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“Lay down your heart” [*bwaga moyo*]: heritage as a driver for urban regeneration in the East- African stone town of Bagamoyo

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Abstract

Purpose – The paper aims to elaborate on the potential for regeneration of Bagamoyo (Tanzania) through adaptive reuse of its heritage sites. The town was the most important harbour for ivory and slaves of the East-African mainland during the 19th and early 20th century and the colonial capital of German East-Africa between 1885 and 1890. Today, it has 85,000 inhabitants who mainly live in informal settlements while stone town closer to the coast is largely abandoned with its historical buildings in a poor state of conservation.

Design/methodology/approach – The first part of the paper describes the history and heritage of the old stone town Bagamoyo, and how it impacts its identity. Additionally, it summarises the critical reception of the town’s role in the application to UNESCO World Heritage for “The Central Slave and Ivory Trade Route”. This, in order to consider the reuse of its heritage sites more as part of a layered regeneration process than of a singular narrative for preservation. The second part presents research-by-design proposals investigating the economic, social and cultural potentialities of three spatial layers: the main street, the coastal strip and the shoreline.

Findings – The identity and therefore also urban regeneration of post-colonial towns such as Bagamoyo is the result of a complex combination of different narratives rather than of a singular one.

Originality/value – Bagamoyo’s heritage has been studied as a driver for international tourism linked to slavery but without successful implementation. This study proposes an alternative perspective by investigating its potential for urban regeneration in line with local needs. Developed in the context of a master studio of architectural design, it presents an innovative didactic approach. Moreover, the methodology of research-by-design can be inspirational for other historical towns.

Keywords – Bagamoyo, Stone town, Contentious heritage, Colonialism, Slavery, Urban regeneration, Research-by-design

Paper type – Research Paper

1. Introduction

Post-colonial urban developments are facing the challenge of how to deal with the heritage sites that are related to their colonial and pre-colonial past, many of which have a contentious history. On the one hand, such heritage may be related to slavery or colonial suppression and exploitation. This type of heritage may be characterised as “dark” (Light, 2017; Thomas *et al.*, 2019), “contested” or “dissonant” (Silverman, 2011; Liu *et al.*, 2020). On the other hand, this heritage often has layers more difficult to acknowledge or assess, such as architectural qualities, a structural urban layout, or even positive narratives intertwined with the contentious aspects of these sites. This ambivalence raises questions on the meaning and potential role of colonial heritage in the context of urban regeneration (Lagae, 2013). Despite a negative connotation, its preservation and presentation is often important for local communities in defining their urban identity and sense of place. This case study paper elaborates on the potential regeneration of the historical town of Bagamoyo in Tanzania. Located just north of Dar es Salaam and across Zanzibar Island, Bagamoyo was the most important harbour of the East-African mainland during the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Famous before for trade in ivory and slaves, the town became the colonial capital of German East-Africa between 1885 and 1890, until it moved to Dar es Salaam. Bagamoyo has today about 85,000 inhabitants who mainly live in informal settlements while the historic stone town closer to the coast is largely abandoned with most of its historical buildings in a poor state of conservation. Bagamoyo and its heritage have been part of UNESCO World Heritage application on “The Central Slave and Ivory Trade Route”, but without success. Nevertheless, conservation and maintenance of the historic fabric of Bagamoyo, including the local Swahili architecture, are crucial for its identity (Samwel, 2008). The regeneration of Bagamoyo through adaptive reuse of its heritage buildings was the topic of a research collaboration between two architectural schools: Ardhi University (Tanzania) and Hasselt University (Belgium). In addition to a study into the characteristics of the heritage of the town, research-by-design was conducted in the context of a master studio. The students were asked to investigate the economic, social and cultural potentialities of the main street, the coastal strip and the shoreline, and to create new opportunities for current and future inhabitants. In groups, they developed a spatial narrative on two scale levels: a conceptual approach on an urban scale and an architectural design concerning the adaptive reuse of a particular heritage building or site. Their proposals were to be rooted in the historical or existing characteristics of the site, elaborating on tangible as well as intangible heritage values.

