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Diverse[city] in the Immaterial Cultural Heritages of Zanzibar Town's Two Sides

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ABSTRACT

The town of Zanzibar developed on Unguja, the main island of the Zanzibar archipelago in the Indian Ocean off the coast of east Africa. An integral part of Swahili history, Zanzibar Town was the uncontested political, diplomatic, and cultural capital of the Swahili world during the nineteenth century. The town consisted of two parts that were naturally divided by a body of water, a tidal lagoon that separated the old Stone Town with its Omani architecture located on the western triangular peninsula, from Ng'ambo, which means "the other side", the old Swahili town on the east. The two parts together formed a truly cosmopolitan city, as evidenced by its rich and diverse architecture, religious structures, and multi-ethnic culture. Arab, Swahili, Indian, Persian, Comorian, Goan and Madagascan people lived next to each other on both sides of the creek in wattle-and-daub Swahili houses, Omani *beyts* and Indian *dukas.* During the British colonial administration, the cosmopolis was reorganised into a segregated city. Stone Town on the peninsula was subdivided into European, Arab and Indian quarters and Ng'ambo on the mainland became the native sector, to which workers' quarters were exiled. This theoretical split has survived up to today, creating unique challenges in terms of intangible or immaterial heritage, and when the Stone Town was declared a World Heritage Site in 2000, scholarly interest in the conservation area piqued, to the detriment of Ng'ambo, which was deemed less important. However, the introduction of UNESCO's Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) approach in 2011 and the publication of the *Ng'ambo Atlas* in 2019, contributed to the inclusion of both sides in recent scholarly debates and narratives. This article proposes to comment on heritage issues faced by both sides, in the face of growing economic pressures characteristic of emerging economies, and the need for sustainable growth, by applying the HUL approach for the island, postcolonial theory, and the historical research method.

1. Introduction

The conference theme of the 2024 UIA Forum is "Diversecity" and its aim is to explore how emerging economies and growing cities can achieve humanity and sustainable growth. This article investigates how the legacy of British colonial segregation of the historically diverse people of Zanzibar, on the island Unguja off the coast of East Africa, has impacted on the heritage of its two sides. It proposes a future where intangible and immaterial heritage forms part of postcolonial debate in the face of growing economic pressures, characteristic of emerging economies, and the need for sustainable growth.

2. Methodology

There is an increasing tendency in architectural research to apply mixed methods to case studies. This article relies on an integrative approach and multiple methods from diverse traditions. It mainly investigates the historical context of the island, requiring a historical research method [1] and an interpretive-historical research strategy, as described by Wang [2]. Interpretive research is defined as "investigations into social-physical phenomena within complex contexts, with a view toward explaining those phenomena in narrative form and in a holistic fashion. Interpretive-historical research implies that the phenomenon is a past condition, relative to the researcher." The system of inquiry or the paradigm in which the research is conducted is qualitative, "mythical" or naturalistic [3]. The strategy of this study is to address the nature of the historical narrative by others and to report on their findings by arranging it in an own narrative.

At the tactical level, interpretive-historical research makes use of empirical evidence from the past. Tactics are qualitative and quantitative techniques for gathering and interpreting evidence found in a wide variety of sources, including evidence from archives, collections, public and private documents, buildings, artefacts, observations and conversations as well as archaeological and material evidence available at the site. Tactically, interpretive-historical research provides a means of getting into a context or event in time past. The harmony between different tactics needs to be appreciated, because the inference of past realities upon present circumstances is quite often hard to clearly isolate. Tactics can be divided into collection of data, and identification, organisation and evaluation or analysis of evidence [4] (Figure 1).

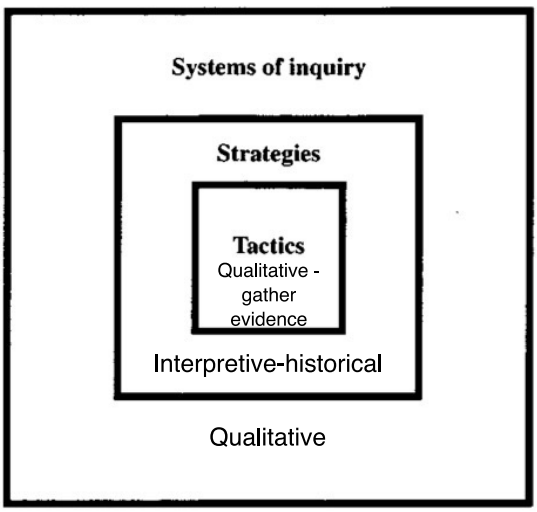


Fig. 1. The relationship between system of inquiry, research strategy and research tactics [2]

Abdul Sheriff[1] [5] writes that Zanzibar on the island Unguja occupies a large "romantic" space in our imagination and has, as a result, attracted the attention of scholars from around the world.[2] It conjures up visions of a tropical paradise, fertile soils, exotic spices, dhows, ancient trade routes, bazaars, palaces, sultanates, slaves, and love stories.[3] My romance with Zanzibar started more than 10 years ago when I visited the island as a tourist (Figure 2). After initial observations from site visits, I managed to access written sources from the island's museums, and I started collecting data on its history and urban design. Upon my return, I met with Antoni Folkers in Pretoria, South Africa. He had just published *Modern Architecture in Africa* and could provide valuable guidance for future research. I returned to Zanzibar, this time as an academic, and site visits were specifically focused on the historical evolution of the palimpsest of the urban landscape and the collection of visual data and photographs. My research led me to the analysis of historical maps and the publication of a peer reviewed article that focused on the changes in the edges between landscape and seascape.

