

## **UNDER THE BREEZE OF THE PORTUGUESE INDIAN OCEAN: TOURISM AND HERITAGE IN ZANZIBAR**

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### **Abstract**

Tourism is, in the 21st century, the largest industry in the world and a phenomenon structured on the basis of a dynamic and tentacular articulation. Among the forms enshrined in the phenomenon, the so-called "memory tourism" has gained relevance, based on a colonial heritage whose values are formulated according to a reminiscence of a once shared culture/ heritage: that of overseas empires. By gaining a new prominence, these post-colonial places open themselves to new readings, responding to a societal challenge of contemporary mobility by looking at the journey as a way of building culture and defining identities, for which we propose to map the heritage of portuguese roots in the archipelago of Zanzibar, a place integrated in the Lusitanian empire for two hundred years and a source of multiculturalism and otherness that our time is heir.

### **Keywords**

Colonial Empires, Indian Ocean, Heritage, Tourism, Contemporary.

### **How to cite this article**

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## **UNDER THE BREEZE OF THE PORTUGUESE INDIAN OCEAN: TOURISM AND HERITAGE IN ZANZIBAR<sup>1</sup>**

**MARIA JOÃO CASTRO**

### **Introduction**

Tourism is today the industry with the greatest impact on the world economy, constituting a global and transversal phenomenon of tentacular scope. In its genesis, tourism and colonialism are not phenomena of the same order, but tourism and imperialism are products of the same context being intrinsically linked since they both involve the possession of a territory and its exploitation. It is certain that the ascendancy of European empires in the development of tourism has a strong impulse in the Universal Exhibitions, showcases of overseas territories that, by crystallizing a whole exotic and distant imagery, drove an elite to embark on the colonial journey that would soon become massified, contributing to the contemporary global tourism phenomenon.<sup>2</sup> The motivations behind such an impetus are based on distinct reasons, but there is one that has been gaining weight when it comes to choosing a travel destination: the post-colonial nostalgia that aspires to visit places stopped in a certain stone-time, not yet fully contaminated by an accelerated urbanity, momentarily giving back an experience that the daily life of Western society has long excluded. This kind of "tourism of nostalgia" has been gaining fans and we can understand why. Whether for the architecture, the cultural heritage, the appeal to the "Good Wild" in us, the artistic legacy or another reason rooted in a common past, the former European colonies have become tourist destinations of choice. On the other hand, the fact that tourism is a fundamental ally of economic, social and cultural development, generating important revenues, has increased pressure on the authorities, with the need to manage it responsibly and with critical thinking, so that it is an issue on the government's agenda, particularly with regard to the heritage to be preserved, whether material or immaterial.

In this sense, the so-called "Tourism of Memory" has been gaining an increasing prominence not only within national and regional government policies but also within

<sup>1</sup> Article translated by Cláudia Tavares.

<sup>2</sup> It is clear that tourism as a social phenomenon did not emerge with the Exhibitions; its genealogy dates back to the late 17th and early 18th centuries with the *Grand Tour*, a movement born in the heart of the English aristocracy that proposed to complete its education by verifying/visiting its civilisational past. However, this tour was always channelled towards the great European artistic centres (first Italy, then France and Greece) and did not therefore include the territories of the Empire, whose residents/visitors were mainly missionaries, administrators and troops.



academic research. Hence, this reflection proposes to create a "Tourism of Memory" route of Portuguese heritage in Zanzibar in response to the question: what heritage of Portuguese origin can be found in the Zanzibar archipelago? Its justification is based on the centrality of heritage as the legacy of a shared memory and its basic objective is to facilitate the integration of tourists into history by making them part of it. In other words: the stimulation of knowledge by the "other" makes us know ourselves better in an effective and full interculturality. The attainment of this central objective requires research in synergy, hence the chosen methodology is anchored in interdisciplinarity (historical science, heritage, archaeology and art history) with a cross-border vocation and valorisation with a pluricontinental emphasis. Since it deals with both material and immaterial heritage, the sources are mainly bibliographical and archaeological and range from the Portuguese national archives to the institutions responsible for conservation in the Zanzibar archipelago. As for its relevance, it is based on the fact that it responds to a tentacular societal challenge of contemporary mobility by looking at travel as a way of building culture and defining identities between visitors and the visited, producing knowledge and experiences capable of contributing to an enlightened citizen science.

