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The History of Kaole Ruins and the Preservation of Cultural Practice of Bagamoyo Region from the 1860s to the 1960s

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ABSTRACT: This paper traces the history of the Kaole ruins, near Bagamoyo on the Coast of Tanzania, and examines how the cultural practices of the Bagamoyo region were preserved between the 1860s and the 1960s. Drawing on observation and exhibition panels at the Kaole site museum, together with published historical and archaeological works, it first reconstructs Kaole's development from the earliest settlement at Bwembweni (AD 600–700) into a thirteenth-century Shirazi Muslim trading town, and its decline around the sixteenth century. It then shows how Bagamoyo inherited Kaole's role and became the leading Caravan Port of nineteenth-century East Africa. The paper argues that between the 1860s and the 1960s the region's cultural practices survived mainly through the actions of communities themselves: Oral tradition, repeated ritual, religious leadership and the blending of old and new customs. These practices included Islam and the Maulid festival, Zaramo initiation and matrilineal kinship, the customs of the Caravan road, *ngoma* dance and pilgrimage to the Kaole tombs. Formal protection of the Kaole ruins came late, with the first conservation work in 1958 and the Antiquities Act of 1964. The study concludes that Kaole is the starting point for understanding both the growth of Bagamoyo and the preservation of its heritage.

Keywords: *Kaole ruins; Bagamoyo; Swahili coast; cultural heritage; Zaramo; Maulid; heritage preservation; Tanzania*

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1. Background of the Study

The history of Kaole ruins can be traced from the seventh century. The ruins are found five Kilometres South of Bagamoyo, among mangroves and baobab trees. Their mosques and pillar tombs are among the oldest Islamic buildings on the East African mainland. They are the remains of a town that flourished long before Bagamoyo existed, and whose people, trade and beliefs laid the foundations on which Bagamoyo was later built.

Kaole belonged to the wider world of the Swahili coast, a chain of trading towns stretching from southern Somalia to Mozambique. Historians and archaeologists now agree that these stone towns were African creations, built by coastal communities who spoke a Bantu language and who absorbed Islam and many Indian Ocean influences over centuries of trade, rather than colonies founded by foreign settlers. Recent surveys of the field likewise treat the Swahili coast as a single cultural and commercial world, linked by the sea to Arabia, Persia, India and China. Kaole's story is therefore part of a much larger history.

This paper follows that story in two stages. It first traces the rise and fall of Kaole, from the first settlers around AD 600 to the town's abandonment in about the sixteenth century. It then turns to the century from the 1860s to the 1960s, when Bagamoyo grew into East Africa's greatest caravan port, passed through German and British rule, and reached independence. Throughout that century, the people of the Bagamoyo region kept their cultural practices alive, sometimes against heavy pressure, while the ruins of Kaole slowly passed from local memory into national protection.

2. Sources and Methods

This study combines three kinds of evidence. The first is observation at the Kaole Ruins, including photographs of the standing monuments, the old port and the exhibition panels of the site museum (Figures 1–12). In the text, "field observation" refers to this site visit, and each figure caption names its source. The second is published scholarship on the archaeology of the Swahili coast, the caravan trade, Islam and dance in colonial Tanganyika, and the history of heritage conservation in Tanzania. The third is reference works and travel accounts describing Kaole and Bagamoyo. The study relies mainly on secondary sources.

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Written sources for this period were produced mostly by outsiders, such as missionaries, explorers and colonial officers, and they say much more about trade and government than about the beliefs of ordinary people. As Trouillot reminds historians, silences enter history at the moment sources are created, archived and retold, so what is missing from the record is not necessarily missing from the past. For this reason archival records and oral interviews with elders and religious leaders in Bagamoyo would strengthen future research on the period.

3. Statement of the Problem

The Kaole ruins are among the oldest Islamic monuments on the East African mainland, and Bagamoyo is one of the best-known historic towns of the Swahili coast. Yet the history of the two places is usually told in separate pieces. Archaeological and guidebook accounts of Kaole concentrate on its mosques, pillar tombs and medieval trade, and say little about what happened to the site and its people after the town was abandoned. Histories of Bagamoyo, on the other hand, concentrate on the caravan trade, slavery, the Christian mission and colonial rule, and treat Kaole, if at all, as a brief prelude. As a result, the link between Kaole and the later growth of Bagamoyo is rarely examined as one continuous story.

Less attention still has been given to the cultural practices of the Bagamoyo region and to how they survived between the 1860s and the 1960s. During this century the region passed through the height and collapse of the caravan trade, the slave trade, the arrival of Christian missionaries, German conquest, the Abushiri and Maji Maji wars, British rule and independence. Formal heritage protection, however, came only at the very end of the period, with the first conservation work at Kaole in 1958 and the Antiquities Act of 1964. This raises a question that existing studies have not fully answered: how were the region's ruins, beliefs and customs kept alive for almost a century before the state took responsibility for them?