Fig. 2. Dhow in Zanzibar harbour

3. Historic Overview

A brief history of Zanzibar Town, on the island Unguja off the coast of East Africa, reveals its cultural richness and the diversity of its social and ethnic groups. It is one of the most important urban settlements of the region and an integral part of Swahili history, going back to the earliest centuries of the Islamic era. For centuries it formed a crucial part of long-distance maritime trade, visited by merchants from across the Indian Ocean. The natural harbour offered protection to incoming vessels during both monsoon seasons. *Kaskazi,* the northeast monsoon, brought traders from Arabia, Persia and India, carrying porcelain from China, glass beads from India and cloth from India, Egypt and Somalia. The southwest monsoon *kusi*, brought vessels from the south, carrying ivory, timber, tortoise shell, iron and gold. Traders from the north and east could also return to their home ports on the Indian Ocean [6] (Figure 3). Zanzibar was thus characterised by a complex assemblages made up of multiple elements and histories.

[1] Abdul Sheriff is a Professor of History at the University of Dar es Salaam and Principal Curator of Zanzibar Museums.

[2] *Ng'ambo Atlas* is the latest publication (2019) through the collaboration of the Department of Urban and Rural Planning in Zanzibar, the City of Amsterdam, and African Architecture Matters.

[3] Princess Seyyida Salme (1844-1924) lived in Mtoni Palace before eloping with Heinrich Ruete, a German trader in 1866. She became Emily Ruete in Germany and her *Memoirs,* originally published in 1888, provides accounts of life on Zanzibar during the middle of the nineteenth century (Ruete, Emily. 1996. *Memoirs of An Arabian Princess from Zanzibar.* Princeton: Markus Wiener Publisher.)

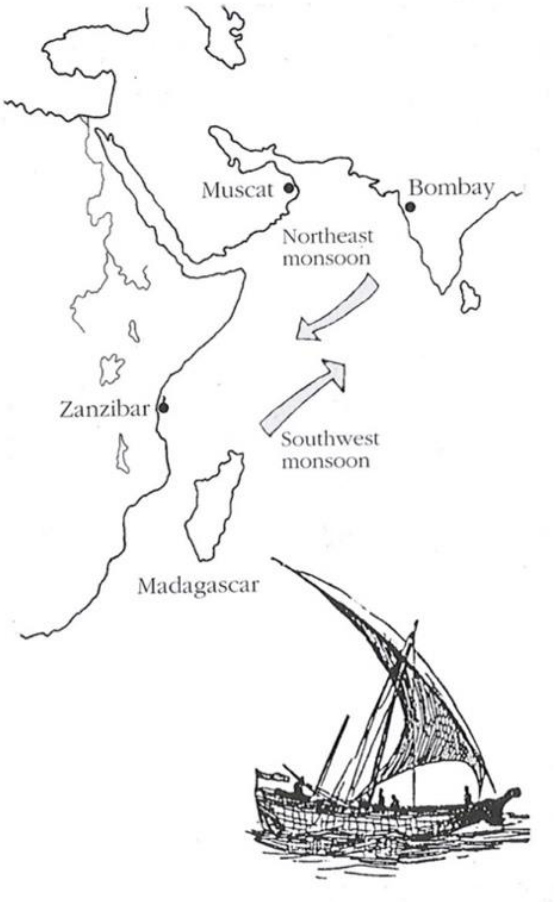
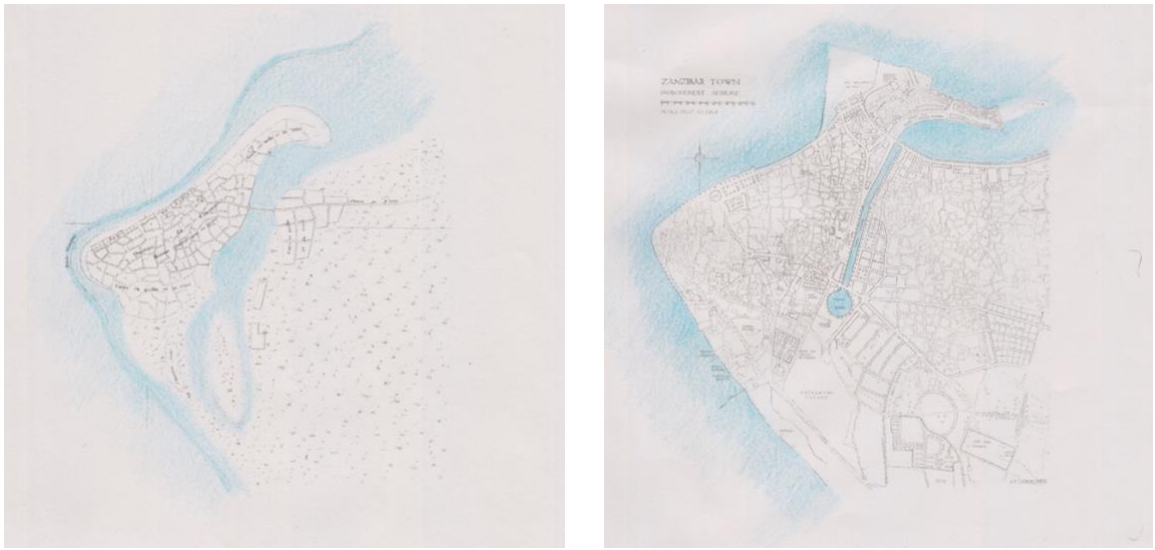


