

АНТРОПОЛОГИЯ ИСЛАМА

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FROM OASES TO THE CITIES. THE IMMIGRATION OF THE SOUTH EASTERN ARABS TO THE SWAHILI EAST AFRICAN COAST AND THE ARAB-AFRO INTEGRATION

ABSTRACT. Since Pre-Islamic times people from South-East Arabia were known as navigators and settlers in the Indian Ocean rim. Written as well as archaeological sources prove Omani maritime activities in the Indian Ocean which connected Oman with the Ancient Oriental civilizations as well as with the Hindus valley civilization from the 3rd millennium BC onward. Written sources from the Roman period, in first place the “Periplus of the Eritrean Sea”, evidence Omani activities as far as India and beyond. In this paper we shall outline the cultural, material and historical relations between the Arabs of the Southeast Arabian coast with the East coast of Africa. These relations have shaped and affected both worlds by creating a unique civilization, that established itself along the coasts of the Red Sea and East Africa since many centuries ago. We shall follow the historic and cultural steps of Arabs sailors, traders and nomads from South Yemen (Aden and Hadramawt) and South Eastern Arabia (Oman), which were the pioneers in the formation and development of this civilization over centuries. This cultural process lasted until the middle of the twentieth century and was stopped by the dramatic political events which coined the death sentence for the unique, multi-ethnic and multi-religious civilization. The article put the Arab and Omani heritage of the Swahili East African Coast within the frames of these historical events.

KEYWORDS: South-East Arabia, Swahili East African Coast, the Arab-Afro integration, Omani heritage, the Lamu Archipelago, Kilwa, the island of Zanzibar

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INTRODUCTION

Since antiquity, the Omanis and other groups from the south of the Arab Peninsula were seafaring people. Already from the 3rd millennium BC, we have evidence of Omani maritime activities in the Indian Ocean which connected Oman with the Indus valley civilization (Vosmer 2017: 31–45).

The navigation manual “Periplus of the Erythraean Sea” (Casson 1989) (1st century AD) describes the sea route from the head of the Red Sea to the East coast of India with short references to the East African coast and mentions a number of places on the coast of South Arabia. We can assume that in those days Omani seafarers frequented the sea from Oman to the East as far as the East coast of India as well as to the East coast of Africa.

In order to display the close cultural, material and historical connections between the Arabs from the Southeast coast and the South coast of the Arab Peninsula and the East coast of Africa, we shall start with a short introduction and concentrate then on three areas of the East African coast:

The Lamu Archipelago in the north

Kilwa in the south and

The island of Zanzibar, located in the middle between the two.

The history, the economy, the material culture, the intellectual and the religious life as well as everyday life and practices, the whole civilization of the East African coastal regions between the south of Somalia and the north of Mozambique are distinctly shaped by influences from the Arab world. Arabs from the coasts of the Red Sea, from South Yemen (Aden and Hadhramaut) and above all from Oman were the pioneers in the formation and development of this particular civilization. According to Sir Richard Burton (1821–1890), the famous orientalist and traveler “the Mrima [the coastal strip from Tanga in the north with its center Dar es Salam] is peopled by two distinct but anciently connected families, — the Arabs and the Coast Clans. The former are generally of the Bayazi (Abazi [Ibadi]) or Khariji persuasion; the latter belong to the Shafei school” (Burton 1872: 52).

In the nineteenth century, as a consequence of the Omani political domination of the coastal region of East Africa, the Omani presence in this region might have been more evident than in the centuries before. This process lasted until the middle of the twentieth century when anti-colonial movements, supported by the East Bloc countries and China, caused the processes which led to discrimination and even killing of the thousands of Omanis and Indians in the blood bath of the so called “Revolution of Zanzibar”. This was the death sentence for a unique, multi-ethnic and multi-religious civilization, of which the entire region did not recover until today.

Since pre-Islamic times the Arabs visited the coastal regions of East Africa and settled there. With the coming of Islam and the development of the “Pax

Islamica”, Arab and Non-Arab (Iranian, Indian) Islamic activities accelerated in this region. Since the eighteenth century this region is known as the “Swahili Coast” (the term “Swahili” is derived from the Arabic word *sahil*, which means “coast”). The name “Swahili” for the population of this region came in use in the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries under the Omani domination. The Omani rulers and later sultans of Zanzibar called “Swahili” their local subjects along the coast while identifying themselves as Arabs or Omani (Middleton 1992: 1).

The Swahili coast stretches from Ras Kamboni and the Bajuni islands in the border area between Somalia and Kenya to Ras Delgado near the border between Tanzania and Mozambique. South of the Somalia — Kenya border the coastal zone is green, well-watered by rivers, which provide relatively easy access to the interior; and granted by ample rainfall. Arabs settled on the small, mangrove swamps hemmed islands off the coast since the Early Islamic period if not earlier. These islands, the most important of which are Pate, Manda and Lamu, provide open access to the sea and protected the Arab settlers: sailors, farmers and traders, from assaults of the natives of the mainland. Nonetheless, until some decades ago, the Arabs were the land dwellers who owned farming areas on the mainland. South of the Tana river lies the Nyali coast with its fertile hilly hinterland and the important cities of Mombasa and Malindi.