2. History and heritage of Bagamoyo

2.1 (pre-)colonial history

Bagamoyo originated around the mid-18th century, as a fishing and agricultural village and small trading post as an extension of the much older Kaole settlements nearby. When in 1804 Sultan Sayyid Said moved the capital from Oman to Zanzibar, the island developed as the central trading post of the Western Indian Ocean, Bagamoyo gained importance as the connection between Zanzibar and the East-African mainland for trade in spices, ivory, gum copal, rubber and slaves. The porters often stayed in Bagamoyo for several weeks or months which steered the local economy. From Bagamoyo, a trading route led 1,200 km westwards up to Ujiji at Lake Tanganyika connecting further into the heart of the continent. Since the 1820's Arab and Indian traders had established key resting points along the caravan routes in the interior which strengthened the development of towns like Tabora and Ujiji (Chami *et al.*, 2004; Junior, 2008).

In 1868, French missionaries founded Freedom Village at Bagamoyo, the first missionary post on the East-African mainland. It served as a shelter for ransomed slaves, while the town became a way station for missionaries travelling from Zanzibar Island to the interior. Many European explorers, including Richard Burton and Henry Morton Stanley, began and ended their trips to East Africa in Bagamoyo. David Livingstone has never been to Bagamoyo but when he died his dead body was transferred to Bagamoyo, before being shipped to Zanzibar and finally to the United Kingdom. The “legendary meeting” between Stanley and Livingstone took place on a caravan route leading to Bagamoyo (Junior, 2008; Chami *et al.*, 2004).

Officially slave trade was forbidden under British pressure since 1873 but continued secretly for years. Hill (2012) argues that the short distance between Bagamoyo and Zanzibar made it easier to transport slaves unnoticed from Bagamoyo than from other ports at the East-African coast. The economic success of Bagamoyo also made for the broad availability of slave workers in and around the town to accompany caravans, work on the fields, or in domestic settings. Due to economic prosperity, Bagamoyo's permanent population increased from around 3,000 in the early 1860s to roughly 18,000 by the end of the century. Because of the presence of porters, the actual population numbers raised at times to 50,000, creating a very dynamic urban environment. German census reports from 1893 recorded that 30–40% of the town's population were slaves.

After the Berlin Conference in 1885, the area of what today is Burundi, Rwanda and the mainland of Tanzania fell under German colonial rule. Initially, Bagamoyo became the capital of “German East

Africa” until it was moved to Dar es Salaam in 1890. The official reason was that it offered a larger docking area, with a better protected and deep-water harbour. However, as argued by Fabian (2007), there were also political motivations: the trading and other economic activities in Bagamoyo were strongly dependent on pre-colonial socio-economic ties with traders from the interior of the country; transport was also in hands of African porters who worked independently or were contracted by Arab or Indian merchant houses; the lack of ownership of land and limited ties with local authorities complicated control. In the first years after Bagamoyo lost its function as a capital, it still surpassed Dar es Salaam as a trading centre. But as the government closed down Bagamoyo as a customs port and due to the construction of a railroad from Lake Tanganyika to Dar es Salaam, from 1912 onwards the town started to decline (Fabian, 2007, 2019).

Although the abolition of slavery was one of the official goals and motivations for the colonisation of Africa, German authorities did not interfere too much in the slave trade as they did not want to create a dramatic disruption of the existing socio-economic structure. Instead, they intended a gradual abolition, mandating for instance that every child born after 1906 was to be free. After the First World War, German East Africa was divided between Britain, Belgium and Portugal. It was then that slavery was officially and effectively abolished. The country became independent under the “father of the nation” Julius Nyerere (1922–1999) in 1961. He was largely responsible for a stable course and united the country then called Tanganyika with Zanzibar in 1964 to form current Tanzania (Sohie, 2016).

2.2 Heritage and identity

The historical centre of Bagamoyo – like other East-African coastal towns traditionally labelled “stone town” – is characterised by a fabric that has been influenced by different political and economic powers and a wide variety of cultures. India Street, which runs parallel to the coastline, functioned as the public and commercial artery of the town. A series of monumental buildings bear witness to its complex history: the Old Fort, the Arab Tea House and a series of palaces dating back to the pre-colonial period; the French Mission Post which was set up in 1868; and several buildings such as the Old Boma and the Old Customs House referring to the German (and later English) colonial period (see Figure 1).

Bagamoyo today has become a slumbering town with around 85,000 inhabitants and a lack of substantial economic investments. In 1969, the township has been documented in a survey by the Lund University (Karlsson, 1978a,b) (see Figure 2). Notwithstanding some changes, it still is a very important source of information to study Bagamoyo’s urban fabric and housing typologies.