Fig. 3. Section of map of East Africa showing monsoon winds [5]

The town of Zanzibar developed on Unguja, the main island of the Zanzibar archipelago on the western tip of a triangular peninsula which projects into the Zanzibar channel about halfway down the island's coastline. The peninsula was separated from the main island by a creek to the east and connected to it by only a neck of land at the southern end [6]. The local inhabitants called the coastal lagoon, that dried during ebb, *Pani dogo* or *Pwani-ndogo*, which are the Swahili words for "small beach or coast" (Figure 4(a)). *Pwani-ndogo* or more popularly referred to as the Old Creek, had for centuries separated the triangular peninsula of Stone Town (west) from Ng'ambo (east). The tidal creek had to be crossed at high tide by canoe and by foot at low tide. This body of water separated the old Stone Town from the rest of the island and naturally divided the landscape (and future town) in two. Over time, this transitional zone between land and sea, the shallow inland body that was separated from the ocean by a narrow land barrier on the south, was manipulated by design, and transformed through human intervention into what later maps called the Tidal Channel and Basin (Figure 4(b)). During the twentieth century, the tidal basin was filled and today, evidence is still echoed in the name Creek Road, which runs from north to south where the lagoon used to be [7].



(a) (b)

Fig. 4. Maps of Zanzibar Town showing how the shoreline changed over time
(a) Base map by Charles Guillain, *Map of Zanzibar 1846* [8];
(b) Base map by H.V. Lanchester, *Zanzibar Town Improvement Scheme 1923* [9]
(blue overlay by the author).

The tidal lagoon naturally separated the old Stone Town with its Omani architecture located on the western peninsula, from Ng'ambo, which means "the other side", the old Swahili town on the east. This diverse settlement developed into a well-defined twin city and despite the disappearance of *Pwani-ndogo*, the two sides of Zanzibar Town remain characteristically distinct to this day. When the Stone Town was declared a World Heritage Site in 2000, scholarly interest in the conservation area, the western side of the town (demarcated in yellow in Figure 5) piqued, creating the perception that Ng'ambo in the west is less important than its neighbouring suburb, Stone Town [10]. However, the introduction of the Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) approach in 2011 and the publication of the *Ng'ambo Atlas* in 2019 [11], contributed to the inclusion of both sides in recent scholarly debates and narratives. The map in Figure 5 is from the *Ng'ambo Atlas*. The morphological difference between the two sides is clearly visible.