Today Kaole and Bagamoyo face new pressures from urban growth, tourism, coastal erosion and the decay of fragile coral stone, and heritage management remains focused mainly on the physical monuments. Critical heritage scholars have argued that such a focus on monuments tends to leave out the people, practices and memories that give heritage its meaning. Without a clear understanding of how local communities preserved their own

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heritage in the past, present-day conservation risks overlooking them. This study therefore examines the history of the Kaole ruins and the preservation of the cultural practices of the Bagamoyo region from the 1860s to the 1960s.

4. Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

i. How did Kaole develop from an early fishing settlement into a Shirazi Muslim trading town, and what led to its decline?

ii. How did Bagamoyo inherit Kaole's role and grow into the leading caravan port of nineteenth-century East Africa?

iii. What cultural practices characterised the Bagamoyo region between the 1860s and the 1960s?

iv. What were the contributions of Kaole ruins to the preservation of cultural practice of Bagamoyo from 1860s to 1960s?

5. Theoretical Framework

The study draws on two complementary theories, supported by the concept of the Authorized Heritage Discourse. Together they explain how heritage can survive through the actions of communities, how cultures change while keeping their identity, and why official protection of heritage arrived late and in a particular form.

5.1 Collective Memory Theory

Collective memory theory was developed by the French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs, who argued that memory is not only a personal matter but is formed and kept by social groups such as families, religious communities and nations. A group remembers its past by repeating stories, rituals and celebrations, and by attaching meaning to particular places. When these social frameworks continue, memory survives; when they are broken, memory fades. Paul Connerton later extended this idea by showing that societies remember not only through words but through the body: through commemorative ceremonies and through bodily practices such as dance, posture and ritual gesture, which are learned by doing and repeated without needing to be written down.

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This theory is relevant to the present study because, for most of the period from the 1860s to the 1960s, the people of the Bagamoyo region had no written heritage policy or government protection. Their past was kept alive through oral traditions about the Diwani rulers buried at Kaole, the meanings of the names Kaole and Bagamoyo, the yearly Maulid, the repeated initiation ceremonies with their songs and dances, and pilgrimages to the Kaole tombs. The theory helps to explain how these practices acted as carriers of memory, and why the disruption of communities by the slave trade, war and migration posed a threat to cultural continuity.

5.2 Cultural Syncretism Theory

Cultural syncretism refers to the blending of elements from different religious and cultural traditions into a new, combined form. Stewart and Shaw show that syncretism is not simply a passive mixing of cultures; it is a process through which people actively choose, adapt and sometimes contest what they take from other traditions. Syncretism therefore allows a community to accept change while keeping important parts of its older identity. Hobsbawm and Ranger add a related warning: some customs that appear ancient were in fact created, or given fixed form, quite recently, often under colonial rule. Tradition, in other words, is always being remade.

The Bagamoyo region offers clear examples of this process. Many Zaramo became Muslim while keeping matrilineal kinship, girls' initiation, the mwana hiti figure and healing practices. Islam spread partly through jando, which fitted easily beside older initiation customs, and beni ngoma combined brass-band music and military drill with local traditions of dance competition. Historians of coastal Islam have described a similar pattern of local adaptation over many centuries. The theory helps the study to explain how cultural practices were preserved not by remaining unchanged but by adapting to Islam, Christianity and colonial rule.

5.3 The Authorized Heritage Discourse

The study also uses Laurajane Smith's concept of the Authorized Heritage Discourse. Smith argues that official heritage practice, shaped by European ideas of conservation, tends to define heritage as old, grand and material things such as monuments and buildings, to be cared for by experts on behalf of the nation. In this view, the living

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practices and memories of local communities are often treated as less important than the stones themselves. The concept helps to explain why, when formal protection finally came to Kaole, it was directed at the ruins rather than at the traditions connected with them.

6. Significance of the Study

This study is significant in several ways. First, it contributes to the historiography of the Swahili coast by linking the archaeology of Kaole with the social and cultural history of Bagamoyo, and by treating the period from the 1860s to the 1960s as a single story of continuity and change. It fills a gap in existing literature, which has tended to study the monuments, the caravan trade and colonial rule separately.

Second, the study is useful to heritage managers and policy makers, including the Antiquities Division of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism. By showing that local communities preserved their heritage long before formal protection began, it supports approaches to conservation that involve communities and recognise intangible heritage alongside physical monuments. This is especially important as Bagamoyo seeks inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

Third, the study is of value to the people of Bagamoyo, to schools and to cultural institutions such as the Bagamoyo Institute of Arts and Culture (TASUBA). It documents practices such as the Maulid, Zaramo initiation and ngoma dance as part of the region's history and can help younger generations appreciate and continue them.

Fourth, the study can improve the interpretation of the Kaole site museum and the information given to visitors, supporting cultural tourism that is accurate and respectful of local beliefs. Tourism shapes how places are seen and presented, and visitors often look for the picturesque rather than the meanings that sites hold for local people. Finally, the study provides a foundation for further research, especially studies using archival records and oral interviews with elders and religious leaders in Bagamoyo.

7. Findings from the Study

The findings of the study are presented according to the four research questions.

