

The development of coffee cultivation across Tanzania as exemplified by the Bukoba and Moshi regions



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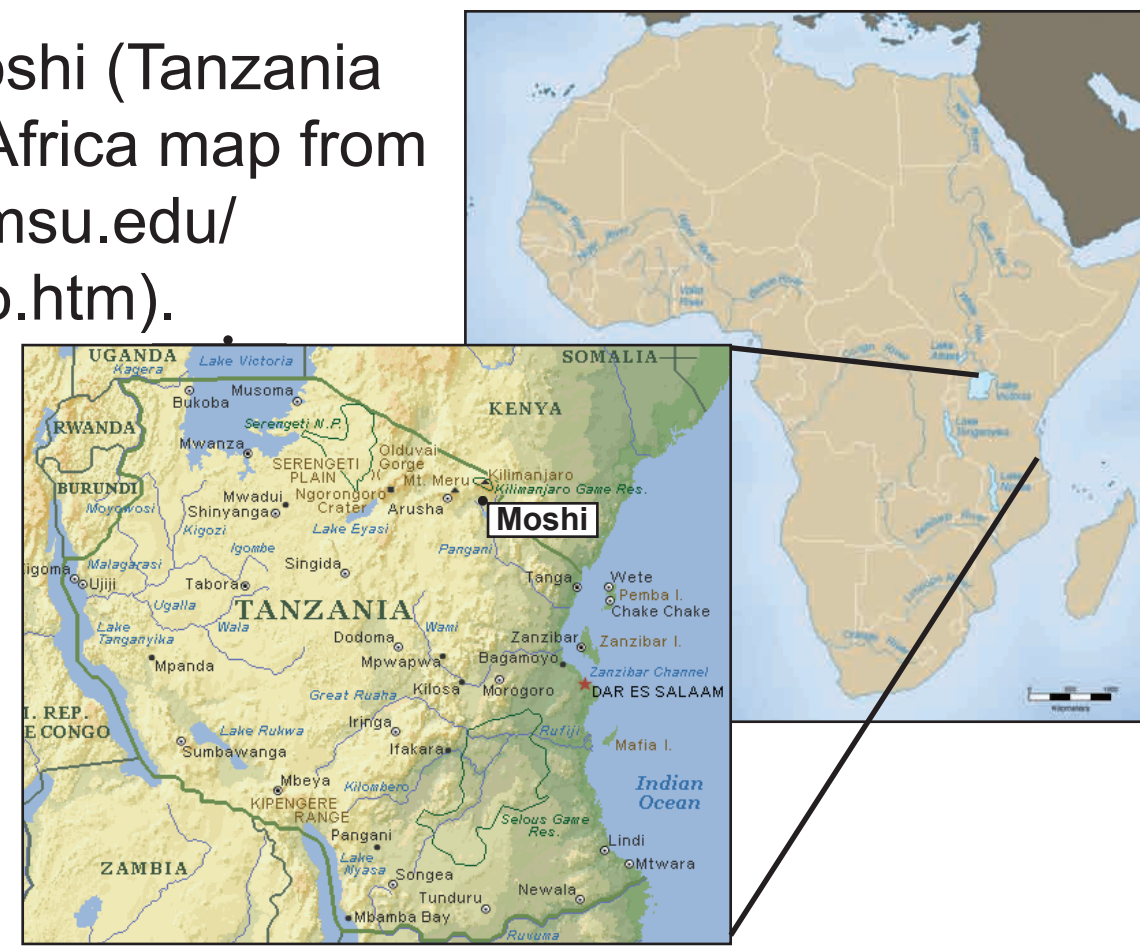
Introduction

Coffee cultivation in Tanzania has developed through the interaction of pre-existing values and cash cropping imposed by Europeans. The Haya tribe in Bukoba historically cultivated coffee, causing ongoing clashes between traditional modes of thought and European efforts to modernize (Weiss 63). In contrast, modern cultivation was more easily accepted where coffee was unfamiliar, such as to the Chagga tribe in Moshi (MacDonald 126). Thus, coffee cultivation in Tanzania has developed differently by region, and this development can be seen in patterns of coffee production today.

Locations of Bukoba and Moshi (Tanzania map from Thompson, date; Africa map from www.exploringafrica.matrix.msu.edu/curriculum/lm6/te_activitytwo.htm).



An old 500 Tanzanian shilling note with images of coffee picking (from www.cafebueno.com/BN).