Although most of the historic buildings are protected as national monuments, recent surveys (Sohie, 2016) and site visits in 2018 and 2019 show that several of these monuments are in a poor state of conservation. Only some, like the Arab Tea House, are well maintained but house government offices and are therefore not publicly accessible. The Old Boma and Fort are part of limited guided tours, organised by the local tourist office. Stone Town today is largely abandoned and the vibrant public life of the past has shifted inland as part of the adjacent informal settlements.

In 2006, an application has been submitted to UNESCO World Heritage for possible inclusion of the former trade route connecting Ujiji with Bagamoyo, as “The Central Slave and Ivory Trade Route”.

Bagamoyo and its history play a key role in the application:



Figure 1. Lund Survey map of Stone Town with an indication of the main historical buildings

Due to its location along the Indian Ocean and being a major harbor and town along the coast of Tanzania that played a key role in the East Africa Slave trade; Bagamoyo is a “place of memory” for human suffering and humiliation caused by Slavery and the Slave trade and the imposition of European colonialism. The population of Bagamoyo ... is the result of the interaction and fusion of different ethnic groups ... from the hinterland ... and the interiors ... Bagamoyo serves as the terminal which starts from Ujiji. From Bagamoyo, slaves were shipped to Zanzibar where the slave market used to be. Important slave trade evidence include slave and slave descendants, buildings such as Caravan Serai, Von Wissman block, Old market, Customs house and the Old fort. Also the freedom village at the R.C. Mission premises and the RC Museum that has enough documentation (Antiquities-Department-Tanzania, 2006).

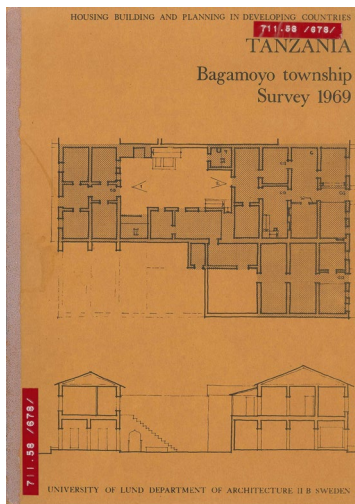


Figure 2. Lund Survey front cover

The application was incomplete and failed to sufficiently reflect on the UNESCO Operational Guidelines for outstanding universal value (Abungu, 2009). In particular for Bagamoyo, the text does not mention or elaborate on multiple appropriate criteria, e.g. criterion (iii) of the Operational Guidelines (UNESCO, 2021), referring to the town's potential "to bear an exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilisation which is living or which has disappeared". In contrast, this criterion is for instance consciously included in the description of the WHS of nearby Zanzibar (UNESCO, 2000).

Although the town as a layered heritage site could arguably pass the UNESCO authenticity and integrity test, it most likely would not in the context of the narrative of slavery. As pointed out by various critics, several statements are not supported by scholarly research, e.g. for some buildings mentioned in the application such as the Caravan Serai, the Old Fort and the Old Customs house the link to slavery is conjecture (Fabian, 2019). Fabian argues that this narrative has become inflated due to the presence of the missionary museum, largely dedicated to slavery and the missionary's fight against it. Rather than focussing solely on the topic, he argues to further investigate and work with the layered history of Bagamoyo to strengthen its local identity and potential for tourism: ivory trade, colonial history, its multi-ethnic, cultural and religious layering, the qualities of the landscape and built fabric, etc.

In addition, Wynne-Jones (2011) argues that the selection of the central route for the remembrance of slavery and slave trading in East Africa may simply be a consequence of the fact that this route has been historically well documented. She is also critical of the fact that the buildings and monuments selected as sites for commemoration are mainly embedded in colonial history as "an abolitionist narrative derived from outside" (e.g. linked to the life and work of David Livingstone). Moreover, she contextualises the export of slaves through the East African ports as only one aspect of slavery and forced labour, very common during the 18th and 19th centuries and supporting the commercial success and economic prosperity of the region. However, a lack of tangible expressions of the history of slavery makes it more difficult to create places of commemoration.

Lindström (2019) argues that the aspired World Heritage status is both cause and effect of globalisation. He described the risk of prioritising one, coherent narrative – slave trade in the case of Bagamoyo – above other related narratives. This univocal or monocular image might lead to standardisation and homogenisation of Bagamoyo's heritage and identity and risks disconnecting the heritage from the local society in favour of globalist tourism.