## **I. Historical-Patrimonial Context**

As it is known, heritage is in its essence of a memorial order and that what characterises it is its symbolic character "a kind of immortalising aura" (Lourenço, 2015a: 54), of a moment passed, since all human works have their time counted. Now the cultural diversity resulting from human action over time in a given place has been valued for its pluralism, a characteristic that allows the development of a plurivocal knowledge. After a period in which anti-colonialism dominated public opinion, post-colonial tension slowly gave way to a less exclusive understanding of the meeting of cultures whose concern became centred on the preservation of the heritage bequeathed. An example of this was the creation in 1998 of the ICOMOS<sup>3</sup> International Scientific Committee network and, within it, the Committee for the Colonial Inheritance Partition.<sup>4</sup> This organisation has been drawing attention to the need to join efforts to preserve, study and promote heritage assets, given the importance of cultural diversity as a source of exchanges, innovation and creativity for present and future generations.

Thus, and within this dual dynamic (tourism-patrimony) UNESCO<sup>5</sup> has been classifying places, practices and expressions, recognised as an integral part of a culture. And that is what happened in 2000 with Stone Town, the old part of the city of Zanzibar on the island of the same name that saw the first Europeans arrive in 1503, during the voyages of exploration of the Maritime Route to India.

As the chronicles recount, the Portuguese were the first Europeans to settle in Zanzibar. Vasco da Gama (1469-1524) on his return from India pointed out the island, as recounted in the annals of the morning of 29 January 1499, when the Portuguese passed in front of Zanzibar (Fonseca, 1998:56):

<sup>3</sup> International Council on Monuments and Sites. Online: <https://www.icomos.org/fr> (accessed 24.4.2021).

<sup>4</sup> Online: <https://www.icomos.org/risk/2001/colonial2001.htm> (accessed 23.4.2021).

<sup>5</sup> United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.



*And on a Sunday, which was the twenty-seventh day of the month (27.1.1499), we set sail from here (Bass de S. Rafael) with a very good wind at our stern, and the following night we hovered. And when morning came, we found ourselves upon a very great island called Zamgibar, which is inhabited by many Moors, and the land is about ten leagues off. And on the first day of February, in the afternoon, we landed before the islands of São Jorge, in Mozambique.<sup>6</sup>*

In 1503, Rui Lourenço Ravasco imposed a tax on the sultan of Zanzibar to the Portuguese crown. Years later, and already firmly established in Mozambique and Melinde, Vasco da Gama's successors monopolised the East African traffic making Zanzibar a Portuguese protectorate since 1522 (Campos, 1935:1-20), although the feitoria and the hospitalization house were only established after Nuno da Cunha's (1487-1539) visit to the island in 1527.

In 1580, with the loss of independence of the Portuguese crown to Spain and the consequent weakening of the overseas empire, some overseas possessions were soon lost, namely Muscat (in 1650), Melinde (in 1660) and finally Zanzibar in 1698.

Since then, and between the end of the 17th century and the 19th century, the genealogy that reigned over the island gave it a new impetus, Arabising it and filling it with buildings with clear Islamic features, among which emerged architectures of Indian, African and colonial influences, the latter already in the 19th century, when the English took over the government of the island, turning it into a protectorate. It was precisely around this time - in 1879 - that Sultan Barghash (1870-1888) signed the famous Treaty of Friendship and Commerce with the King of Portugal. In 1885, the Kingdom of Portugal opened a consulate on the island and appointed Alexandre de Serpa Pinto (1846-1900) as its first consul. In the 20th century, between 1911 and 1918, Aristides de Sousa Mendes (1885-1954). In those times, the predominant population with portuguese roots on the island came from Goa, and dozens of families settled there, mainly dedicated to trade. The Portuguese colony was the second largest in number (about 400 people), after the British one (Mello, 1890: 89).