The rise and decline of Kaole

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The study found that settlement in the Kaole area began with African fishermen and farmers at Bwembweni between AD 600 and 700. By the thirteenth century Kaole had grown into a prosperous Shirazi Muslim town, governed according to tradition by Diwani rulers, with a coral-rag mosque that is among the oldest on mainland Tanzania, a second mosque of about the fifteenth century and a cemetery of about thirty tombs. Its wealth came from Indian Ocean trade in mangrove poles, ivory, ebony and other goods, exchanged for pottery, porcelain, beads and cloth from Arabia, Persia, India, China and Kilwa. Kaole declined from about the sixteenth century as a result of Portuguese attacks on the Swahili trading network, the silting of its harbour by mud and mangroves, and the shift of wealth and power to other coastal centres (see section 7.1–7.4).

Bagamoyo as the heir of Kaole

The study found that a fishing and farming village about five kilometres North of Kaole slowly took over its role, and by the eighteenth century it was known as Bagamoyo. After Sultan Seyyid Said moved his capital to Zanzibar around 1840, Bagamoyo became Zanzibar's main gateway to the mainland. By the 1860s it was the coastal end of the central caravan route, about 1,200 kilometres long, which carried ivory and enslaved people to the coast. The town also became the starting point for European explorers and, from 1868, the site of the first Christian mission in East Africa. It served as the headquarters of German East Africa from 1886, but lost its importance after the capital moved to Dar es Salaam in 1891 and the railway bypassed the town from 1905. Bagamoyo thus repeated, on a much larger scale, Kaole's earlier role as a port linking the interior with the Indian Ocean world.

Cultural practices of the Bagamoyo region

The study found that the culture of the region between the 1860s and the 1960s drew on four main sources. The first was Islam, which spread steadily among the Zaramo and was strengthened by Sheikh Yahya bin Abdallah Ramiya, who founded Bagamoyo's annual Maulid. The second was Zaramo tradition, including boys' nhulu initiation, girls' initiation with the mwana hiti figure, matrilineal kinship, the Kolelo cult and the work of traditional healers. The third was the culture of the caravan road, seen in the singing and celebrations that welcomed returning porters and in new dance forms such as beni ngoma. The fourth

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was Christianity, introduced by the Holy Ghost mission and its Freedom Village. The Kaole ruins themselves remained part of this living culture through pilgrimage to the tombs and beliefs in their healing power.

Preservation of cultural practices and of the Kaole ruins

The study found that for most of this century cultural practices were preserved by communities themselves rather than by any government. Oral tradition, the repetition of initiation ceremonies and the Maulid, religious leadership passed from Sheikh Ramiya to his son, and the blending of old and new customs all helped culture to survive. Writings by missionaries, explorers and colonial officers also left a written record. These practices survived despite serious threats, including the slave trade, the Abushiri and Maji Maji wars, migration away from Bagamoyo after its economic decline, and the gradual loss of older customs. Formal protection of the Kaole ruins came late: after the Monument Preservation Ordinance of 1937 and the creation of the Department of Antiquities in 1957, the first conservation work at Kaole was carried out in 1958, and the Antiquities Act No. 10 of 1964 gave the independent nation legal power to protect the site.

Taken together, these findings support the theoretical framework of the study. As collective memory theory suggests, the region's heritage was kept alive through repeated social practices and sacred places. As cultural syncretism theory suggests, practices survived by adapting and blending rather than by remaining unchanged. And, in line with the concept of the Authorized Heritage Discourse, official preservation focused on the stone monuments of Kaole, while the living traditions connected to them were left in the care of local communities.

7.1 Before Bagamoyo: The Rise of Kaole (c. AD 600–1500)

The story of Kaole begins with fishermen. Archaeologists working in the area found that the earliest people settled at Bwembweni, about two Kilometres South of the present ruins, between AD 600 and 700. The wider area, once a fishing locality called Pumbuji, includes three parts: Bwembweni, Kaole hill and the ruins themselves. The first inhabitants were African farmers and fishermen who traded with seasonal visitors carried along the Coast by the monsoon winds.

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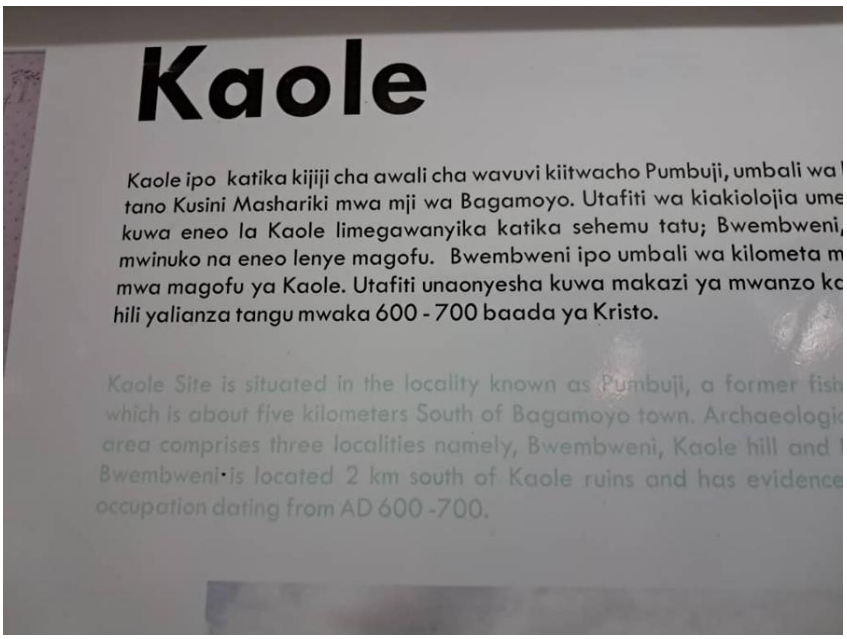


Figure 1. Panel in the Kaole site museum describing the Pumbuji locality and the earliest settlement at Bwembweni, AD 600–700. Source: Kaole Ruins Site Museum.

