

TANZANIA

Tanzania has a vast cultural heritage and enormous potential for the development of cultural industry, crafts and cultural tourism through the judicious utilisation of cultural heritage items, their setting and environment. The history of the impressive sites of Kilwa Kisiwani and Songo Mnara, which reflect multiple and rich cultural identities, are largely unknown to the people of Tanzania. The vast majority of Tanzanians, and particularly the local populations living in and around the sites, are generally ignorant of the potential commercial values of the sites. The case studies below review the situation at Kilwa, a site that is already included on the UNESCO World Heritage List, and Bagamoyo, which is on the tentative list of sites in Tanzania and may be nominated in the future.

There seems to be only a token management system for the protection of these sites; as a result, the monuments are slowly decaying and disintegrating, and the natural environment is gradually reclaiming the sites. It has become imperative to take affirmative action to restore, conserve and develop the sites in a realistic and sustainable manner.

Case Study: Kilwa Kisiwani & Songo Mnara

Kilwa Kisiwani and Songo Mnara are two islands, situated close to each other about 280 kilometres off the Tanzanian coast to the south of Dar es Salaam. A complex of ruins has been preserved on each island, and both complexes are presently under the protection of the government of the Republic of Tanzania.

The ruins on Kilwa Kisiwani are by far the most important. The site has been occupied from the 9th century to the 19th century and reached its peak in the 13th and 14th centuries. In 1331–1332, the great traveller Ibn Battouta made a stop here and described Kilwa as one of the most beautiful cities of the world. Thereafter, Cabral and Vasco de Gama were content only to call at its port, but Francisco d'Almeida seized it in 1505 and established a fortress there. The Portuguese named the island 'Quiloa'; it is by this name

that it was known in the west and that Milton made mention of it in his 'Paradise Lost'.

Among other monuments, the ruins comprise:

- the vestiges of the great mosque, constructed in the 12th century of coral tiles embedded in a core of puddled clay, but considerably enlarged in the 15th century under the reign of sultan Sulaiman Ibn Mohamed el Malik el Adil (1412-1422);
- the remains of the Husuni Kubwa palace, built between c. 1310 and 1333 by the Sultan Al Hasan;
- numerous mosques;
- the Gereza (in Swahili, the term means 'prison') constructed on the ruins of the Portuguese fortress;
- an entire urban complex with houses, a public square, burial grounds, mosques and fence walls.

The ruins of Songo Mnara, at the extreme north of the island of Songo, consist of five mosques and a number of domestic dwellings of puddled clay and wood within the enclosing walls. A poorly identified construction of greater dimensions is known by the name of 'palace'.

The earthenware and other small objects that have been gathered during the excavations bear exceptional testimony to the commercial and cultural exchanges of which Kilwa and, to a lesser extent, Songo were the theatre. Cowrie shells, pearls of glass, carnelian or quartz were interphased with porcelain of the Sung dynasty as a medium of exchange from the 12th century. Chinese porcelain and Islamic monochrome faience continued to be the vectors of a bartering system, well after the appearance of a monetary atelier at Kilwa.

Kilwa Kisiwani and Songo Mnara are, therefore, two archaeological sites of prime importance to the understanding of the Swahili culture, the Islamisation of the east coast of Africa and the extensive commerce of the mediaeval period and the modern era.

There is a serious rapid deterioration of the archaeological and monumental heritage of these two islands due to various agents.



Kilwa Kisiwani, Portuguese fortress



Ruins of Songo Mnara

Erosion

The erosion due to the sea is the first sign that strikes the visitor who arrives on the island of Kilwa Kisiwani. Ninety-nine percent of the city walls have been lost, Gereza Fort has lost the north wall and the massive tower that flanks it on the north-east is severely threatened. Stabilisation work was done in this area during the restoration project undertaken by Neville Chittick, but since then this work has largely been eroded. All the vestiges situated on the sea front on the northern side of Kilwa Kisiwani have been greatly altered, and certain more are threatened with collapse. At the Husuni Kubwa Palace, the damage to the soil caused by rainwater wash is accentuating the risks of collapse of the remaining structures on the edge of the cliff. The eastern section of the palace is progressively disappearing.