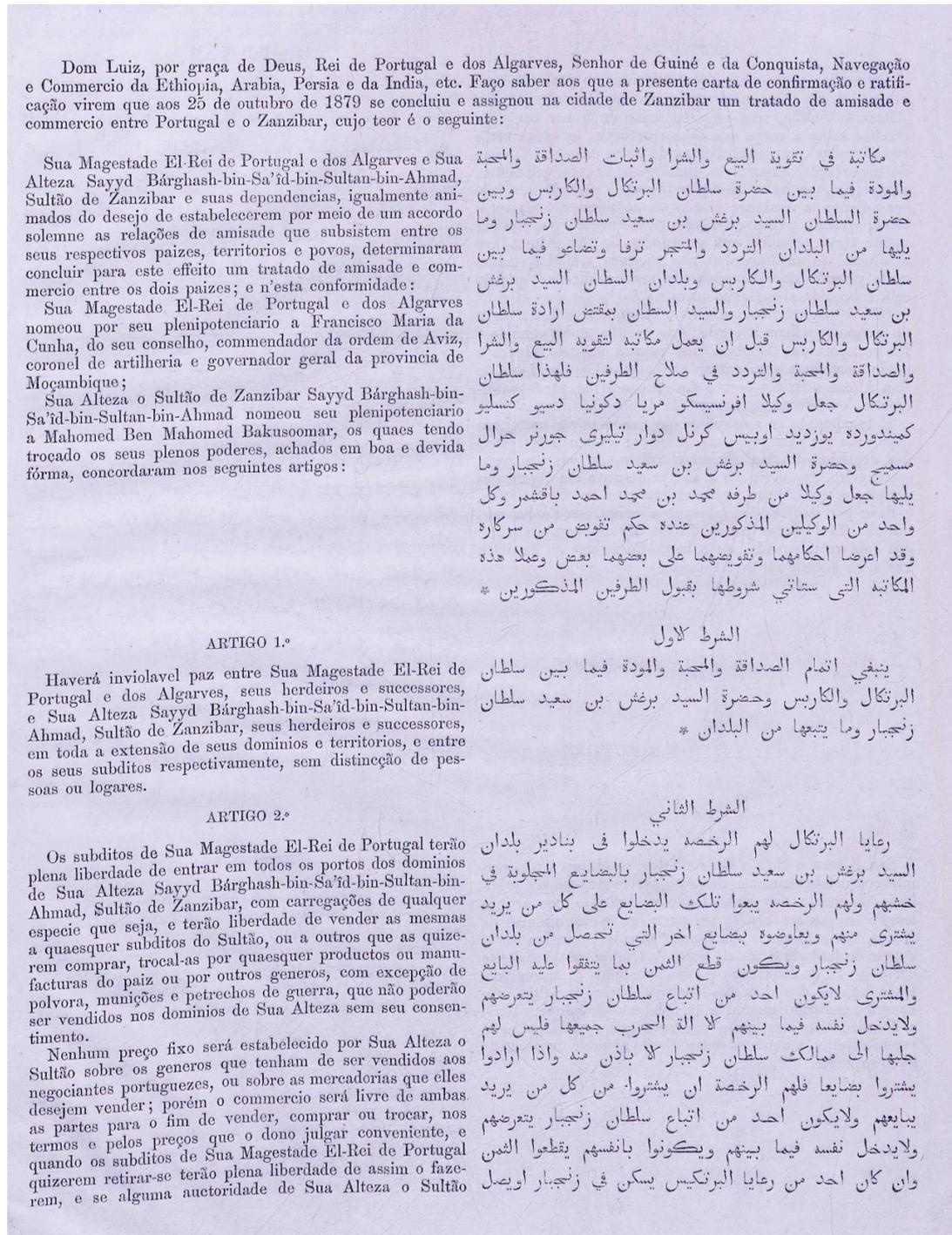
Focusing on the Portuguese heritage on the island, during the two hundred years that it captained Zanzibar, the crown of the kingdom of Portugal and the Algarve undertook buildings (trading post, church, hospital) and movements (change of capital) that would reconfigure its territory, although little has survived until today. But traces know how to speak to those who are willing to listen to them; you only need to look at some of the testimonies to be able to formulate a heterogeneous itinerary capable of rediscovering part of the Lusitanian heritage on the island.

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<sup>6</sup> It is worth mentioning that even before Vasco da Gama, Pêro da Covilhã had already advanced along the East African coast, passing off the island, and he gives an account of this in his diary, although in an unclear manner. It is known that travelled for a long time the coast of Azania, having integrated vessels of Arab traders who regularly visited ports such as Mombasa, Melinde, Zanzibar, Kilwa or Sofala. See Leal Freire, Pêro da Covilhã, Gráfica S. José, Castelo Branco, 1964, p. 10.



