

AN EXAMINATION OF ISLAMIC INFLUENCES  
ON CERTAIN ASPECTS OF DECORATIVE ARTS  
IN  
SELECTED AREAS OF THE OFFSHORE  
ISLANDS AND COASTS OF EAST AFRICA

BY

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## CONTENTS

Preface .....	iv
List of Figures .....	vii
List of Plates .....	viii
Introductory Note .....	1
Chapter I	
The Historical Background of Zanzibar & Pemba	
A. Early History and External Influences	
1. Islamic Traders and Settlers .....	8
B. The Coming and The Decline of The Portuguese -- Zanzibar & Pemba, 1498-1695 ....	95
C. The Arabs of <sup>c</sup> Umān in Zanzibar & Pemba -- 1698-1815 -- .....	107
D. Features and Divisions of Islam -- in Zanzibar & Pemba -- .....	115

## Chapter II

### Decoration on Religious Buildings.

#### The General Architectural Setting

--- in Chronological Order --- ..... 136

The Early Period ..... 162

The Middle Period ..... 222

The Final Phase ..... 308

Selected Bibliography ..... 332

Plates ..... 341

Index ..... 371

## PREFACE

This dissertation is the result of research work carried out in Zanzibar and Pemba, and to some extent on the East African Coast, under ' A Special Lectureship Scheme ' financed by the Rockefeller Foundation and administered by the University of East Africa. I owe gratitude therefore, to both these bodies, for without the financial assistance of this Foundation, much of what I was able to do, would have been impossible.

This research -- as it is based on comparative study -- covers a field, so extensive, that I cannot claim to have carried independent researches into every part of it. My investigation -- in some places -- was therefore drawn from published sources noted in the selected bibliography.

While in preparation all chapters of the thesis were submitted to the author's supervisors, namely C. Todd, Professor and Head of the School of Fine Art, and Mr. S. Hamdun, of the Islamics, Department

of Religious Studies ( both of Makerere University College ), for their criticism. Grateful acknowledgements are therefore due to them for their most useful suggestions; and for their readiness with which they have responded whenever requests for their assistance were made by the author. Special mention should be made to Professor Todd, who rendered further help by reading, with much patience, the entire manuscript, and for proposing several improvements as regards to the English language. To him my hearty thanks are due. Similarly, I would like to acknowledge my special indebtedness to my friend and colleague, Mr. Tag Ahmed, for most ably illustrating the boss of Kizimkazi-Dimbani mihrab ( FIGURES 3 & 4 ), which provide the most useful part of this research; and also for illustrating FIGS. 5 & 6. Mr. Ahmed has personally and kindly communicated his valuable views and suggestions to me. I would also like to thank Dr. Fehervari, of the Department of Near & Middle East, School of Oriental & African Studies, University of London, and to Professor Ettliger, Durning-Lawrence Professor

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The illustrations ( PLATES 1, 2, 3, & 4 ) are from the photographs taken by Mr. Gomes, a professional photographer in Zanzibar, a number of years ago; those in Plates 28 & 30, and Plates 10, 11, 12, 13 & 29, were taken by my friends Mr. J. de V. Alen, of the History Department, Makerere, and Mr. J. Weatherby respectively. Plates 8, 14 & 15, are from the photographs taken by my friend and colleague, Mr. J. Kingdon. I am indebted to them for permission to use their photographs as illustrations in this thesis. The remaining 16 illustrations are from photographs taken by the writer, together with two maps ( FIGS. 1 & 2 ) drawn by him.

Finally I wish to thank friends, too numerous to name, who have helped me with kindness during my visits to the Coastal sites.

Makerere University College

A.H.D.

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## LIST OF FIGURES

Fig.	Page
1. Map of Zanzibar showing the principal places mentioned in the text and the sites illustrated .....	160
2. Map of Pemba showing the principal places mentioned in the text and the sites illustrated.....	161
3. The inscription on the Kizimkazi boss.	204
4. A key to the inscription on the boss at Kizimkazi -- A.H.500-A.D.1107 ...	204
5. Kizimkazi, Zanzibar -- moulded plaster	210
6. Mihrab, Tumbatu, Zanzibar.....	292

## LIST OF PLATES

Plate	Page
1. Mihrāb in main prayer chamber of Kizimkazi Mosque .....	341
2. Mihrāb (A.H.500-A.D.1107) Kizimkazi ..	342
3. Detail of plate 2 .....	343
4. Kufic inscription dated A.H.500-A.D.1107	344
5. Mihrāb, Ras-Mkumbuu, Pemba .....	345
6. Mihrāb, Shengejuu, Pemba .....	346
7. Detail of Mihrāb at Shengejuu .....	347
8. Mihrāb, Jamia Mosque, Gedi .....	348
9. Mihrāb, Chwaka Jamia, Pemba .....	349
10. Decorative embellishment on gateway, Shela .....	350



Plate	Page
11. Detail of plate 10 .....	351
12. Facade decorated with numerous niches in typical Indian style .....	352
13. Interior of domestic building, Lamu .	353
14. Gateway to the Palace of Gedi, The niches above the entrance are arranged in similar way as those above arched entrances of India ...	354
15. Example of pilaster recess commonly used at the East African Coast, Gedi	355
16. Semicircular mihrāb, Msuka Mjini, Pemba .....	356
17. Pilaster recess on the left side of the mihrāb, Msuka Mjini .....	357
18. Mihrāb at Kichokochwe, Pemba .....	358
19. Mihrāb in main prayer chamber of Jāmi <sup>c</sup> i Mosque of Forodhani, Zanzibar .....	359

Plate	Page
20. Mihrāb in the Jāmi <sup>C</sup> i Mosque of Msikiti Mnara, Zanzibar .....	360
21. Mihrāb in Chake Mosque, Pemba .....	361
22. Mihrāb in the Mosque of Nungwi. This is an example of small provincial Mosque in Zanzibar and Pemba .....	362
23. Mihrāb in the Mosque of Bwejuu. Another example of provincial Mosque .....	363
24. Stone fretwork on a wall at Bububu ( Mid. 19th. century ) .....	364
25. Wooden fretwork on a window in a private Mosque of Hamoud bin Ahmed bin Seif at Bububu, Zanzibar .....	365
26. Decoration and numerous niches on a wall of domestic building at Shela .	366
27. Main entrance of a domestic building at Shela .....	367

Plate	page
28. Detail of niches as decoration on a wall at Pate .....	368
29. Decoration on wall, Pate .....	369
30. Niches and decoration on wall at Shela	370

## I N T R O D U C T O R Y   N O T E

This thesis entitled " An Examination of Islamic Influences on Certain Aspects of The Decorative Arts in Selected Areas of The Offshore Islands and Coasts of East Africa " aims at displaying the external influences which came about during the twelfth and subsequent centuries, the time of the arrival of Islamic settlers on the East African Coast. Much of it is concerned with the history of Islamic Architecture based on the observation made from ancient monuments. This " History of the Coastal Islamic Architecture on the Comparative Analysis " elicits the characteristic features of mosques of each City-State, by comparing one style with another, and by giving distinction to the influences -- religious and historical, which have contributed to the formation of each style. This is made possible by distinguishing the products of separate cultures, discerning stages of historical devel-

opments, and detecting the interaction of different traditions.

The thesis is divided into two chapters arranged into a chronological order. The first chapter is on the historical background of Zanzibar and Pemba, with reference to the East African Coast as a whole; starting as early as the tenth century, when the Islamic settlers were already established, to the early nineteenth century rule of the <sup>U</sup>mani Arabs. In this study, a number of documents of the principal writings on the East African Coast have been discussed so as to provide sufficient historical background to indicate the influence of Islam in forming the culture, as an introduction to the study of religious buildings. The documents are those left to us by Arab geographers and historians, and they are as various as those of al-Mas<sup>U</sup>di (10th. century), Ibn-Hawqal (10th. century), al-Idrīsi (12th. century), and Ibn-Battūṭah (14th. century). As an introductory chapter, other important sou-

rees of local histories and chronicles, as well as information recorded by the Portuguese who visited East African Coast, add to give a connected account of the medieval periods. For the much earlier date, reference is given to the first century Periplus of the Erythrean Sea ----- now maintained by some authorities to date from the third century A.D. ----- and the fourth century Geography of Ptolemy to show that trading voyages were taking place at that time to the Zanj Coast. In this chapter, a short paper on " Features and Organization of Islam -- Beliefs and Sectarianism " is included in an attempt to show as to what ' m a d h h a b ' (sect) of Islam the early settlers belonged prior to Ibn-Battūtah's account of Kilwa of 1331.

The second chapter is on the Islamic architecture of Zanzibar and Pemba, and it is divided into three sub-sections. These are :-

- A. The Early Period.
- B. The Middle Period.
- C. The Final Phase.

On each period a brief outline of the historical background to the architectural developments is given. In this chapter each group of buildings falling approximately on the same period is compared with the other group to find out the main reasons of changes in style, and that every architectural detail is discussed and traced back to the origin as far as possible. An analysis of the typology of the architecture is therefore as essential as a study of the decorative and ornamental elements, as well as the composition of mihrābs.

#### A. The Early Period.

The early period characterised by a delightful style evident in the rather sophisticated mihrāb of the Kizinkasi-Dimbani Mosque -- referred to by Sir John Gray as " a little architectural gem ", and by Professor Flury as to " exhibit a degree of technical skill and feeling for style ", reveals great artistry. This little

gem is doubtless unique, being the only one of its kind in Zanzibar and Pemba, and indeed on the entire coast, and would provide a contrasting feeling in style to the middle period.

Similarly, the Kizimkazi-Dimbani coral bosses are unique, both in type and purpose, because they were specifically designed to take a Kufic inscription; thus it is the only one of its kind on the whole of the East African Coast. The fact that the bosses at Kizimkazi mihrāb hold Kufic inscription appears for the first time in this thesis : no author has yet, until the present work, identified the inscription and therefore the information is not contained in any previous publication. This led to further research and it has been established for the first time that the kufic inscription dated A.H.500/A.D.1107 on the mihrāb of Kizimkazi is contemporary to the actual building of the mosque.



## B. The Middle Period.

The second period covers a span of approximately three hundred and fifty years, starting from the fifteenth century to probably mid eighteenth century, which could be classified as one of the three styles, with few fundamental changes. This is evident in some parts of Pemba, along the West Coast from the North to half way down the coast, namely from Verani down to Ras-Mkumbuu, where the mosques have features in common. The difference appears in the mihrab's decoration -- when concentrating upon refining its details. These are probably due to either lack of informed and tasteful patronage or to the individual feeling of their founders, rather than to any difference due to date. Though not unproductive as far as the number of buildings is concerned, this middle period shows some variations, primarily in the use and type of decoration. In the main, all seem to follow the same lines, for each of them was an off-shoot of the style developed by the earlier builders.

### C. The Final Phase.

The final phase is a period of revival, often imitating the past -- the early and the middle periods. Although this period started soon after the establishment of the Arab rule from <sup>C</sup>Umān, it was not until the middle of the nineteenth century that an active period of building began. The delay was perhaps due to some political events on the coast, as the main preoccupations were directed to empire development. However, there existed some fundamental differences between builders and patrons, and on both sides their aesthetic taste was comparatively poor. The artistic sophistication and creative design of the past is always absent, and this could be realised if the recent work was compared with an older neighbour, perhaps one produced a hundred years ago, leave aside those of much earlier date.

## C H A P T E R I

## THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF ZANZIBAR &amp; PEMBA

## A. Early History And External Influences

## 1. Islamic Traders And Settlers

From an early date the East African Coast was brought into contact with the people of the Persian Gulf, Southern Arabia, India and even China -- how far back it is not easy to state with any degree of certainty. But what is gathered from the "Periplus of the Erythrean Sea" written by an unknown Greek in about A.D.110<sup>1</sup>, and from many other documents, is that trade relations between Asia and East Africa were already in existence in the first century of the Christian era. Admittedly many of the early writers seem to have a second-hand knowledge of the coas-

1. The Periplus of the Erythrean Sea is now maintained by some authorities to date from the third century A.D.

It is said that Egypt furnished a number of specimens which were —

tal area, as no indication of their visits to the East African Coast is shown in their documents, apart from Ibn-Battūṭah's account of Kilwa. It is worthy of note that in some parts of these documents, descriptions of the area names, and accounts of the people and their traditional life, have been found to have connection with the main course of history.

It is said that Egypt established commercial relationships with Punt -- modern Somalia -- at a very early date. In Somalia the main attraction for the Egyptians was frankincense, a product in which this country was particularly rich. Frankincense was a most valuable commodity, for it was indispensable in religious ceremonies, apart from other secular uses such as medicines and the making of perfumes. Al-Yaman, in South-Western Arabia also produced frankincense, and from this the inferences to be made would perhaps be that since Al-Yaman was nearer to Egypt, the latter would have preference in obtaining the pr-

oduct from the neighbouring port rather than from Somalia.

From an early date, the Egyptians had commercial interests in South Arabia. They had long before turned to the sea, and searching for more sources would be a normal practice in the quest for trade expansion even taking them as far as East Africa. Yet it would not be proper to draw the conclusion that they had at that time contacts with regions farther south of Somalia. No archaeological evidence has been advanced to show their trade relations with East Africa. Granting that Egypt had such relationships with Somalia and East Africa about 2500 years ago, ivory would probably be one of the main commodities for trade. " Much ivory is taken away from these places, but it is inferior in quality to that of Adulis ". Here it may be that the author of the *Periplus* is comparing the quality of the ivory obtained from Somalia with that of East Africa. Some Egyptian coins have however been found in

East African soils, but six of these are Mameluk pieces and seven of the Ottoman period of many centuries later<sup>1</sup>.

" The Mapharitic chief governs it under some ancient right, that subjects it to the sovereignty of the state that has become the first in Arabia. The people of Muza now hold it under his authority, and send thither many large ships, using Arab captains and agents, who are familiar with the natives and intermarry with them, and who know the whole coast and understand the language<sup>2</sup>". The author of the Periplus further gives descriptions in his guide on the voyage down the Red Sea and the African Coast and mentions an island called Menouthias. Much controversy has been raised in regard to the identification of Menouthias, but whether the writer was actually speaking of Zanzibar, Pemba or Mafia nobody seems to know for certain. To identify Menouthias is still a game of guess-work. The possibility of second-hand information cannot be ruled

1. Grenville, *The Medieval History of The Coast of Tanganyika*, pp. 22.
2. Sir John Gray, *History of Zanzibar From The Middle Ages to 1856*, pp. 11.

With regard to geographical location, we will assume a position of Al-Yemen, Aden, and other countries along the Red Sea, where the Gulf of Aden is a gulf in Al-Yemen to which the eastern part of the Arabian refers, — "Arabia Felix" — and the sea can be identified as one of the people of "Arabia" — several for Arabia/Aden — the Gulf with the Red African Coast. In further support, the whole continent — the Red Sea — is to be named — that is the possession of the Arab world of today, hence the name "Arabia" for the world area.

If the name of the Red Sea is correct, then the Red African Coast would have a very close connection to the Red Sea area, and



out as he might have relied on the statements of other merchants with whom he was in contact. But from the few useful descriptions given, it would be safe to say that Menouthias lies on East African water.

With regard to geographical location, south Arabia consists of Al-Yaman, Hadhranawt, and other countries along the neighbouring coast<sup>1</sup>. Ma-  
Cāfir is a tribe in Al-Yaman to which the author of the Periplus refers, — " Mapharite Chief " — who can now be identified as one of the people of " Mouza " — present day Mukha/Mocha — who traded with the East African Coast. In earlier centuries the whole coastland — the Periplus seems to suggest — was in the possession of the Arab State of Ausan, hence the name " Ausanitic " for the coastal area.