By the thirteenth century this small settlement had become a prosperous Muslim town of the Swahili coast. Its people belonged to the culture later called Shirazi, after traditions linking the Coastal ruling families to Persia. Scholars of the Swahili generally read these Shirazi traditions not as literal records of Persian migration but as claims to prestige, ancient ties and Islamic respectability made by local ruling families. Kaole grew at a time when the Sultan of Kilwa dominated trade along the Southern Coast, a dominance based largely on Kilwa's control of the gold trade from Sofala further south. According to local tradition, its rulers, known as Diwani, were descendants of Sheikh Ali Muhammad al-Hatim al-Barawi, and some of them lie buried in the town's pillar tombs.

The builders of Kaole worked in coral rag (rough coral stone) set in lime mortar. Around the thirteenth century they raised a mosque that is one of the oldest on mainland Tanzania. A second mosque followed in about the fifteenth century, showing that the town was still wealthy two hundred years later. Around the mosques grew a cemetery of about thirty tombs, some marked by tall stone pillars and others by small, roofed tomb houses. Garlake's survey of the early Islamic architecture of the coast showed that coral-stone mosques and pillar tombs of this kind form a distinctive East African building tradition, different from the architecture of Arabia or Persia. A well near the mosque supplied water for washing before prayer. Ordinary houses, built of wood, mud and thatch, have long since disappeared, so the town was once much larger than the ruins suggest.

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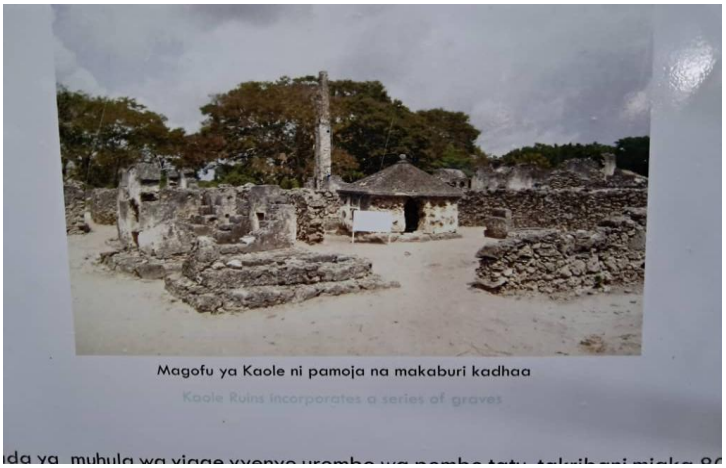


Figure 2. Museum panel: "Kaole Ruins incorporates a series of graves", with a pillar tomb and a roofed tomb in view. Source: Kaole Ruins Site Museum.



Figure 3. Coral rag walls at Kaole, with one of the tall pillar tombs rising behind them. Source: field photograph, Kaole Ruins.



Figure 4. Coral stone arches, showing how Kaole's builders used arches in walls of coral rag and lime mortar. Source: field photograph, Kaole Ruins.

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Figure 5. A small roofed tomb house beside a rectangular grave enclosure in Kaole's cemetery. Source: field photograph, Kaole Ruins.

Kaole's pillar tombs belong to a wider coastal tradition. Similar tombs stand at Tongoni, near Tanga, another fifteenth-century Shirazi town, and the site museum at Kaole displays panels comparing the two.

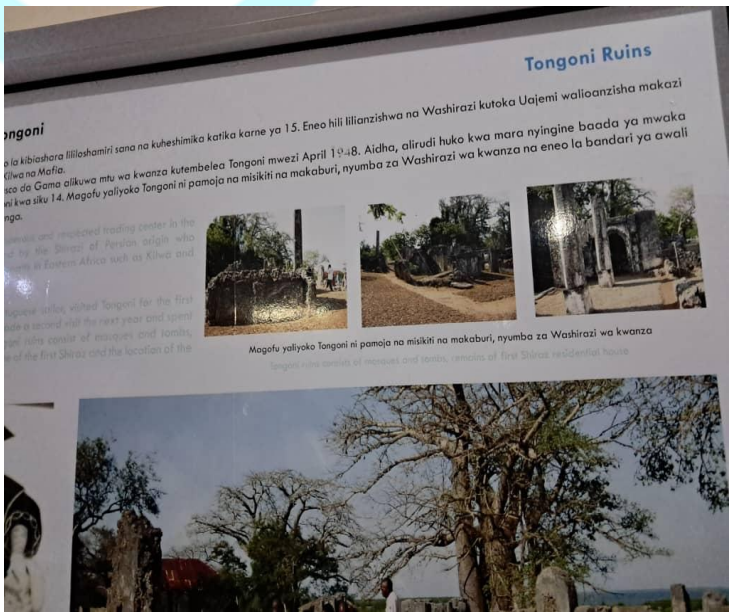


Figure 6. Exhibition panel displayed at the Kaole Ruins site, describing the related Tongoni Ruins near Tanga, a fifteenth-century Shirazi town of mosques and pillar tombs. Source: Kaole Ruins Site Museum.