**Image 1 - Reproduction of the frontispiece of the Treaty of Amity and Commerce, Lisbon**



Source: National Press (1940). Historical Diplomatic Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

However, this presence and heritage building in the Zanzibar archipelago is one of the least studied facets of Portuguese expansion and presence in East Africa. The direct



contributions of Duarte Barbosa (c. 1480-1521), Gaspar Correia (1492-c. 1561) and João de Barros (c. 1496-1570). Meanwhile, more recent studies by Abdul Sheriff and Mark Horton have highlighted the issue, but only now, with the growing importance of tourism in countries' GDPs, has the challenge been set for other historians to explore the subject. Two orders of reasons may justify such a gap. Firstly, the focus on the objective-destination - India - relegating the anchorages of the Route to a secondary place; then the reduced and punctual sources, dispersed among documents of a very diverse nature, make it difficult to draw a clear picture of the presence and experience of the Portuguese in the lands of Zinj. Data with wide chronological hiatuses, documents spread across several archives without being catalogued and that include chronicles, reports, administrative notes and letters exchanged between Zanzibar officials and the authorities based in Lisbon, condition and explain the rarity (not to say absence) of studies of this specific historical reality. Even so, the information gathered points to guidelines on the Portuguese presence in the Zanzibar archipelago at a turning point of great historical and cultural potential.

## **II. Subsidies for a Portuguese itinerary in Zanzibar**

Designing a tourist itinerary through the material and immaterial heritage of Portuguese heritage in Zanzibar recovers a history registered at the time of navigation and exploration of the contours of the world, in consequent voyages that configured it on a global scale introducing the modern era. It is therefore important to bear in mind that history is made of layers, layers that overlap each other, the oldest ones sinking beneath the most recent ones, in an accumulation of sediments and testimonies that embody fractions of the historical narrative. In fact, it is in this past substratum that part of contemporary Zanzibar is enclosed and justified, so that listing this legacy constitutes an excellent access to understand and promote Zanzibar as a tourist destination.

It should be noted, however, that the aim is not to draw up an exhaustive list of the Lusitanian heritage on Zinj soil, but rather to create a patrimonial *corpus* with its own identity, and that this survey will always be provisional and subject to multiple readings.

## **ZANZIBAR ARCHIPELAGO**

UNGUJA (Zanzibar Island)

### **I – Material Heritage**

#### **1. Stone Town**

With garrisons established in the ports of Zanzibar, Pemba and Mombasa, the old capital of Zanzibar situated at Unguja Ukuu, about twenty-four kilometres south of the present capital, was gradually relocated to a site further north-west, which was later to become known as Stone Town. As stated in the Portuguese manuscript of the *Relação made by Father Francisco de Monclaro of the Company of Jesus*, this was due to the port to the south, which was



small<sup>7</sup> for the Portuguese ships to anchor. With the growing affluence of ships coming from India, the new capital made possible an increase in the port calls of maritime traffic in Zanzibar, reiterating the importance of this port on the Indian coast.

## 2. Trading post, Hospital, Church

In Stone Town, and after the visit of Nuno da Cunha in 1527, a trading post and a hospital house would be built, which surely coupled with a chapel-church. This was located in the so-called Old Fort (re) built by the Arabs after the conquest of the island from the Portuguese in the late 17th century. The indications are that, in 1612, there would have been an Augustinian church there, such occurrence appearing in the papal bull (Gray, 1958:174) of 21 January of that year, which shows the Lusitanian ecclesiastical commitment to East Africa. From the few things that are known, it seems that the Lusitanian missionary power found here a tolerant society but deeply convinced of its (Muslim) religiosity, so that the evangelisation was reduced to occasional conversions. According to the article by J. J. Campos, there was a building where the trading post and the Portuguese church would function, which would be protected by a wall later erected by the Arabs. In 1774, Alexander Dalrymple - the Scottish geographer - would state in his *Collection of Charts etc. in the Indian Navigation*, that this "fortress" looked like a ruined church. An inscription in the museum of Beit al Ajaib informs:

*Portuguese remains indicate that there was a Portuguese chapel of cruciform design, with rectangular windows, built in the 16th century, and of which traces remain on the west wall of the old fort.*

And, a few metres away, at the Old Fort, a plaque reiterates that this was:

*Erected by the Omani Arabs around 1700 on the basis of the materials of the old Portuguese chapel and adjoining residence.*

Recent studies and excavations - in 2017 and 2019 - confirm the church's authorship<sup>8</sup> and move towards new formulations of questions concerning its function and importance.

<sup>7</sup> Relation made by Father Francisco de Monclaro of the Society of Jesus, of the expedition to Monomotapa, commanded by Francisco Barreto, Portuguese Manuscript no. 8, pp. 241-265, V., BNP, Lisbon, 1573, p. 344.

<sup>8</sup> Online: <https://www.bristol.ac.uk/news/2017/august/early-portuguese-churches.html> (accessed on 24.5.2021).