If the author of the Periplus is correct, then the East African Coastal peoples were certainly known to the Sabaeen Arabs between 950 and

1. Hitti, History of The Arabs, seventh edition, pp. 30.

Along the Arabian coast, navigation<sup>1</sup> was difficult in every season. The shipping business was almost entirely confined to the summer months of May, June, and July, when the winds were favourable for sailing. The trade routes between Aden and Syria, passing through Bab-el-Mandeb and further up to Petra and Damascus, were the principal points of contact between the East and West. The sea routes were also important, especially the route from Aden to the Red Sea and the Gulf of Persia, and from there across the Indian Ocean to the East Indies. The trade was carried on by long voyages. It was dangerous and actually unprofitable. Many attempts to the north were made, but they failed. It would appear that they had learned the art of navigation, and had good knowledge of the conditions of the sea and the nature of the winds, but they were not able to make a living out of it. If this statement is generally true, the specific statement would be that the

250 B.C. If they had married with the natives, then they would have had an infusion of Arabian blood of far earlier origin than the Muslim invasion.

Along the Arabian Coast, navigation<sup>1</sup> was difficult in every respect. The *Periplus* describes this coastal area to be dangerous because of breakers and rocks, which caused the Sabaeans to take land routes between Al-Yaman and Syria, leading through Makkah and farther up to Petra and then to diverge at the northern point into Egypt. To sail from Al-Yaman down through Bāb al-Mandab and the Gulf of Aden, and then across the Indian Ocean to the East African Coast is undoubtedly a long voyage. If the Sabaeans were actually sailing to East Africa in the eighth century before our era<sup>2</sup>, it would appear that they had learned the art of navigation and had good knowledge of the existence of and the seasons of the monsoons at a fairly early date. If this statement is granted, the possible explanation would be that the

1. Cf., Hitti, pp. 50.
2. Sir John Gray, *History Of Zanzibar From The Middle Ages To 1856*, pp. 11.

Such information given by early historians and geographers about Arabia, and their reports obtained from local sources, supplemented by archaeological finds of coins and pottery in the wild, it is reasonable to assume that there was a steady intercourse between East Africa and Persia. The early religions were Christianity, Judaism and Islamism, before they were superseded by the Mohammedan faith. Before the Arab period — that is before the establishment of Islam — there was already an important contact between the

discovery of the monsoons and the use of the variable winds was an art familiar to them from times before Hippalus, about 90 B.C., or even the earlier Greeks since Nearchus's<sup>1</sup> return from the Indus (326-325). However, there is no substantial evidence to show that South Arabians were engaged in sailing activities as early as the eighth century before Christ, -- not to mention the possibility of their owning a portion of the East African Coast at that early period<sup>2</sup>.

From information given by early historians and geographers about Africa, and from reports obtained from local chronicles, supplemented by archaeological finds of coins and pottery in the soil, it is reasonable to assume that there was a steady intercourse between East Africa and Persia. The early merchants were Christians, Jews and Zoroastrians, before they were superseded by Muslim Arabs. During the older Arabian period -- that is before the establishment of Muslim -- Persia was already the most powerful empire in the

1. Hourani, Arab Seafaring, pp. 25.
2. Sir John Gray writes that the Arab State of Ausan, which came to an end about 700 B.C., traded with, and possibly held a portion of the coast.

East, enduring for almost twelve centuries, from 600 B.C. until A.D. 600. Long before this Zoroastrian Persia held supremacy over Syria, Egypt and North India, and was transmitting her cultural ideas into Arabia. Bernhard Krumm, quoting the Bible ( in the book of Esther, chapter I ), in his book, " Words of Oriental Origin in Swahili ", tells us of the Persian King Ahasverus, who reigns over one hundred and twenty seven provinces.

Long before the Arabs, the Persians constituted a world power. They held the supremacy of the sea and became the masters of the whole trade in the orient. They were vigorous, self-assertive and wealthy, and were to be found everywhere in the East. °Umān, Bahrain and Hadhramawt were under the direct Imperial rule of Persia, being earlier in a state of general disorganization and disorder due to constant internal conflict. This was changed under Persian domination. The Persian bourgeoisie gave them powers of organization,

administration and co-operation, faculties which were rare among the Arabs. The emigration of the experienced Persian merchants made these places flourish. Through these channels some knowledge of the more advanced techniques of sailing and navigation became known to the Arabs. It is an accepted fact that Persians were skilled shipbuilders and fearless navigators. If we assume that Arabs sailed regularly to East Africa in the old days it would even be safer to assume that Persians had acquired a considerable hold in East Africa before them. It is more than likely that the Persians made East Africa one of their many provinces. If Egypt was under her domination, the next probable step would be East Africa. Here rare products such as ivory, spices, leopard skins, timber, tortoise-shell, gold and slaves were obtained, some of which found their way to Western markets. These products together with those obtained from the Persian Gulf, India and China were highly prized.



With the Sassanian period, a much stronger and more centralized government was established. The Iranian national spirit became even firmer. This was the time of the first emperor Ardashīr I ( A.D. 225-241 ), whose hands grasped the reigns in the drive to glorify the Empire. He founded many sea ports and encouraged the native Persians to turn to the sea for their livelihood and to exploit and develop more trade routes. This seems to be a period of much maritime activity. Ammianus Marcellinus, reports that there is much navigation on the Persian Gulf<sup>1</sup>. Trade relations between the western boundry of Parthia ( now Persia ) and other countries such as China, India, Syria, and probably East Africa were established. They also had relationships with Eastern Somaliland<sup>2</sup>. A few coins of this period have been found in Zanzibar or Pemba, which are now in the Beit al Amani Museum in Zanzibar. Freeman Grenville as an eye witness reports that these coins have sandy soil on them typical of Zanzibar,

1. Hourani, Arab Seafaring, pp. 38.

Hourani states that later in the century the Latin historian Ammianus Mercellinus, in describing the Sassanid realm, reports that there is much navigation on the Persian Gulf and that the terminus for seagoing ships is "Teredon" at the Euphrates mouth -- the recurrence of this ancient name is surprising.

2. Hourani, pp. 38. Narseh (293-302) had relations with the Zand Afrik Shah, i.e. the King of the Zang nation of Eastern Somaliland.

There are five pieces in all, and among these, three are Parthian issues. Of the first three, one is of the first century, one of the second and one uncertain. The remaining two are Sassanian, one of Ardashir I and one uncertain of the third century.

The importance of the monsoon seasons for navigation as exploited by the Persian, Indian, and Arab traders was mentioned before the first century of our Christian era by the Greek sailor Hippalus. For these traders to go to East Africa where gold, ivory and slaves could be obtained, oral understanding between them and the local inhabitants was a necessity. The Periplus tells us of the captains and crews who knew the language of the indigenous East Coast Africans. The language spoken by the people on the coast, presumably the Bantus was Swahili. This language is spoken very widely and includes many words of oriental origin, amongst many of them Persian. Claudius Ptolemy in his Geographia, A.D. 150 spe-

aks of Zingis<sup>1</sup>, and Cosmas Indicopleustes (A.D. 525) mentions the " Ocean of Zingion "<sup>2</sup>. Later the word Zanj appears to be used from time to time by Arab geographers, probably to mean black or savage. The frequent application of this word was because the wider meaning was gradually lost and finally was applicable only to the Island which is now named Zanzibar. Hitti speaks of the rebellion ( about A.D. 870 ) of the Zanj slaves, who were employed in the Saltpetre mines on the lower Euphrates led by <sup>c</sup>Ali ibn-Muhammad ( Sāhib al-Zanj ). They were negroes imported from East Africa. Other Arabian writers gave no explanation as to its uses, and no one seems to know for certain the origin of this word. Scholars hold different views on the meaning and origin of the term. It appears more likely that Zanj̄ was used first and later changed to Zanj. Ferrand is of this opinion and believes that the word Zanj̄ is more correct. He argues that Zanj̄ changed to Zanj in a time, when Arabic no longer knew sonore

1. Claudius Ptolemy, in describing Zingis reports that after the market town of Opone is another bay, the first of Azania, at whose entrance is the promontory of Zingis and the mountain of Phalangis, which has three peaks.
2. Cosmas Indicopleustes. The Homerites are not far distant from Barbaria, as the sea which lies between them can be crossed in a couple of days, and then beyond Barbaria is the ocean, which is there called Zingion.

gutturales, and that Zanj is the Arabianized form of the Persian Zang<sup>v</sup> which is the name for the negroes living on the East Coast of Africa<sup>1</sup>. Certainly Ptolomaios and Cosmas both speak of Cape Zingis, long before the Arabian authors. Professor A. Werne's opinion is that Zāngel is difficult to identify as an Arabic word. He further explains that the more usual derivation is from Zang, the Persian name for Ethiopia, which became in Arabic Zeng, Zing or Zinj. However, Krumm is not competent to decide. Though he does not form a definite opinion on this question, he appears to have a sound argument on discussing the origin of the word. He says " the word Zang (Zeng) penetrated into Arabic, but as Arabic has no g, the g was replaced by <sup>v</sup>g. This Arabian form Zeng<sup>v</sup> was in return adapted by the Iranians, and we have now in Persian the co-existence of Zeng, and Zeng<sup>v</sup>. Had there been first the Arabian Zeng<sup>v</sup>, the Iranians would not have needed to change the word, because 'g' is a frequent sound in Persian<sup>2</sup>.

1. Krumm, in his book " Words of Oriental  
Origin in Swahili " quotes Ferrand in  
his article, ( 61. pp. 240 ).

2. Ibid, Krumm, pp. 109.

Apart from Arabic and Persian, Swahili borrowed words from other languages such as Hindustani, Gujurati, Portuguese, Turkish, Malay, German and English, but thirty per cent of the vocabulary is Arabic. Glaser was of the opinion that the language spoken in South Arabia was a form of Arabic probably made rich by Iranian and Indian words, as Iranian is an offspring of Sanskrit. Krumm points out that the Arab traders who came to East Africa had a large number of Iranian words, which might have enriched the Swahili language. His argument is that in the Pre-Islamic Persian scarcely any Arabic word can be found whereas in the Arabic language of the same period there are a considerable number of Persian words. Although he did not wish to rule out the possibility of Iranian immigrants in East Africa, Krumm attempted to show that if the language of the Iranians had been purely Persian, then that language would have left deeper traces than it has done. Freeman Grenville holds a view that if



these settlements had been purely Persian speaking, it would rather be expected that the number of Iranian words would be greater than those of Arabian origin.

Both Krumm's and Grenville's arguments could be used to prove the contrary. It could as well be argued that the Iranian trading settlements in East Africa were of earlier date than that of the Arabs. The Iranian language, has, undoubtedly, left deep traces in Swahili, with a considerable number of Persian words, which have helped to develop a coastal language. The number of Iranian words might have comparatively been greater than those of Arabic origin at an early date. In the later periods the Arabs had a firm grip over the whole coastal region, and their relationship with the local inhabitants was a permanent one. From the beginning of the seventeenth century --- that is after the overthrow of the Portuguese to the present day --- the Arab influence was great in many respects. As a conse-

quence of this intercourse, not mentioning their contact, along that of the Persians, from the early times, the Swahili language has evolved a rich vocabulary which includes a great number (about thirty per cent) of words of Arabic origin. A number of Persian words might have been forgotten and gradually superseded by Arabic, which for the last two or more centuries has extended its influence into Swahili. As might also be expected, the introduction into the Swahili language of some English words is noticeable, but only for the last seventy years, of British rule, in Zanzibar. Some of the words of Arabic origin have, in this short spell of time, been replaced by English words. A number of example to this effect can be given.

Early traders and sailors from the Persian Gulf had common communication, and the language they spoke was, to some extent mixed. It is obviously an exaggeration to say that this language is to this day extremely mixed<sup>1</sup>. In support of

1. **G.S.P. Freeman Grenville, The Medieval History of The Coast of Tanganyika, pp. 29.**

this statement it is not valid to assume that the original settlements in East Africa were made by persons of mixed Persian and Arab stock from the Gulf region. The argument does not follow, nor does it show who came first. Persian and Arab settlers in East Africa certainly had their own national identity.

The influence of the Persian language in Swahili is not the only Iranian survival. The close association with the East Africans brought certain cultural influences. Nau-ruz̄, 'New Day' of the Iranian solar year of 365 days is to this day kept in Zanzibar and Pemba. Every year Nau-ruz̄ is celebrated on the same day as in Persia. Though it is celebrated throughout the islands of Zanzibar and Pemba, this day has become so rooted in tradition in those areas where the people claim to be descendants of Shīrās in Persia<sup>1</sup>. The ceremony begins with bathing in the sea before daybreak. The practice of rough horse-play which actually took place in the main streets of Iran and in various other places where the infl-

1. The author refers to localities such as Makunduchi, Mtende, Jambiani, Paje, Bwejuu, Michamvi, Kizimkazi, Uroa, Nungwi, Kiwengwa, Pongwe, and Tumbatu, where the inhabitants claim to be decendants of Shirāz in Persia.

uence was deep is also common in Zanzibar. Professor R. Levy reports that no respectably dressed person could venture into the streets without risking his dignity<sup>1</sup>. So is the case in Zanzibar when fighting on that day breaks out among the participants, which normally results in police intervention. Naturally enough in view of this surviving inheritance the Washirazi regard Nau-ruz̄ with greater respect than ʿĪd al- Aḏḥa (the festival of sacrifice). Most interesting is the fact that these people who observe the day embrace Islam, but regard Nau-ruz̄ as their cultural heritage.

The lack of a continuous chain of evidence left the history of the East African Coast without a definite and clear picture. Sometimes the connection between Persia and East Africa comes into the open, while in the course of years it fades considerably. But from some useful information recorded by Arab authors it is possible to trace the path.

1. Professor R. Levy, *The Legacy of Persia*,  
pp. 66.

According to one version of the Pate chronicle the earliest recorded attempt at organized colonization originated from Persia, and not Arabia. This is related to the story told by the chronicler about the fifth Umayyad Caliph <sup>c</sup>Abd-al-Malik ibn Marwān ( A.D. 695-705 ) who heard of East Africa and longed in his soul to found a new kingdom. The story goes on to say that <sup>c</sup>Abd-al-Malik sent Syrians to a number of places along the coast to build cities, of which Zanzibar was one. Then the chronicler reports that because of lack of interest in founding towns <sup>c</sup>Abd-al-Malik's sons, after their father's death dropped the project completely until the time of Har-ūn al-Rashīd ( A.D. 786-809 ). This renowned Caliph is said by the chronicler to have tried to bring to life his predecessor's project and to have sent Persians to East Africa instead of Syrians. It is true that the first impression a reader gets from these stories is that the <sup>c</sup>Ab-bāsid caliphs owned portions of land on the East



African Coast where cities had been built for them, in which case one would be tempted to question their validity.

Examination of these stories may reveal some truth however. A number of Ummayyad caliphs, with the exception of Mu<sup>o</sup>awiyah ( A.D. 661-680 ), <sup>o</sup>Abd-al-Malik and Hishām ( A.D. 724-743 ), who were highly esteemed by the Arab authorities for their brilliant statemanships, proved to be incapable in state affairs. Their overindulgence in wine, music, and poetry, of whom Yazid II (A.D. 720-724) was the best example, caused the government to degenerate. As a result some of the Ummayyad period appeared to be dominated by party matters rather than the sovereignty of a united empire. <sup>o</sup>Abd-al-Malik as a statesman was anxious to follow the steps of his predecessors, and returning to the story however, the great <sup>o</sup>Abd-al-Malik's interest was in founding cities on the coast of Africa. This desire could not materialize because of the shortage of time. The chron-

icler clearly stated that it was on the seventy seventh year of the Hijra ( A.D. 696 ) when <sup>o</sup>Abd-al-Malik heard of Africa. So, the caliph had exactly nine years to build cities before he was succeeded by Al-Walīd ( A.D. 705-715 ). The shortage of time would certainly not allow such extension of the Caliph's dominations in Africa. In all probabilities, it is, ofcourse, possible that merchants from Damascus might have been sent over for the purpose of trade.