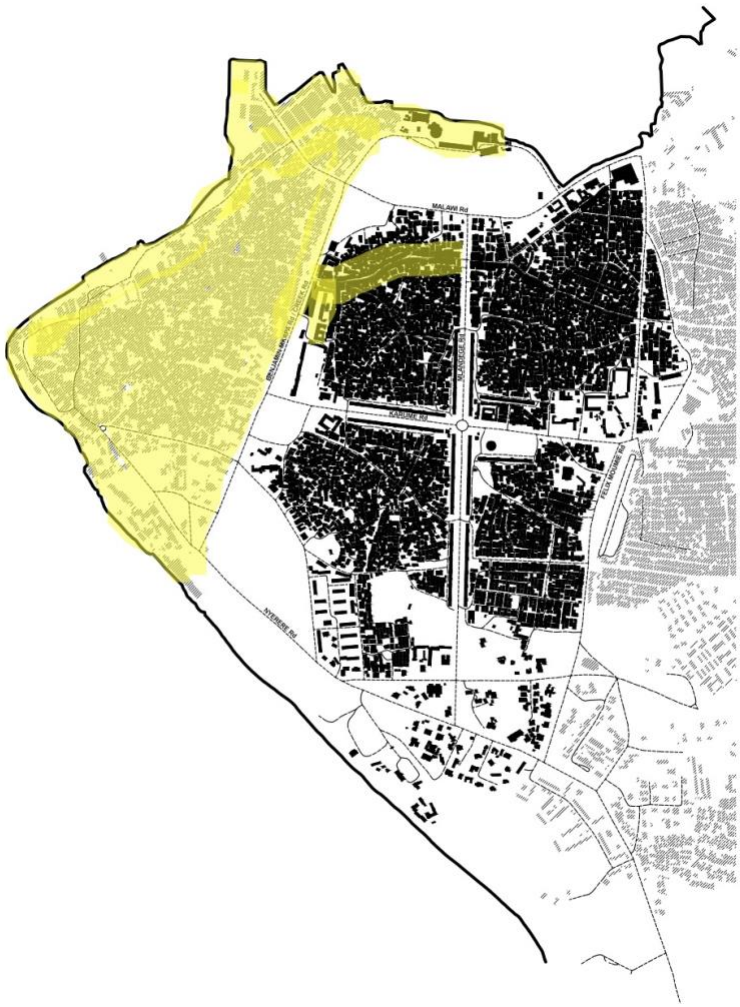


Fig. 5. Base map of Zanzibar Town depicting UNESCO conservation area in yellow on the left and Ng'ambo's built fabric in black line on the right (map by Folkers and Perzyna [11] p. 21, overlay by the author from whc.unesco.org).

Ng'ambo grew and in the nineteenth century wattle-and-daub huts were interspersed between the stone houses in Stone Town, but by 1845 the settlement had jumped across the Creek to Ng'ambo, "the other side". The two parts together formed a truly cosmopolitan city with Arab, Swahili, Indian, Persian, Comorian, Goan and Madagascan people, to name a few, living next to each other, on both sides of the creek in wattle-and-daub Swahili houses, Omani *beyts* and Indian *dukas* [11]. Free men and slaves made up mercantile Swahili city states. Omanis who lived in town were dependent on African labourers, most of whom were domestic workers who lived with their masters. But some returned home after working hours and lived on land in Ng'ambo bought by the Omanis. By 1890 Ng'ambo exceeded the old city in size and population.

Although Ng'ambo was perceived by westerners and outsiders as disorderly chaos, many argue that it was not so. As Sheriff [7] put it, the town was composed of organised, structured, and serviced communities based on traditional local development procedures, using local skills and mutual agreements between neighbours. It was divided into clearly defined districts (Mtaa).

Zanzibar became a British Protectorate in 1890.[4] Before that time no formal policy of segregation existed, but during the British colonial administration, the cosmopolis was reorganised into a segregated city. Stone Town on the peninsula was subdivided into European, Arab and Indian quarters and Ng'ambo on the mainland became the native sector, to which workers' quarters were exiled. Workers and the poor of the town made up the third part of Zanzibar's social formation. The division between the "haves", people of pedigree or *waungwana,* and the "have-nots" were not only social, but also spatial [7]. The creek became the *cordon sanitaire* with the Stone Town on the one side: a formal city for wealthy Europeans, Arabs and Indians and Ng'ambo on the other side: an informal city for African urban proletariat, day labourers, freed slaves, and impoverished Arabs [9]. Degeneration and neglect eventually caused Ng'ambo to turn into a slum.

3. Historic Interaction by Sociocultural Groups

A historical overview of the island reveals the historic interaction between diverse sociocultural groups. These groups can be divided into pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods.

3.1 Pre-colonial Era

3.1.1 Swahili traders and the Kilwa Sultanate

During the eighth century, Swahili people began to engage in the Indian Ocean trade and were influenced by Arabic, Persian, Indian, and Chinese cultures. During the tenth century, city-states flourished along the Swahili Coast and adjacent islands. Kilwa, Malindi, Gedi, Pate, Comoros, and Zanzibar were Muslim, cosmopolitan, and politically independent of one another. The Kilwa Sultanate originated as a Persian colony, but it turned into a very diverse state through extensive inter-marriage and conversion of local Bantu inhabitants and later Arab immigration. Arab and Persian colonisers brought stone architecture and urban civilisation to the Swahili coast. The mixture of Perso-Arab and Bantu cultures in Kilwa is credited for creating Swahili as a distinctive East African culture and language [5] [14].

3.1.2 Swahili diko

The town of Zanzibar originated as a fishing village on the Shangani peninsula in the twelfth century, and comprised of a few *diko,* (temporary fishing settlements) that over time transformed into a typical East African Swahili merchant town, with local crafts participating in the long-distance maritime trade [13]. It is the product of an ancient pattern of maritime trade and settlement [5]. Many such stone towns existed when the Portuguese came to East Africa in the fifteenth century [15].[5]

3.1.3 The Portuguese

Portuguese navigator Bartolomeu Dias was the first European to round the southern tip of Africa in 1488, demonstrating that the best sea route from Europe to the Orient was in the open Atlantic Ocean to the west of the continent. Vasco da Gama followed the same route and reached India in 1498, therefore becoming the first to link Europe with Asia, the West with the East, and the Atlantic with the Indian Ocean. By 1503 the Portuguese controlled the whole East African littoral and the lucrative

[4] Sultan Khalifa concluded a treaty to turn Zanzibar into a British Protectorate in 1890, and the offshore islands and a thin strip along the coast opposite Zanzibar were all that was left of the former Omani Empire. Britain's influence was extensive but not dictatorial [8].