3. Reusing heritage as a design strategy

As described above, (international) tourism has up till now been considered the main catalyst for the regeneration of the historic town of Bagamoyo. However, as the World Heritage application has not been approved and the heritage trail was not developed, this strategy does not seem feasible. Therefore, we explored an alternative approach, based in part on the needs of the local community. The methodology we applied is research-by-design. The results described below are obtained by, and consistent with experience in practice, through design work (EAAE, 2012). The research-by-design took place in the master studio of architecture and interior architecture during two academic years (2018–2019 and 2019–2020) at the Faculty of Architecture and Arts at Hasselt University (Belgium). The studio fits within a larger international research project on urban regeneration and the development of sustainable tourism in Tanzania which includes a yearly parallel design studio between the architectural schools at Ardhi University (Tanzania) and Hasselt University (Belgium). Staff and students of both institutions did (joint) site visits and exchanged insights and ideas during a joint workshop. The design studio in Ardhi University focussed on regeneration through new, mixed-use developments (housing, commercial, tourist infrastructure, etc.); the studio in Hasselt University on regeneration through adaptive reuse of heritage. In the context of this paper, we elaborate on the outcome of the Hasselt University design studio.

The didactic approach to the design studio consisted of four steps. The first was the definition of the historical and spatial framework by the tutors, interpreting the town through three urbanistic layers (including the historical building sites) – approaching the town as a palimpsest (Lagae, 2013). The second step was a “start-up” workshop during one week, with the graduate students working in groups and debating concepts and ideas on how to approach one or more sites. These ‘pitches’ were evaluated in the third step: during a 10-day stay in the town, the students (and tutors) engaged in fieldwork visiting and studying the various sites, making interviews that could inform the projects and participating in stakeholder sessions with representatives of the local or regional authorities, the Department of Antiquities of Tanzania (based in the Old Fort), researchers from Ardhi University (Dar es Salaam), local tourist guides and entrepreneurs, etc. The fourth and final step entailed the elaboration of a selection of approaches resulting from the visit into individual design projects during the remainder of the semester. The proposals described below are a summary and reflection of this mixed and bottom-up approach. Although the designs largely remained embryonic, they are the product of a broad dialogue and correspond with local needs and desires. Resulting from the multiple readings of the town and its sites, they try to integrate the different voices into engaging narratives. They are mainly aimed at the local population, but also invite new inhabitants from Dar es Salaam or the surrounding region to (re-)invest in Bagamoyo.

Below we present three examples of possible approaches for the urban regeneration of Bagamoyo based on the results of the design studio, and link them back to the urbanistic starting point. The approaches are never simply addressing individual buildings or isolated sites, but tried to take into account their context and complexity in time and place. Having a thematic and narrative character, their main aim is to initiate a transformation rather than or only being part of an overall master plan. Being developed in an educational context, the problem statement related to the town was somewhat abstracted in the sense that the broader context, such as the topic of mobility (e.g. circulation of motorised traffic versus pedestrians), technical infrastructure (e.g. supply of water and electricity) and socio-economic aspects (e.g. employability or budgetary questions) were not extensively studied. However, during site visits students were confronted with these topics in both direct and indirect manners, informing their approach towards the sites. The three approaches are (1) India Street as a catalyst for the redevelopment of stone town, (2) The coastal strip as an open and productive landscape and (3) The shoreline as a place for relaxation.

3.1 India Street as a catalyser for the redevelopment of stone town

Dar es Salaam was the capital of the country until 1973 when political authorities decided to move it again to Dodoma. The city currently holds more than 5 million inhabitants, a number which is expected to double by 2034 (Wenban-Smith, 2012). Because of the lack of a comprehensive master plan, Dar es Salaam is the subject of urban sprawl along its main radials, with Bagamoyo road as one of them. Anticipating the pressure on Bagamoyo in the near future, we investigated the densification of the town while at the same time trying to safeguard its identity. As stone town forms the historical centre of Bagamoyo and is currently underused, we studied a transformation starting with the main road, India Street as a catalyser. Its name refers to the origin of the tradesmen that use to sell their products in more thriving times. Also called Ocean Road, Post or Kaisers Straße under German rule, it runs parallel with the waterfront and connects the most important historical buildings between the former French mission in the north and the Tasuba Arts School in the south (see Plates 1 and 2).