The Mrima coast or Mrima region with the modern cities of Tanga in the north and Dar-es-Salam, the modern capital of Tanzania, in its center, follows south. Many small rivers provide the water for the local population and its agricultural activities. The remains of a number of old settlements were found on the coast of this prosperous part of modern Tanzania. Many small islands are scattered along the coast; and the two important islands of Pemba and Zanzibar lay opposite Tanga. The Mrima, where many roads from the interior ended at the coast, was the customs monopoly of the sultans of Zanzibar over a long part of the nineteenth century.

The ancient center of the southern coastal region of modern Tanzania, the Mago region, south of the Rufiji river, was Kilwa (Kilwa Kisiwani, “Kilwa on the Island”). Up to the early sixteenth century, Kilwa had been the most important city of the whole Swahili coast. Its wealth Kilwa had derived from the gold trade. Gold from Monopotapa inland was exported via the harbor of Sofala in present-day Mozambique to Kilwa and was redistributed from there.

The life of the Swahilis orbited the coast of East Africa, the interior of Africa and the sailing routes across the Indian Ocean. Behind the northern half of the coast one can find a small girdle of cultivable land which borders vast areas of semi desert. In the south, the fertile coastal belt is wider. Between the coastal areas and the interior the people of a transitional zone functioned as intermediates between the coast and interior regions.

At the present, the Swahili coast is a muddle of modern cities, far-off villages and partly ruined towns. Behind the towns and villages there are gardens

and groves of coconut and mango behind which fields and bush stretch. In the smaller towns and villages some of the traditional values of the traditional Swahili way of life, its urbanity and civilization can be still witnessed. Little is left. The Nyerere regime (1961–1985) made Tanzania victim of the Cold War. Socialist mismanagement and a concomitant destruction of values let into an economic and social disaster. Uncivilized money-oriented businessmen of the Post-Nyerere period do theirs, to get rid of the old multinational and multicultural Swahili civilization in most of the towns. In addition Nyerere supported (if not initiated) 1964 “revolution” in Zanzibar which destroyed its unique multicultural civilization.

In the period of Omani control of the coastal regions of East Africa between the southern parts of present days Somalia and the northern parts of present days Mozambique, which is generally considered to have started in the 1690s (Nicholls 1971: 119), Swahili civilization reached its peak. The policies of the Omani rulers, namely the Sultan Sayyid Said b. Sultan (r. 1806–1856), let into an epoch of economic prosperity and created an atmosphere of cultural activities in many fields. This unprecedented move towards modernization must be also seen and understood before the background of western colonial ambitions with which the Omani rulers of Zanzibar and East Africa had to cope.

The material witnesses of this era can be seen in the magnificent palaces of the sultans on the island of Zanzibar, the proud houses of Arab patricians in the Stone Town of Zanzibar, in the very similar houses in Lamu or in Mombasa and in other places on the seashore and the islands of Tanzania and Kenya.

The literature in the Swahili or Kiswahili language written in Arabic script starts its development since the seventeenth century and reached its summit in the period of Omani supremacy (Pouwels 1987).¹ The language of this literature developed over centuries as the “lingua franca” of the East African coast. It is a product of the special ethnic and economic composition of this area. Grammatically it belongs to the Bantu family of languages but its vocabulary is predominantly a mixture of African and Arabic words. A mixture of the Arabic and African languages, not necessary Bantu (because the Bantu did not come to the coastal areas before ca. 1100 AD), must have started long before the advance of Islam. This is to be deduced from a remark in a Greek description of the sea route from the Red Sea to India, the above mentioned *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*. The anonymous author of the work mentions that the Arab captains who were engaged in the trade with Africa and India married women of the East African coast and understood the language of the region. The advance of Islam and the gradual Islamization of the coastal population led to a strengthening of the Arabic vocabulary in the Swahili language, and the contacts between the coastal region and the interior resulted in the spread of the Swahili language far into the interior of

¹ A general survey gives: Harries 1962.

Africa. In our days, Swahili is the official language of Tanzania. In Kenya, Swahili is the second official language next to English. A brilliant portrayal of the people of the Swahili coast can be found in Coupland's "East Africa and its Invaders": "The remain of the mixed people of the maritime belt, the Swahili, 'a mixture of mixtures', arising... from the impingement of Asiatic immigrants on the Bantu who lived on the coastland or were brought down to it from the interior as slaves. Every degree of Afro-Asiatic combination and wide diversity of physic and culture are to be found in their ranks; but they possess — and have disseminated far inland — a common tongue, a Bantu language freely modified by Arabic and betraying also in its vocabulary the influence of Asiatic and European invasions" (Coupland 1965: 11).

THE LAMU ARCHIPELAGO

In the Lamu Archipelago we find a number of old settlements, all of which were built on islands. The northernmost of these islands is Pate or Faza island, where the remains of four major old sites are preserved: Pate, Siu, Faza and Shanga.

Excavations of a mentionable size were undertaken only in Shanga, east of Pate town, which had been abandoned in the early 15th century. The ruined site covers an area of about fifteen hectares of which *ca.* nine hectares consist of ruined stone walls and pottery scatters, which attest its foundation in the late Sasanian or early Islamic period. Of special interest are the excavated remains of a mosque which, according to its not protruding *mihrab*, could have been the Ibadi one (Horton 1996).