**Image 2 - Information plaque at the entrance of the Old Fort, Stone Town.**



Source: Photograph by Maria João Castro.

As for the old hospital, it was built after the visit of the future governor of India, Nuno da Cunha, who, after definitively conquering Mombasa in 1527, landed with his captain of the guard Manoel Machado in Zanzibar, where he left 200 patients in the care of Aleixo e Sousa Chichorro. From that date onwards, the island would figure as a port of hospitalisation for the sick on the Indian Route, since it was less palustrine than Mozambique (Strandes, 1961:118) and it was only with the expulsion of the Portuguese, in 1698, that the Real Hospital (on the island) of Mozambique became essential as a place for curing the sick soldiers and crew members coming in the ships of the kingdom.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> The creation of the Royal Hospital (on the Island) of Mozambique dates back to the 16th century and, in 1681, its administration was entrusted to the religious of the Order of São João de Deus. In the following year, 1682, the hospitallers transferred the hospital to the south of the town, in an area considered to have better air.



### 3. Beit al Ajaib (House of Wonders)

#### 3.1. Cannons

At the entrance to Stone Town's largest building until the last century are two Portuguese cannons.<sup>10</sup>Both pieces, cast in bronze, bear in relief the coat of arms of King Dom João III (1502-1557) with the crown and the royal figure "J" in ornament, the royal standard being supported by a heraldic lion. One of the pieces measures 3.7 metres and has a calibre of 20 centimetres and a diameter of 55 centimetres; the other is 3.12 metres long, with a calibre of 18 centimetres and a diameter of 44 centimetres. There is also another cannon, the largest of all, which is in the garden of the English Resident's Palace, 4.15 metres long.

A Persian legend recorded later reads:

#### Images 3, 4, 5 - Portuguese cannons at the entrance of Beit al Ajaib, Stone Town



Source: Photograph by Maria João Castro.

*In the name of God and by the grace of Mahomed Ali is communicated to the true believers gathered for warfare, the good news of success and victory in the year 1031 of Hegira.<sup>11</sup>During the reign of Shah Abbas, Safawi, King of Earth and time, whose power ever increases, Imam Kuli Khan, by the grace of Shah, Defender of Faith, conquered Fars, Lar, Mount Kaiwan, Bahrain and the Fortress of Hormuz and arrested Ibn Ayyub.*

<sup>10</sup> Online: <http://memoria-africa.ua.pt/Library/ShowImage.aspx?q=/BIVG/BIVG-N026&p=24> (accessed on 21.4.2021).

<sup>11</sup> 1622 of our Common Era.



The inscription suggests that the cannons came from Hormuz, after the siege of 1622, and that the Arabs from Oman transported the pieces to Zinj.

### 3.2. Stone

In the ground-floor museum of Beit al Ajaib, in a corner and protected by a glass case, lies a grey sandstone stone, whose grooves draw letters that are grouped into Portuguese words. The chisel engraved a phrase from which the following letters are legible today:

VEL<sup>12</sup>

LEITAO<sup>13</sup>

G...SEM

TÃO MOR<sup>14</sup>

MEMDES<sup>15</sup>

SELO<sup>16</sup>

This type of stone does not exist in Zanzibar, so the stone is supposed to have come from Portugal.

**Image 6 - Stone with inscription in Beit al Ajaib, Stone Town**



Source: Photo by Maria João Castro.

<sup>12</sup> Fragment of the word *Remarkable*?  
<sup>13</sup> Word for the given name *Leitão*?  
<sup>14</sup> Fragment of the word *Captain-major*?  
<sup>15</sup> Word for *Mendes* proper name?  
<sup>16</sup> Word for the given name *Vasconcelos*?



As for the name, it is known that in Mombaça, the works on the fortress of Jesus were initiated by its first captain, Mateus Mendes de Vasconcelos between 1593 and 1596, and it is also known that the captain killed during the assault on the same stronghold in 1631 was called Pedro Leitão de Gamboa. The dating points to the 17th century so both hypotheses are plausible but need further study.

As for its function, the legend accompanying the stone says that it is a testimony to an *Old Leitão tombstone, apparently found in the area of Uroa, on the eastern part of the island*. However, its size and the inscribed words point more in the direction of having been a commemorative stone, since on tombstone other types of epigraphs tend to be engraved.