Continuing with the story, the chronicler further tells us that after <sup>o</sup>Abd-al-Malik death " his sons did not care for the work of founding towns, and so they left them " <sup>1</sup>. And, with this, the same chronicler passes to the <sup>o</sup>Abbāsīd dynasty and mentions Hārūn-al-Rashīd ( A.D. 786-899 ) as having attempted to revive <sup>o</sup>Abd-al-Malik's projects <sup>2</sup>. This would mean that the work of building cities on the Coast of Africa had stopped for eighty one years. But it does not mean that trade relations had stopped. Such ports as Baghdād,

1. Sir John Gray, History of Zanzibar, From  
The Middle Ages to 1856, pp. 12.

2. Ibid., pp. 12.

The British Government called itself the 'Arabian' Government and its policy was to build up a strong and powerful empire in the East. It is necessary to remember that the British empire was not built, as is often said, by the British navy alone. The British Government called itself the 'Arabian' Government, and its policy was to build up a strong and powerful empire in the East. It is necessary to remember that the British empire was not built, as is often said, by the British navy alone. It is necessary to remember that the British empire was not built, as is often said, by the British navy alone.

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al-Basrah, Sīrāf, Cairo and Alexandria developed into centres of active maritime commerce. Besides the wide extent of the empire, the civilisation having now attained a high level, involved extensive international trade. It is extremely important to remember that the Ummayyad empire was Arab, while the <sup>c</sup>Abbāsīd was more international. The <sup>c</sup>Abbāsīd Government called itself *d a w l a h*<sup>1</sup>, that is new era, and so indeed it was. It is very likely that the chronicler of Pate was right in suggesting that Hārūn-al-Rashīd had sent Persians to the East Coast of Africa. Not in the sense of building cities but of extending trade. It is worthy of note that this was the time when Persians occupied important or rather chief posts in Al-Rashīd's Government.

Most likely trading settlements along the East African Coast were already in existence by the early ninth century, which presumably, in the course of years grew up in size and prosperity. At the end of the ninth century we find that the

1. Tabari, Volume iii, pp. 85, 11.16,17,p. 115,  
 1. 9. Also cited by Hitti, History of The  
 Arabs, seventh edition, pp. 286.

Arab writers have much to say of the activities of trade. Ibn-Hawqal ( A.D. 978/ A.H. 367 ), an Arab traveller, who is believed to have either actually visited East Africa or to have had second-hand information reports that the inhabitants of this country are not much inclined to the cultivation of arts and sciences<sup>1</sup>. He speaks about a race of white people in Zanzibar who bring from other places articles of food and clothing for trade. He does not mention who these whites were, but one might guess that they were settlers from Persia. In exchange the people from the Gulf of Persia took back with them products from the Zanj country. Arthur Upham Pope quotes Ibn-Hawqal as having said that the houses of Sirāf, were built of teak wood brought from the Zanj country, which were several stories high, built to overlook the sea, and that one merchant might even spend thirty thousand dinars on his residence<sup>2</sup>.

Al-Mas<sup>o</sup>ūdī, a native of Baghdad of the late ninth century, travelled like many other scholars

1. The East African Coast -- select documents --  
 from the first to the early ninth century --  
 edited by Freeman Grenville, Oxford, 1962.

This account is taken from 'Ebn Haukal'  
 The Oriental Geography, translated by Sir  
 William Ousley, 1800, pp. 8, 14.

2. Arthur Upham Pope, Survey of Persian Art,  
 Vol. II, part VI.

into Persia, India, and China. In quest of learning he ventured as far as the land of Zanj. Professor Hitti described him as having visited Zanzibar<sup>1</sup>. Freeman Grenville seems to have formed an opinion that Al-Mas<sup>o</sup>ūdi had obtained most of his knowledge on East Africa from sailors, on the assumption that unlike Ibn-Baṭṭūṭah, he never speaks of direct contact between himself and the inhabitants<sup>2</sup>. Grenville further adds that while one cannot assert that Al-Mas<sup>o</sup>ūdi did not visit Zanj, he could probably have told us as much if he had not made the voyage<sup>3</sup>.

Although one cannot refute the truth of his extensive travels into other countries of Asia, it would be equally wrong to doubt his visit to the country of Zanj. This is made quite clear by Al-Mas<sup>o</sup>ūdi himself in his thirty-volume work, surviving in an epitome, *Murūj al-Dhahab wa Ma<sup>o</sup>ādin al-Jawhar* ( meadows of gold and mines of gems ). He gives a clear description of his voyage on the various seas, -- those of China, Rum, the Khazan,



1. Hitti, History of The Arabs, seventh edition, pp. 391.
2. Freeman Grenville, The Medieval History of The Coast of Tanganyika, pp. 40.
3. Ibid., pp. 40.

In one of his voyages, he said to have been in the company of a certain Ibn-al-Battal and another Ibn al-Battal, who crossed the straits. Al-Battal pointed out that his companions were from 'Udda, and this is fully supported by virtue of their names, being typical of the 'Udda Arabs. According to the further information he gives us, it is clear that apart from the 'Udda, Swahili had been travelling to East Africa in his time. He tells us of the people of 'Udda and also mentions the name of the East African coast. It was mentioned

Qulzum, and Yemen. In comparison he does not know of one more dangerous than that of the Zanj which seems to indicate that he knew East Africa. In the ports of East Africa that he saw, Al-Mas<sup>o</sup>ūdī mentions the Island of Kanbalū, which is at the furthest point of their voyage on the Zanj sea. Kanbalū is thought to be Ras-Mkumbuu in Pemba. However, Al-Mas<sup>o</sup>ūdī and other travellers sailed from Ṣanjar, the capital of <sup>o</sup>Umān to East Africa.

In one of his voyages, he said to have been in the company of Muḥammad ibn-al-Zaidbud and Jawhar ibn Aḥmad, surnamed ibn Sirāh. Al-Mas<sup>o</sup>ūdī pointed out that his companions were from <sup>o</sup>Umān, and this is fully supported by virtue of their names, being typical of the <sup>o</sup>Umāni Arabs. According to the further information he gives us, it is clear that apart from the <sup>o</sup>Umānis, Persians had been travelling to Kanbalū at his time. He tells us of the people of Sīrāf who also made voyages to the East African Coast. In one occasion

-- this being his last journey from Kanbalū to °Umān in A.H. 304 ( A.D. 916 ), he travelled in the ship belonging to Aḥmad, and °Abd-al-Ṣamād, who were the brothers of °Abd-al-Rahīm ibn Ja°f-ar al-Sīrāfi, a native of Mikan, which is a quarter of Sīrāf<sup>1</sup>. Again their names show significance of Iranian origin, apart from the fact that they are from Sīrāf.

Unlike Ibn-Baṭṭūḡah, Al-Mas°ūdi writes in a completely different style. His account of the physical environment of East Africa, and the lives of the people is based entirely upon his personal impressions, while Ibn-Baṭṭūḡah speaks of his experiences and actual contacts with the inhabitants; this being related to us in an absolutely descriptive manner. Al-Mas°ūdi spent the last few years of his life in Syria and Egypt, compiling what is now left to us as a summary of his philosophy of history. Both Al-Mas°ūdi and Ibn-Baṭṭūḡah could be said to have visited the Coast of Africa and to have left behind useful information.

1. Al-Mas<sup>c</sup>ūdi's account of East Africa is spread throughout parts of Murūj al-Dhahab wa Ma<sup>c</sup>ādin al-Jawhar. This account appears in the select documents -- the East African Coast -- edited by Grenville. The translation has been made by the editor from the text in Les Prairies d'Or, C.B. de Meynard and P. de Courteille, Paris.

Al-Mas<sup>o</sup>ūdī explains the importance of ivory from Zanj and its chief trade route from there to China and India through <sup>o</sup>Umān. According to his account on this product, it seems that ivory was an indispensable commodity in China as no officer or notable dared to come into the royal presence without an ivory palanquin. In India ivory was also used for the making of dagger handles called "harari" and for the curved sword-scabbards called "kartal". He describes at length the method of hunting elephants and that one tusk could weigh up to fifty pounds or more. The Zanj people make no use of elephants for domestic purposes as Indians do. The land of Zanj produced wild leopard skins which they exported to Muslim countries for making saddles.

According to Al-Mas<sup>o</sup>ūdī the land of Zanj stretched from Ethiopia to probably Mafia. This large area had a mixed population of Muslims and Zanj idolaters. Among the idolaters every one worshipped what he pleased, be it a plant, an ani-

mal or a mineral. They are described to have had no religious law. Their God was called 'maliknaju' -- meaning Great Lord, and their King as 'Flīmī', son of the Great Lord. It could be presumed that there was relationship between the 'Flīmī' and the God 'Maliknaju'. Flīmī appears to be a corruption of the Swahili word 'Malime' a King, but Maliknaju cannot be yet identified.

To the primitive mind and tradition Flīmī was an Earthly and Heavenly representative of Maliknaju. If the Flīmī, the Great Lord becomes tyrannical or strays from the truth, he is killed and his seed is excluded from the throne; for they consider that in acting wrongfully he forfeits his position as the son of the Lord, the King of Heaven and Earth<sup>1</sup>. Al-Mas<sup>ūdī</sup> adds that the Kings of Zanj rule by custom and by political expediency<sup>2</sup>. This is true and what is more is that their custom is still indicative of the present day system of elective chieftainship which was,

1. Les Praeries d'Or, C.B. de Maynard and P. de Courteille, Paris, 1861 seq., II, pp. 29-31. This passage is cited on page 16 of the select documents from the first to the early nineteenth century -- The East African Coast -- edited by Grenville.

2. Ibid., Grenville, The East African Coast, pp. 15.

at that time reinforced by religious concepts.

It is not explained by Al-Mas<sup>C</sup>ūdī what proportion of the inhabitants are idolaters. What he tells us is that Zanj had a mixed population of Muslims and idolaters, of which the latter were thought to form the great majority. But he clearly mentions the Island of Kanbalū as having a Muslim population and a royal family. If he is correct -- and we have no reason to disbelieve his statement -- the Muslim settlements existed in Kanbalū Island before A.D. 926. Ibn-Ḥawqal tells us of the inhabitants of Zanj being at war with Mussalmans<sup>1</sup>.

A few years later, Al-Idrīsī ( A.D. 1100-66 ) who compiled his work of geography, the Kitāb Ruḡar, tells us about the Zanj of the East African Coast. He spent most of his life at the Court of Count Robert of Sicily, where he did his writing. The other title of his work, Nuzhat al-Mushtāq fī Ikhtirāq al-Afāq -- meaning the book of the travels of one who cannot travel himself is indicat-



1. Cf., *The Oriental Geography*, translated by Sir William Ouseley, 1800, pp. 8, 14.

ive of the fact that he obtained his information from other writers and travellers. He himself had never been to the country of Zanj. From this second-hand source of information one learns of the trade activities between the Zanj coast and other countries. Pearl fisheries and various types of aromatic plants and perfumes attracted merchants from outside, who brought goods with them for exchange. In corroboration with Al-Mas<sup>o</sup>ūdi and Ibn-Ḥawqal, Al-Idrīsī confirms the presence of Muslims at the coast.

Al-Idrīsī includes Malindi to be a town of the Zanj, which takes three days and three nights to reach from Medouna ( on the Somali Coast ). According to him, Malindi appeared to be a prosperous town because of the existence of an iron industry which was the main source of revenue to the country at that time. There is no trace of this at present. He also mentions Mombasa, a small town further down the coast, where iron was also produced. The King of Zanzibar was said to

have lived there. If Al-Idrīsī is correct, then Zanzibar was prosperous and Mombasa was her colony.

Ibn-Battūṭah's visit to the country of Zanj should also be mentioned. According to him, the land of Zanj does not include Mogadishu. He draws a clear line between present day Somalia and the Swahili Coast. The latter includes Mombasa and Kilwa. Regarding Mogadishu he discourses at length on the habits of the people and their monarchy.

His visits to these places, and Kilwa in particular, has now been established and widely accepted. He spent only a night at Mombasa, an island which was separate from the mainland, and where bananas, lemons and oranges grew. It seems that Ibn-Battūṭah had no time to note that the island of Mombasa had the iron industry to which Al-Idrīsī referred to before. The people of Mombasa followed Shāfi<sup>c</sup>i rites. Their mosques were stron-

gly constructed of wood, and besides the door of each mosque there was a well, one or two cubits deep. To every Muslim, the performing of ritual ablution before entering a mosque is an imperative. Ibn-Baṭṭūṭah noticed this being done, using the well as a place of ablution. From it water was drawn with a wooden vessel which was fixed on to the end of a thin stick, a cubit long. The vessel was held between thighs, thus pouring water on hand to make the necessary ceremonial washing.

The wells Ibn-Baṭṭūṭah was describing to us were a sort of reservoir, three or four feet deep whose supply depends upon the wells nearby. This is still a common practice at the coast. Such reservoirs for water are found at almost all ancient mosques. In places like Pete, Muyuni and Kichakachoni in Zanzibar miniature wells to-day are used to serve the same purpose. The method of holding the wooden vessel, which was described by Ibn-Baṭṭūṭah known as ' k a t a ' in Swahili

is also common to the coastal people.

Nothing more of great importance was said about Mombasa. The next day Ibn-Battūṭah set sail for Kilwa which, in his opinion, was one of the most beautiful and well constructed towns of the World. Yet it seems strange that he gave us no clear description of the construction of buildings, apart from the statement that the roofs were built from mangrove poles. From this original Arabic manuscript a little more can be gathered about the magnificent town of Kilwa, as having either built of wood, or elegantly built. Freeman Grenville suggests that the correct reading of the passage is to substitute for ~~من الخشب~~ min-al-khashab -- of wood -- the reading ~~من الحسب~~ min-al-hasb -- with elegance, a reading in accordance with the sense and logic of Ibn-Battūṭah's description<sup>1</sup>. H.N.Chittick is of the same opinion and prefers to amend ~~من الخشب~~ to ~~من الحسب~~ 'with elegance' as seems logical in the context of the passage<sup>2</sup>. The suggestions given by both

1. Freeman Grenville, *Medieval History of the Coast of Tanganyika*, pp. 107.
2. H.N.Chittick, 'Notes of Kilwa', *Tanganyika Notes and Records*, No. 53, October, 1959, pp. 179 ff.

Grenville and Chittick are not acceptable to the writer. Their amendment is grammatically and idiomatically incorrect, and that their attempt to substitute the word **من الحساب** to **من الخشب**, which is unnecessary, is not in conformity with the regulation and sense of the Arabic language. Clearly there is nothing wrong with the original word, **بالخشب**, recorded by Ibn-Baṭṭūṭah. The chart on the next page shows clearly that this is so, and **بالخشب**, is therefore, the correct reading.<sup>1</sup> Other words in the chart -- formed by appropriately placing the dots in all their respective positions -- are either meaningless or do not relate, conform or read in accordance with the sense of Ibn-Baṭṭūṭah's description, in the context of the passage.