The remains of old Pate town cover an area of about 27 hectares. It must have been an impressive settlement. The ruins of not less than ten mosques are recorded (Wilson 1964: 54–64). Only one of them might predate the eighteenth century. The houses are built of stone. Many old walls are partially integrated into new buildings.

Pate was the town of the Nabhani, a dynasty which had ruled parts of Oman between the middle of the thirteenth century and the early seventeenth century. Sulayman b. Sulayman b. Muzaffar al-Nabhan, is mentioned as the founder of the Nabhani dynasty in the "Chronicle of Pate". According to this tradition, he had come from Oman to Pate in 1203 being defeated by the Yaarubi in Oman. In reality the Yaarubi came to power in Oman much later (1624–1741), so the tradition is a fictitious one. According to the "Chronicle", Sulayman married the daughter of an Arab ruler of Pate. This may be true, and the Arab ruler of Pate might have been of Omani origin too, perhaps one of the Julanda, who had emigrated from Oman to East Africa in the early Islamic period, or a descendent of another Omani leader who had to leave Oman in a later period. It is more than probable that the Nabhani already had contacts with the East Coast of Africa after they came to power in Oman. Thus, it

cannot be ruled out that this Sulayman b. Sulayman was a Nabhani who had come to East Africa before the downfall of the Nabhani in Oman and might have married the representative of the ruling family of the town. Reliable chronological data is rare. Therefore any attempt to bring a certain degree of clarity into the chronology of the rulers of Pate starts with conjectures based on the “Chronicle”.

Pate is not mentioned by the early Arabic geographers and historians, and even famous traveler Ibn Battuta (1304–1377) does not mention the town or the island. It is not until the sixteenth century that Pate is mentioned in the Portuguese sources. The rise of Pate beginning in this period is demonstrated by written sources, including the “Chronicle of Pate” (Chittick 1969: 375–391), as well as by archaeological evidence.

In 1966 Neville H. Chittick (1967: 55–63) started his survey of Pate and excavated seven test pits. Shards collected in Pate, prove a certain wealth of the city of the sixteenth century as well as a possible connection with Oman via the so-called “Bahla” — ware a pottery type which might have originated in the fourteenth / fifteenth century and was common in Oman until very recently.

Up to our present knowledge it seems that before about 1300 Pate was non-existent or of negligible size. It was gradually growing in importance in the fifteenth and the sixteenth century, and reached its greatest period of prosperity until the seventeenth century. But Chittick’s conclusions were amended by later work in Pate. Material excavated from the two new test pits show the ranges from the late eighth to mid-thirteenth and from thirteenth to nineteenth centuries (Wilson 1997: 31–76). Few, if any of the standing ruins in Pate date from before the eighteenth century. Of the old town, very little is preserved: parts of a mosque, mausoleums, tombs and remains of the palace.

Siu (Wilson 1978: 88–99; Kirkman 1964: 104–106) presents a much more “African” impression than Pate. The houses are built in a different style, and the whole settlement is less compact than Pate. Due to its thriving craft industries, Siu had attained a high degree of prosperity between 1750 and 1850 (Allen 1979: 11–35; Brown 1985; 1988: 101–113). It is frequently mentioned in the “Chronicle of Pate”. For a long time it was the rival of Pate, which led to a number of wars between the two settlements. In the second half of the nineteenth century, Siu finally came under firm Omani control. Some decades earlier an Omani fort (Wilding 1973: 151–153) had already been built there. Parts of the town wall can still be seen. The mosques are not impressive buildings, but in the Friday Mosque a *minbar* dated 1523/4 is preserved. Outside the town wall, one can see tombs and three mausoleums. One of them had been decorated with porcelain and pottery bowls and is dated by 1853/4.

The excavations in the northeast of the island of Manda revealed the remains of a large settlement. A seawall from 1,5 meters to 2,0 meters wide was followed over a length of *ca.* 400 meters, a mosque, the remains of a

house, in which Fatimid coins struck in Sicily (!) and dated to the 10th or the 11th century, as well as cisterns were excavated. The pottery found ranges from the mid-9th to the early 11th century. Later settlement phases of the settlement development reach up to the 17th century (Chittick 1984).

In the southeast of the island, the remains of Takwa (Kirkman 1964: 70–71; Wilson 1978: 82–88; Wilson 1979: 7–16), a circumvallated settlement, covers an area of about 210 m (E-W) by 260 m (N-S). Ruins of houses, a mosque, other buildings and tombs are scattered over the whole area and the area outside the walls. The walls are thin and similar to other places on the islands and along the coast. Parts of the wall gates are still visible. Takwa obviously had only a short lifespan of about two hundred years between 1500 and 1700. The houses have a consistent plan: two or three longitudinal rooms, one behind the other and are only single-storied. Stores and toilets were generally included inside the houses. The houses vary in size, and some are built around courtyards. Most significant are two structures: the mosque and a pillar tomb with an inscription dated by 1682.

Lamu (Kirkman 1964: 71–73; Wilson 1978: 75–80; Allen 1974) is one of the few natural ports on the coast of East Africa. Throughout its known history the city was closely linked to Pate, either in friendship and cooperation, or in conflict. It is certainly older than local tradition puts it. According to this tradition, Lamu originally consisted of two settlements: Weyuni, which was founded by Arabs from the Hejaz, and Hedabu, founded by Arabs from Oman.