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7.2. A town of the Indian Ocean: Kaole's trade

Kaole's wealth came from the sea. Each year the monsoon winds brought dhows from Arabia, Persia and India, and carried them home again a few months later. Kaole's merchants sold mangrove poles (boriti) for building, together with ivory, ebony, sandalwood and other products of the coast and its hinterland. In return they bought glazed pottery, porcelain, glass beads and cloth. Fragments of Chinese porcelain found in the ruins show that Kaole's goods travelled in a trading world that reached as far as China. Middleton describes the Swahili towns as a "mercantile civilization" whose merchants acted as middlemen between the African interior and the Indian Ocean, and whose wealth and status depended on this exchange.

Kaole also traded along the coast itself. Oil lamps from Kilwa, which the site museum dates to between AD 1300 and 1800, show its ties with the most powerful town of the southern Swahili coast.

This trade brought Islam, new building methods and new tastes to the town. Between the trading seasons, the people of Kaole lived by fishing, farming and salt making. In this way Kaole set a pattern that Bagamoyo would later repeat on a far larger scale: a coastal port linking the African interior to the Indian Ocean world.

The people of the area did not disappear. Fishing and farming communities continued to live along the shore, and the Zaramo who settled the region gave the ruined town the name it carries today: Kaole, meaning "go and see", probably out of wonder at the stone buildings left behind.

About five kilometres to the north, a small village of fishermen and farmers slowly took over Kaole's role. Its people traded in fish, salt and gum copal. From around the seventeenth century the settlement grew more prosperous, and by the eighteenth century it was known as Bagamoyo. Local leaders, the Diwani and majumbe linked to the Shomvi people of the coast, governed the town. In the late eighteenth century, Muslim families with ties to Oman settled there, collecting taxes and trading in salt from the northern shore. When Sultan Seyyid Said moved his capital from Muscat to Zanzibar around 1840, Bagamoyo, which lay directly across the channel, became Zanzibar's main gateway to the mainland. Sheriff shows that Said and his successors built in Zanzibar a commercial

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empire based on ivory, cloves and slaves, financed largely by Indian merchants, which drew the whole East African mainland into the world economy. In this sense Bagamoyo was the heir of the much older settlement at Kaole.

7.3. The Caravan Port: Bagamoyo in the 1860s

By the 1860s, Bagamoyo had become the busiest mainland port opposite Zanzibar. It stood at the coastal end of the great central caravan route, which ran about 1,200 kilometres inland through Morogoro and Tabora to Ujiji on Lake Tanganyika. Caravans of hundreds of porters, many of them Nyamwezi from the interior, walked for months carrying ivory to the coast. Indian merchants from Gujarat provided the credit that paid for the expeditions. Rockel has shown that these porters were not simply beasts of burden but a skilled and organised workforce, with their own customs, songs, leaders and ideas about fair treatment, so that the caravans carried culture as well as goods. Glassman's study of the northern Mrima coast, which includes Bagamoyo, shows how this caravan wealth drew newcomers, slaves and free migrants into the coastal towns and sharpened competition over who belonged to coastal society.

Ivory was the main export, but enslaved people were also driven down the same road and shipped across to the slave market in Zanzibar. Demand for slaves rose in the nineteenth century as clove plantations spread on Zanzibar and Pemba and grain plantations grew on the mainland coast. Captives were taken from areas as far away as Lake Tanganyika and the Great Lakes region, while further south a separate route through Kilwa carried slaves and ivory from the lands of the Yao and their neighbours. Historians still debate how large the slave trade through Bagamoyo was, since many porters were free wage workers. Yet slavery left a deep mark on the town's memory. In 1863 Father Anthony Horner, who would later found the Catholic mission at Bagamoyo, described the Zanzibar market in a letter to his superiors in Paris: men, women and children "chained like animals and sold like animals".

The town's very name was remembered in two ways. Most often Bagamoyo, from Swahili bwaga moyo, is explained as "lay down your heart": a place where porters could at last rest after the long journey. Others recall it as "give up hope", the cry of captives leaving the mainland for ever. The two meanings are a clear example of what Tunbridge and Ashworth

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call “dissonant heritage”: the same place can hold different and even opposing memories for different groups. Sites linked to slavery are often described as “difficult heritage”, and the way such places are remembered in public is shaped by who has the power to tell the story.

It was also through this coast that the first European explorers entered the interior. Richard Burton and John Speke set out from Bagamoyo in 1857. A sign at the old harbour of Kaole, now silted up and hidden behind the mangroves, records the local tradition that explorers used the Kaole port as well.