Undoubtedly Ibn-Baṭṭūṭah, who is referred by Hitti as the Muslim globe-trotter of the middle ages<sup>2</sup> visited not only countries of the Middle East, but also Eastwards as far as Ceylon, Bengal, the Maldive Islands and China. In 1327 he visited

Not Found.	الحشب	Incorrect Emendation.	الحسب
Not Found.	الحشت	Not Found.	الحست
Not Found.	الحثث	Not Found.	الحثث
Relevant But Not Conclusive.	الحشب	Not Found.	الحسب
Not Found	الحثث	Not Found.	الحثث
Not Found.	الحثث	Not Found.	الحثث
Irrelevant	الحشب	Not Found.	الحسب
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Not Found.	الحثث	Not Found.	الحثث

NOTE.

The word الحشب means the rinds of pomengranates. الحثث has not been found, though حثث (verb) means ' to collect '. Consult Arabic-English Lexicon, Book I, Part II, by E. William Lane.



1. The description of buildings at Kilwa as being constructed entirely of wood, given by Ibn-Battūṭah, may be at complete variance with the archaeological record. However, an attempt to resolve the contradiction by both Grenville and Chittick and to reconcile the two views has not been acceptable to a number of scholars, especially on the Arabic language. Here I am grateful To Mr Hamdun, Lecturer in Islamics, Department of Religious Studies, Makerere University College, for his views on this. Also consult R.Mauny, *Textes Et Documents, Relatifs A L'Histoire De L'afrique, Extraits tires des Voyages d'Ibn Battūṭa*, pp. 29, f.n.2
2. Hitti, *History of The Arabs*, seventh edition, 1961, pp. 569.

Baghdād and gave us a detailed description of the buildings. He saw bath-houses in Baghdād which he described as elaborately built. In Bukhāra, Samarqand, Balkh, and other cities, he found ruins. This he also reports. On his arrival at Kilwa, he was immediately struck by the appearance of what he describes as one of the most beautiful towns in the world, and we would have expected to hear of the magnificent palace or palaces, and also of the elaborately constructed mosques. No such remarks are available from his manuscript -- is this not strange?. Certainly stone buildings were already there before he visited Kilwa, but it would be reasonable to suggest that Ibn-Baḥḥūrah for unknown reasons, had produced an exaggerated statement concerning Kilwa.

Concentrating on the inhabitants of Kilwa, the great majority were of the Shāfi<sup>o</sup>i rite, and were constantly engaged in a holy war as their country was near that of the pagan Zanj. In all probability, they were local Muslim converts.

Nothing has been said about the remaining portion, but here one would presume that they were either Arab or Persians, whose religious and political power was quite considerable at that time.

Their Sultān was Abu-al-Muzaffar Hassan surnamed Abu-al-Mawahib ( The Father of Gifts ). Ibn-Baṭṭūṭah described him as having been extremely generous to beggars and entirely devoted to the service of God<sup>1</sup>. He frequently makes raids into the Zanj country, attacks them and carries off booty, of which he reserves a fifth, using it in the manner prescribed by the Koran<sup>2</sup>. This portion of the money was reserved for Sharifs, the kinsfolk of the prophet, who came to visit him from Irāq, the Ḥijāz, and other countries.

The Arabic version of the Kilwa chronicle tells us that during the reign of Al-Ḥassan ibn Sulaimān, the Friday mosque collapsed. This Jāmi<sup>3</sup> mosque in Kilwa remained in ruins, and the people prayed under shelters and tents until the

1. The name Abu-al-Mawahib -- The Father of Gifts -- is indicative of his generous nature. Ibn-Baṭṭūṭah said that a faqir from Yemen stopped the Sultān and said : O Abu-al-Mawahib. He replied : ' Here I am, O beggar ! What do you want ? ' Give me the clothes you are wearing ! ' And he said : ' Certainly you can have them '. ' At once ? ' he asked. ' Yes, immediately !.

2. This translation is taken from the Arabic text in C. Defremery and B.R. Sanguinetti *Les voyages d' Ibn Batoutah, vol. ii, Paris, 1854, pp. 179-96.* The sentence appears in ' East African Coast ' -- select documents from first to the early 19th. century, pp. 32.

time of Sulṭān Sulaymān ibn al-Malik al-ʿAdil<sup>1</sup>. Ibn-Baṭṭūṭah said nothing about this mosque having collapsed during his visit there. However, if this were true, the mosque remained in ruins for nearly one hundred years as Kilwa had no masons to undertake the work of re-building. This gives an indication that the mosque and presumably other buildings were built by masons from other countries.

A few years before Ibn-Baṭṭūṭah's visit to Kilwa Marco Polo, though he never visited East Africa himself, seems to show some knowledge of the coast. He derived his information from other sources. But what little he has to tell us, may be of some interest. He describes "Zanzibar as a large and splendid Island some 2,000 miles in circumference. The people are all idolaters<sup>2</sup>. Certainly the information he obtained from wherever he was, was completely untrue because at that time the Muslims were already scattered all over the coast. What is true of his statement is

1. An Arabic History of Kilwa Kisiwani c. 1520  
 -- Anonymous. Also cited in the select  
 documents -- ' East African Coast ', edited  
 by Grenville, pp. 39.
2. Marco Polo dictated his travels in Venice  
 c.1295. His description of Zanzibar, by  
 which he means the whole of the East African  
 Coast, is taken from the translation of R.E.  
 Latham, the travels of Marco Polo, Penguin  
 Books, 1958, pp. 275-7.

that the East African Coast was thriving in the ivory and ambergris trade. A confirmation of this, is from his statement that " many merchant ships call at the island with a great variety of goods, all of which they dispose of before taking in a return cargo -- chiefly of elephant tusks, which are very abundant there. There is also no lack of ambergris, since whales are caught in large numbers<sup>1</sup>.

" Zanzibar has elephants in plenty, and also lions of a different sort from those found elsewhere, besides lynxes, leopards and giraffes "<sup>2</sup>. Probably Marco Polo was muddled. His description of Zanzibar does not seem to be convincing. The island has no such animals, apart from leopards. Others are found in plenty on the mainland. He was probably referring to East Africa as a whole.

Of great interest is the first available Chinese information on East Africa from Yu-Yang-tsa-tsu, written by Tuan Ch'eng-Shih, who died in

1. **The Travels of Marco Polo, Penguin Books, 1958, pp. 275-7.**

2. **Marco Polo, loc. cit., pp. 275-7.**



A.D. 863<sup>1</sup>. In his record, Tuan Ch'ieng-Shih said that when Persian traders wished to enter this country, they formed a caravan of several thousand men and presented them with strips of cloth — presumably in exchange for ivory and ambergris, which he noted to be the products of the country. He added that from olden times this country had not been subjected to any foreign power. In fighting they used elephant tusks, ribs, and wild cattle's horns as spears, and they had corselets and bows and arrows. The Arabs were continuously making raids on them.

From this record we know of three groups — the inhabitants, the Persian merchants and the Arab raiders. The inhabitants are those who fight with the Arabs. The Persian traders seem to have been readily accepted by the inhabitants, for they traded freely with them. The people of the country themselves ( that is the Africans ) kidnapped their women and sold them to strangers ( the Persians ) at prices many times more than

1. The translation of Yu-Yang tsa-tsu is from F. Hirth and W.W. Rockhill, *Chan Ju-Kua*, St. Petersburg, 1911, pp. 128-9, with certain emendation as proposed by J.J.L. Duyrendak, *China's Discovery of Africa*, 1949, pp. 13-14.

The text of the *Chan Ju-Kua* is a translation of the Chinese text, 'The Discovery of the Southern Continent', which is one of the most important sources for the history of the discovery of the southern continent. The text is a translation of the Chinese text, 'The Discovery of the Southern Continent', which is one of the most important sources for the history of the discovery of the southern continent. The text is a translation of the Chinese text, 'The Discovery of the Southern Continent', which is one of the most important sources for the history of the discovery of the southern continent.

If *Chan Ju-Kua* was actually referring to the discovery of the southern continent, it is possible that the text is a translation of the Chinese text, 'The Discovery of the Southern Continent', which is one of the most important sources for the history of the discovery of the southern continent. The text is a translation of the Chinese text, 'The Discovery of the Southern Continent', which is one of the most important sources for the history of the discovery of the southern continent.

they would fetch at home. As for the Arabs, they were considered to be enemies as they made continuous raids on the local inhabitants.

In 1226 A.D. Chao-Jo-Kua, a commissioner of foreign trade at Chuan-Chou in the Funken province of China, completed his Chu-fan-Chih, 'Description of Barbarous Peoples'. From this we learn that the country of Pi-p'a-lo, which is most likely Somalia<sup>1</sup> ( since from the middle ages to present day it produces camels in large numbers ), was rich in products such as elephants' tusks, ambergris, myrrh and tortoise shell of extraordinary thickness, for which there was great demand in other countries.

If Chao-Jo-Kua was actually referring to Somalia or Tanga<sup>2</sup> ( in present day Tanzania ) as Hirth<sup>3</sup> identified the passage as describing Berbera on the Somalia coast, then some more reference might be of interest. From the same record we learn of the villages being constantly

1. " The land produces many camels and sheep, and the people feed themselves with the flesh and milk of camels and with baked cakes ". This sentence is from passages translated in F. Hirth and W.W. Rockhill, Chao-Ju-Kua, St. Petersburg, 1911, pp. 126, 128.
2. Grenville mentions the existence of camels in Tanga within living memory, and a quarter of the town is known as Ngamiani, the place of the camels. He also mentions Malindi ( Kenya ) where once camels are said to have survived, but in addition he says Somalia from Medieval times as now produces camels in abundance.
3. F.Hirth and W.W. Rockhill — Chao-Ju-Kua, St. Petersburg, 1911, pp. 126, 128. This translation also appears in the 'East African Coast' - select documents from first to the early 19th. century, edited by Grenville, pp. 21-22.

engaged in fighting with one another -- a piece of information frequently given in other documents and local chronicles. For instance the disturbance which broke up concerning the affairs of the Kingdom of Kilwa is mentioned in the Kilwa chronicle. The fact that it is associated with Zanzibar is interesting and here it would be important to quote the exact reference. "Then Al-Ḥasān ibn Sulaymān ibn <sup>C</sup>Ali, the founder of Kilwa ruled for twelve years. All this happened after the flight of Sulṭān Al-Ḥasān ibn Sulaymān to the land of Zanzibar "1.

While Al-Ḥasān ibn Sulaymān ( A.D. 1005-42 ? ) was a refugee in Zanzibar a message was sent to him from Kilwa by his loyal subjects to come and recover his dominion. He succeeded in this and ruled Kilwa for fourteen years before he died, meanwhile Al-Mandhīri, was on the throne. He ( Al-Mandhīri ) whilst desperately trying to oppose Al-Ḥasān's landing at Kilwa was killed by the followers of Al-Ḥasān.

1. The manuscript was presented to Sir John Kirk, who later gave the copy to the British Museum which is now numbered Or. 2666.

Al-Mandhīri, who, ( as we have already seen )  
 usurped the throne<sup>1</sup>, belonged to one of the important tribes of <sup>C</sup>Umān. Their attempt to expel the Persians who had made settlements at a much earlier date was designed to achieve wider colonization. Sulṭān Al-Ḥasān's flight from Kilwa to the land of Zanzibar lends evidence to the fact that at that time there were no <sup>C</sup>Umāni colonies in Zanzibar. In point of fact it shows that a Persian settlement was already established in Zanzibar. Obviously it would have been political suicide for Al-Ḥasān to seek refuge at a place where <sup>C</sup>Umāni Arabs were holding power. Sir John Gray seems to be right in all respects in assuming that by this time there was some sort of firmly established Asiatic colony in Zanzibar, the members of which were of a race closely akin to that of the rulers of Kilwa<sup>2</sup>.

About one hundred and twenty years passed between the reign of Al-Ḥasān ibn Sulayman ibn <sup>C</sup>Ali and that of Sulaymān ibn Al-Ḥasān ibn Dā<sup>C</sup>ūd.

1. See above, pp. 74.

2. Sir John Gray, History of Zanzibar from the Middle Ages to 1856, pp. 13.



In the Portuguese version of the Kilwa chronicle we are told that the latter Sulṭān conquered the great part of the coast, and because of his father's support he became master of the trade of Sofala and of the Island of Pemba, Mafia, Zanzibar and a large part of the mainland coast. As the statement stands, nothing shows clearly that Zanzibar was actually conquered, but surely we are assured that there was a trade relationship between Kilwa and Zanzibar of which Sulaymān ibn Al-Ḥasān was the master. But we read from the geographical dictionary Mu<sup>o</sup>jam al Buldān compiled by the geographer Yāqūt ibn <sup>o</sup>Abdullah Ul-Rūmi ( 1179-1229 ) that the inhabitants of Zanzibar have been removed from this island to another called ' Tumbāt ' ( the present day Tumbatu ), a much smaller island off the North-West of Zanzibar, the inhabitants of which are Muslims<sup>1</sup>. Taking into account that Zanzibar was conquered by Ibn Al-Ḥasan would only be a matter of conjecture, which one could use to infer that the fli-

1. **Yaqut, Jacut's geographisches Worterbuch,**  
 ed. F. Wustefeld, Leipzig, 1869.

... of the people from ... to ... and ...  
 ... by his ... to the ... of ...  
 ... according to local ... we ...  
 ... that ... was colonized by a ... of ...  
 ... of the immigrants from ... in the latter half ...  
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 ... as a place of refuge means that there was ...  
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 ... and that the people were of the same ...  
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It is also known from other traditional ...  
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ght of the people from Zanzibar to Tumbatu was mainly caused by his invasion to the island of Zanzibar. But according to local tradition we learn that Tumbatu was colonized by a son of one of the immigrants from Shīrāz in the latter half of the tenth century<sup>1</sup>. Their desire to chose Tumbatu as a place of refuge means that there was a sort of political affiliation between the two islands and that the people were of the same ethnic group.

It is also known from other traditional accounts about the Arab pirates raiding the people of Tumbatu of Persian origin, which resulted in frequent changes of abode. But there was always an alternative object. This was of-course to defend their colonies from such attacks, which is shown by the evidence that a number of settlements were fortified. Those who were weaker found it hard to hold back the waves of attacks that swept over them from time to time. For this, and a number of other reasons, which will be discussed

1. Sir John Gray, History of Zanzibar from the Middle Ages to 1856, pp. 16.

It should not be supposed that only slaves and their families were taken to India, in all probability the whole population of the island was taken to the East Indies. It is not possible to say how many were taken to India and they certainly reached India through India, Al-Buhārī in his book al-Bihar al-Ruhaniyyah mentioned the following in 1814 in the chapter which treated the slaves taken to India during the conquest of the island. They landed at Bombay and some were sent to Malabar and Cochin. This is the chief source of slaves and it is not clear how many were sent to Malabar and Cochin. Apart from this there is no other reference to the fact that a considerable number of slaves were taken to Malabar and Cochin. It may be said that the slaves were taken to Malabar and Cochin but there is no direct proof of this. The fact is that the slaves were taken to Malabar and Cochin and that the Indians obtained their slaves from Malabar and Cochin. Slaves

in the next chapter; the hard conditions no doubt led to some settlements which were perhaps only temporary.