#### 4. Portuguese Arch

At the corner of the intersection of Kanuda and Vuga streets, and set in a small garden, is the so-called Old Portuguese Arch. Although its construction and building are shrouded in mystery, its structure and decorative elements are identical to other Portuguese ones scattered around the world. Without being dated, the pointed arch with Corinthian lateral capitals may be a vestige of the Portuguese presence on the island, or simply have been built based on the religious architectural influence disseminated along the East African coast of Lusitanian origin.

**Image 7 - Portuguese Arch, Stone Town**



Source: Photograph by Maria João Castro

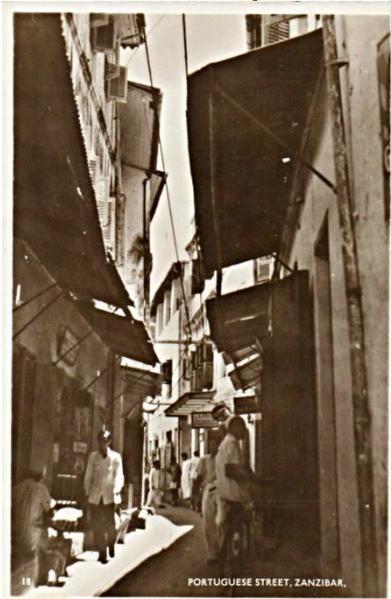


## 5. Streets

### 5.1. Portugueza Street

Portugueza Street was behind the old fort and was renamed Gizenga. Today, it remains one of the busiest streets in the capital as it was more than a century ago when most of the shops of the Portuguese merchants from Goa were located there. In period photographs one can see the signs with Portuguese surnames such as Silva, Paixão de Noronha, and which advertised the shops of various specialities such as medicine, wines and photography.

**Image 8 - Old Portuguese Street now renamed Gizenga Street, Stone Town, c. 1930. Period postcard**



Source: Author's collection

### 5.2. Souza street

About this street there is a testimony from the 19th century that describes it as follows:

*The Portuguese Indians, who composed a large colony in Zanzibar, were increasing in numbers; almost all of them were called Souza and sold alcoholic beverages. There is even a street of the Sousas in the city (Anonymous, 1851: w.p.).*



### Image 9 -Ad for the establishment *Sequeira & Souza*, Stone Town, 1924



Source: Rohit Ramez Oza Collection, Capital Art Studio.

## 6. Fukuchani and Mvuleni Ruins

In the Beit al Ajajib museum in Stone Town, an inscription reads:

*In Fukuchani and Mvuleni there were a number of estates or fiefs in these rural areas with arched doorways and gaps in the outer walls which, defensively, served to place firearms.*

The remains of the Portuguese houses of Fukuchani and Mvuleni are located in the north of the island. They were probably old merchants' houses, both dating from the 16th century.

At Fukuchani, opposite the island of Tumbatu, the enclosure around the main dwelling shows a wall enclosure two metres high, which shows, without much difficulty, holes drilled to place weapons in them. Each of these openings has a different orientation according to the angle of the target that was intended to be hit. The main building is now protected by a thatched structure that houses the walls dividing rooms arranged around a central corridor from east to west, with balconies at the front and back. The doors were designed in *vidaka* arches, typical of local architecture. The heritage authorities have carried out various excavations but little evidence has been recovered that does not allow their real purpose to be ascertained.

Less than a kilometre south of Fukuchani, a wall topped by a rusty gate guards Mvuleni. The construction plan of Mvuleni is almost identical to that of Fukuchani. Here too, openings can be seen in the defensive wall, which were used to display the weapons of their owners. The eastern wall of the enclosure encloses an underground tank fed by a fresh water spring. Unlike Fukuchani, the ruins of Mvuleni are submerged by vegetation already evident in photographs



from the early 20th century and belonging to the National Archives. In the central part of the façade stands a row of doors flanked by windows with ogival arches of clear Arab influence.

**Image 10 - Façade of the old Portuguese house in Mvuleni, Unguja.**



Source: Photograph by Maria João Castro.

## 7. Trunks/cases

Made from fine woods and decorated with brass, silver and mother-of-pearl inlays, Zanzibar trunks reflect the Indo-Portuguese style imported from Goa. Known as *sanduku* (from the Arabic *sandūq*) or *kasha* (from the portuguese *caixa*) these pieces of furniture replace dressers, wardrobes and wardrobes and are inherited from one generation to the next as treasured possessions.