Omani Arabs became a dominant power in Lamu. This is one of the reasons why in the the mid nineteenth century the people of Lamu soon realized the advantage of being allied with the growing power the Omani Bu Saidis, under the leadership of Sayyid Said, who gave orders for the building (or completion) of the fort and installed an Omani garrison there.

Lamu is mentioned in pre-Portuguese Arab sources (Freeman-Grenville 1962: 33) whereas Pate and its neighboring settlements are not mentioned in these texts. In the Portuguese period, the town experienced times of relative independence. Some of the rulers of Pate lived (at least for parts of their lives) in Lamu and married with representatives of Lamu families.

The excavations here were also carried out by Chittick (1967: 65) gave the shards ranged from the thirteenth century to the fifteenth century. Shards collected on the surface at different places date back to the pre Islamic / early Islamic period (“Sasanian-Islamic” ware) and continue up to the nineteenth century.

Allen (1974: 25–26) gives a list of 15 mosques built before 1900: Pwani (1370/71), Juma (*minbar* dated by 1511/12), Nanalalo (1753/54); Raskopo (1797/98, Freeman-Grenville 1973: 98–122) dates by 1707/08), Utukuni (1797/98, Freeman-Grenville dated by 1824/25), Jumaan (1820/21 ?), Nyebai (1824/25); al-Anisa (1830/31, Freeman-Grenville — al-Nisa, dated by 1733/34), Mpya (1845/46), Mwenye Alawi (1849/50, a mosque once

exclusively used by women with a female *khatiba*); al-Azhar (1855/56, Freeman-Grenville dates by 1741 or 1760/61), al-Aqza (1865/66), Shaykh Muhammad b. Ali (1876/77), Rodha (1877/78 according to the *qibla* inscription, the door has a slightly earlier date), Pumwani (1880/81). They demonstrate a peak of building activities in the nineteenth century — the time of Bu Saidi rule. The location of most of the nineteenth century mosques on the periphery of the nucleus of the town suggest growth of the town and its population in the same period.

The town is built on a slope descending towards the shore. This topographical precondition led to a NW — SE orientation of the main street, the main artery of intra-urban communication, almost eight hundred meters long. In its southeastern part, the main street is lined with shops and workshops. This is the *suq* of Lamu. In more recent times, this business area has developed in a north westerly direction.

From this main artery more than ten lanes of different length branch off at proximal right angles, giving the general layout of Lamu a regular ground pattern. In pre-modern times, the main street was the edge of the settlement in the direction of the sea. The stone buildings which are the historical core of the town, extends to a distance of almost two hundred meters up the slope. In this area, about 600 individual old buildings are located, an extraordinary high number for a town of the nineteenth century in this region. This quantity reflects the wealth of Lamu in the past times. One can stress also the architectural quality of the houses, several of them are little palaces in reality.

Lamu is the ideal place to get acquainted with the high quality and refined traditional domestic architecture of the Swahili coast, which is only matched by the architecture of the of Zanzibar (Ghaidan 1975: 43–60). Houses usually face north. The two-storey Lamu house has two courtyards, one for each floor. The first-floor courtyard is smaller and covers part of the ground floor court, while the uncovered portion continues through the first floor in the form of a well. This is probably the most striking difference between these houses and courtyard houses in the Arab world and elsewhere where the open well continues vertically in the form of a single shaft.

The inconspicuous façade of many of the houses is accentuated by artfully carved wooden doors. Inside the house the eye is hatched by decorative plasterwork which attempts to counter the monotony generated by the practice of stacking the long narrow spaces of the house behind each other.

The plaster work found in the houses of the Lamu archipelago appears to be the product of an artistically mature period. The plaster work skill represents the highest attainable point within the limitations of the medium of coral lime processed by the basic tools. Its most interesting feature lies in its intrinsic relationship to the architecture that embodies it; a relationship in which decoration, structure and plan patterns are complementary to each other.

KILWA

Located in the south of the coastal area of Tanzania, Kilwa is the most important archaeological and historical site along the East African coast (Freeman-Grenville 1962). This assessment is not only founded on the richness of archaeological material which came to light in the course of excavations and the overwhelming architectural remains preserved and / or excavated there (Chittick 1974). One must add to this the oldest local chronicle of all the towns in East Africa, that is the “Chronicle of Kilwa”.²

Not only these facts distinguish Kilwa from the other settlements along the East African coast. Above all, Kilwa is the only one of these settlements which had its own mint. Coins were struck in Kilwa between *ca.* 1200 and (this remains controversial) the fifteenth / early sixteenth century (Freeman-Grenville 1960: 31–43). This, the legal implication of assuming the right (or having the face) to strike coins with one’s own name, elevated the rulers of Kilwa above all the rulers along the East African coast.

Ibn Battuta writes of the city as being “one of the most beautiful and well constructed towns in the world. The whole of it is elegantly built” (Defrémery, Sanguinetti 1854: 179–196). Portuguese sources are no less fulsome in their description of the town. In the report of Pedro Alvares Cabral’s voyage of 1500, Kilwa is described as a small, beautiful island near the mainland. The houses were high like those of Spain. There were rich merchants and much gold, silver, amber, musk and pearls. The inhabitants wore clothes of fine cotton and silk and many fine things. They were black men (Freeman-Grenville 1962a: 60).