Plate 1. Colonial postcard showing the narrow profile of India Street with a mix of Swahili (left) and colonial architecture (right)



Plate 2. The ethnic multiplicity of a thriving Bagamoyo: depicting the complex interrelationship between Africans, Arabs, Indians and Europeans (Fabian, 2019)

“Rebirth of India Street” – Alexia Di Carantonio, Aleya Kaya, Aileen Runyoro and Thibault Van Tilt

This student project redefined the street scale and scape, taking into account the variety of activities it used to present. The proposal densifies the street with a mixed program of housing/ lodging and shops or working spaces. It restores the narrow profile where bustling commercial activities used to take place and at the same time opens up specific parts to allow for a view of the sea. It respects the vernacular architecture by relating to the existing scale and materials, strengthens the community feeling by creating meeting and leisure points along the street, and links it with the commercial parts. By intervening in a surgical and modest way – building on top of ruins, inspired by local typologies and various styles, closing city blocks, emphasising street crossings, removing walls or vegetation, etc. the project has the potential to bring back the original quality, while at the same time upgrading the town axis (see Figures 3 and 4).

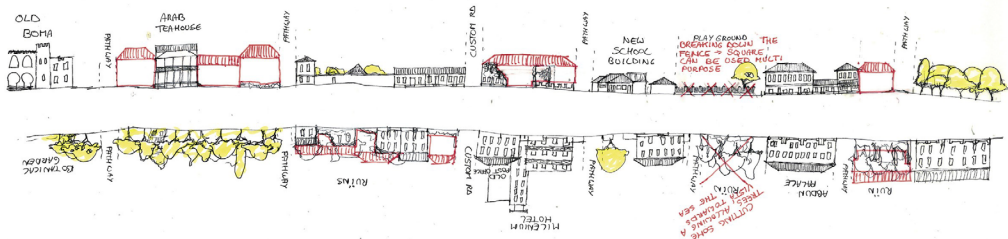


Figure 3. “Rebirth of India Street”: sketch of the existing streetscape with an indication of contextual interventions in red



Figure 4. Lund Survey map of Stone Town highlighting India Street with existing and potential building sites, green areas, crossing streets and paths and see-throughs

3.2 The coastal strip as an open and productive landscape

Agriculture has formed the basis of economic activity during Nyerere's governance in Tanzania. In his essays, Nyerere (1968) emphasised African traditional values such as humanity, equality and security as the backbone to what he named African socialism or Ujamaa. He described self-reliance, agriculture and family or community as characteristics for post-colonial development. Collective farming initially replaced landownership and was to become the main economic driver of the country. The policy, however, became a failure and by 1984, amid an economic crisis, Nyerere voluntarily stepped down. Afterwards, the country was liberalised and larger farmlands were cut up and divided amongst different farmers. Today, still 73% of Tanzanians are economically dependent on agriculture and fishery, (up to 95% in rural areas). Farming is of a small scale and serves mostly for their own use. Various recent developments (e.g. population growth, environmental change, need for bio-based energy and land-use disputes), are the cause of a much-needed agricultural innovation (Rwehumbiza, 2014) (see Plate 3 and Figure 5).

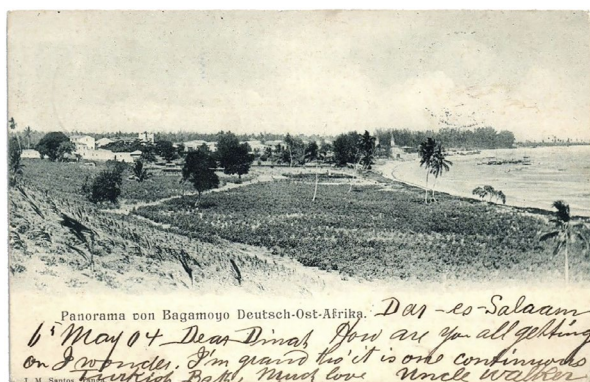


Plate 3. Colonial postcard showing the narrow profile of India Street with a mix of Swahili (left) and colonial architecture (right)

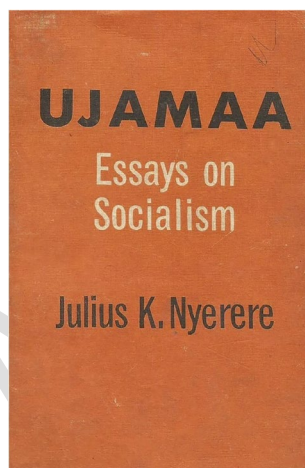


Figure 5. 1971's publication of the Arusha Declaration and the speeches and political Writings of Julius Kambarage Nyerere, the first Tanzania President