7.4. Decline of Kaole Town (c. 1500–1850)

In about the sixteenth century, Kaole began to decline, and by the end of the Shirazi era it had been abandoned. Several forces seem to have worked together. From 1498 the Portuguese attacked and taxed the Swahili towns, weakening the trading network that Kaole depended on. Pearson shows that the Portuguese tried to control Indian Ocean shipping by force, demanding tribute from coastal towns and requiring passes (cartazes) from ships, which disrupted the older pattern of free trade. Mud and spreading mangroves slowly choked the harbour. Wealth and power moved to other centres along the coast. Kusimba argues that the decline of Swahili towns generally resulted from several causes acting together, including changes in trade, conflict and environmental pressure, rather than from a single event. The empty buildings were left to the damp sea air and the advancing mangroves, which gradually brought down their walls.

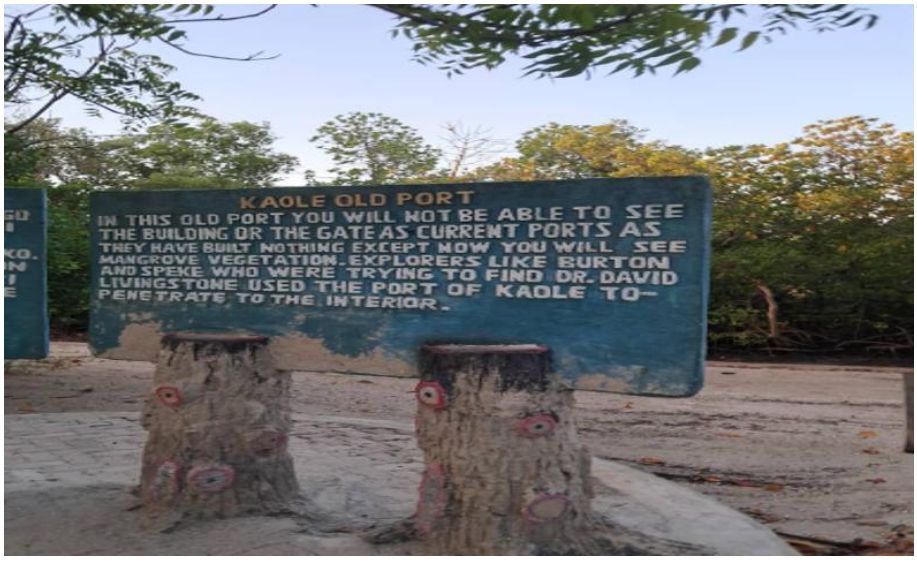


Figure 10. Sign at Kaole Old Port. Only mangroves remain, with no buildings. The sign says explorers such as Burton and Speke used this port to travel into the interior. Source: field photograph, Kaole Ruins.

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7.5. Missionaries, conquest and colonial rule (1868–1961)

In 1868 the local rulers of Bagamoyo gave land North of the town to the French Catholic Holy Ghost Fathers. There they founded the first Christian mission in East Africa. Its first purpose was to care for children freed from slavery, but it soon grew to include a church (1872), schools, workshops, farms and a "Freedom Village" for freed people. Kollman shows that the Spiritan missionaries obtained many of these children by redeeming them from slavery, and that they hoped to build a model Christian community which, by its example, would spread the faith inland. In February 1874 the body of David Livingstone, carried to the coast by his African companions, rested in the mission church before being shipped to Zanzibar and on to London.

In 1886 Bagamoyo became the headquarters of German East Africa, first under the German East Africa Company and then under the imperial government. German rule soon provoked the Abushiri revolt of 1888–1889, in which the Arab-Swahili traders of the coast rose against the newcomers. Glassman argues that the rising was not only a revolt of Arab slave owners, as colonial writers claimed, but drew in a wide range of coastal people, including slaves, freed people and townsmen, each with their own reasons for resisting. German forces under Hermann von Wissmann crushed the rising and built forts and a stone administrative centre (the Boma) in the town.

German rule did not end slavery at once. Deutsch shows that the colonial government avoided a sudden abolition and instead allowed slavery to decline slowly, so that many former slaves had to negotiate their own freedom over several decades. The memory of slavery therefore remained close to the lives of many families in Bagamoyo well into the twentieth century.

Bagamoyo's greatness did not last. In 1891 the Germans moved their capital to Dar es Salaam, which had a deeper harbour. From 1905 a railway was built inland from Dar es Salaam, bypassing Bagamoyo and ending its role as the gateway to the interior. The same years saw the Maji Maji war (1905–1907) against German rule in the South. During the First World War, British forces bombarded and captured Bagamoyo in 1916, and the town passed under British rule as part of Tanganyika. It remained a quiet district town until Tanganyika won its independence in 1961.

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7.6. A Living Culture of Bagamoyo Society (1860s–1960s)

Through all these upheavals, the people of the Bagamoyo region kept a rich and changing culture. It drew on four main sources: the Islam of the Swahili Coast, the traditions of the Zaramo and their neighbours, the customs of the caravan road, and the Christianity of the mission.

