James Brennan’s history of Tanzanian race relations from 1916 to the early 1970s historically contextualizes the relationship between Africans and Indians. It is a useful resource for anyone interested in contemporary or historical Tanzania, not just historians. As a critical applied linguist, I found particularly valuable his framing of these issues as a history of discourse: how meanings of Swahili terms like *taifa* (both ‘nation’ and ‘race’), *kabila* (‘tribe’), *unyonyaji* (‘exploitation’) and others have shifted or been deliberately reframed by colonial and postcolonial officials and ordinary people over time.

Brennan introduces the book as ‘a study of the language of identity’, arguing that concepts like ‘nation’, ‘race’, ‘African’ and ‘Indian’ are not fixed aspects of social structure but rather must be understood through attention to their shifting meanings and ‘the deeper linguistic and cultural grammars in which the words are embedded’ (p. 1). Brennan’s expertise is history, not linguistics, but he meets his goal of explicating these ‘cultural grammars’ using sources that range from colonial documents to letters to editors to his own interviews with Africans and Indians who lived through the period. He begins at the story’s end, the passing of a 1971 law that nationalized most of the buildings owned by Indians in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania’s largest city, and subsequently led to the emigration of almost half of the country’s Indian population – fulfilling President Julius Nyerere’s promise to rid the country of exploitation of the African population by shopkeepers and landlords. In the five core chapters that follow, he takes us back to 1920, the early years of British colonialism, and leads us through twentieth-century Dar until we understand how the 1971 law came to pass and its effects.

Chapter one, ‘Native and non-native,’ analyzes urbanization under colonialism in the 1920s and 1930s with a focus on the relationship between racial-identity labels and colonial attempts to regulate the spatial configuration of the city – deciding who could live and do business where, based on claims to the higher-status label ‘non-native’.

Within the same time period, chapter two, ‘Identity and social structure in interwar Dar es Salaam,’ examines the intra- and inter-group relationships that helped the terms ‘Indian’ and ‘African’ become categories of self-understanding rather than simply labels applied by colonial outsiders.

In ‘Posing the urban question,’ Brennan both shifts away from his focus on the language of identity and moves forward to the Second World War period, examining...
urban access to commercial goods along racial lines. He continues to show, however, how urban residents used shifting identity labels in order to improve their class status and everyday lives, such as the stressing of immigrant origins which gave recent Arab immigrants and Africans from outside of Tanganyika status as ‘Asians’ or ‘Arabs’ and thus entitlement to ‘superior rations’ (99) as well as better clothing and housing. African racial consciousness, he argues, sharpened during this period, paving the way for anti-colonial nationalism, the subject of Chapter four.

In ‘Continental shift’, Brennan examines more closely the words *taifa* and *unyonyaji* not only through an intellectual history of Tanganyikan writers concerned with race, nation, civilization, racial purity and exploitation, but also interviews with African men who had served in South Asia and Burma during the Second World War. He chronicles the impact of thinking about race on the work of the principal political party, Tanganyika African National Union (TANU), established in 1954 but still the ruling party today, renamed CCM (Chama cha Mapinduzi ‘the revolutionary party’). The strength of chapter four is the clarity it brings to the complex and seemingly contradictory positions of the party itself, which advocated racial purity, and those of its leader, Julius Nyerere, who advocated multiracial and/or nonracial politics.

Chapter five, ‘Nationalist thought, racial caricature, and urban citizenship in postcolonial Tanzania’, examines post-independence debates about who could stay on as a Tanzanian citizen alongside a continued divide between TANU’s and Nyerere’s contradictory rhetoric about race. Nationalists premised citizenship on commitment to combating exploitation, and Indians, particularly Indian landlords, failed this test in the eyes of many Africans. Here Brennan takes up postcolonial redefinition of a number of key Swahili words, including *Mswahili*, ‘a Swahili person’ redefined as ‘anyone who speaks Swahili’; *ujamaa*, ‘familyhood’, redefined as ‘socialism’; *unyonyaji*, ‘sucking’, extended from metaphorical (and for some, presumed literal) ‘blood- or sweat-sucking’ to the more abstract ‘exploitation’; and a new set of ‘vocabulary of enemies’ (165) used to refer to bourgeoisie, feudalists, landlords, capitalists and unemployed hooligans. He shows how Africans depicted Indians as appropriating *ujamaa* rhetoric – ‘all of us are one family’ – only when it benefited them, but continued to exploit their positions as merchants and landlords. Yet, when Indian-owned buildings were nationalized in 1971, it was African *naizi* ‘elite nationalists’ who gained control of these properties and not the *kabwela* ‘ordinary Africans’; racial divisions were replaced with intra-racial class divides.

In the afterword, Brennan cursorily brings his study from 1971 to the present in a quick four pages. In shorthand fashion we see that, despite the emigration of a large portion of the Indian population, racial segregation continues in parts of Dar, the city has continued to grow exponentially, and Indians have continued to be depicted by nationalists as the ‘nation’s main enemy’ (199). Only one thing seems to have changed: terms which were once shifting, now seem to have become fixed, with *taifa*’s relationship to ‘race’ and ‘nation’ now rarely discussed, instead replaced with
the ‘durable, politically successful, and territorially defined realities of the Tanzanian nation-state’ (200).

As a history of Dar, of Tanzanian race relations, and of Swahili terms for various identities, Brennan’s book has much to offer scholars in diverse fields. It is no surprise that it won the African Studies Association’s Bethwell A. Ogot Book Prize, deemed the best book on East African Studies published in 2012. It should be required reading for those interested in Swahili.

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This welcome collection of thirteen essays explores two themes identified by the editors, who also contribute the first two introductory essays: 1. Intellectual and cultural interactions between the Christian and Muslim worlds (C. Norton), and, 2. Shared material culture (A. Contandini).

The first theme is the philosophical and religious discussions in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in Europe relating to the Muslim East, mainly to the Ottomans. The second theme refers to objects that were acquired through martial, commercial and diplomatic contacts with the East by Europeans, and how the objects themselves or their decorative motifs were absorbed and interpreted by local artists and craftsmen in Italy, particularly Venice. The contact with the Ottomans enhanced creative approaches to map-making, and added new subjects to the European repertoire of pictorial representations.

The essays dealing with the first theme are thought-provoking. In his chapter, Zweder von Martels encapsulates the ‘demarcation lines’ between Christian Europe and the Muslim Ottomans that forms the contextual core for other essays on this theme. After the crucial date of 1453, the year when the Eastern Christian Byzantine Empire ceased to exist with the fall of Constantinople to the Turks, the conceptual differences between the adherents of the two religions took a confrontational character of which repercussions still reverberate. Noel Malcolm’s contribution is on the positive European views of Islam and the Ottomans. The author strains to evaluate the writings of a few West European thinkers, of Jean Bodin (act. sixteenth century) particularly, which have kind sentiments about the Ottoman military being orderly and disciplined, and Muslims being tolerant of other religions.

Asaph Ben-Tov, in his chapter, discusses German and Dutch humanists’ attitudes toward the ‘Eastern peoples’ during the Reformation. His sources, Dernschwan and Ogier Ghislain de Busbecq (also spelled Augerius Gislenius Busbequius elsewhere in this volume), among others, express their disappointment with the ‘Turkified’ or Orientalized orthodox Greeks who were ignorant of their own glorious past.