***“Crop the Future”* – Bram Iven, elaboration of a group project developed together with Merve Yildirim, Diana Marcela Mosquera Moreno and Dorothea Mbosha**

Bagamoyo has a lot of potential for food production and fishery. The mangroves and seagrass fields are the breeding and feeding places for a variety of fish. The presence of the Ruvu River and the grounds around Bagamoyo create opportunities for agriculture. Inspired by an old postcard, the student project “Crop the Future” introduced an agricultural incubator in the south of the coastal strip, using the land as a testing ground for crop innovation and mixed cultivation and an open, supporting pavilion to share ideas and experiences informally. In the project, the Old Boma is to be reused as an official research centre linked to the incubator but reaching out to a larger region and bringing together different stakeholders (farmers, wholesalers, retailers, etc.). The coastal strip historically had an open character, incorporating farmland, the fish market with the Old Customs House, the former botanical garden, several graveyards and more recently the hospital campus and the Tasuba art school. Considering the open and green character as a quality and the strip therefore as landscape heritage, the project supports its preservation. (see Plate 4 and Figure 6).



Plate 4. “Crop the Future”: impressions of the new supporting pavilion for an agricultural incubator



Figure 6. Lund Survey map of Stone Town highlighting the coastal strip and the development of its programme and landscape + the potential connection to the Old Boma

3.3 The shoreline as a place for relaxation

The name of the town is derived from *bwaga moyo*, Kiswahili for “Lay down your heart”. The words have generated two popular interpretations: the first one derived from the lament of slaves being shipped to Zanzibar and beyond, in the knowledge they would never return to their home; the second and more likely one, signalling the time for relaxation upon arrival of a trade caravan after a long and hard journey through the interior (Lindström, 2019). Different sources refer to historical Bagamoyo for its leisurely and cosmopolitan atmosphere in addition to its key role as a trade town along the East-African coast. For the current approach, we focussed on the Old Customs House as a landmark along the coast. It was built by the Germans in 1895 to store goods coming from inland Tanganyika. Its location near the beach has always been crucial as the point of transfer, but supposable also before colonial rule, as the place where slaves used to await deportation or the point of arrival of explorers of the African continent. Today, the structure has deteriorated a lot but is still used for storing oil vessels and other goods. The part closest to the fish market is still functional, the remainder largely ruined. The immediate surroundings are littered with waste from trade and market activity (see Plates 5 and 6).



Plate 5. Colonial postcard showing the scenic setting of the Old Customs House at low tide



Plate 6. A fragment of the now largely ruined Old Customs House

***“A Day at the Sea”* – Nena Hustinx, elaboration of a group project developed together with Matthew Moskal, Anjeza Hysenaj and Mohamed Soliman**

The project “A Day at the Sea” reverses the usual viewpoint by looking from the sea towards the mainland. It tries to revive the strong ties with Zanzibar and the sea by introducing a simple landing pier for the typical and ancient dhow boats coming from the island, also allowing for an alternative tourist connection for bigger boats. The project aims to connect different activities, including the fish market and the dhow shipyard with visitors or travellers interested in the local culture. Taking the seaside perspective, the project redefines the Old Customs House as a place for relaxation that can receive different guests: on the north side, adjacent to the fish market, the fishermen in need of a resting place in between high tides; on the south side backpackers or local tourists in search for enjoyment and a cheap place to stay. The long structure with (the remains of) two buildings on either side lends itself well to divide the lodging spaces amongst the two groups. The project is inspired by the popular Forodhani leisure gardens and the food market in Zanzibar and the playful interaction of young people with its waterfront. It reuses the central space of the Old Customs house as a shaded and informal meeting place and includes a tidal pool as a safe and clean place to swim for the children of Bagamoyo (see Figures 7 and 8).



Figure 7. “A Day at the Sea”: new section and façade Old Customs House; an open, wooden structure for backpackers on the left; a ticket office and fishermen’s lodge on the right (with interventions indicated in red/pink)



Figure 8. Lund Survey map of Stone Town highlighting the shoreline and the harbour activities + the potential connection to the Old Customs House

4. Conclusion

to think in dichotomous terms of insiders and outsiders, core and peripheral, civilized and heathen, frustrates a more informed understanding of how Bagamoyo evolved from a fishing village to a trading entrepôt (Fabian, 2019).