Islam was the faith of the coastal town, and during this century it spread steadily into the countryside. Among the Zaramo, conversion began in the nineteenth century and quickened after the Maji Maji war; by 1913 about half of them were Muslim. Iliffe and Becker both describe the rapid spread of Islam in mainland Tanganyika in the early colonial period, carried less by foreign missionaries than by local teachers, traders and Sufi brotherhoods. Islam often spread through jando, the boys' circumcision ceremony, which sat easily beside older initiation customs. The most influential Muslim leader of the period was Sheikh Yahya bin Abdallah Ramiya (1856–1931). Brought to the coast as an enslaved boy, he rose to become a respected scholar, sheikh of Bagamoyo in 1910 and a khalifa (deputy) of the Qadiriyya Sufi order in 1911. He founded Bagamoyo's annual Maulid, the celebration of the Prophet Muhammad's birthday, which became the most popular Muslim festival on mainland Tanganyika in the colonial period. In 1916 the British also made him Liwali, or governor, of Bagamoyo. Nimtz's study of the Sufi orders in Tanzania, based on research in Bagamoyo, shows how the Qadiriyya brotherhood linked to Ramiya gave people of slave and up-country origin a respected place in coastal Muslim society. Fabian likewise treats the Bagamoyo Maulid as a festival through which people of many backgrounds came to see themselves as belonging to the town.

The Zaramo, the main people of the Bagamoyo and Dar es Salaam hinterland, kept their own rites of passage alongside Islam. About every three years, in the dry season, boys went through nhulu initiation: they lived apart in a special hut (kumbi) under an instructor (mhunga), were circumcised and taught the duties of men, and returned to the village with the mlao dance while their mothers danced the mbiga. A girl's initiation began at her first menstruation. She was secluded and taught by her paternal aunt (shangazi), and she cared for a small carved figure, the mwana hiti, as if it were her own baby, bathing, oiling and dressing it to protect her future fertility. She returned to the community with the mbwelo dance. Swantz's detailed study of Zaramo ritual shows that these rites, and the symbols

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used in them, remained central to Zaramo ideas of womanhood and fertility even as society changed around them. The Zaramo also kept their matrilineal kinship, tracing descent through the mother's line, even after becoming Muslim. Some continued the Kolelo fertility cult and the worship of the god Mulungu, and traditional healers (waganga) remained important.

The caravan road shaped the town's daily life and celebrations. Porters marched into Bagamoyo singing after months on the road, greeted with rifle salutes, the ululation (vigelegele) of women and crowds of excited children. Glassman shows that festivals and public celebrations in the coastal towns were also moments when different groups competed for status and expressed their place in society. Music and dance (ngoma) also took new forms under colonial rule. The best known was beni ngoma, which spread along the Swahili coast from the 1890s, mixing brass-band music and military drill with fierce competition between rival dance societies. As Ranger showed, such dances allowed ordinary people to express their identity and comment on the colonial world around them. Fair found a similar pattern in Zanzibar, where former slaves and their descendants used dance, music and leisure to claim new identities after abolition.

The ruins of Kaole were part of this living culture. Accounts of the site describe pilgrims visiting the tombs of the sheikhs buried there, and a belief that certain tombs have the power to heal, especially those troubled by evil spirits. Some visitors drive iron nails into a sacred tree, believing it will draw away bad luck or illness. These practices are recorded today, but how far back they go is not documented. Such beliefs are not unusual on the coast. Larsen's study of Zanzibar shows that dealings with spirits and healing rituals have long existed alongside Islam, and that people do not see them as contradicting their faith. Anthropologists of pilgrimage also note that sacred sites often carry several meanings at once, so that the same tomb may be a place of prayer for one visitor, of healing for another and of history for a third.

Finally, the mission at Bagamoyo added a Christian strand to the region's culture. The freed people of its "Freedom Village" learned Christian worship, reading and writing, European crafts and new methods of farming, and some carried the new faith inland along the caravan routes.

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7.7. Keeping the past alive: preservation (1860s–1960s)

For most of this century, the people of the Bagamoyo region preserved their culture themselves, without help from any government. Elders passed down stories by word of mouth: of the Diwani rulers buried at Kaole, of the meaning of the names Kaole and Bagamoyo, and of the families who founded the town. Initiation ceremonies were held again for every new generation, so their songs, dances and teachings were relearned each time, and a family's mwana hiti figure could be handed down for forty or fifty years. This is exactly the kind of "incorporated" memory, carried in bodily practice and repeated ceremony rather than in writing, that Connerton describes. The yearly Maulid and the Qur'an schools kept Islamic learning and ceremony going, and when Sheikh Ramiya died in 1931, his son Sheikh Muhammad Ramiya carried on his work. Rather than giving up old ways, the Zaramo blended them with the new, remaining Muslim while keeping matrilineal kinship, girls' initiation and healing practices. Missionaries, explorers and colonial officers also wrote down what they saw, and their letters and reports became a written record of the period.