Vegetation

The vegetation that proliferates on the cliff has limited the progression of the rain-wash effect, but also causes the break-up of the masonry structures. The plants grow into the joints and push out the mortar, then push apart the stones and end up weakening and dislocating the structure. The excavation carried out by Neville Chittick and the regular maintenance of certain parts of the site by the Tanzanian Antiquities services have limited the proliferation of the vegetation.

However, the size and geographical layout of the monuments do not always permit systematic maintenance. Husuni Ndogo, situated to the east of the Husuni Kubwa Palace, and the urban complex situated on Songo Mnara Island have been invaded by trees that have become so intertwined with the stonework that it would be extremely difficult to remove them without destroying part of the structures.

Rains

The ruins by definition have no roof, which renders them very vulnerable to the weather. The upper layer of exposed stone does not facilitate the run-off of rainwater. Thus a significant amount of water penetrates into the masonry, washing out the lime mortar so that it gradually disappears and causes the collapse of the wall. This phenomenon is one of the major elements that creates ruins out of the manmade structures. The dislocation of the stones also makes the work of stone poachers easier as they look for building materials. As early as the 14th century, it seems that the coral stone

of the Husuni Kubwa Palace (which was perhaps never finished) served as a source for raw materials for making lime for new constructions.

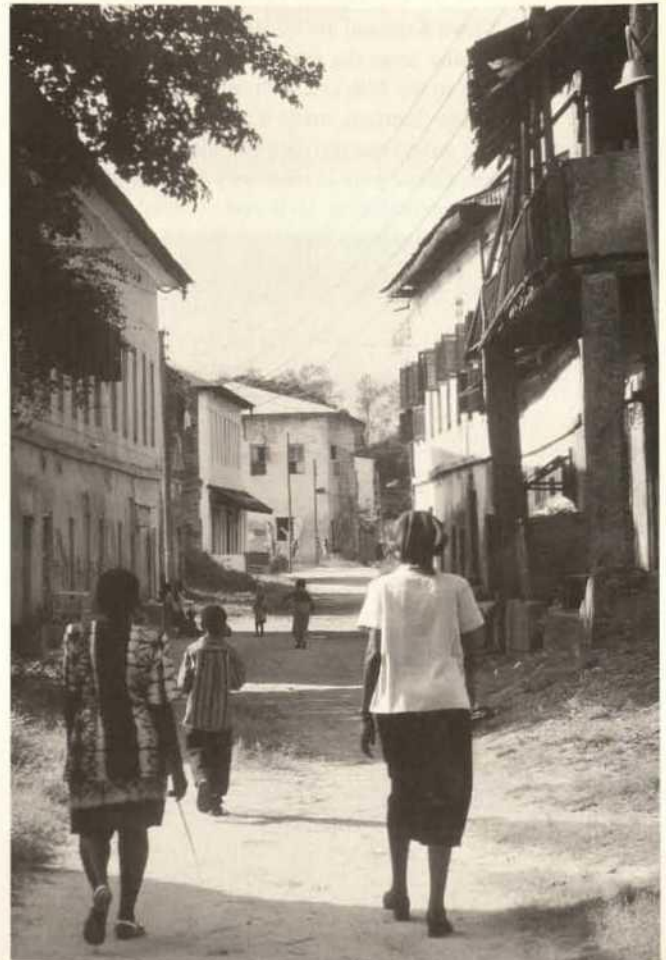
Only the Great Mosque and the Small Mosque have kept a significant part of their roofing of cupolas and vaults. It is essential to ensure the water tightness of these coverings in order to preserve the architecture.

In the 1960s, Chittick totally resealed the roofing of the mosque using a mortar made of lime, clay and sand, which is the best technique one can use. Since then, the service of Antiquities has performed several maintenance campaigns, removing vegetation and filling in cracks. Today, the state of degradation of the roofing is such that a simple maintenance job is not enough. The sealing of this type of roof, in a rainy climate such as in Tanzania, must be redone at least every 10 years and the work of Chittick will soon be 40 years old.