Coffee before colonialism (pre-1860)

Oral history indicates that the Haya tribe of northwest Tanzania brought coffee from Abyssinia during the 16th century (MacDonald 126). "Haya coffee" or *amwani* was a unique variety of robusta, prepared by boiling unripened coffee cherries with herbs and smoking them for several days; this was chewed whole (Weiss 18). The Haya used coffee for transactions rather than consumption, including greetings, royal tribute, and rituals. Royal authorization was required to grow coffee, which was only propagated by cuttings and grown in specific localities. In these ways, coffee equated to wealth in traditional Haya society (Weiss 61).



However, the Haya also traded coffee during the pre-colonial period, along northern exchange circuits as well as in coastal Swahili caravans. For example, Burton and Speke reported finding Haya coffee as far as Kazeh (now Tabora) (Weiss 48).

Coffee cherries on the Moivaro coffee plantation in Arusha (from stensland.net/images/africa/tanzania/arusha).

German rule: Coffee as a cash crop (1860-1918)

East Africa came under German rule in the late 19th century (MacDonald 29). In 1911, the administration enforced coffee planting throughout the Bukoba region to compel the Haya to enter the cash economy (Weiss 51). They introduced coffee propagation by seed, which undermined royal control over cultivation and ascribed a new, measurable value to coffee trees (Weiss 71). The Haya were reluctant to replace food crops with coffee and disliked the imported arabica varieties. However, Bukoba's coffee exports increased from 234 to 681 tons between 1905 and 1912 (Weiss 53).

Outside the Bukoba region, settlers introduced arabica varieties to the Chagga tribe of the Moshi region on Mt. Kilimanjaro (Eckert 287). Though the Chagga traditionally raised cattle and practiced agriculture, they were active in 19th century East African trade, selling ivory and slaves and provisioning caravans. Upon German cessation of the slave trade, Chagga chiefs switched fully to coffee cultivation (Eckert 290).



The Bukoba coffee plantation on Mt. Meru (from www.atlascoffee.com/1tz11.html).

Modernizing coffee under the British (1918-1961)

After World War I, the British carved Tanganyika out of German East Africa. Their Bukoba coffee campaign planted over ten million seedlings from 1919 to 1925. Thinking of Haya coffee as a "wild orchard crop" (Weiss 150), the British instituted land-use reforms in 1928-1937. However, these conflicted with traditional practices and provoked significant Haya resistance, even unto uprooting coffee trees. As a result, Bukoba production stayed fairly constant from 1930 to 1950 (Curtis 322).



In contrast, the Chagga were exporting 6000 tons of coffee valued at \$1.5 million by 1925 (MacDonald 126); they had no preexisting coffee culture and thus enthusiastically cultivated it for cash. When white settlers began to complain of difficulty in recruiting estate labor (MacDonald 127), Chagga planters formed the Kilimanjaro Native Planters' Association (KNPA) in 1925. This was the first of several Tanganyikan coffee cooperatives, which enabled planters to sell directly to London markets and gain a better price (Eckert 300).

Chagga woman harvesting coffee (Yeager 55).

Coffee after independence (1961-present)

After receiving independence from Britain in 1961, and Tanganyika and Zanzibar formed Tanzania (Yeager 26). The new socialist government, aspiring to double production by 1970, provided loans to coffee cooperatives (MacDonald 95). Unfortunately, this goal was not achieved. After inflation, a declining economy, and low industrial growth rate in the 1980s, Tanzania switched to multiparty democracy in 1992 (Yeager 108).

Today, Tanzania is 24th in world coffee production (Baffes 1). Coffee grown by smallholders is its largest export crop and contributes \$115 million in domestic earnings (EAFCA). 70% of Tanzanian coffee is arabica but it receives low prices due to poor handling, and little is processed within the country (Thompson). Over two thirds is still intercropped with bananas (Tanzania Coffee Board). In Bukoba, robusta still dominates the crop, and production is low considering its long history of cultivation (Weiss 185). Contrastingly, the Moshi region of Kilimanjaro is renowned for some of the best arabica coffee produced in Tanzania, and accounts for nearly 75% of total production (EAFCA).



Selling coffee in the Arusha market (from www.harvard.ingen.org/tanzania).



Most of Tanzania's coffee is exported, leaving instant coffee such as Africafe for domestic use (from <http://www.africafe-pp.com>).

Conclusion

The current state of coffee cultivation in Tanzania is an artifact of the interplay between colonial pressure to cash crop and traditional agricultural methods. In Bukoba, European pressure to cultivate coffee conflicted with coffee's established planting and ceremonial value in Haya society, whereas in the Moshi area, cash cropping coffee was more readily accepted because it did not conflict with preexisting traditions. These differences are expressed in the present day: Bukoba, the traditional Tanzanian seat of coffee cultivation, comprises a relatively small portion of Tanzania's coffee economy, while Kilimanjaro (including Moshi) produces most of the country's coffee.

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