These traditions survived despite heavy pressures. The slave trade tore families and communities apart. German conquest brought war in the Abushiri revolt and the Maji Maji rising. When the capital moved to Dar es Salaam and the railway bypassed the town, many people left Bagamoyo in search of work. The spread of Islam, literacy and town life slowly wore away some older customs, such as carved grave figures for chiefs. Shortly after independence, in 1963, chiefs and headmen were removed from government posts, weakening the traditions attached to their office.

The ruins of Kaole, meanwhile, had no official protection for most of this period. The German government took an interest in conserving ruins at Kilwa in the early 1900s, the first such work on this coast, but there is no record of similar work at Kaole. In 1937 the British colonial government passed the Monument Preservation Ordinance, yet coastal monuments continued to suffer heavy damage through the 1940s and 1950s. In 1954 the archaeologist Mortimer Wheeler drew public attention to this destruction, and in 1957 a Department of Antiquities was finally set up, with only two staff.

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Kaole's turn came in 1958. That year the Department of Antiquities mapped the ruins, repaired a building, a grave and a mosque, and fenced the site, while the British archaeologist Neville Chittick began the first scientific study of the ruins. Before then, Kaole's walls had stood exposed to weather and mangroves; the respect of local people for the tombs may have given them some protection, though no records show this. Three years later, in 1961, Tanganyika became independent and its heritage passed into national care. The century closed with the Antiquities Act No. 10 of 1964, which gave the new nation the legal power to protect sites such as Kaole. As Smith's concept of the Authorized Heritage Discourse would predict, this legal protection was written for monuments and objects; the songs, rituals and beliefs connected with the site were not part of it.



Figure 11. Ruined walls and a doorway at Kaole, part of the site first repaired and fenced in 1958. Source: field photograph, Kaole Ruins.



Figure 12. The ruins at dusk, with a pillar tomb and the small site museum in the background. Source: field photograph, Kaole Ruins.

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7.8. Kaole and Bagamoyo after the 1960s

The work begun in the 1950s and 1960s continued after independence. The new state also took a direct interest in living culture: in 1962 President Nyerere created a Ministry of National Culture and Youth, and ngoma dance was promoted as part of a shared national culture. A committee to study the conservation of Bagamoyo town was formed in 1971, and the town was declared a conservation area in 1983. Today, Kaole Ruins and Bagamoyo Historic Town are both National Historic Sites, managed by the Antiquities Division of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism. Bagamoyo is on Tanzania's tentative list for UNESCO World Heritage status and is home to the Bagamoyo Institute of Arts and Culture (TASUBA), which keeps the region's music and dance traditions alive. The great challenge remains the same as before: protecting fragile coral stone and living traditions as the town grows and visitors increase.

Recommendations and Conclusion

The history of Kaole and Bagamoyo is one continuous story. Kaole made this stretch of coast a Muslim trading place as early as the thirteenth century; when it declined, Bagamoyo inherited its role and expanded it into a great caravan port. Between the 1860s and the 1960s the region lived through the slave trade, Christian missions, and German and British rule. Its culture survived because communities kept repeating, adapting and blending their practices: the Maulid, Zaramo initiation and kinship, the songs of the porters, the ngoma dances and the visits to Kaole's tombs. Official protection of the ruins arrived only at the end of the period, with the conservation work of 1958 and the Antiquities Act of 1964.

In light of these findings, the study makes three recommendations. First, heritage authorities should involve the people of Kaole and Bagamoyo in managing the site, and should recognise the pilgrimages, beliefs and oral traditions connected with the tombs as part of its heritage, not only the stone ruins. Second, oral traditions held by elders, religious leaders and families should be recorded and archived before they are lost, so that future histories are not limited to the voices of missionaries, explorers and colonial officers. Third, the site museum and tour guides should present the history of the slave trade

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honestly, including the different meanings of the name Bagamoyo, so that visitors understand the town as a place of both trade and suffering.

Appendix: Chronology

Date	Event
1964	Antiquities Act No. 10 gives legal protection to sites such as Kaole
1962	Ministry of National Culture and Youth established
1961	Tanganyika becomes independent
1958	First conservation work at Kaole: mapping, repairs and fencing
1957	Department of Antiquities established
1937	British Monument Preservation Ordinance
1931	Sheikh Ramiya dies; his son Sheikh Muhammad Ramiya succeeds him
1916	Ramiya appointed Liwali of Bagamoyo; British forces capture the town
1910–1911	Ramiya becomes sheikh of Bagamoyo and a Qadiriyya khalifa
1905–1907	Maji Maji war; railway from Dar es Salaam begins, bypassing Bagamoyo
1891	German capital moves to Dar es Salaam
1888–1889	Abushiri revolt against German rule
1886	Bagamoyo becomes headquarters of German East Africa
1874	Livingstone's body rests at the Holy Ghost Mission
1868	Holy Ghost Fathers found East Africa's first Catholic mission
1863	Fr. Horner describes the Zanzibar slave market
1857	Burton and Speke start their expedition from Bagamoyo
c. 1840	Sultan Seyyid Said moves his capital to Zanzibar
c. 16th century	Kaole declines and is abandoned
13th century	Kaole's first mosque and tombs built; town at its height
AD 600–700	Earliest settlement at Bwembweni, near Kaole

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