It should not be assumed that only Persians and Arabs traded with East Africa. India, in all probability had trade connections with East Africa — how far back it is not possible to say. But products such as gold and ivory certainly reached India through <sup>C</sup>Umān. Al-Is<sup>o</sup>ūdī in his *Murūj al-Dhahab wa Ma<sup>o</sup>ādin al-Jawhar* mentioned the following :- "It is from this country (East Africa) that comes tusks weighing fifty pounds and more. They usually go to <sup>C</sup>Umān, and from there are sent to China and India. This is the chief trade route, and if it were not so, ivory would be common in Muslim lands". Apart from this there is no other evidence to show that such a trade relation existed. Could it then be that at that time there was no direct dhow traffic between India and East Africa, but that the Indians obtained ivory from Arab merchants in <sup>C</sup>Umān ?. Slaves

from Africa were also imported into India, a large number of them were to be found in Bengal, where in 1486, they became powerful and played a prominent part in politics. In Gujarat and the Deccan the slave trade was also active, resulting in a considerable Negro population. This trade was mainly in the hands of the Arab merchants who found their market in India.

Zanzibar tradition holds it that there arrived at the coast of the island people whom they called Wadebuli. These were also believed to have made settlements in other coastal areas. In Zanzibar and Pemba they were known to be immensely cruel to the local inhabitants. They were said to have made temporary settlements as they kept on moving from one place to another. In the Arabic version of the Kilwa chronicle we know of one Hajj Muḥammad Rukn al-Dīn al-Dābūli, whose name shows that he belonged to the Dābūli tribe. He settled in Kilwa Kisiwani at the beginning of the sixteenth century. He and his bro-

ther were the joint keepers of the treasury in the time of Amīr Muḥammād Kiwabi and the Amīr Ibrāhīm. But contrary to the local tradition, the two brothers were kind and generous to Muslims. They were men of business and very rich<sup>1</sup>.

To certain points the Wadebuli were and still are generally described by the elderly people of Zanzibar and Pemba as armed invaders. Wherever they settled, they treated the local people with the utmost cruelty -- thus causing mistrust and great enmity. Such people would certainly be undesirable and therefore could not be expected to have lasting settlements. Sir John Gray is of the opinion that the Wadebuli and the people whom they found in the island profoundly mistrusted one another. He adds that they either evicted some earlier colonists or else that they took over a site which such settlers had abandoned<sup>2</sup>. Similarly the fate of the Wadebuli was then decided by a more powerful people -- the Portuguese. Obviously the appear-

1. The Arabic version of Kilwa chronicle,  
British Museum. The copy of the chronicle  
is numbered Or. 2666.

2. Sir John Gray, History of Zanzibar from  
the Middle Ages to 1856, pp. 25.



ance of the Portuguese in East Africa was to bring the influx of Wadebuli to an end, and those who were there already would have either to submit themselves to the newcomers' power or leave.

Local tradition seems to put great emphasis on the belief that the Wadebuli settled in various parts of Pemba rather than in Zanzibar. The number of old sites in Pemba, mostly consisting of small and simply built mosques are attributed to them. The position and appearance of these sites would undoubtedly give the impression and confirm the tradition that these people did not stay long in one place. Pemba at that time was said to have been divided into five kingdoms, and it is not surprising therefore to find several small groups of ruins scattered along the coast. Sir John Gray, drawing on local tradition has listed the five kingdoms as Twaka -- the present day Chwaka --- Mkumbuu --- now Ras-Mkumbuu -- Utenzi, Ngwana, Pokomo or Ukomo. The last three

cannot be identified. He further adds that each of the kingdoms was said to contain seven towns, and that this division of the island owed its origin to colonization by settlers arriving from different parts of Asia<sup>1</sup>.

As the name itself seems to denote, the Wad-ebuli are said to have come from Dabhol on the west coast of India, south of Bombay. During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the Deccan was ruled by the Bahmānī Kings. Dabhol at that time was an active and busy port of the Deccan over which the Bahmānī dynasty ruled for one hundred and seventy years ( 1347-1525 ), until their kingdom collapsed and split into several principalities, of which Golconda fell to the lot of Qutub-Shāhs whose domination lasted for one hundred and seventy five years ( 1512-1687 ). Sir John Gray claims that the coinage of this dynasty had some similarity in type with those found on the local coinage of Kilwa and Zanzibar. The principal design of those coins of the Bahmānī Kings



rhymes with the reverse in the same way as do the coins of Kilwa and Zanzibar. Concerning those found in Zanzibar Sir John Gray was referring to the coins bearing the names of Al-Ḥasān ibn <sup>c</sup>Ali, Al-Ḥasān ibn Aḥmad, and Ishāq ibn Ḥasān, who were the Sulṭāns of Zanzibar, presumably during the first half of the fifteenth century. In type these coins are similar to those of the Sulṭāns of Kilwa, and have been discovered in great quantities at Kiwengwa and Uroa on the east coast of Zanzibar.

All this would give little indication as to the settlement of the Wadebuli on either Zanzibar and Pemba or on the East African Coast as a whole. None of the traditions have been recorded in detail. The number of sites attributed to them, and especially those in Pemba give an impression that they were built mainly as trade centres, and more or less as ports of call for their shipping. Freeman Grenville gives a hypothesis that the Wadebuli were perhaps traders who had settled

originally as agents for the merchants of Dabhol, especially for the ivory trade and for the retail of Indian goods<sup>1</sup>.

With these common interests in trade with India, architectural influences upon East Africa were to be expected. Several of the small mosques scattered in various parts along the East Coast of Pemba, and a few in Zanzibar, are ascribed to the Wadibuli. With the exception of one at Chwaka in north Pemba, the rest are simply built with slight changes in form and style. Sir John Gray in comparing the style of building of the Deccan with that of East Africa states that "several of the Bahmānī rulers were responsible for the building of Muslim places of worship, of which the mosques at Gulbarga and at the Madrasah at Bidar are outstanding examples and remarkable for the elaborate use made of the pendentive. He is of the opinion that there is the same use of this style of construction, though on a much less pretentious scale, in the fifteenth century mosque

1. Freeman Grenville, the Medieval History of the coast of Tanganyika, pp. 204.

In its early stages, building was often haphazard. During the Ismaili dynasty the Deves employed builders from Persia. And in the 1300's there was greater building activity, though still in fashion that before for economic reasons, but such of the architecture was at this time was its inspiration in Persia. Seventy years later there was a clear cessation of the flow of craftsmen, though few still came in. In the 1400's some technical help came from the yemenites, which continued for another century. At the end of the fifteenth century some buildings in the Deves would not be considered to be part of the main stream of Islamic building.

For another hundred years (1500-1600) there was still little building activity, as the main effort was directed to the development of the empire. But from the end of 1540, there was a revival of building, in which technical assistance

at Kilwa Kisiwani on the mainland and the Msiki-ti Wa Choroko at Chwaka in north Pemba<sup>1</sup>.

As in many other countries, builders are often foreigners. During the Bahmānī dynasty the Deccan employed builders from Persia. And in the 1330's there was greater building activity, though plainer in fashion than before for economic reasons, but much of the architecture may at this time owe its inspiration to Persia. Seventy years later there was a clear cessation of the flow of craftsmen, though few still came in. In the 1420's some technical help came from the provinces, which continued for another century. At the end of the fifteenth century some buildings in the Deccan could not be considered to be part of the main stream of Indian building.

For another fourteen years ( 1526-1540 ) there was still little building activity, as the main effort was directed to the development of the empire. But from the end of 1540, there was a revival of building, in which technical advanc-

1. Sir John Gray, History of Zanzibar from the Middle Ages to 1856, pp. 26.



ement was evident, and the use of fine materials increased. Fifteen years later there was even greater activity with greater achievement resulting in a combination of Hindu and Islamic forms. It could be said that these fine results were possible because of both technical skill and wealth which allowed such unrestricted development.

Again this occupation lasted for another century until in the 1650's the decline of building was caused by economic and military factors. This was followed by an almost complete decay when the rulers were gradually losing power and prestige.

## B. THE COMING AND THE DECLINE OF THE PORTUGUESE

----- ZANZIBAR AND PEMBA ----- 1498-1695

It is evident that by the end of the fifteenth century, the Portuguese had begun to arrive on the Coast of East Africa. They saw great wealth accumulated, and a substantial civilization attained, by the former settlers. This good news was soon despatched to the King of Portugal, with a full report on trade. Portugal did not fail to see the importance of these great discoveries. A few years later, the East Coast of Africa was conquered and a governor named Duarte de-Lemos was appointed to look after the Portuguese possessions. These included Mombasa, Malindi, Zanzibar, Lamu, Pemba, Kilwa, Sofala, Socotra and Mozambique. By this time the Portuguese

had already established a great commercial empire in the East. They realized that since regular trading voyages were being made to the East, it would be convenient for them to set up a number of ports along the coast where their ships could call and obtain fresh water and other necessary provisions on their long voyages. Actually the ports were meant as a half way calling place between Portugal and the East.

Normally the people of the coast were hospitable, for they were always ready to receive strangers, but now the picture had changed. They had foreseen the danger which was to fall upon them, and indeed their anticipations were correct. This time the strangers were powerful and worse still, they were infidels. Their bad intentions were easily felt, and news of the arrival of the Almirante ( admiral ) was treated with great suspicion -- contrary to their former practice. Such suspicions caused uneasiness and great tension. To them the appearance of the Portuguese

meant war, and that was also true. The stranger was ever ready to take the part of a dissembler, showing false signs of friendship, but at the same time was determined to strike if need be. But later it was to be a question of the trade monopoly which the former settlers had enjoyed for so long. The Portuguese interest in East Africa was great ; their immediate aim was specifically to seize and monopolize the entire machinery of trade.

Naturally the first important thing to do was to study the coast -- a task undertaken by Vasco da Gama, admiral of the fleet, who first appeared during the early days of 1498. He dropped anchor off Mombasa harbour with the urgent intention of obtaining a pilot. This was necessary because of the little information they possessed concerning the geography of Africa due to the lack of accurate maps, but Vasco da Gama was astounded to receive at first a rather lukewarm welcome, followed later by an attempt to seize

his ship.

The next stop was Malindi where the reception was comparatively good. This can be attributed to the fact that there existed a bitter rivalry between Mombasa and Malindi. The object of Malindi in extending the hand of friendship to the Portuguese was, perhaps, to spite her rival. The King of Malindi, after some hesitation satisfied the needs of the Portuguese by supplying them with a pilot. During this first visit they sighted the extreme northern part of Zanzibar, and beheld the Island of Pemba without calling at any of the two islands. It was only on his first return voyage from India in January, 1499 that Vasco da Gama actually stopped at Zanzibar.<sup>1</sup>

Four years later, that is in 1503, another Portuguese ship arrived at Zanzibar. This ship was commanded by Ruy Lourenco Ravasco. His reception was unpleasant for it soon ended in severe

1. Description of Vasco da Gama's visit to East Africa on his return voyage from India in 1499. It is taken from the anonymous account of the voyage appearing in the Journal of the first voyage of Vasco da Gama, 1497-1499. The extracts are taken from the translation by E.G. Ravestein for the Hakluyt Society, 1898, pp. 87-92.

fighting. The Zanzibaris demonstrated their unfamiliarity with the fighting skills of the Portuguese by gathering together in a large crowd and so fell easy victims to the artillery with which their adversaries were armed. In this conflict the son of the King of Zanzibar who was a captain of the islanders was killed.

The Portuguese attack was undoubtedly well planned and designed to establish their supremacy over Zanzibar. They were successful in this, for the King of Zanzibar, realizing his weakness and inability to defend his country immediately sent four representatives to Ruy Lourenco to ask for peace. The King showed both physical weakness, and weakness of mind, for his delegates did not hesitate to offer tribute to the Portuguese. The delegation made it quite clear that " the King wished to be a tributary of the King of Portugal, and that as to the past, the death of his son and of many who accompanied him was sufficient satisfaction for any guilt, if he had been

guilty of defending his country "1. Finally peace was granted, on condition that a tribute of one hundred golden miticals ( about £60 ) per annum be paid to King Dom Manuel of Portugal, and thirty sheep for the captain who should go to collect it.

Soon other Portuguese ships began to appear, increasing now in number and strength. In less than seven years Zanzibar became completely subject to Portugal. In fact the conquest of the whole East Coast of Africa was thus won shortly after its discovery. Portuguese settlements were then made at various points -- though thinly -- at places such as Kilwa, Sofala and Mozambique. In Zanzibar itself there seemed to exist a friendly and peaceful atmosphere, whereby the Portuguese authority allowed the Sultan to form their own local Governments.

In Pemba, Portuguese ships also appeared from time to time. Sir John Gray quotes Commander



1. The passage is taken from the translation by G.M. Theal in *Records of South-Eastern Africa*, Volume VI, 1900, pp. 216-220, from the original in de Barros Da Asia, 1552, Decade I, Book VI, Chapter IV.

Goncolo Vaz de Goes as having reported that the inhabitants of Pemba were of peaceful and quiet disposition and that there were four or five rival Kings<sup>1</sup>. Like Zanzibar, Pemba was also subjected to the yearly payment of tribute to Portugal. But when Duarte de Lemos was despatched in 1510 to collect payment of tribute, the King was impoverished as a result of settling this tax. He and a number of his men escaped to Mombasa, leaving their houses empty. Eventually a Portuguese settlement was established upon the island. The new masters caused immense terror to the inhabitants by plundering whatever property their eyes lit upon, perpetrating much oppression and fraud. The King failing to protect the rights of his subjects, evidently due to fear of the Portuguese, tended to cause hostility among his people against him. Several attempts were made by the people to revolt against their Kings, but the Portuguese were quick to crush the rebellions ruthlessly and to restore the Kings by force of arms.

1. Sir John Gray, *History of Zanzibar from the Middle Ages to 1856*, pp. 55.

The whole East African Coast is so small, it will be seen that the Portuguese failed to win the love and affection of the people they ruled through their cruel and unscrupulous domination. The fact that Sumbar remained a friend and ally of the King of Portugal, in which case she seemed to be a tributary of Portugal was, by no means advantageous to the Portuguese interests in East Africa. However, the people in other parts of the coast did not long remain submissive to Portugal. The nearly permanent state of tribulation which continued and was attended with great severity, some being threatened with destruction in the event of non-compliance. They remained determined to see the end of Portuguese oppression and would every possible chance of

To give the King physical and moral support, a few Portuguese soldiers would be posted to deal with any possible riots caused by a war of liberation.

But taking the whole East African Coast into account, it will be seen that the Portuguese failed to win the love and affection of the people they ruled through their cruel and treacherous domination. The fact that Zanzibar remained a friend and ally of the King of Portugal, in which case she ceased to be a tributary of Portugal was, by no means advantageous to the Portuguese existence in East Africa. However, the people in other parts of the coast did not long remain submissive to Portugal. The yearly payment of tribute still continued and was exacted with great severity, towns being threatened with destruction in the event of non-compliance. They remained determined to see the end of Portuguese aggression and seized every possible chance of

revolt. Thus by 1631 all the Portuguese Coastal States of East Africa were in rebellion. Mombasa took the lead and was gradually followed by other states. The revolts there were constantly suppressed, but the rebels endured the torture and rose to fight again. By the end of the seventeenth century the Portuguese were overpowered in Mombasa -- which was then the key point. From then on there was no further hope of recovering Pemba. Zanzibar, which remained loyal to Portugal for longer would also however be difficult to retain.

### C. THE ARABS OF <sup>o</sup>UMĀN IN ZANZIBAR AND PEMBA

----- 1698-1815 -----

Attempts to enter Zanzibar were still being made by the Portuguese with a hope of receiving a friendly reception from the King and the people. But by the beginning of the eighteenth century, the Portuguese Empire was crumbling and decaying at an accelerated pace. It was now clear that the <sup>o</sup>Umāni Arabs were in power in East Africa, undivided and far stronger than the Portuguese. In Mombasa Said el-Ma<sup>o</sup>āmīrī was made governor, representing <sup>o</sup>Umān, following a request made by the local people for protection against any possible Portuguese invasion. In Zanzibar there were a few Portuguese soldiers in command

of the Island. By 1710 it was reported to the Government of Lisbon that there were fifty soldiers in Zanzibar commanded by one Said<sup>1</sup>.

