in fact they are all most likely directly borrowed from the donor dialect of Omani Arabic, like most borrowed words in Swahili. As a result, the following etymologies present an OAr origin. It should be noted that this cannot be considered a certainty, but merely the most plausible explanation. Etyma that are regionalisms but of native Arabic origin (e.g. Sw *sufuria* from OAr *ṣufriyya*[12] 'saucepan'), as well as words found in all major StAr dictionaries (e.g. Sw *bandari* from OAr *bandar* 'port'), are omitted.

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11 The loss of /n/ and intervocalic /l/ attest to its early date. It is seemingly a non-Omani loan; compare OAr *qranfel* (R: 55) / *qrúnfil* (N: 21).
12 As found in Dozy (1887: 835), R: 74 has *ṣufryje* norm. *ṣufrīye*.

'Ambassador', Sw *balozi*. From OAr *bālōz* 'consul' (R: 76), ultimately from Venetian *bailo* (by way of Turkish).

'Amber', Sw *kaharabu*. From OAr *kahrāb* (R: 52), from Persian *kahrubā*.

'Boat', Sw *mashua*. From OAr *māšūa* (R: 74) (but also *māšūwe* R:164), from an Indian language; cf. Gujarati *macvā*.

'Canoe', Sw *hori*. From OAr *hōri* (R: 74), from an Indian language; cf. Gujarati *hoḍī ~ hoṛī*.

'Car', Sw *gari*. From OAr *gāri* (R: 62), from Persian *gārī* or an Indian language; cf. Hindustani *gāṛī*. The exact meaning in the donor dialect is slightly unclear. Reinhardt (1894) defines this item as 'Wagen' and Nakano (1994: 55) as 'cart'. See also the discussion of /g/ above.

'Color', Sw *rangi*. From OAr *reng* (R: 72) / *ráng* (N: 96), from Persian *rang*.

'Flag', Sw *bendera*. From OAr *bendyra* norm. *bendīra* (R: 76) / *bandḗra* (N: 60). Reinhardt thinks it is from Italian, and Jayakar (1889: 838) points to Persian; Portuguese *bandeira* makes much more sense than either suggestion. The attested OAr forms vary significantly in vowels, with Reinhardt's being more nativized than that of the donor dialect, but the first vowel in the Sw form supports OAr mediation rather than a direct loan from Portuguese, as Mugane (2015: 96) claims.

'Ginger', Sw *tangawizi*. From OAr, donor dialect probably **tangwīz*; *tangwíl* (N: 21) is close, and the word is absent from Reinhardt (1894). The form *zangabil* (M: 291) is evidently a recent borrowing from StAr *zanjabil*.

'Government', Sw *serikali*. From OAr *sörkār* norm. *serkār* (R: 126) from Persian *sarkār*. Sw *serikari* is found in nineteenth-century texts, so the dissimilation of the liquids likely happened after it was loaned, but Holes (2011: 479) also notes instability between /l/ and /r/.

'Ice', Sw *barafu*. From OAr *barf* (R: 41) / *báraf* (N: 84), from Persian *barf* 'snow'.

'Lakh', Sw *laki*. From OAr *lekk* (R: 84) / *lakk* (Holes 2011: 487), from an Indian language; cf. Hindustani *lākh*.

'Luck', Sw *bahati*. From OAr *baxt* (R: 20), from Persian *baxt*.

'Mango', Sw *embe*. From OAr *(e)mbe* 'mangos (collective)' (R: 52; R:69) / *embē* (M: 252). Ultimately of Indo-Iranian origin, probably Persian *anba*.[13]

'Manner', Sw *namna* (older *namuna*). From OAr *nemūne* (R: 45) but also *nemne* (R: 58) / *namúna* (N: 95) (glossed as 'form, shape'), from Persian *namūna*.

'Sabre', Sw *kitara*. From OAr *kittāra* (R: 126), from an Indian language; cf. Hindustani *kaṭār*.