## II – Immaterial Heritage

### 1. Vocabulary

There is still today in the Swahili vocabulary a set of words whose origin dates back to the Portuguese. Most of these words are related to the sea and we can understand why: because they were the first to boost maritime commerce on the Swahili coast, despite the fact that there was already traffic in the region before. By way of example, we list the following words which, because they are more common, are easily audible in everyday conversation:

**Table 1 -Examples of Swahili words of Portuguese origin**

almirante	almiranti
amarra	amari
bandeira	bendera



barquinha	barikinya
batel	batela
bomba	bereu
boia	boya
bolo	boleo
bule	buli
caixa	kasha
cárcere	gereza <sup>17</sup>
cana	kana
chapéu	chepeo
companhia	kompania
copo	kopo
fronha	foronya
lenço	leso
limão	mlimau
manteiga	manteka
mesa	meza
padre	padri
pão	pao
parafuso	parafujo
pistola	batola
roda	roda
sapato	sapatu
tabaco	tumbako
vinho	mvinyo
xaile	shali

## 2. Photographers

Various period photographs, taken by professionals with surnames such as Gomes, Coutinho, Souza, Almeida or Silva, subsist to this day in a "sultanate" of photographers of Portuguese descent that has been studied, allowing us to begin to understand the dynamics of the journey of Portuguese Indian residents to the island of Zanzibar.<sup>18</sup>

This movement occurred at the end of the 19th century when Goan families from Portuguese India disembarked to open photographic studios. The *Coutinho Bros* was probably the first commercial photographic house in East Africa, having formed a partnership in 1890 with A. C. Gomes (who had run a studio on the island of Zanzibar since 1870), owned by the Coutinho brothers, both of Portuguese origin. The sons of A. C. Gomes continued the family business by signing *A. C. Gomes & C<sup>o</sup>, photographers, Zanzibar*; some years later we found stamps with *Copyright issued by A. C. Gomes & C<sup>o</sup>, Son, Zanzibar* and finally *A. C. Gomes & C<sup>o</sup>, Sons, Zanzibar*.

Today there is only one shop left open, *Capital Art Studio*, on Kenyatta Road. In business since 1930, it was founded by Ronchad T. Oza (? -1993) who, although not of Goan origin, began working as an apprentice photographer for A.C.

<sup>17</sup> This is the Swahili word for prison and comes from the Portuguese igreja, having its origin in the fact that many Portuguese churches and forts scattered along the African coast were later converted (by the Arabs and the English) into prisons. Hence the analogy.

<sup>18</sup> See studies by Pamila Gupta. Online: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/325077977\\_Sensuous\\_Ways\\_of\\_Seeing\\_in\\_Stone\\_Town\\_Zanzibar\\_Patina\\_Pose\\_Punctum](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/325077977_Sensuous_Ways_of_Seeing_in_Stone_Town_Zanzibar_Patina_Pose_Punctum) (accessed on 20.4.2021).



*Gomes & C<sup>o</sup>, Sons* in 1925. Ronchad became the official photographer of Sultan Khalifa bin Haroub (1879-1960). In 1979 his son, Rohit Ramez Oza, took over the shop, a space that harks back to a bygone era given by the walls lined with black and white photographs. In many of these records, the streets depicted display hanging signs announcing surnames of Portuguese origin showing the profusion of families I up to half a century ago inhabited the streets of Stone Town.

**Image 11 - Capital Art Studio, Rohit Oza, Stone Town**



Source: Photograph by Maria João Castro

All the documentation concerning the Zanzibar-Portugal relations that can be found in the National Zanzibar Archives (ZNA), Torre do Tombo Archives, Foreign Affairs Ministry Library, and Overseas Historical Archives and that contains several documents between the Zanzibar sultans and the Portuguese monarchy.

## **Pemba Island**

### **1. Chake Chake Fortress**

It is believed that the fortress of Chake Chake<sup>19</sup> was of Portuguese origin (1594). The old space - a kind of sixteenth-century barracks - is believed to have been destroyed by the Omanites to make way for a new defensive building, a fortress. The traces of the Portuguese garrison are not visible but there are records dating from the early 19th century that describe it as being rectangular in plan, with two square towers and two round towers at the corners, topped by thatched roofs. As is known, the round towers are typical of Arab and Swahili architecture of the time, but the square towers are unusual and indicate the possible Portuguese influence. Today it houses the Pemba Museum showing, History and Culture of the Island including early history, polity, maritime culture, colonial occupation and ways against it, years of politics, independence and revolution.

<sup>19</sup> Online: <http://memoria-africa.ua.pt/Library/ShowImage.aspx?q=/BIVG/BIVG-N026&p=17> (accessed on 21.4.2021).