[5] Lamu and the old cities of the Lamu archipelago, Mombasa, Vanga, Moroni and Mtsamoudu [11]. Harbour towns lined the western Indian Ocean: Kilwa, Mombasa, Malindi, Lamu and Mogadishu and linked with the trading ports of the Arabian Peninsula and the Persian Gulf [1].

Indian Ocean trade. The Kilwa sultanate was destroyed by the envious Portuguese at the beginning of the sixteenth century [9]. The Portuguese had fast ships and firearms and resistance was met with force. Mombasa (1505 and 1528), Kilwa (1505) and Lamu and Pate (1506) were attacked, invaded, and sacked. Zanzibar was not so important to them, but they built a chapel on the Shangani peninsula in 1569, on the site of the Old Fort and a small factory (a trading agency) and some houses further to the south [5] [16].

3.1.4 Mwinyi Mkuu's pre-Omani dynasty

According to local legends, Zanzibar was first settled by Persians from Shiraz (current Iran) [12], who mixed with the African population to form a local dynasty that ruled the island in traditional Swahili fashion. The oldest datable relic is from 1107 (CE). It is the *kufic* inscription on a (trefoil mihrab) pillar of the kiblah (north niche) in the mosque at Kizimkazi at the south end of the island. There are ruins of a fortress overlooking the harbour near the mosque [16][5]. The Great Chief or Mwinyi Mkuu was also referred to as Mfulame, which means "king", or as the King of Kadimu, meaning "the king of the people of the old" (from the Arab word *qadim* which means "old") [16]. By the end of the sixteenth century these local rulers submitted to the Portuguese, who left them in their positions of power [13]. Unguja was a divided kingdom and Queen Fatuma (1650-1715) ruled over the indigenous people in the northern half. Her capital was in Zanzibar Town and her palace is said to have been on the site of the present-day Beit al-Ajaib (House of Wonders). She was married to an Arab of the Alawani clan from Hadhramaut in the Yemen, who was the ruler of Utondwe on the mainland [6] [9]. They were associated with the Forodhani Mosque, the earliest of the Friday mosques. Swahili families from Malindi on the coast of Kenya established quarters there and built mosques, which showed similarities to the mosques on the homeland [5][9].

3.1.5 Omanis

The Omani were rivals to the Portuguese and penetrated the area in the second half of the seventeenth century. Portuguese power began to wane in the mid seventeenth century and the Omanis were able to exert their dominance, culminating in the expulsion of the Portuguese from the East African coast in 1698 when the sultan conquered Fort Jesus in Mombasa [5][12]. Structures that were left behind by the Portuguese were incorporated into fortifications built by the Omani rulers before 1710 and were later transformed into the Great Fort [5][13]. The sultans left the indigenous rulers in position on the mainland at Kilwa and Pate or kings at Malindi and Mombasa, recognising local chiefs as tribal rulers and confirming their ceremonial functions. The chief collected tax for the sultan [16]. But because Queen Fatuma had remained loyal to the Portuguese, she paid the price by having to go into exile in Oman until 1709 [6][9]. Sometime before 1728 Queen Fatuma was succeeded by her son Hassan, who cleared the bush on the peninsula and is believed to have been the real founder of the town, which gradually replaced the early inhabitants' small fishing village of mud and palm leaf huts at Shangani point [5][9].

By the later part of the eighteenth century, Omani merchants who conducted trade between East Africa and Arabia began to settle in Zanzibar [17]. The Swahili city was replaced by a stone city after the end of the eighteenth century and became the home of Swahili and Omani Arabs [9]. Seyyid Said, the Sultan of Oman, decided to transfer his capital from Muscat to Zanzibar in 1828, and most Omanis immigrated to Zanzibar after 1830 [17]. They were an immigrant community but continued to maintain links with their homeland. According to Folkers and Perzyna [13] and Sheriff [7], Zanzibar Town was the uncontested political, diplomatic, and cultural capital of the Swahili world during the nineteenth century. From Kilwa to Lamu to Mombasa, no other city in East Africa could compete in number of inhabitants or in strategic military and economic importance.

Omani rule dominated for centuries and even with the onset of colonial rule, the Omani empire maintained its commercial foothold [12]. As a result, Omani architecture dominated the physical appearance of the town [13].

The result of pre-colonial trade and settlement in Zanzibar was a twin city pattern. Although many other pre-modern African cities had bipolar city plans [9], this settlement has Islamic characteristics.[6] Mark Horton and John Middleton [18] coined the terms "patricians' town" and "commoners' town" to denote the two types of towns recognised by the Swahili. These terms focused on the owners of the settlements, rather than their characteristics. The Stone Town on the western peninsula is an example of a patricians' town, a compact Muslim settlement that was home to the patrician merchants and from where international trade was controlled (Figures 6 and 7). Ng'ambo on "the other side" was an example of a commoners' town, one that resembled a rural village, built with impermanent materials, facing the land rather than the sea (Figures 8 and 9).