The chronicler of Vasco da Gama’s second voyage of 1502 writes: “The city is large and is of good buildings of stone and mortar with terraces, and the houses have much wood works. The city comes down to the shore, and is entirely surrounded by a wall and towers, within which there may be 12 000 inhabitants (Freeman-Grenville 1962a: 66–67)”.

In the report on Francisco d’Almeida’s attack on Kilwa in 1505 we read: “The greater number of the houses are built of stone and mortar, with flat roofs, and at the back there are orchards planted with fruit trees and palms to give shade and please the sight as well as for their fruit. The streets are narrow as these orchards are large, this being the custom among the Moors, that they may be better able to defend themselves. Here the streets are so narrow that one can jump from one roof to the other on the opposite side. At one part of the town the king had his palace, built in the style of a fortress, with towers and turrets and every kind of defense, with a door opening to the quay to allow entrance from the sea, and another large door on the side of the fortress that opened on the town. Facing it was a large open space where they hauled

² The important Portuguese sources one finds in: Theal 1900: 225–274; Freeman-Grenville 1962: 59–63, 66–75, 80–119, 127–133. A translation of the oldest, the Arab version of the “Chronical” from *ca.* 1520 gives: Freeman-Grenville 1962a: 34–49; Freeman-Grenville 1962b: 74–98.

the vessels up, in front of which our ships had anchored. From our ships the fine houses, terraces, and minarets, with the palms and trees in the orchards, made the city look so beautiful that our men were eager to land and overcome the pride of this barbarian, who spent all that night in bringing into the island archers from the mainland” (Montgomery 2008: 179–180).

In another account of the same event we read: “The town of Kilwa lies on an island around which ships of 500 tons can sail. The island and town have a population of 4000 people. In Kilwa there are many strong houses several storeys high. They are built of stone and mortar and plastered with various designs. There are many vaulted mosques, one of which is like that of Cordova. The [Portuguese: Gereza] fortress of Kilwa was built out of the best house that was there. All the other houses round it were pulled down. It was fortified and guns were set in place with everything else a fort needs. The sea laps the entrance of the fortress at high water near where the ships enter” (Freeman-Grenville 1962a: 80–104).

According to Duarte Barbosa (1517/18) Kilwa was “a Moorish town with many fair houses of stone and mortar, with many windows after our fashion, very well arranged in streets, with many flat roofs” (Freeman-Grenville 1962a: 131).

Today the site is situated in *ca.* 250 m east of the Gereza. In around 200 m walk in a westerly direction lays the so-called Malindi mosque with an adjacent cemetery. It was built in the fifteenth century and widely altered in the eighteenth century. In the cemetery next to the mosque to the northwest different types of tombs can be seen. It is remarkable that we find similar structures in Qalhat in Oman.

Not far from the Malindi mosque and the Malindi cemetery lays the fort of Kilwa, the Gereza (Chittick 1959: 179–183; Chittick 1974: 214–218). It is a plain, functional, military building, which has an almost square shape and a tower in northeast and a tower in the southwest. The wooden Omani Gate with an inscription flanked by stylized flowers and branches is the only decorated part of the building. The original Gereza was erected in space of a few weeks in 1505 after the Portuguese sack of Kilwa. It was built on and at the place of the best buildings in this part of the settlement. Only seven years later, as consequences of the disastrous policy of the Portuguese which led to the decline of the city, the fort was given up and dismantled. It took three hundred years that Kilwa experienced an economic recovery under Omani rule. This led to the restoration and partial alteration of the Gereza as one of the most southern Omani forts along the coast. This restoration is commemorated by an inscription above the gate of the fort. The inscription is partly destroyed, and that has resulted in different readings of it. The date was read as 1231/1807 or 1200/1785. My reading is 1230/1816.

Because of its size (*ca.* 42 m × 25 m) and architectural finesse, the Great Mosque of Kilwa is the most outstanding mosque along the entire Swahili

coast. It is the key monument for the study of the history of architecture of the Swahili coast between the twelfth and the fifteenth century because it is the only building about which we have information in written sources, and because of its repeated alterations. The mosque is divided into two clearly distinguishable parts, the northern, earlier section and the southern, later section.

The most striking difference between the two parts lies in the roofing technique. The northern part was covered with a flat roof, common to many mosques on the Swahili coast. Arched doors and a *mihrab*, which is later than the rest of the building, are preserved. The southern part of the mosque has a totally different character. It is much larger than the older part. Five aisles, the middle one giving a view of the *mihrab*, oriented the prayer hall in south-north. The structure of the building appears almost weightless in comparison to the flat roofed mosques of the region. This is the result of the slender columns, the different roofing method and the intelligent placement of domes and vaults. The bays between the walls of the prayer hall and the first row of columns are roofed with domes, and so is the middle aisle which opens to the *mihrab*.

The construction of this new mosque can be dated to the early fourteenth century, when the "Mahdali" dynasty came to power in Kilwa. It is generally connected with the famous Mahdali Sultan al-Hasan b. Sulayman (Freeman-Grenville 1962b: 99–110) who also commissioned the construction of the palace of Husuni Kubwa. Al-Hasan's mosque did not have a long life. The ambitions of the architect (and the patron?) the inexperience of the masons soon led to the collapse of the building, and in the period of economic recession which followed the reign of al-Hasan no funds were available to rebuild the mosque. This was carried out in the early fifteenth century, the second phase of extensive building activity in Kilwa.