'Sack', Sw *gunia*. From OAr *gūnyje* norm. *gūnīye* (R: 74) / *gūníyya* (N: 33), from an Indian language; cf. Hindustani *ganī*, likely via Persian *gūnī* (given the unusual shift in the first vowel). See also the discussion of /g/ above.

'Soursop', Sw *stafeli*. From OAr *stā'fal* (M: 293), from an Indian language; cf. Hindustani *sītāphal*.

'Table', Sw *meza*. From OAr *mēz* (R: 126), of disputed origin. Morano (2019: 332) follows Reinhardt (1894) in stating that this word is from Portuguese *mesa*, but Persian *mēz* is a perfect formal fit. Behnstedt & Woidich (2011b: 208) conflate the two etyma but justify it with a supposition that the Persian may be borrowed from the Portuguese, which is rejected by Iranists, and on its face, very unlikely.[14] N: 25 has *mḗza*, which is a perfect formal fit to be a reborrowing from Sw, although it is not marked as such.

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13 There is a tendency to assume that a tropical people would not borrow a word for a tropical fruit, and certainly not from a non-tropical source. Despite the Zanzibaris living on an island, they borrowed Sw *samaki* 'fish' from Arabic, which is evidence enough that borrowings are not limited to novelties.

14 Steingass (1892: 1361) shows that Persian *mēz* once had a much broader semantic domain: "A stranger; a guest; preparations for entertaining a guest; a table; a chair on which people eat their dinner." The native Persian origin of this word is confirmed by MacKenzie (1971: 56) under the Pahlavi entry *mēzd*.

'Telephone', Sw *simu*. From OAr *sym* norm. *sīm* 'telegram' (R: 35) (the original meaning in Swahili), from Persian *sīm* 'wire'.

'Veil', Sw *shela*. From OAr *šēla* (Jayakar 1889: 662), which is unattested in sources closer to the donor dialect. Ultimately from Persian *šāl*, but with a vowel change distinct from StAr *šāl* from the same source.

'Veranda, balcony', Sw *roshani*. From OAr *rōšen* (R: 123), from Persian *rawšan* 'bright'.

'Window', Sw *dirisha*. From OAr *dryše* norm. *drīše* (R: 58) / *drī́ša* (N: 23), from Persian *darīča*.

7. CONCLUSIONS

Swahili historical linguistics has largely ignored the issue of identifying the Arabic dialect that contributed so much to it, or else made faulty assumptions about it. More fieldwork on Omani Arabic dialects, especially the Zanzibari dialect and dialects similar to that of the Banū Xarūṣ,[15] may yet uncover the donor dialect. However, the striking differences between Reinhardt (1894) and Morano (2019) reveal a sobering reality: the donor dialect may have evolved too much to be recognizable. In Oman, the rise of widespread education in high-prestige Modern StAr and the abundance of popular media in Gulf Arabic mean that traditional dialects are undergoing rapid change, most of which began in 1970 when Oman opened to the West and transformed into an oil state (Morano 2019: 245). It is possible that what the donor dialect really represents is a window into an otherwise inaccessible historical stage of the dialect of Rustāq or its environs, now obscured by diachronic sound change and interdialectal contact.

What we do know is that, contrary to widespread assumptions, the dialect of Reinhardt (1894) is not the same as the donor dialect: it exhibits productive ʾimāla, /ḍ/ rather than /ð̣/, and different vocalism. Given the data available, the dialect of Zanzibar as documented by Nakano (1994) is likely the closest we have to a descendant of the donor dialect, and as most of its speakers left Zanzibar for Arab countries following the 1964 revolution, it is critically endangered (Gintsburg 2018: 93). A better understanding of this dialect, and of Omani Arabic in general, can help illuminate both the historical linguistics of Swahili and the history of intercultural exchange along the Swahili coast.

ABBREVIATIONS

norm.	normalized transcription	R	Reinhardt (1894)
M	Morano (2019)	StAr	Standard Arabic
N	Nakano (1994)	Sw	Swahili
OAr	Omani Arabic		

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15 In particular, dialects of the interior designated as "System 5" in Holes (1989), including Bahlā, Karshā-Nizwā, Qalhāt, and ‘Ibrā’.

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