Fig. 6. Stone Town harbour view 1880 (photograph by J. Sturtz)

Fig. 7. Stone Town rooftop panorama 1888 (photograph by J. Sturtz)

[6] Where urbanism in an Islamic city is defined by possession of a mosque, baths and central market, traditional Swahili towns would have a mosque but rarely food markets and never baths [14].

Fig. 8. Houses in Ng'ambo c 1900 [19]

Fig. 9. Ng'ambo in 1894 (photograph by J. Sturtz).

3.1.6 Indians

Indians occupied important positions in the Omani administration as advisors, controlling much of the mercantile and port activities. Sultan Said invited them to Zanzibar to police his dominions [17].

3.2 Colonial Era

3.2.1 German colonialism

The German explorer Carl Peters arrived in Zanzibar in November 1884 (disguised as an Englishman). At the time Zanzibar was ruled by Sultan Said Bargash and the local Arab and Indian community controlled the successful commercial empire that traded slaves and ivory. Although European entrepreneurs had owned businesses on the island for decades, British interests were the most prominent, Britain being the quiet power behind the throne. Peters reported that he concluded treaties with local tribal leaders ("sultans") on the mainland, taking more and more territory for Germany,[7] claiming access to the sea and thereby intruding on an area that had previously been controlled by the Sultanate. The Sultan delivered a formal protest and as Peters continued his empire-building, he tried to convince Otto von Bismarck to secure free transit rights through the coastal strip. Bismarck's plan was to secure a protectorate as a neighbouring state to the Sultanate, ensuring that existing trade relations were built into the new protectorate's economy, but since the Sultan's entire income came from the collection of customs, free transit would have meant his financial ruin. Bargash thus refused to recognise German protectorate but in August 1885, a German squadron entered the harbour of Zanzibar giving the Sultan an ultimatum, allowing him twenty-four hours to accept their demands. Bargash could see the cannons through the windows of his palace and was forced to capitulate, signing a formal note in which he accepted the German protectorate [12][20]. In 1890 the German government traded the island of Heligoland (northwest of Germany) for Zanzibar from the British.

3.2.2 British colonialism

The British could not stand aside and began to take territory for themselves, leaving the Sultanate helpless in the face of these overwhelming forces. Britain and Germany divided East African between themselves [12] and Zanzibar's commercial hinterland was parcelled out [7]. Sultan Seyyid Said died in 1856 and by the time Sultan Khalifa concluded a treaty to turn Zanzibar into a British Protectorate in 1890, all that was left of the former Omani Empire was a thin strip along the coast opposite Zanzibar,

[7] These treaties can only be described as fraud, since they were made in a German that his interpreters would not have been able to translate, using concepts like "state sovereignty" which were alien to his audience. Furthermore, the leaders that he claimed to have met, may have been mere headmen [16].

and the offshore islands. Zanzibar thus suffered the loss of its Kiswahili and Islamic trading empire (Afro-Arab dynasty) to the German and British colonisers [7]. Britain's influence was extensive but not dictatorial [12]. It brought modern and social services to the island, but colonial management was a jumble of vague and disorganised practices supervised by inadequate social civil servants [7]. It introduced segregation as part of colonial politics and Stone Town was closed to Africans in 1891. The Public Works Department was established by Gerald Portal in 1893 and in 1897 slavery was abolished. British architect Sinclair dreamed to reshape Stone Town in an image confirming to the romanticised views of exotic places held by the British colonialists (see the Peace Memorial Museum).

The original merchant class Omanis were not entirely displaced from commerce. Arab and Swahili merchants continued to play a role in the social sphere commensurate with their political role, maintaining a strong foothold in oceanic as well as coastal trade and others flourished on the caravan trade throughout the century returning to Zanzibar to build their homes and mosques [12]. In 1896 the Sultan's descendant challenged British authority and was evicted from his palace, which was bombarded by an English warship in the 38-minute war: the shortest war of all time [9].

3.3 Post-colonial Era

3.3.1 The Revolution of 1964 and the creation of the Republic of Tanzania

Zanzibar was granted complete independence by Britain in 1963. Although various ethnic groups were becoming mixed and distinctions between them blurred, political parties were organised along ethnic lines. Arabs dominated the Zanzibar Nationalist Party (NZP) and Africans the Afro-Shirazi[8] Party (ASP), which was led by Abeid Karume. The Arab minority managed to retain power after parliamentary elections and remained a constitutional monarchy ruled by Sultan Jamshid bin Abdullah.

In 1964, African residents of Unguja under the leadership of Ugandan John Okello, called for the massacre of all Arabs and Indians between 18 and 25. Up to 20,000 Arab and Indian Zanzibaris were brutally murdered and women gang-raped in an act of genocide. The Sultan fled the island and was exiled to Portsmouth, in England. The motivation for the revolution drew upon slavery and deep-rooted racial divisions. At the time of the Revolution, Abeid Karume was on the mainland in Tanganyika. Okello invited him back and he became the leader of Zanzibar. He had a pact with Julius Nyerere to join Zanzibar and Tanganyika to form Peoples' Republic of Tanzania. The East German government saw the opportunity to publicise communistic ideals, providing political and military support [9].