The governments of Zanzibar and Pemba were subject to the Imāms of Masqaṭ, and governors were appointed and entrusted with full authority in administering the affairs of the new colonies. Pemba, together with Mombasa was under the control of the Mazrui Arabs, while a member of the El-Hārithi tribe was governing Zanzibar. But, in 1471, the change of dynasty in <sup>o</sup>Umān from the Yorubi to that of Busa<sup>o</sup>Īdi -- at the head of which was Ahmed bin Seif -- caused a feeling of unrest and repercussions in East Africa. A number of governors, including the governor of Pemba declared themselves independant and thereafter refused to recognize the authority of the <sup>o</sup>Umāni rulers. Zanzibar however, was one of the few places which remained loyal to Imām Ahmed bin Seif. Similarly, at the end of 1783 internal conflict in <sup>o</sup>Umān itself had its tense and unpleasant imp-

1. Sir John Gray, History of Zanzibar from  
the Middle Ages to 1856, pp. 83

... Sir John Gray, History of Zanzibar from the Middle Ages to 1856, pp. 83. ...

The fact that ... is shown in a letter to Captain ... in his letter ... reports that ... is governed by the ... of ... It ... of ... is ... well established and ... the ... This has ...



act in Zanzibar. Seif bin Ahmed, realizing his rather feeble chances of becoming Imam of Masqat --- after his elder brother Sa<sup>o</sup>id successfully inherited the title of Imamate after his father's death in 1783, reached Zanzibar early in the following year to create a Sultanate for himself. But Khalfan bin Ahmed, who was at that time governing Zanzibar and enjoying the luxury of leadership, vigorously opposed Seif's attempt at snatching the Sultanate from his hands. However, Seif managed to occupy the northern part of the Island.

The fact that Zanzibar was under direct control of the Imam of Masqat is shown in a letter by Captain Dallons who probably made frequent voyages to Zanzibar before 1804. In his letter Dallons clearly reports that " Zanzibar is governed by the prince of Masqat. It suffers constant changes because of the fear the Sultan has of a governor becoming too well established and taking the lordship from him. This has happened at

Pemba, Mombasa and Pate "1. But Sir John Gray is of the opinion that Dallons is wrong on this point. He justifies his claim by giving an example that Yakut was in charge of Zanzibar for at least ten years<sup>2</sup>. The mere fact the Mazrui Arabs had a firm grip over Pemba and Mombasa, and their subsequent declaration of independence confirms Dallons report. It was not until the time of Seyyid Sa<sup>o</sup>Id bin Sulṭan in 1837 that the rebellious Mazrui Arabs were defeated, and Fort Jesus conquered. The island of Pemba actually sent delegates to <sup>o</sup>Umān asking to be freed from Mazrui domination. The petition was accepted on condition that a payment of five per cent duty on products be made to the government of Masqaṭ. Furthermore the people of Pemba -- it was suggested -- should work for the government without recompense. The people of Pemba readily agreed to these exacting conditions, and orders from Masqaṭ reached the governer of Zanzibar to expel the Mazrui Arabs from Pemba.

1. Captain P. Dallon's letter from the Mauritius Archives GA 11, no. 119, 1804. This was translated into English, and the same translation appears on page 39 of the *East African Coast, select documents from the first to the earlier 19th. century*, edited by Freeman Grenville, 1962.
2. Sir John Gray, *History of Zanzibar from the Middle Ages to 1856*, pp. 87.

Sir John Gray, quoting a report made to the governor of Ile de France ( Mauritius ) shows that the number of <sup>o</sup>Umāni Arabs in Zanzibar in about 1776 did not exceed 300 and they were hated by all other Arabs and half-Arabs along the Coast.<sup>1</sup> Many of them were traders, who after conducting their seasonal business up and down the coast, would return to <sup>o</sup>Umān in March, when the South-West wind blows. Among them some had decided to make permanent settlements along the coast. But certainly this influx of immigrants from <sup>o</sup>Umān would appear to be gradual and slow until in 1832 when Seyyid Sa<sup>o</sup>Id bin Sulṭan transferred his capital from Masqaṭ to Zanzibar the expansion was actually felt. Seyyid Sa<sup>o</sup>Id definitely took an active interest in the administration of the government, whereby Zanzibar became an important port supplying a considerable annual revenue to the treasury of both <sup>o</sup>Umān and Zanzibar.

1. Sir John Gray, History of Zanzibar from the Middle Ages to 1856, pp. 87.

## THE HISTORY AND CIVILIZATION OF ISLAM

### II

#### INDONESIA AND YEMEN

As early as 104-1050's, the Sultans of the Sultanate of the East African Coast were followed by the SULTAN'S wife --- one of the four Orphans of the Sultan, whose Gender was supposed to be the SULTAN'S al-SULTAN'S. Even to this day, the most in prominence SULTAN'S, which forms the main ethnic group consisting largely of the Africans, over half-bred and Arabs of South Arabian origin. A small group of Malays and the Khmer are identified. The SULTAN'S and SULTAN'S are not to be found among the Sultan's community of Zanzibar and Pemba, as well as other parts of East Africa. These are

D.           FEATURES AND DIVISIONS OF ISLAM

IN

ZANZIBAR AND PEMBA

As early as the 1330's, Ibn Baṭṭūṭah tells us that the East African Coast was following Shāfi<sup>c</sup>ī rite --- one of the four Orthodox of Sunni, whose founder was Muḥammad ibn Idrīs al-Shāfi<sup>c</sup>ī. Even to this day, the coast is predominantly Shāfi<sup>c</sup>ī. This forms the main Muslim group consisting largely of the Africans, plus half-Arabs and Arabs of South Arabian origin. A small group of Memons and few Khumbaras are Hanafites. Malikites and Hambalites are not to be found among the Muslim community of Zanzibar and Pemba, or even in other parts of East Africa. Those who

came from <sup>o</sup>Umān at the end of the eighteenth century or even earlier are the <sup>o</sup>Ibādīs ; amongst them, the most important clans are the Āl-Bu-Sa-<sup>o</sup>Idīs and the Mazruīs. In both islands the Africans who follow the <sup>o</sup>Ibādīte sect are those who have been brought up in the homes of the <sup>o</sup>Umāni Arabs, but they are so few in number that they become almost insignificant. The Shī<sup>o</sup>ites in Zanzibar and Pemba are divided into three main groups -- the Ithnā<sup>o</sup>ashiriyya, the Ismā<sup>o</sup>īlīs and the Musta<sup>o</sup>līs. The biggest group of the Shī<sup>o</sup>ites consists of the Pakistani-Indians. In it, <sup>o</sup>Irāqīs, Persians and Bahraynis are included, while the Ismā<sup>o</sup>īlīs are purely Pakistani-Indians. The Musta<sup>o</sup>līs, better known as Bohoras include a few Arabs of Yemanite origin.

As we have seen, Ibn Baṭṭūḡah found Kilwa to be Orthodox Sunni, and to have been of the Shāfi<sup>o</sup>ī rite, presumably like Zanzibar and Pemba. While Ibn Baṭṭūḡah's statement may be correct, one wonders whether there were any Shī<sup>o</sup>ites and <sup>o</sup>Ibādītes at the same time. It could hardly be

that he did not know if any of the latter Madh-habs existed : may it be that they were so few that Ibn Baṭṭūṭah did not care to mention them ?. De Barros, however, reports that ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥu-sayn ibn ʿAlī ( 957-996 ) the founder and ruler of Kilwa was, in fact, a Shīʿah. Reusch says that al-Ḥasan ibn Sulaymān III ( 1310-1333 ) on his return from Makkah in 1310, converted Kilwa to the Shāfiʿī rite of Sunni Orthodoxy<sup>1</sup>, and this was confirmed by Ibn Baṭṭūṭah in 1331. If this were correct, the only explanation would be that Kilwa -- and possibly other parts of East Africa -- followed Shāfiʿī rite at a date earlier than the fourteenth century, but the exact date cannot be determined.

It may be suggested that Zanzibar and Pemba, together with other parts of East Africa began as Shīʿah and later became Shāfiʿī. If this was actually the case, the cause of such a religious revolution could only be worked out on this assumption.



1. Article of Kilwa, in the Encyclopaedia of Islam, cf. Reusch, History of East Africa, pp. 102, 2.

Shī<sup>ʿ</sup>ism began as an entirely Arab and solely political party based and built upon the claims of ʿAlī ibn Abū-Ṭālīb and of his descendants to the caliphate. Its divine right was that caliphs must be elected. The real development of the movement began after the martyrdom of al-Husayn at Karbalā on 10th October, 680 ( tenth of Muharram ). Because it failed to adapt itself to the patterns of an Arab party, it sought victory and success as an Islamic sect. The system of Imāship subsequently became the main differentiating element between Sunnites ( orthodox ) and Shī<sup>ʿ</sup>ites. Since this time, Shī<sup>ʿ</sup>ism has remained essentially the expression in religious terms of opposition to the established Sunnite state. This state of affairs caused hostility and everlasting hatred between the two madhhabs. A good example of one of the causes of such hatred was the prosecution in A.D. 850 of the Shī<sup>ʿ</sup>ah by al-Mutawakkil, who also destroyed the tomb of ʿAlī at al-Najaf and that of al-Husayn at Karbalā<sup>1</sup>.

Again in 1029 the Caliph al-Qadir drove a Shī<sup>h</sup> leader out of his Baghdād mosque and replaced him by a Summite<sup>1</sup>. Later in the year A.H. 645 ( A.D. 1247 ) another fierce prosecution of the Shī<sup>h</sup> broke out, causing great disaster to the Saracenic Civilization. The Sunni church doomed the entire male population of the Shī<sup>h</sup> to massacre<sup>2</sup>.

Such was the attitude in the Muslim World -- an attitude which could have repeated itself in East Africa, perhaps with even greater severity. Sunni and Shī<sup>h</sup> would not have tolerated each other in Zanzibar or Pemba, especially at a time when bitter opposition was prevalent in the Middle East.

Even at a much later date, the Shī<sup>ites</sup> in Zanzibar were denied the right of certain religious observations. During the reign of Seyyid Sa<sup>id</sup> bin Sulṭān ( 1804-1856 ), the Shī<sup>h</sup> muadh-in was not allowed to recall <sup>h</sup>Ali as وَيُؤْتِي اللَّهُ

1. Hitti, History of the Arabs, seventh edition, pp. 440. History of the Arabs,

1. Ibn-Al-Athir, Volume IX, pp. 278. Also consult Hitti, History of the Arabs, pp. 440.

2. Ameer Ali, The spirit of Islam, pp. 313.

' Waliyyu Llah ', a friend and vicegerent of Allah, when calling for prayers. Similarly the public mourning on the anniversary of al-Ḥusayn's death ( tenth of Muharram ) --- a festival when Shī<sup>h</sup>ahs spend the night walking in procession around the town was completely forbidden. Such was the case in Zanzibar where the Shī<sup>h</sup>ah could hardly show their feeling of joy at the Prophet's alleged appointment of <sup>h</sup>Ali as his successor -- the festival better known in Zanzibar as عيد الغدير <sup>h</sup>Idd al-Ghadīr, taking place on the 18th of dhu-al-Hijjih. Shī<sup>h</sup>ah religious festivals were therefore observed indoors until such time as British rule was established, and these restrictions were relaxed.

Similarly, personal choice of madhhab was restricted and depended on who was governing the state and had the authority to stop such change of sect. The Qādī of Zanzibar and Pemba, Shaikh <sup>h</sup>Abdallāh Ṣāleh al-Fārīsī, writes " Wanavyuoni wengi wa Kisuni walikamata bendera ya kupinga

madhehebu ya Kilibadhi na kuwafanya Suni. Wengine walifungwa na Seyyid Barghash. Katika alio-wafunga ni Shaikh <sup>°</sup>Ali bin Khamis al-Barwany, na Shaikh <sup>°</sup>Abdul Aziz bin <sup>°</sup>Abdul Ghany al-Amawy, na Pemba, Shaikh <sup>°</sup>Ali bin <sup>°</sup>Abdāllāh al-Mazru<sup>°</sup>I (kwao khasa ni Mombasa)<sup>n</sup>1. These three were amongst other leading Sunnite Shaikhs who openly expressed defiance against the <sup>°</sup>Ibādites belief and their task of converting <sup>°</sup>Ibādites to Sunnites was stopped by Seyyid Barghash bin Sa<sup>°</sup>id ( 1870-1888 ). The three Shaikhs were imprisoned. But unlike the Shī<sup>°</sup>ahs the Sunnites in this case challenged the authority of the existing political order -- that of the <sup>°</sup>Ibādite rulers.

Shī<sup>°</sup>ism as we have seen, took definite form during the Umayyad rule. Al-<sup>°</sup>Irāq was the place where the seed of its doctrine was first planted, and it later spread into Persia, especially the north-eastern province ( Khurāsān ) where the atmosphere was most fertile for its growth. Though in the process of growing, Shī<sup>°</sup>ism was not

1. **Personal communication.** Contents of the letter dated April 25, 1966, from Shaikh <sup>c</sup>Abdāllāh Ṣāleḥ al-Fārisī, Qāḍī of Zanzibar and Pemba.



established as the state religion in Persia until 1502 by Safawids, who claimed descent from Musā al-Kāzim, the seventh Imām<sup>1</sup>. If the Shī<sup>c</sup>ite rite was followed in East Africa before Shāfi<sup>c</sup>ī, then it would be reasonable to assume that it was brought over at the time of its early infancy.

Within the Shī<sup>c</sup>ite community itself a number of minor sects arose. Shahrīstāni divides the Shī<sup>c</sup>ah into five sects, viz. the Zaidia, the Ismā<sup>c</sup>īliya, the Isnā<sup>c</sup>ashiriya, or Imāmiya, the Kaisāniya, and the Ghāllia or Ghullāt. The Zaidis are considered to be one of the early groups of Shī<sup>c</sup>ism since its founder was Zaid, son of <sup>c</sup>Ali II ( Zain-ul-Ābidīn ), son of al-Husayn. Furthermore, a good many offshoots such as the Qarmatians, the Nusayris, the Druzes, the Yazīdīs and the like were set up from the Shī<sup>c</sup>ite sect. De Barros alleged that the first foreign people who settled in the land of Zanzibar were Zaidites, and that they were from the region of al-Ḥasa on the gulf, about forty leagues from the Island of al-Bahrayn.

1. Hitti, History of the Arabs, seventh edition, pp. 441.

Since evidence was restricted to that of the Jews, like any other Islamic sect and authority, the Hittite view is that the term is the word of Allah directed through Gabriel (Jibril) to Muhammad; and that every sect and nation is inspired. Dr. James Davidson was definitely misinformed on this last point. In fact, in their testimony, the Hittite closely approach the old tradition, and some of the four subjects — that is the *Qur'an*, *Hadith*, *Tafsir*, and *Sunnah* — hold evidence contrary to the Jews. Though they are not to be found in history, a Hittite will still exist in Northern Syria.

It may be possible that Dr. James was actually speaking of the *Qur'an*, and not of the *Hadith*. Regarding the first group of Hittite people — the Jews — it is highly probable that it was actually referring to the *Qur'an* as before.