## **2. Bullfights**

Introduced in Pemba during the Portuguese colonisation, bullfights take place during the most varied celebrations on the island, such as New Year's Day. Reminiscent of a tradition established in the 17th century, bullfights are seen as a test of bravery of the men who own cattle and are kept within a strong community and festive character in small villages such as Chuale and Kangagani.

Having concluded the non-exhaustive list, and contrary to what Oliver and Mathew wrote that "the Portuguese presence for 200 years contributed nothing to art and architecture" and that its passage was "a mere lost dream" (Oliver, 1963:168), we can see that this was not merely residual but relevant in the sense that it left a legacy that time has seen fit to extinguish. However, in the last decades, we have begun to understand its scope, thanks to new investigations, excavations and analyses that have been carried out through partnerships and protocols with foreign entities and that have brought to light some significant data that have filled in some of the less clear areas of history.

Having said that, we must not forget that the definitive victory of the Muscat Arabs over the Portuguese in 1698 and the English colonialism that turned the island into a British protectorate for part of the 19th and 20th centuries contributed to a dilution of the vestiges of previous cultures, as happens in all historical processes.

## **III. Non-final considerations**

Having traced the itinerary of part of the Portuguese heritage in Zanzibar, it is important to understand that history is a discovery in permanent crescendo that is built and put into perspective in a dynamic of multiple approaches. The very vision of the cultural and artistic assets that make up a country's heritage is constantly reconfiguring, which means that there is no one-focused or definitive view; rather, there are approaches that, being interdisciplinary, transnational and intercommunal, leverage the construction of a responsible and attentive cultural heritage policy. Because heritage can be an instrument of resilience for local communities and a fundamental element in maintaining a common identity. In fact it has been used as a prospective force capable of promoting well-being and cohesion, contributing to a more inclusive and sustainable society, within a more altruistic and solidary geopolitical dynamic.

In this sense, if we take into account the growth of a sustained tourism market with Zanzibar's resources, this could be the catalyst for an improvement in the quality of life of its population and the sedimentation of its cultural identity. Of course, balancing this equation is challenging and poses a number of questions for the government. Since tourism is a recent phenomenon (1970s) in the archipelago - driven by the decline of clove cultivation from 1975 onwards - it was seen as a substitute for the inflow of foreign currency to the island, based on an offer that combines not only leisure (*végiatura*) but also an Arab-Swahili culture of its own. The success of this commitment is reflected in the fact that tourism contributes more than 27% of the



gross domestic product (Keshodkar, 2013:71) - data from 2012 - which not only shows the ascendancy of the sector in the economy but also poses new challenges to its preservation (Zanzibar Mail, 2020:7).

In the field of philosophy, ethnology, anthropology or art historiography, the understanding of the nature of a given artistic heritage was often anchored in a Western-matrix thinking (Palmeirim, 2006: 14) that postcolonial studies have stirred. What perhaps seems basic in this context is that, regardless of currents, lines of thought or ethnocentric positions, the cultural-artistic heritage mapped out in a given territory integrates an aesthetic and symbolic genealogy that determines the present time and experience. In this sense, the visual research of a phenomenology of place constructed under several historical-artistic layers is fully realized in Zanzibar.

In any case, in the diaphanous and mellifluous palimpsest that is Zanzibar, the island-joia of the Islamic and Swahili civilization presents itself today as a tourist focus of choice that goes far beyond the univocal offer of the beach destination. Because the richness of the heritage and memory resulting from a narrative based on the blending of Arab, African, Indian and Lusitanian cultures, places its territory as a reference destination for Indian culture. This circumstance constitutes a challenge for the archipelago's guardianship because it is centred on balancing an equation of great fragility and complexity: conservation, development and sustainability.

A worthy starting point was the recognition of Stone Town as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2000. Finding the right balance between the quality of life of the inhabitants and the quality of the visitor experience, while ensuring - above all - that heritage values are not compromised, is always a challenge, even though the potential of Zanzibar's resources do not end at Stone Town but go far beyond it. We can only believe that, under the breeze of the Indian Ocean, the legacy of a time when Portuguese expansion involved the installation of emporiums and trading posts by the sea constitutes a memory and a heritage capable of deepening the historical dimension not only for those seeking reminiscences of a shared past but, above all, knowing that only by knowing the past can one have a perspective on the future because the ultimate truth is that "we only exist in the mirror of others"(Lourenço, 2015b).

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