In 1969 the *Wakf* Department banned burying the dead in town, but a few funeral grounds remained as an element of the Stone Town cityscape. From 1934 only six family vaults were allowed to continue. To end racialism, everyone had to bury their dead at Mwanakerekwe, four miles to the east, but even there, people were buried closer to their social groups. Hindus continued to use their burning *ghat* at Kiungani [17]. President Karume destroyed many tombs in Zanzibar after the Revolution. He was against the veneration of mausoleums as he was hostile to gatherings that mark the birth of the Prophet. The Government cleared some cemeteries for construction, public gardens, or streets. The first plots that were targeted were those whose owners could not be identified or the ones that were not being maintained. Although enclosures or family plots were places where the living and the dead had a social presence, it did not mean that families took care of the plots, and they were often invaded by bush or rubbish [21].

With the departure of Stone Town residents, rural families moved into the stone mansions, but the new owners could not maintain these old houses, resulting in neglect and collapse in the 1970s. After the social transformation, Stone Town was on the verge of extinction and the reversal of government policies in the 1980s meant the rapid development threatened to destroy and disfigure the town [7].

[8] The term "Shirazi" was used by people long established in Zanzibar to refer to themselves, claiming origin from Persian Gulf [8].

3.3.2 Post-colonial context

A list of different socio-cultural groups can be problematic in a postcolonial context, because it echoes structuralist principles, which determined that there are definite underlying structures that undermine the position of subjects (persons, groups, or the intangible such as meaning, nationality or culture) in relation to one another. The list attempts to isolate certain groups from others, and even if this happens subconsciously, some groups are alluded to as inferior to others, or alternatively, non-western groups are historicised and theorised in relation to European structures. Postcolonial discourse is post-structuralist, because it suggests that a group is never homogenous and cannot be represented in isolation, because identities are always constructed in relation to each other [22]. One must bear in mind that interaction that is always determined by an uneven distribution of power, produces hierarchical systems of cultural dismissal and racial discrimination. Be that as it may, a study of these groups explores this complex assemblage of powers and demonstrates the influence that each of these groupings had on the landscape, seascape and cityscape of the geographic area that is the focus of this study.

4. Recent Conservation Efforts

4.1 The Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) approach

The *Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape* was adopted on 10 November 2011 by the 36th session of UNESCO's General Conference, after two international conventions: one on intangible heritage (2003) and one on the diversity of cultural expressions (2005). The aim of this approach is to integrate the goals of urban heritage conservation with those of social and economic development. Increasing economic pressures often demand the admittance (or rather intrusion) of modern, unsensitive developments. The HUL approach attempts to address the conflict between modern services and traditional structures. Questions that arise in Stone Town is whether it should be fossilised for tourists or whether it should grow for the benefits of the inhabitants. These are conflicting social and economic pressures [15].

If one understands the complex relationships between conservation and development, heritage can be viewed as an asset, defined by a historic layering of values as produced by successive and existing cultures. It is an accumulation of traditions and experiences drawn from the entire human environment with all its tangible and intangible qualities.[9] This approach implies that the conservation of historic urban landscapes will have to refer to the need to link contemporary architecture to the urban historic context [23].

The idea of heritage was born two centuries ago as the result of an enlightened "top-down" vision of an intellectual and political élite, but there has always been a deep rift between this original Western approach on the one side, and the social perceptions of urban heritage and the needs and realities of the emerging world on the other. It called for a "bottom-up" expression of social values and social choice [25]. "A static, monumental approach as inherited from the previous century is wholly inadequate or may become perhaps downright destructive" [24]. The HUL approach includes new heritage types such as cultural landscapes and since there is a wide variety and diversity of cultural and spiritual dimensions in the world, a cultural approach supports different ways of interpreting and protecting heritage in different regions of the world. Neil Silberman [26] called it a new paradigm of heritage interpretations, based on Jürgen Habermas's ideal of rational public discourse leading to social consensus and collective action, which should focus on "process, not product; collaboration, not 'expert-only' presentation; memory and community, and not a heritage audience".

But what did this mean for Swahili communities on the East African coast? In 2013, UNESCO compiled a report aimed at explaining how the HUL approach is applied in these areas. The Flemish

[9] Available: https://whc.unesco.org/en/news/1026.

Government provided financial assistance for two activities: firstly, for preparatory workshops and secondly for fieldwork. The aim of the workshops in Zanzibar (and also on Lamu and Mozambique Island) was to introduce, explain and discuss the HUL approach and to review inputs from stakeholders. The University of Pretoria in South Africa collaborated with the Karume Institute of Technology, Zanzibar's Urban and Rural Planning Office and the Stone Town Conservation and Development Authority (STCDA, responsible for its World Heritage site management) [23]. Stone Town's intangible heritage values were integrated into an earlier inventory of public open space, to produce a report on both the tangible and intangible heritage values in the public realm. These values included use, movement, spiritual, visual, aesthetic and memory values [23]. *The Zanzibar Recommendations on the Application of the Concept of the Historic Urban Landscape in the African Context* of 3 December 2009 was included in the report. UNESCO thus contributed to a comprehensive mapping of the urban environment, considering natural, cultural but also intangible attributes.