West of the Great Mosque a small replica of the second building of the Great Mosque is preserved. This is the Small Domed Mosque. It dates from the time of the rebuilding of the Great Mosque, i. e. early fifteenth century but stands on older foundations.

Close to the west of the Small Domed Mosque, one encounters a wall enclosing a roughly triangular area, called Mukatoni ("the place of the great wall"), rebuilt in different periods of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century. The houses were arranged around courtyards and some of the rooms were domed or vaulted. This complex might have been the sultan's palace in the fifteenth and later centuries. After Husuni Kubwa, to which I shall come soon, it had been abandoned. The southern wall of a large palace is part of the dividing wall between the two sections of the Makutani complex. It consists of two parts of different function. The eastern part forms a wide courtyard with large, oblong rooms to the north and east.

The western part was the residence of the sultan of Kilwa. The palace and the houses in the northern section of the Makutani complex, as well as the houses east and south of the palace, were built in the late eighteenth / early

nineteenth century, when, after almost two and a half hundred years of decay and marginalization, Kilwa regained some very modest wealth. This was a consequence of the developing process of a new world trade system and the rise of colonialism. An important step in this process was the final expulsion of the Portuguese from the coastal area north of Mozambique by the growing Omani maritime power. The Omanis had started to control the coastal region between the southern border of modern Somalia and the northern border of modern Mozambique from the second half of the seventeenth century, and had expelled the Portuguese from their last stronghold north of Mozambique, Mombasa in 1698. A short time later, the Omanis took possession of Kilwa, and in 1710 we know of an Omani garrison in Kilwa.

The Omanis were not able to harvest the fruits of this victory immediately. Civil unrest in Oman postponed Omani activities in East Africa. A French interlude, beginning in the middle 1770s, was the starting point of Kilwa's modest revival. In a treaty of 1776 between the sultan of Kilwa and the French merchant Morice, the sultan promised to sell annually one thousand slaves to Morice (Freeman-Grenville 1965). It can be assumed that the palace of Makutani was built with the money gained from the slave trade. The monopoly of Morice lasted only about ten years. In Oman the Busaidi dynasty had stabilized its power, which resulted in an increase in Omani activities in East Africa, and to the reestablishment of Omani power in Kilwa and its region. As was Omani practice, they left the local rulers as subordinates in their position and took the larger part of the revenues. Thus, the sultan of Kilwa remained in his place and resided in the Makutani palace, as we learn from a traveler who visited Kilwa in 1811, whereas the Omani garrison was stationed in the Gereza.

Two kilometers east of the Makutani complex on a cliff overlooking the harbor, the remains of the two "Husuni", Husuni Kubwa and Husuni Ndogo, are preserved. Husuni Ndogo is nothing more than a walled rectangular enclosure of about 70 m × 50 m with the remains of a few walls inside.

Much more interesting than Husuni Ndogo is Husuni Kubwa. Its function, at least the function of its northern part, is easy to recognize. It was a palace, a palace to which there is nothing comparable in the whole of East Africa; and the whole complex, both northern and southern part, find no comparison with any other building in the entire Islamic world. Access was granted from the shore via a long staircase carved out of the rock on which the palace stands.

It is still an unanswered question arises: how did one enter the palace from the direction of the sea and which function had the different parts of the complex?

The function of the different parts of the *husun* cannot be definitely solved, and the exact date of construction of the complex is also not definitive. The undated, monumental inscription with the name of Hasan b. Sulayman in fine Naskhi script as we know it from the Mamluk period in Egypt and Syria, allows with a degree of certainty the attribution of the construction of

the *husun* to the most glorious king of Kilwa, al-Hasan b. Sulayman III, who ruled from 1310 to 1333.³

ZANZIBA STONE TOWN

The origin of the Zanzibar Town goes back only as far as the middle of the seventeenth century. In 1652 an Omani expedition attacked Zanzibar Island which at that time was still under Portuguese control. The Omanis killed a large number of Portuguese, but were ultimately repulsed by the Portuguese, who destroyed Kizimkazi, the old capital of the island. Not long after, the Omani ruler Sayf b. Sultan finally drove the Portuguese out from all their possessions north of Mozambique. He established garrisons at different places, and Zanzibar among them. This had a prelude in a call for help from the Omanis by the Queen of Zanzibar. After their successful counterattack, the Portuguese drove out the Queen of Zanzibar and her son, the King of Otondo, a place west of Zanzibar Town. She was followed by her brother Yusuf. At his death he had divided his kingdom into two parts. The southern part of his kingdom including the capital he gave to his son Bakri, and the northern part to his daughter Fatima. She was married to Abdullah, King of Otondo, and they had a son named Hasan, who succeeded her before 1728 when his name appears in Portuguese sources.

Hasan is considered to be the founder of present Zanzibar Town. He was succeeded by his son, Sultan, and he – by his son, Ahmad, who was the last independent local ruler before the final Omani take-over of Zanzibar by the first Al Busaid ruler Ahmad b. Said b. Ahmad. The Omanis gave Ahmad's son Hasan a limited authority over the local population⁴.

