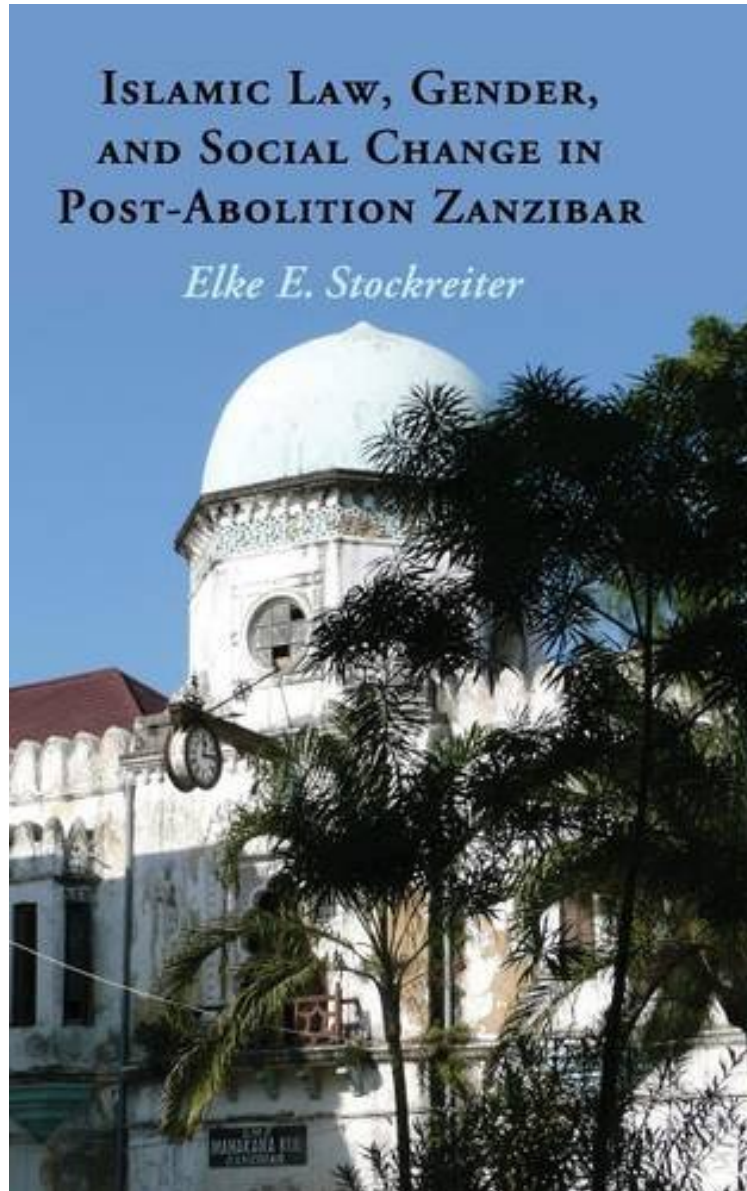


Islamic Law, Gender and Social Change in Post-Abolition Zanzibar

Elke E. Stockreiter

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size: 51.Mb

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Post-Abolition Zanzibar:

After the abolition of slavery in 1897, Islamic courts in Zanzibar (East Africa) became central institutions where former slaves negotiated socioeconomic participation. By using difficult-to-read Islamic court records in Arabic, Elke Stockreiter reassesses the workings of these courts as well as gender and social relations in Zanzibar Town during British colonial rule (1890-1963). She shows how Muslim judges maintained their autonomy within the sphere of family law and describes how they helped advance the rights of women, ex-slaves, and other marginalised groups. As was common in other parts of the Muslim world, women usually had to buy their divorce. Thus, Muslim judges played important roles as litigants negotiated moving up the social hierarchy, with ethnicisation increasingly influencing all actors. Drawing on these previously unexplored sources, this study investigates how Muslim judges both mediated and generated discourses of inclusion and exclusion based on social status rather than gender.

"This captivating history establishes that Islamic courts contributed significantly to reconfiguring social relationships in post-abolition Zanzibar. Elke Stockreiter deftly explores rarely studied topics, such as women's control of property, men's material gains from divorce and former slaves' claims to inheritance, and reveals how the courts enabled these forms of individual agency while also constraining their social impact." Susan F. Hirsch, George Mason University, Virginia
"Islamic Law, Gender and Social Change in Post-Abolition Zanzibar is a pioneering study of the practice of Islamic law in Zanzibar with a particular focus on gender dynamics and social change. This text is a highly welcome contribution to the fields of Islamic studies, gender studies and the history of Zanzibar in the colonial period." Roman Loimeier, Universität Göttingen
"Stockreiter has done a tremendous amount of work to pull together a detailed picture of litigants' affairs in a unique social and political setting. She is clearly at ease with the difficult records she works with, and her argument is never unclear. ... specialists in Zanzibar's history will delight in Stockreiter's showcasing of a rich trove of court records." Fahad Ahmad Bishara, Law and History
About the Author
Elke E. Stockreiter is an Assistant Professor of History at American University, Washington, DC. She obtained her PhD from the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, and previously held a position as an Assistant Professor at the University of Iowa. Her work has been published in peer-reviewed journals, such as the *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, and anthologies, such as *Domestic Violence and the Law in Colonial and Postcolonial Africa*, edited by Emily Burrill, Richard Roberts and Elizabeth Thornberry.