The cause of the banishment was that they were supporters of Zaid whose opinions were contrary to those of the Koran<sup>1</sup>. Like any other Islamic sect and madhhabs, the Zaidi's view is that the Koran is the word of Allah dictated through Gabriel ( Jibriyl ) to Muḥammad, and that every word and letter is inspired. De Barros therefore was definitely misinformed on this last point. In fact, in their doctrines, the Zaidis closely approach the Ahl-us-Sunnat, and none of the four sub-sects --- that is the Jārudias, Sulaimaniāns, Tabariās and Sālehiās --- held opinions contrary to the Koran. Though they are not to be found in Zanzibar, a Zaidia Imām still exists in Northern Yeman.

It may be possible that de Barros was actually speaking of the Qarmaṭians, and confused them with Zaidis. Regarding the first group of foreign people who came to settle in Zanzibar from al-Ḥasa, it is highly probable that he was unknowingly referring to the breakaway or better

1. De Barros, Decade I, Book VIII, Chapter IV.

... [The text is extremely faint and largely illegible. It appears to be a historical or geographical description, possibly discussing the settlement of Brazil or a similar region. Key words that are faintly visible include 'decade', 'book', 'chapter', 'settlement', 'land', 'people', 'territory', 'discovery', 'navigation', 'commerce', 'agriculture', 'mining', 'settlements', 'territories', 'discovery', 'navigation', 'commerce', 'agriculture', 'mining', 'settlements'.]

stil to the outrageous movement of the Qarmaṭians whose revolutionary attitudes formed a strong political organization. In A.D. 899, the same body established an independent state on the western shore of the Persian Gulf with al-Aḥsa as their Capital.<sup>1</sup> This same movement had much connection with the development of the Shī<sup>ī</sup>te sect and also with the establishment of the Fāṭimid dynasty of Egypt; hence easily mixed up with the other Shī<sup>ī</sup>te sect -- the Zaidite. Similarly, the Qarmaṭians, like the Nusayris, Druzes and Assassins, are considered by the Twelvers Shī<sup>ī</sup>te group -- Isnā<sup>ā</sup>shirias -- as extremists. Extreme in the sense that they disregard the finality of Muḥammad's prophethood, though they compromise on the divinity of God. This is the sect which has reached such extremes as to pronounce that Gabriel mistook Muḥammad for <sup>ī</sup>Ali in conveying the prophetic message. May it be then that deBarros considered these extreme religious attitudes of the Qarmaṭians to be contrary to those of

1. Hitti, History of the Arabs, seventh edition, pp. 445.

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the Koran ?.

More convincing is the fact that the early wave of foreign people who appeared on the coast of East Africa between the early twelfth and beginning of the fourteenth century were not followers of the Shi'ite rite. When 'Umar ibn-al-Kh-aṭṭāb conquered Persia and brought Islam to the people of Persia, there were no schisms in Islam.

The Shi'ites, the followers of the saintly Imāms, succeeded in establishing their national church in Persia only during the time of Shāh Ismā'il ( 1502-24 ) the founder of the Ṣafawid dynasty ( 1502-1736 ). When the Sunnite sect was established, almost the whole of Persia was following Sunnite Islam. It was only in Qūmm that the Muḥibiyn lil Ahl-ul-Bayt,<sup>1</sup> the lovers of the people of the House ( of Muḥammad ) were attached to the doctrines of Imāms.<sup>2</sup> The Qāḍi of Zansibar and Pemba, Shaikh 'Abdāllāh Ṣāleh al-Fārisī confirms that Isnā'ashirīaism became the state reli-

1. The Aul-ul-Bayt is the designation usually given to Fātimah and <sup>o</sup>Ali and their children and descendants.

2. Personal contacts with Agha Khurasani, Secretary of the Islamic Society, England.



gion of Persia only in the time of Nādir Shāh, and that previously, the whole coastal region was Sunni Shāfi<sup>CI</sup>.<sup>1</sup> This is largely because the rulers of Persia at that time were themselves Sunnis. Maḥmūd of Ghaznah ( 387-421 A.H. ) --- a ruler of Khūrasān --- was himself a Hanifite as were a number of other rulers. The Atābegs princes who were extremely powerful during the period of Seljuque and ruled Persia up to A.H. 590 were at the same time followers of the Sunnite rite. Amongst them were Sa<sup>C</sup>d ibn Abūbakr and Abūbakr ibn Sa<sup>C</sup>d. The Atābegs ruled Khūrasān for one hundred and twenty eight years and so were the rulers of Isfahan, Fars and Tabriz. These latter two were in the capital of Shīrāz.<sup>2</sup> May it be then that the early Persians who settled in Zanzibar and Pemba were supporters of Sunnite Islam ?.

1. To quote his letter to the writer, Shaikh °Abdāllāh Ṣāleḥ al-Fārisī writes " Persia haikua nchi ya Ushia barabara ila katika sama za Nādir Shāh. Pwani yake yote -- bali na baadhi ya nchi za ndani yake -- zilikua Sunni Shāfi<sup>°</sup>ī.
2. Personal contacts with Agha Khūrasāni.

- In Chronological Order -

The unwillingness to authorize expeditions against the sea by 'Umar ( A.D. 634-44 ), the second Caliph of Islam, who was quoted by Arab historians as forbidding his generals to advance to a place where he himself could not reach on the land, did not last long. The history shows that the South-side expeditions of the Islamic world were actually in progress during the Umayyad period, as proved that was the evidence for many years to come, and which was to involve the Moslems and the East Indian Hindus, for they also had in

## C H A P T E R II

## DECORATION ON RELIGIOUS BUILDINGS

## The General Architectural Setting

## - In Chronological Order -

The unwillingness to authorise expeditions across the sea by <sup>c</sup>Umar ( A.D. 634-44 ), the second Orthodox Caliph, who was quoted by Arab historians as forbidding his generals to advance to a place which he himself could not reach on his camel<sup>1</sup>, did not last long. For history records that the World-wide expansion of the Islamic state was actually in process during the Umayyad period, an event that was to continue for many years to come, and which was to involve the non-Arab who had adopted Islam, for they also had in

1. Bernard Lewis, *The Arabs in History*, pp. 116.

On the eve of this period, history tells us we record another notable occurrence, that of the establishment of trade which was to extend westward as far as the coast of East Africa. Though this may go back as far as 1,000 years, it does not seem however, that in this connection, trade arrived in East Africa before the tenth century. This gradual, but definite contact laid the basis of Islamic civilization and ultimately developed a culture which the inhabitants of the East African Coast would probably never themselves have achieved.

The Muslim traders had come to these countries with the developed civilization of Islam as their heritage, and they were determined in order to establish new homes for themselves. This is evident from the number of towns which grew up and flourished on the coast. From documents

their hands the power to give the new religion a unique maritime expansion.

In the course of this period, history turns on to record another notable occurrence, that of the establishment of trade which was to effect many countries as far away as those along the Coast Of East Africa. Though this may go back some 2,000 years, it does not seem however, that in this connection, traders settled in East Africa before the tenth century. This gradual, but definite contact laid the basis of Islamic civilization and ultimately developed a culture which the inhabitants of the East African Coast could probably never themselves have achieved.

The Muslim traders had come to these countries with the developed civilization of Islam as their heritage, and they made settlements in order to establish new homws for themselves. This is evident from the number of towns which grew up and flourished on the coast. From documents

left to us by Arab geographers and historians<sup>1</sup>, supplemented by local chronicles and traditions, the carriers of this civilization were the people of Arabian and Persian stock, who, some of them, had been uprooted from their homeland for religious and political reasons. It would also seem from these same sources<sup>2</sup> that the majority of them were traders who were forced by economic necessity to put down roots elsewhere to establish their traditional way of life. But this movement which is sometimes over-emphasized by many Christians, was not entirely a religious movement that offered only the Koran with one hand and the sword with the other<sup>3</sup>. It was not fanaticism, but rather an economic necessity; a fact that was not ignored by historians, for they viewed the events of the traders in the light of their subsequent developments and settlements.

The various civilizations which the immigrants contacted in the course of their trading

1. Consult Al-Mas<sup>c</sup>udi, *Muruĵ al-Dhahab wa Ma<sup>c</sup>a din al-Jawhar*, translated by C.B. de Meynard and P. de Courteille, Paris, 9 Volumes, 1861, seq., i, pp. 231-2, 233-6, 333, 334-5; iii, pp. 2-9, 11, 18, 26, 29-31. Ibn Hawqal, *al-Masalik wal-Mamalik*, translated by Sir William Ouseley, *Ebu Haukal, The Oriental Geography*, 1800, pp. 8, 14. Al-Idrīsī, *Kitab Rujar, or Nuzhat al-Mushtāq fi Ikhtirāq al-Āf-āq*, translated by G. Ferrand, *Relations de Voyages et Textes Géographiques*, 2 vols., Paris, 1913, i, pp. 58-60, and from M. Guillaumin, *Documents Sur l'histoire, la géographie et le commerce de l'Afrique orientale*, 3 vols., Paris, 1856, i, pp. 205-6. Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, translated from the original Arabic text in C. Defrémery and B.R. Sanguinetti *Les Voyages d'Ibn Batoutah*, vol., ii, Paris, 1854, pp. 179-96. All these documents, translated into English, have been assembled by Freeman Grenville in his book, The East

activities on the East African Coast were very different from their own. The new comers and the indigenous Coastalists were fundamentally different peoples — different in language, customs and beliefs. One of their first needs was to create a type of dwelling place in their own traditions, that is, not a mere shelter but a building which catered for all needs. One of the most important requirements would be a place of worship, prayer and thanksgiving. So, for them, the building of the mosque became a prime necessity, essentially a home for all the people, an institutional building so complex as to serve multiple purposes, religious, social, political and even educational. As this was a spiritual focal point of the whole life of the city, the mosque became physically integrated into the arrangement and pattern of that city.

The arrangement had to be advanced by the immigrants in order to adjust their minds to the new environment of the Coast of East Africa, and



indeed adjustment had to be made between the differing peoples -- the new-comers and the local inhabitants. The one who had deep ancient traditions of the Orient and the other who had followed the practices set up by their own local societies. Here the fundamental religious convictions of the two groups was bound to produce a conflict. The foreign group followed a relatively recent religious code -- that of Islam -- whilst the local group were involved in the worship of spirits. The contrast could be shown between their respective places of worship, as symbolized by the mosque on the one hand and the ' M z i m u ' on the other. Comparing the two, the mosque is a stone construction built to a plan with architectural permanence, while the Mzimu is an abode of mystery, a small shelter ( k i b a n d a ) built of mud or just a space under a rock, a cave, or a large shady tree.

When the Arab-Muslims came into contact with other peoples in the course of their World-conq-

west, with countries like Persia or India, the influence of Islam in the cultural field was gradually absorbed. But when this influence was forced, for instance on the Indians, it met with considerable resistance because of the consciousness that they, the Indians, represented a higher and more ancient culture. This was true in the event of the Arab invasion of Sind in A.D. 710, and on that other invasion under Mahmūd of Ghaznah at the close of the tenth century. On the other hand, however great the resistance had been in both cases, cultural intercourse between the conquerer and the conquered was inevitable. In the case of India, this would explain the course of the cultural development of the Indo-Islamic architecture which started during the period of the Slave Kings in the thirteenth century to the Court of Oudh in the early eighteen hundreds.<sup>1</sup> The Muslim patron in India had to depend largely on Hindu building craftsmen to carry out his projects, while the Umayyad and <sup>C</sup>Abbāsīd caliphs

1. **John Terry, the Charm of Indo-Islamic Architecture, pp. 2.**

In all these cases the introduction of ancient willows, traditions, and ideas, whether into a remote land of local activity or into a distinctive genre or the enrichment of architecture. In these countries, the rich source of inspiration came from the already existing buildings with their towers, minarets, and arches, of which many have been in existence since the time of the case in the East African coast. When the Europeans arrived they found buildings built of mud and brick, or similar materials, and therefore there was no apparent evidence of architectural influences — although this point would have to call for the attention of archaeologists.

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would need the services of Persian craftsmen, especially on the applied schemes of painted plaster and glazed tiles.

In all these cases the interaction of different cultures, traditions, and ideas, combined into a common bond of human activity to produce a distinctive genius to the enrichment of architecture. In these countries, the rich source of inspiration came from the already existing buildings such as temples, palaces, and cathedrals, of which many dated back to ancient times. This was not the case on the East African Coast because when the immigrants arrived they found buildings built of mud and wattle, or similar impermanent materials, and therefore there was no apparent exchange of architectural influences --- although this point would seem to call for the attention of archaeologists.

In Al-Madā<sup>c</sup>in, Sa<sup>c</sup>d ibn-abī-Waqqā<sup>s</sup> used the I<sup>v</sup>ān ( arched hall ) of the Persian emperor as a

place of worship<sup>1</sup>, and in Damascus, al-Walid I rebuilt the Cathedral of St. John into a mosque<sup>2</sup>. And for instance, when the Ghaznavids made a movement to settle in India they dismantled temples and skillfully re-arranged their stones to turn the buildings into mosques<sup>3</sup>. This had not been the case on the East African Coast for the Muslim immigrants found no older structures to dismantle and to make use of. So even this simple process of robbing a man's efforts and labour, ( a practice which was not favoured for long by builders themselves in India ) was non-existent on the Coast of East Africa. In the case of the earliest Indian mosques, they were built by conquerors in a land where masons were plentiful and highly skilled in their own traditional work. Once again this long heritage of accumulated experience in building traditions had not been evident among the local inhabitants of the East African Coast.

1. **Tabari, Volume 1, pp. 2443, 2451.** Also cited by Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, seventh edition, pp. 261.
2. **Balādhuri, pp. 125 ; Ibn Jubayr, pp. 262 ; Yāqūt, Volume 11, pp. 591. = Hitti, pp. 261.**
3. **John Terry, the charm of Indo-Islamic Architecture, pp. 7.**

The early colonization of the East African Coast, traditionally believed to have commenced in the eighth century A.D.<sup>1</sup> was characterised in the first case by seasonal raiding and periodic trade movements. Prospective immigrants would have some feeling of insecurity and no firm plans for permanent settlement. When however they did stay, they settled with the indigenous non-Muslims, and at this period a mosque was not a pressing necessity. On the other hand, the Islamization of the Africans was not an easy task but a slow process, and the only means by which it could grow was through the absorption of individuals into the Islamic faith, because the conversion itself was an act of free will. So the mosque which was to be built at that time was for the few Muslim immigrants and the occasional visiting traders, and at this comparatively early stage they hardly saw the necessity of collecting and cutting stone for large mosques and buildings.

1. According to one version of Pate Chronicle the earliest recorded attempt of colonization was begun by <sup>c</sup>Abd-al-Malik, the fifth of the Umayyad Caliphs ( A.D. 695-705 ), who heard of East Africa and ' his soul longed to found a new Kingdom '. He is said to have sent Syrians to build cities along the coast, and one of these cities was the Island of Zanzibar.

The coastal zone, as such, development was dependent on the wealth and prosperity of the people. Religious zeal and forward looking ideas were not enough to produce additional architectural achievements. Little building activity was envisaged through this long and unproductive period.

Probably there were no very rich Muslim settlements on the East African Coast who could be the source of vigorous patronage that would provide unrestricted development in the early art of building. The frequency of their designs was determined by a most primitive economy as they had no



The Muslims had already established centres along the East African Coast by the close of the twelfth century, these settlements flourished during the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries. The arrival of the Portuguese at the beginning of the sixteenth century was extremely disruptive to the already established commerce and trade enjoyed by the Muslims. This ofcourse, retarded the growth of the coastal towns, as such development was dependant on the wealth and prosperity of the people. Religious zeal and fervent desire alone were not enough to produce ambitious architectural achievements. Little building activity then continued through this hard and unfavourable period.