The town was built on a nearly triangular island. It was separated from the mainland of Zanzibar Island by a lagoon, which was filled in the 19th century and connected with it by a narrow neck of land in the south. With its insular location, Zanzibar town essentially resembles most of the sites described above. While settlements like Kilwa, Pate and many other places were only accessible by boat, most of Zanzibar Town was separated from the main body of Zanzibar Island only when the tide was high. It is assumed that before the foundation of the present old part of Zanzibar Town, the "Stone Town", by Mwenyi Mkuu Hasan in the first half of the eighteenth century, one or

³ A chronological summary based on the pottery sequence (Chittick 1974: 18):

Period Ia	Ninth century (?) to ca. 1000
Period Ib	c. 1000 to late twelfth century
Period II	Late twelfth to late thirteenth century
Period IIIa	Late thirteenth to ca. 1400
Period IIIb	1400 to ca. 1500
Period IV	Sixteenth to seventeenth century
Period V	Eighteenth to nineteenth century.

⁴ A good summary of the history and development of Zanzibar gives: Pearce 1920.

more small settlements existed on the peninsula. These were certainly typical Swahili settlements with simple houses built of coral stone, mud and thatch.⁵ The first stone buildings might have been a Portuguese factory and a small chapel, built around 1612 by the Portuguese at the site of the present day fort. These buildings were destroyed by the Omanis and the stone was later used for the construction of the first Omani fort in Zanzibar.

At first, the Stone Town grew very slowly. It has been controversially discussed whether trade or a plantation economy was the reason for the rise of Zanzibar Town. In reality one does not exclude the other, because it is a proven fact that many of the rich Omani residents of Zanzibar were active in trade as well as in the plantation economy.

In the time of the rule of Hasan, Arabs from Pate came to Zanzibar to settle there. They were followed by other Arabs and Indians. Toward the end of the eighteenth century, when Zanzibar definitely came under direct Omani jurisdiction, the town's importance was beyond any question, and the fishing village of 1710 had blossomed forth into a large town, throughout which were dotted the stone-built houses of the wealthier Arab and Indian merchants.

In the early nineteenth century the town of Zanzibar was large and populous. It was composed chiefly of coconut leave huts and a good number of stone buildings, belonging to Arabs and Indians. The fort was constructed in the center. The number of inhabitants of the island was estimated as 200 000 and at least three fourth of them were the slaves. The trade was chiefly in the hand of Arabs from Muscat and a few adventurers from Cutch State and the coast of Sind.

In the mid-1830s the town had a population of 10 000 to 12 000. The Omani segment of the population of the town rose steadily. In the 1770s there were 300 Omanis in Zanzibar Town. In the 1820s the number had increased to 1 000 and by the 1840s it had reached 5 000. The growth of the Omani population was a result of their expanding and diversifying economic activities. Until around 1820 most Omanis were engaged in trade, but many shifted later their activities into the plantations economy, the main products of which were cloves and coconuts. In the period of expansion the Stone Town grew with the construction of solid stone houses. The rich merchants and landlords built houses in the west of the peninsula, and the Sultan built a new palace on the sea front. When Sayyid Said died in 1856, the town had about 25 000 inhabitants. During the northeast monsoon this number would rise to about 40 000, when the town was full of thousands of piratical Arabs from the Gulf.

The rapid and uncontrolled growth of Zanzibar had its dark sides too. It was not only the population of Stone Town that was growing year by year, the population in the native quarters east of Stone Town also increased at the same rate, or more. The disastrous outbreak of cholera in 1869 and 1879

⁵ For the shape and the early development of Zanzibar town see: Sheriff 1992: 1–20; Sheriff 1995: 8–20.

(which claimed between 15 000 and 20 000 lives), as well as changes in a world economy undermined the growth of Zanzibar. One of the causes of the outbreak of cholera was the rapid expansion of Zanzibar and the concomitant disastrous hygienic conditions in the town which are mentioned by many travelers. Even the great explorer Livingston, who had seen much on his travels, remarked that it might be called "Stinkibar rather than Zanzibar" (Pearce 1920: 194). This changed, and in the early twentieth century Zanzibar was "one of the cleanest and most inoffensive cities in the world" (Pearce 1920: 198).

The splendid mosques of Zanzibar are dominating the skyline of the town. Their exteriors and interiors are plain or modestly stucco-decorations. This reflects the Ibadi attitude towards mosque building.

The distribution of mosques of the different Muslim groups of Stone Town helps us to get a glimpse of the distribution of the population of Stone Town towards the end of the nineteenth century. A distribution map of the mosques indicating the Muslim denominations shows that the majority of the mosques in Zanzibar Stone Town belonged to the Ibadi community. As a consequence of the de-Omanization of Zanzibar following the revolution and the killing and expulsion / emigration of many Omanis, some Ibadi mosques were transformed into Sunni mosques. The original large number of Ibadi mosques in Zanzibar underlines the importance of the Omanis within the population of the Stone Town since only the Omanis were Ibadis. The location of these mosques also shows the parts of town where Omanis preferred to settle which were in the west in the new quarters, as well as in the area near the palace. The movements of Ibadis within the town as well as the consequences of the Zanzibari revolution are demonstrated by the mosques which were originally Ibadi but later became Sunni of the Shafi'i *madhhab*. It is of great interest that we find a number of mosques in Zanzibar Stone Town which were built by Ibadis for Sunnis (!). Two mosques are belonging to the Indian Sunni Hanafits. The Sunni's mosques are concentrated in two parts of Stone Town: in the west, in the area which was not yet part of Stone Town around 1850, and in the oldest quarter of Stone Town, in the northeast. The Shi'a community lived and continue to live in the east and specifically north-east of the fort. They are all of Indian origin. The dates when the mosques were built or endowed testify to the boom period of Zanzibar in the nineteenth century.

