



Swahili Port Cities: The Architecture of Elsewhere (African Expressive Cultures)

Sandy Prita Meier

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On the Swahili coast of East Africa, monumental stone houses, tombs, and mosques mark the border zone between the interior of the African continent and the Indian Ocean. Prita Meier explores this coastal environment and shows how an African mercantile society created a place of cosmopolitan longing. Meier understands architecture as more than a way to remake local space. Rather, the architecture of this liminal zone was an expression of the desire of coastal inhabitants to belong to places beyond their homeports. Here architecture embodies modern ideas and social identities engendered by the encounter of Africans with others in the Indian Ocean world.

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