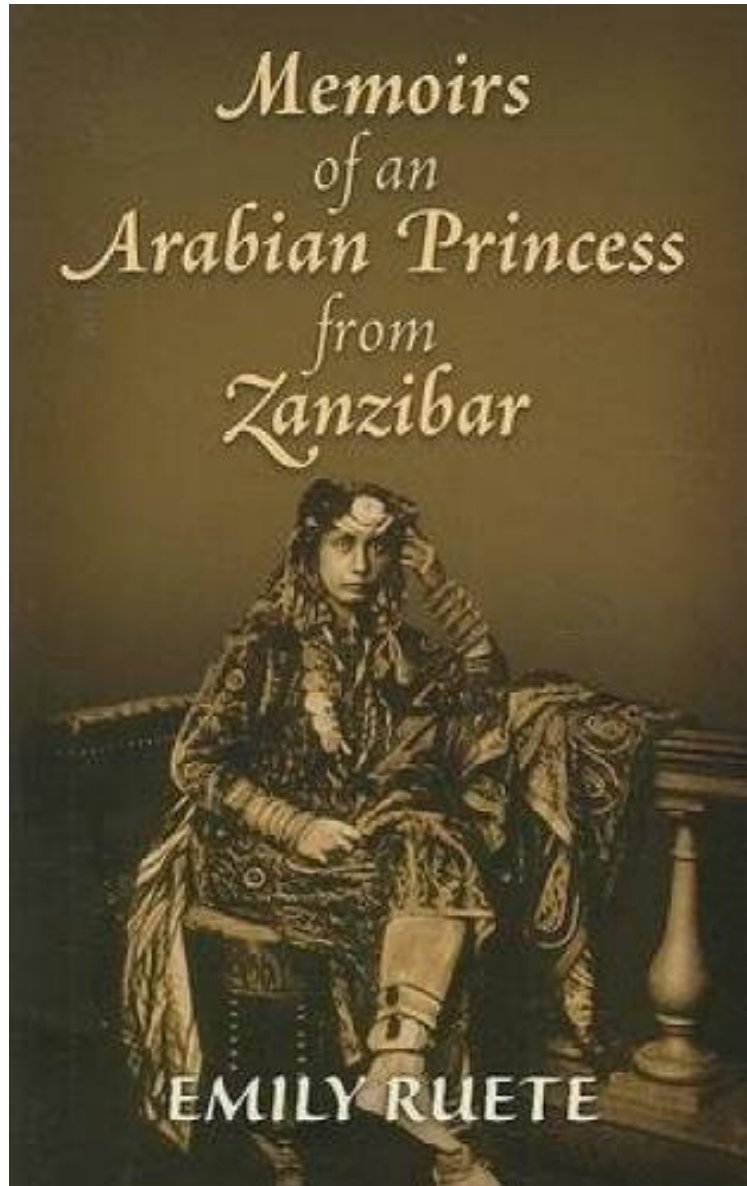


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## Memoirs of an Arabian Princess from Zanzibar

*Emily Ruete Sayyida Prin. of Zanzibar*

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**Emily Ruete Sayyida Prin. of Zanzibar : Memoirs of an Arabian Princess from Zanzibar** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Memoirs of an Arabian Princess from Zanzibar:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Arabian Princess - reviewBy QueenDI found this book to be very

interesting in that the Princess tells her story herself and brings the reader into a life not known by many people. She describes every day life in Zanzibar during the late 1800's and early 1900's and even royalty in those days had it's drama with family members. I found her writing to be a little dry and juvenile at times, but it was nicely written. 4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. this was good for the traveller to zanzibar to get a touch ...By mable harpthis was good for the traveller to zanzibar to get a touch of insight. i have to say, her opinions on the nature of "negro slaves" was quite off-putting, but i had to just remind myself that she was of a different culture and a different time. also, zanzibar was big into the slave trade at the time. ugly history, no doubt. other than that, it was a really interesting insight to what life was like in a place that, if you visit today, you can't even compare to your home. but take it back 100+ years... very interesting... 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A Real Arabian Princess By good2Bme Because I have recently become involved in a dance troupe involving Middle Eastern, Romani, Persian, etc. costumes, the cover of this memoir immediately caught my eye. The autobiography was much more readable than I expected from something written 150 years ago. Just as in any classic book from long ago, it takes awhile to get used to the rhythm of historical dialogue. Add to that the fact that the author was virtually uneducated, and that the book is written through her eyes in a time that was very different than now, it could have been very hard to read. However, the true story of a woman raised in a harem (with all the political intrigue you might imagine), was instead hard to put down! Her down to earth details of royal Muslim life, like wearing hajib, explanation of Sharia law, experiencing Ramadan, and even her very unpleasant view of black Africans made me wish for more of her outspoken voice. I do admit, the tale begins to drag when she falls in love, moves to Germany, and converts to Christianity, but, she was writing about her life in Zanzibar and so her story had to end. I truly enjoyed reading this unusual memoir of a real Arabian princess and would recommend to fans of women's history in particular.

Return to an era when Zanzibar was ruled by sultans, and enter a vanished world of harems, slave trading, and court intrigues. In this insider's story, a sultan's daughter who fled her gilded cage offers a compelling look at nineteenth-century Arabic and African royal life. After years of exile in Europe, the former princess wrote this fascinating memoir as a legacy for her children and a warm reminiscence of her island home. Born Salamah bint Said, Princess of Zanzibar, in 1844, author Emily Ruete grew up in a harem with scores of siblings. The royal family maintained its fabulous wealth and luxury with a robust traffic in ivory, spices, and human bondage. Ruete ventures beyond the palace, into the city and plantations where European traders, missionaries, and colonists exercised a growing influence. After her dramatic elopement with a German trader, Ruete attained the perspective to form a comparison of the lives of women in Muslim society with those of their European contemporaries. Originally published in 1886, this remarkable autobiography will captivate readers interested in Zanzibar and Eastern Africa as well as students of Arabic, Islam, and women's studies.

From Publishers Weekly Ruete could be the subject of a thrilling romance. As Romero ( *Life Histories of African Women* ) explains, she was born in 1840 as Salme, princess of Oman and Zanzibar, and grew up privy to the machinations of her father's harem and of her scores of siblings. Following her father the sultan's death in 1856, Salme participated in one brother's unsuccessful coup to wrest the throne from another. Despite strictures confining Islamic women, she trusted with a German who is thought to have impregnated her, fled to Germany where she converted to Christianity, changed her name, married her lover, bore three children and was soon widowed. Ruete relates few of these escapades; instead she provides a disingenuous account of harmonious life at the palace. Despite the profusion of concubines, Ruete claims that Arabs predominantly practice monogamy; her father is a beneficent king--although Romero states that he attained power by murdering a cousin. The disparity between introduction and text, the latter translated from the German, generates a peculiarly successful tension, enhanced by carefully recorded details of court life. Illustrations not seen by PW . Copyright 1989 Reed Business Information, Inc. "an intriguing account of court life in an outpost of the Islamic empire in Africa." -- *Journal of World History* Language Notes Text: English (translation) Original Language: German