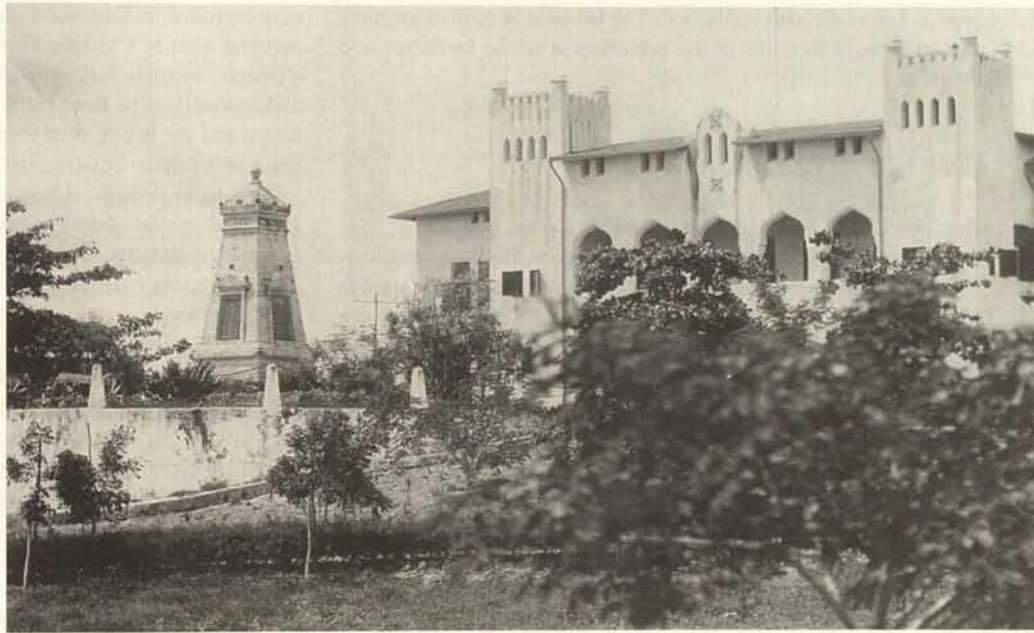
Problems due to lack of public awareness

Through lack of information, new construction that is indispensable for the development of the local population, can often be in contradiction with our aim of preservation. For example, the primary school of Kilwa Kisiwani, which occupies a very visible site, is made of concrete whitewashed with lime. It may be seen as imposing on the general landscape due to its position and architecture. However, the dilemma raised by the school remains only minor compared with the potential dangers from the development of tourism infrastructure, such as hotels or industries, once the