The consecutive domination of Zanzibar, the German and English empires has left indelible marks on the town. As such, various aspects of its cultural heritage can be interpreted as “related to times of conflict, death and suffering”, in correspondence with the definition of “dark heritage” by Thomas et al. (2019). In a similar vein, the UNESCO application can be characterised as an attempt to create a lieu de mémoire for slavery on the eastern side of Central Africa. It reduces other narratives in favour of the role Bagamoyo played as a transfer for slaves towards Zanzibar and beyond. However, and as mentioned by various scholars, slavery and colonialism are both layers that also risk to simplify and obfuscate the more complex quality of the town. Slavery and colonialism in Bagamoyo were far from clear-cut and became increasingly entangled in the various local communities through time (Fabian, 2019). Despite their significant impact, viewed as singular phenomena both fall short of capturing the historical identity of Bagamoyo. The geographic condition of the town and the former ethnic mix of its inhabitants made for a specific social culture open to foreign influence, while at the same time resistant to political pressure.

Like many post-colonial urban developments, Bagamoyo is partly left with the spatial consequences of foreign suppression. Rather than using the label “dark heritage” and focussing on the memorialisation of various sites, we argue in this article for a different approach. We believe the characterisation by historians of the town as a layered entity can inspire a beneficial spatial transformation for the town. When using the term “contentious heritage”, we refer more to a property than a category, implying relative aspects to some extent still embedded in society in a social, political, economic, or even cultural way, aspects that cannot be isolated in a simple and straightforward way. Immaterial in nature, they tend to be hidden, while giving a negative connotation to the sites and their material remains. We argue for the consideration of these contentious historical layers in proportion to a larger set of criteria, including positive aspects of its collective memory.

Based on the intricately layered heritage of Bagamoyo, we introduce an approach through research-by-design. The study proposals are complementary and concentrate on three parallel zones: India Street, the coastal strip and the shoreline. (1) Mitigating the expansion of Dar es Salaam northwards, we propose a (re)densification of India Street based on the existing or historical layout. A combination of new housing and commercial activities along the street could bring back the spirit of the place and at the same time strengthen and preserve its heritage. (2) We propose to maintain the historically open landscape of the coastal strip by using the south part for an agricultural incubator. By combining it with a regional research centre in the Old Boma, the project offers a positive translation of the central role the building played in the colony. (3) The last project proposes to use the historically significant location of the Old Customs House on the shoreline to tie together the current social and economic activities relating to the sea: the fish market, the trade connection with Zanzibar, and the potential for a specific form of tourism. A pragmatic re-interpretation of the architectural layout of the Old Customs House offers a meeting point for the local population and visitors. These proposals are not claiming to be complete. However, they contribute to a strategy of urban regeneration through surgical interventions in the historical part of the town, interpreting its heritage in a larger (tangible and intangible) perspective, beyond the mere question of preservation or restoration.

Although the nomination of Bagamoyo as World Heritage was no pre-set objective of this exercise; each of the three approaches can correspond, in varying degrees, to criteria (ii) to (v) of the UNESCO

Operational Guidelines for outstanding universal value (UNESCO, 2021). The densification of India Street exemplifies criterion (ii) to (iv) as it elaborates on the historic meeting between various ethnic populations and its materialisation in an architectural and urbanistic setting. The redevelopment of the landscape of the coastal strip exemplifies criterion (iv) and (v) as it elaborates on the natural and cultural landscape of the East-African coast. The third proposal exemplifies criterion (iv) and (v) as it translates a historic harbour building and its connection to sea transportation.

In our view, research-by-design has the potential to reveal and translate the condition of the historic town in an innovative methodological approach. Drawing from its layered quality, and besides its preservation and (arguable) classification as a (UNESCO) world heritage site, we believe in the potential for heritage-led urban regeneration, involving various local and regional stakeholders. The experimental attitude and different backgrounds of the various designers involved can generate ideas and concepts for Bagamoyo that are also exemplary for other places. Out of the complex and seemingly contradictory layers, the proposals derive potentialities to construct new narratives for transformation. By recalibrating the layers, they offer a measured and realistic approach for the much-needed regeneration of the town. Unable to fully heal the wounds of the past, they can perhaps define a sustainable condition for the future development of an East-African coastal town such as Bagamoyo.

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