The Royal Omani Buildings in and around Zanzibar Town are of special interest. The oldest building in Zanzibar Town is the Gereza. The fort which is located on the seafront has four circular towers and consists of two parts, an older western section and a later eastern section. One can trace four main building periods:

- Period 1: Between 1590 and 1610: Portuguese chapel and mission.
- Period 2: 1710: Omani fortification of the church / mission.
- Period 3: Between 1150 and 1800 a first Omani fort was erected.
- Period 4: After 1836 Sayyid Said extended the fort to the east.

Period 5: End 19th century the fort was turned into a prison. Later it became a railway workshop (1926) and a ladies club (1946).

The present Sultan Palace was erected after 1896 when British warships destroyed the old palace of Sayyid Said and the adjoining palace named as Bayt al-Hukm. The bombardment of 1896 resulted from rivalries for the succession of Sultan Hamad b. Thuwaini, who had died on August 25th of that year. These internal rivalries were overshadowed by the much more far-reaching interests of the British and the Germans in the control of the whole region. Sayyid Khaled, son of Sultan Barghash, had attempted to succeed Sultan Hamad against the will of the British. An ultimatum demanding submission was ignored by Khaled and “at nine o’clock on the morning of August 27th 1896, the Zanzibari Arab and Swahili learn this lesson <...>. A hail of shell from Her Majesty’s ships made the town rock, and the two adjoining palaces, crammed with the adherents of the usurper, crumbled visibly away, while the defenders with their guns and muskets were swept away in one bleeding and distorted mass of wreckage. After twenty-five minutes the rebels hauled down their flag, and Seyyid Khaled, horrified at the destruction he had caused, fled to the German Consulate — a very significant fact” (Pearce 1920: 205).

The present palace is not — and was not — an impressive building. It now serves as a museum which is in deplorable condition, unfortunately.

The Bayt al-Aja’ib or “House of Wonders” is a Victorian style building with iron columns carrying verandahs along three sides and a central clock tower. An elevator was one of the wonders of the palace. It was built in 1883 by Sayyid Barghash, one of the most famous Sultans of Zanzibar. It was constructed not as a residence, but rather for ceremonial purposes though some of his successors did use Beit al-Aja’ib as a residence. When the two adjoining palaces were destroyed by the bombardment of the British fleet in 1896, the Bayt al-Aja’ib was spared.

The Mtoni palace was built by Sayyid Said. Impressive parts of it are preserved. A two-storey structure with massive walls built around a courtyard stands near the shore.

The Marahubi palace was built in the 1880s by Sultan Barghash. An aqueduct carried water to the site. Some years later the palace was destroyed by fire. What remains are the imposing columns which carried upper floor balconies.

Around 1840, Sayyid Said built a palace and a bath at Kizimbani for his Persian wife Sahrezade, a daughter of the Shah of Persia. Today only the bath is left. In Kizimbani one can find fine Persian stucco decorations on the walls and in the domes. Unfortunately, unqualified attempts were undertaken to “restore” these decorations.

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ИЗ ОАЗИСОВ В ГОРОДА. ИММИГРАЦИЯ ЖИТЕЛЕЙ ЮГО-ВОСТОКА АРАВИИ НА СУАХИЛИЙСКОЕ ПОБЕРЕЖЬЕ АФРИКИ И АРАБО- АФРИКАНСКАЯ ИНТЕГРАЦИЯ

АННОТАЦИЯ. Еще с доисламских времен жители юго-востока Аравии были известны как мореплаватели, создававшие поселения по берегам Индийского океана. Письменные и археологические источники свидетельствуют о плаваниях оманцев по Индийскому океану, вдоль путей, связывавших Оман с цивилизациями Древнего Востока и долиной Инда, начиная с III тысячелетия до н. э. Письменные памятники римской эпохи, в первую очередь «Перипл Эритреского моря», сообщают о присутствии оманцев в Индии и на востоке Африки. Статья посвящена культурным, материальным и историческим связям арабов Юго-Восточного побережья Аравии с восточным побережьем Африки. Эти связи оказали влияние на оба региона, сформировав уникальную цивилизацию, которая много веков назад утвердилась вдоль берегов Красного моря и Восточной Африки. Мы проследим исторические и культурные пути арабских мореплавателей, торговцев и кочевников из Южного Йемена (Аден и Хадрамаут) и Юго-Восточной Аравии (Оман), игравших первостепенную роль в возникновении и развитии этой цивилизации на протяжении веков. Этот культурный процесс продолжался до середины XX в. и был прерван драматическими политическими событиями, которые вынесли смертный приговор уникальной мультиэтнической и мультирелигиозной цивилизации. Статья помещает арабское и оманское наследие суахилийского побережья Восточной Африки в контекст этих исторических событий.

КЛЮЧЕВЫЕ СЛОВА: Юго-Восточная Аравия, арабы, суахилийское побережье Восточной Африки, арабо-африканская интеграция, оманское наследие, архипелаг Ламу, Килва, остров Занзибар

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