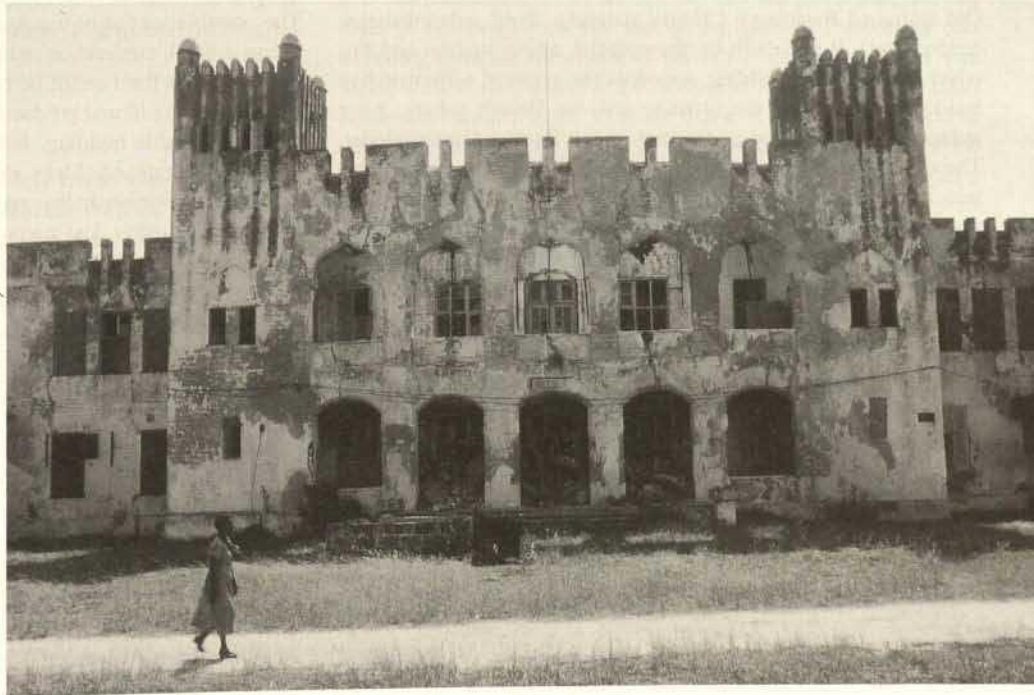
Bagamoyo today: India street



TUNISI The location of the
UNESCO World Heritage site of
the Medina of Tunis, situated in
the heart of the city, is under
threat from modern development
and the loss of its traditional
character. The site is a
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The Old Boma of Bagamoyo, historical photo from colonial times (c. 1900)



The abandoned Boma Bagamoyo after 1998



The Boma after December 2000: dangerous parts of the façade had to be taken down. Will it be possible to reconstruct it soon?

road to Dar es Salaam is finished. The increase in tourism requires careful thought in terms of the preservation of the landscape and the ruins.

Case Study: Bagamoyo

Bagamoyo is a small coastal town with a natural harbour, 70 kilometres north of Dar es Salaam. It is located on the Zanzibar Channel, just opposite the Island of Zanzibar. The relation to Zanzibar was very strong in history, because most of the slave trade, ivory trade and expeditions of traders and explorers from and into the interior of East Africa were organised through Bagamoyo. Bagamoyo was at that time the most important city of mainland Tanganyika and the most important harbour in East Africa. When the colony of German East Africa was established in 1888, Bagamoyo was chosen as the capital. But in 1891 the capital was transferred to Dar es Salaam, due to better harbour facilities.

The heritage of Bagamoyo consists of a mixture of German colonial buildings, buildings and facilities related to the slave trade and slave route, and buildings of the merchants and financiers of Indian origin. One outstanding example of the built heritage is the Old Boma of Bagamoyo ('Boma' meaning 'Fort', administrative headquarter). It was built by the colonial administration and finished in 1897. The building served as the regional administrative headquarter for both the German and the British colony. After independence, it served as the seat of the District Commissioner. The original roof construction was altered in a questionable way, which created maintenance problems. The pitched roof with a long roof overhang was removed and a flat roof introduced. The building is constructed with thick walls of coral stones with lime mortar and lime plaster, very similar to the Arab-Islamic buildings in the Stone Town of Zanzibar. However, the slabs are of a specific German type: I-beams with vaulted stone slabs. All the iron beams are

now corroded and the slabs have to be renewed completely. The building style is a unique blend of Islamic-Arabic and European elements, monumental symmetry and arrangement of the rooms and spaces (U-type floor plan). The site is close to both the town centre and the beach, with a splendid open public-park and landscape between the building and the beach.

Due to neglected maintenance, part of the slab collapsed in 1998 and the building has been abandoned since then. Several attempts to save the structure were initiated by the Department of Antiquities, but have not shown any positive results so far – the building is too big, complicated and costly for the Tanzanian Government. Foreign assistance is needed, but foreign donors are very reluctant to assist in financing the project, most of them giving priority to programmes such as health, education or infrastructure. Additionally it takes time to establish a well-organised project concept with the government. Also private investors may be reluctant to be involved in such a big investment. It is an open question as to whether or not the building can be saved before it is too late, the speed of deterioration being so fast.

It would be a big loss to the heritage of Bagamoyo if this building with its history, its outstanding architectural and aesthetic qualities, its supreme location at the sea front, were to disappear. The possibilities for re-use are very good, with the potential for use as a hotel, conference centre, museum or cultural centre. The public land in front could be re-established as a botanical garden or used for agricultural production.

Not only this building, but also the entire heritage of Bagamoyo is threatened. Many owners of the residential buildings, mostly of Tanzanian-Indian origin, are absent and have lost interest in their property, leaving poor tenants, often without water and electricity and with leaking roofs. Until it is understood that the buildings have a cultural and commercial value, especially with ongoing tourism development, it will be too late for many buildings unless emergency repair is undertaken soon.

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