Collaborators tried to provide guidance for future development in Ng'ambo, which they called the "Buffer Zone", with the aim of "enhancing its spatial urban qualities" [23]. Although it is briefly mentioned that Ng'ambo is of equal importance to conservation, the report does not elaborate further on "the other side". This is not surprising, since UNESCO declared only Stone Town (and not Ng'ambo), a World Heritage Site in 2000. As confirmed by Joseph Heathcott [], "[E]fforts to save elements of the Swahili built environment have been hampered over the past half century by colonial legacies that frame conservation in terms of pure architectural typologies and racially distinct building cultures." Oliver Barstow [10] states that the declaration of Stone Town as a World Heritage Site highlighted how global agendas often gloss over local realities, thus imposing a new kind of prejudice. The declaration further reinforced the perception that Ng'ambo is less important than its neighbouring suburb, Stone Town.

4.2 Ng'ambo Atlas

It was not until the publication of *Ng'ambo Atlas* in 2019 through a collaboration between the Department of Urban and Rural Planning in Zanzibar, the City of Amsterdam, and African Architecture Matters, that the other side of Stone Town was considered in terms of UNESCO's HUL approach. The HUL approach recommends that a historic area and its surroundings should be considered in their totality as a coherent whole.[10] Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) research for the *Atlas* was conducted in two phases over a period of eight months. It consisted of a survey of Ng'ambo's built environment (as a key element of the tangible heritage) and mapping of the immaterial culture (as part of the intangible heritage) [11]. (See also [10]).

Barstow [10] however, is critical of the *Atlas*, stating that attempts to survey the "immaterial" landscape of Ng'ambo is the book's greatest weakness. The editors Folkers and Perzyna, acknowledged the difficulty of compressing "the diversity, dynamic and complexity of the place onto the pages of an atlas". They relied on oral histories and field recordings to objectively determine the intangible moment of place making, which is, in fact, impossible. Ultimately only five pages out of almost 200 deal with immaterial heritage. The rest, as Barstow puts it "resorts to the geographer's tried and tested surveying techniques, identifying and naming – in short, mapping – physical locations in the urban environment. Facts, figures and locations – all the stuff out of which the traditional atlas is made – are replaced by myth, by story-telling, by conflicting 'truths' and uncertain origins."

Barstow further questions the audience for whom the Atlas has been written. The book is expensive and the "generous amounts of white space and often blank pages" mean that it was probably not written for the average person on Ng'ambo's streets, but rather for a "Dutch and European audience with specialist interest and deep pockets". This takes us to the next question, namely "what is the intention behind cultural collaborations between developed and developing countries?" Barstow claims that the

[10] UNESCO 1976 General Principle no 3.

motives for collaboration between Amsterdam and Zanzibar is never explained. He questions the motive for the Dutch interest in the future of Zanzibar Town's urban planning.

> Questions of contemporary cultural imperialism should not be posed lightly and it would be going an exaggeration to pin this label onto *Ng'ambo Atlas*. Still, when considering how such projects are financed and whose interests are served by their outcomes, questions must be asked about format and the epistemologies they represent and inform. The Atlas brings with it all the codes of empire making that were integral to the colonial project, which is not to claim that colonised populations did not develop and use maps themselves. At the risk of stating the obvious, the point is that the coloniser's atlas always originated from the outsider's perspective, describing in apparently objective, scientific terms what was essentially a subjective view with a specific agenda. One would hope that the difficulties of the atlas and the territories it claims to represent, and the type of knowledge it embodies, would be well understood by now [10].

There is always the risk of an outsider's perspective in the interpretation of Western maps. This point brings us to crux of postcolonial theory: that many of the strategies used to construct and exercise colonial authority are still employed today, even if it is under different guises [22].

Homi K. Bhabha's work has dominated discussions about postcolonial architecture and Felipe Hernández's book *Bhabha for Architects* [22] provides valuable insights into Bhabha's application of the concept of space and other architectural analogies to the political dimension. Bhabha states that although colonialism often feels like a distant era from the past, its historic proximity means that architectural education is still complicit with the continuation of colonial methods of representation, which construct the non-Western as inferior. This theory applies to Zanzibar because the non-Western architecture of especially Ng'ambo, has been "derogatorily inscribed in the hegemonic and singularly western architectural historicity" [22].

4. Conclusion

A pre-colonial historical overview of the island of Zanzibar reveals the interaction between different sociocultural groups. What once was a diverse, truly cosmopolitan city, as evidenced by its rich and diverse architecture, religious structures, and multi-ethnic culture, was reorganised during the British colonial administration, into a segregated city. Stone Town on the peninsula became a World Heritage Site, and the "Other Side" of Ng'ambo on the mainland became a slum to be upgraded. This theoretical split is addressed by renewed conservation efforts, and acknowledgement of the intangible or immaterial heritage, but care must be taken to address post-colonial heritage concerns by acknowledging the discourses that are current in architectural heritage and restoration.

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