Probably there were no very rich Muslim settlers on the East African Coast who could be the source of vigorous patronage that could provide unrestricted development in the costly art of building. The fortunes of these immigrants was determined by a most unstable economy as they had no

firm control over the sources of supplies of those commodities necessary for trade. Kilwa however, appeared to have enjoyed a better economic life with a firm control over the gold trade of Sofala in the fifteenth century. So on the whole economic progress was slow and therefore any distinctive improvement in architecture was lacking, or perhaps there was no need at that time for ambitious architectural projects. And even if there existed wealthy immigrants on the coast who wished to have their mosques rich and in a medley of styles, they would have had to employ master builders from thousand of miles away ; artisans who were competent and talented in technical knowledge and skills. In India and Persia the Islamic conquerors encountered no difficulty as far as the extension of architectural activities was concerned, because skilled labour was abundant and available. No so with East Africa for such skilled labour and knowledge would depend upon the importation of labour from abroad, a hig-

hly expensive project. Again those countries referred to, a vast amount of fine decoration and executed by artisans who were highly skilled was already in evidence in the larger centres. Such work was always a source of inspiration to the less expert craftsmen in the smaller communities and served as examples to emulate. These more humble craftsmen would do the bulk of the building in villages and provincial towns, and this kept the general standards fairly level. This ofcourse would ensure a rapid development of technique and style. In the case of the East African Coast it is most likely that whatever artisans were available would belong to that group who came from the smaller communities and were not of the elite in the architectural arts. The early architecture of the coast therefore reflects no African influence whatsoever and its forms were absolutely new to the area. East Africa at that time had nothing to contribute to the art of building in this new era, the forms of

which were alien and fully related to the Islamic architecture of other countries outside Africa.

Though humble if put side by side for comparison with the Islamic architecture of Iran, Iraq, Syria, India, Egypt and the like, the Islamic architecture of the East African Coast may appear to be homogeneous in architectural style if not carefully examined. Definitely there are common factors in it peculiar to the whole coast, but this likeness in appearance is due to a number of factors which have contributed to its particular formation. Some of these have been briefly discussed above.

The development -- not to mean improvement, but rather activity -- of the coastal Islamic architecture ; and in this respect to mention the architecture of Zanzibar and Pemba, covers a period of eight hundred years. It ranges from the delightful twelfth century Kisimkazi-Dimbani Mosque ( Plate 1 and 2 ) to the vigorous but most

unattractive nineteenth century mosques of Nun-gwi ( Plate 22 ) and Bwejuu ( Plate 23 ). During practically the whole of this late period ( eighteenth and nineteenth centuries ) -- a period of the strong colonial rule of <sup>o</sup>Umān -- though marked by great activity in building, the standards definitely declined, to a complete degeneration in the decorative field. However, the early period characterised by a delightful style evident in the rather sophisticated mihrāb of the Kizimkazi-Dimbani Mosque -- referred to by Sir John Gray as " a little architectural gem " <sup>1</sup>, and by Professor Flury as to " exhibit a degree of technical skill and feeling for style " <sup>2</sup>, and by Peter Garlake as " perhaps the best known relic of the entire Coast " <sup>3</sup> -- reveals great artistry. This little gem is doubtless unique, being the only one of its kind in Zanzibar and Pemba, and indeed on the entire coast, and would provide a contrasting feeling in style to the middle period.

1. Sir John Gray, *History of Zanzibar from the Middle Ages to 1856*, pp. 13.
2. Flury, *The Kufic Inscription of Kizimkazi Mosque, Zanzibar*, *Journal of The Royal Asiatic Society*, 1922.
3. P.S. Garlake, *The Early Islamic Architecture of The East African Coast*, pp. 7.

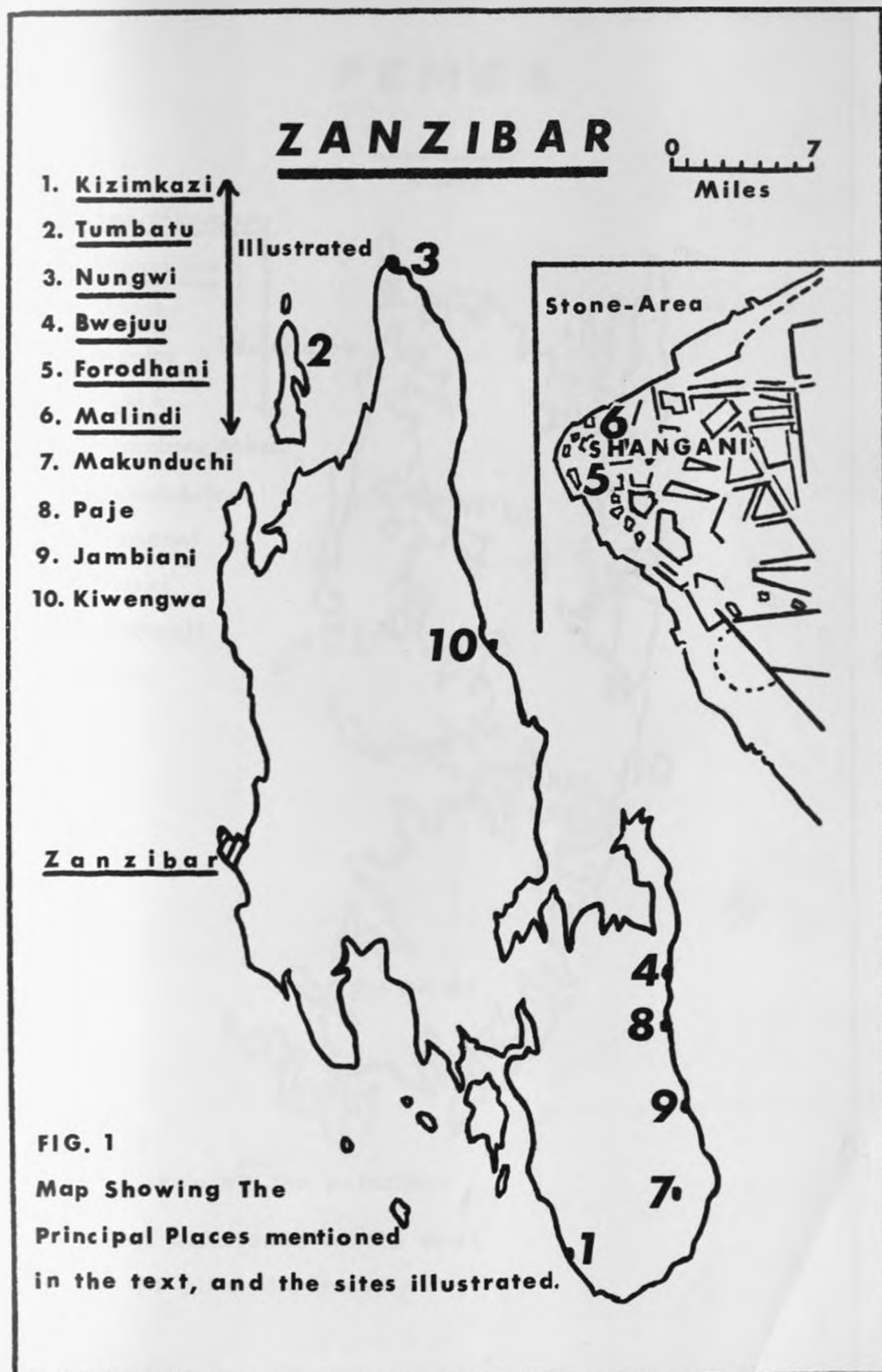
The second period covers a span of approximately three hundred and fifty years, starting from the fifteenth century to probably the mid eighteenth century, which could be classified as one of the three styles, with few fundamental changes. This is evident in some parts of Pemba, along the West Coast from the North to half way down the coast, namely from Verani down to Ras-Mkumbuu ( see Map of Pemba, Fig. 2 ), where the mosques have features in common. The difference appears in the mihrāb's decoration -- when concentrating upon refining its details. These are probably due to either lack of informed and tasteful patronage or to the individual feeling of their founders, rather than to any difference due to date. Though not unproductive as far as the number of buildings is concerned, this middle period shows some variations, primarily in the use and type of decoration. In the main, all seem to follow the same lines, for each of them was an off-shoot of the style developed by the earl-

ier builders.

The final phase is a period of revival, often imitating the past -- the early and the middle periods. Although this period started soon after the establishment of the Arab rule from <sup>o</sup>Umān, it was not until the middle of the nineteenth century that an active period of building began. The delay was perhaps due to some political events<sup>1</sup> on the coast, as the main preoccupations were directed to empire development. However, there existed some fundamental differences between the builders and patrons, and on both sides their aesthetic taste was comparatively poor. The artistic sophistication and creative design of the past is always absent, and this could be realized if the recent work was compared with an older neighbour, perhaps one produced a hundred years ago, leave aside those of much earlier date. So much is new, and so much re-appears again and again to the present day.



1. The civil strife in <sup>C</sup>Umān after the death of Seif bin Sulṭān in 1711, which lasted until 1741 ( i.e. when the Yorubi dynasty was ousted by that of al-Busa<sup>C</sup>idi ) was met with a mixed reception in East Africa. Many of the <sup>C</sup>Umāni governors on the coast refused to acknowledge Aḥmed bin Seif and declared themselves to be independent rulers. Zanzibar however, accepted the change. This made <sup>C</sup>Ali bin <sup>C</sup>Uthmān attempt to conquer the island in 1755. He succeeded to take possession of the northern part of Zanzibar but the defenders withdrew and retained the southern portion of the town. In 1784 Seif bin Aḥmed landed and captured the northern part of the peninsula. Other parts of the East African Coast were also involved in the fighting. It was until early in the nineteenth century however, that Zanzibar and Pemba appeared to have enjoyed comparative peace.



# PEMBA

0 6  
Miles

1. Ras-Mkumbuu

2. Shengejuu

3. Chwaka

4. Msuka illustrated

5. Chake

6. Mtambwe Mkuu

7. Kichokochwe

8. Mandani

9. Verani

10. Vitongoji

11. Pujini



FIG. 2

Map showing the principal  
Places mentioned in the text,  
and the sites illustrated.

### THE EARLY PERIOD

The first mosque that was erected anywhere along the East African Coast was, no doubt, built by a man who came from abroad. In the tenth century A.D. Islamic settlers were already established, though traditionally it is believed that this wave of immigrants had started as early as the eighth century<sup>1</sup>. Before this, however, the indigenous African had, as he still has today, an architecture represented by buildings of mud and wattle, devoid of ornament and decoration and suited only to the simplest needs. As a result of this, the standing mosque of the early period reflected no African influence and its forms were

1. See above, pp. 149.

similar to those of Islamic architecture outside East Africa. The similarity between the early architecture of the East African Coast and that of the Islamic World could be observed, and its origin therefore be identified on their stylistic forms alone. It is true that the mosques at the coast are much smaller in size comparing with those of other countries -- due to limited wealth, human resources and material -- yet certain elements common to the more sophisticated and larger mosques of major cities are also common to the lesser sophisticated mosques of the much smaller settlements. Similarly the same elements common to the early Islamic architecture may also appear in the architecture of the later mediaeval periods. As for the architectural character there are variations, because their developments are not necessarily closely related to one another, for the same themes were established in many techniques and certain countries preferred some techniques or themes to oth-

ers. But if we assume that the followers of Islam did not carry a style of architecture with them to another country for the reasons that they were content to adopt that which had already been found suitable to that particular country, then the situation would be different on the East African Coast as there was no existing architecture as such which could influence that of the new-comers. Thus the builders of the mosques at the coast must have carried with them a style and knowledge of the type of mosques of their own homelands.

While humble houses may follow plans and adopt decorations of ambitious monuments which have been in use for thousand of years, so may the builder of a mosque turn back to a style or styles that emerged in the course of years. This is more so in relation to religious architecture where Muslim architects, or the men they employed evolved a scheme of building more suited to express the spirit of the new religion. Thus it

has become a tradition for a mosque builder to look for a loftier character in the earlier buildings of a religious character, and those responsible for the building of early mosques at the East African Coast are no exception to this sort of traditional rule, as a mosque has always been the important aspect of the building arts. In this way, such an established custom enabled the style of building to survive though its development depended largely on the skill and imagination of the builder.

The development in style can be best studied from the mihrāb, a niche or a recess in the wall of the mosque indicating the direction of prayer. Its purpose is important, for in reciting their prayers, the worshippers arrange themselves to face the Qiblah; the wall that faces Makkah. As in the early days of Islam, the mihrāb was related to the person of the Imām and sometimes of the prince, or to the place where the Prophet Muḥammad used to stand and conduct prayers. Again



that same wall where a palm trunk was fixed in the ground and served first as a pulpit ( m i n b a r ) for the Prophet to stand on while addressing the congregation<sup>1</sup>. As such the mihrāb acquired special sanctity in the eyes of Muslims, and therefore had varied forms of decoration bestowed on it. It is the wall on which the changing styles of Islamic decorative art could best be studied.

Early examples of mihrābs evidently show simple niches and it was only gradually that the mihrāb became rather a focal point of the decoration of the mosque, and appropriated for itself a symbolic theme of eschatological writing. The exact history of its development is obscure, although the mihrāb of the Dunaysir mosque of Turkey, built in A.D. 1200 indicates that something profound was already involved in the decorative art.

If one expects to find differences in the themes of decoration from one country to the other

1. Ibn-Sa'īd, Volume 1, pt. 2, p. 9 ; F. Wüstenfeld, Geschichte der Stadt Medina ( Göttinger, 1860 ), p. 63; cf. Bukhārī, Volume 1, p. 107. Cited by Hitti, History of the Arabs, seventh edition, pp. 258.

The of the very early stages of Islamic architecture, a book which probably provided the main source for design was written. In this, some of the principles, decorations of prayer and mosque, or 'mosques' or 'temples' are mentioned as well as the materials used in the construction of the walls and the roofs of the domes. The book is a very valuable source in the case of Islam. The book is written in Arabic and is a very good source of information on the early stages of Islamic architecture.

due to the fact that the artistic background, taste, as well as technical knowledge were so different, similarity between them would at first, seem unlikely. Yet it is striking that similarities do exist and that relationships can be established between various buildings of the Islamic World. It is even more relevant if buildings of the same period or those near to one another in date, are compared and studied, and here more attention is given to the twelfth century mosque of Kisimkazi-Dimbani, Zanzibar --- the period now under discussion<sup>1</sup>.

One of the many major themes of Islamic decoration, a theme that actually provided the basic elements for design was writing. In this, Koranic passages, inscriptions of praise and triumph, or eulogies to commemorate the name of the builder of, or the contributor to the construction of the mosque served to mark the memory of the founder, with a reverential respect in the name of Islam. Oleg Grabar writes " inscriptions could point out



the exact purpose in any given instance of plans and elements of construction which were, in different buildings, made to serve different functions, and this may in part explain the lavishness of their use, as well as their variety<sup>1</sup>." Under different forms, each of the inscriptions has its own history. On the wall of the Kizimkazi-Dimbani mihrāb, the twelfth century Kufic inscription ( Plate 4 ), translated by Professor Flury reads :

" This is what has been ordered by the high and very great Sheikh As-Sa<sup>c</sup>īd Abu <sup>c</sup>Imrān Mūsa, son of Al-Ḥasan, son of Muḥammad --- may God grant him long life and destroy his enemies --- on a Sunday in the month of Dhul Ḥajj in the year five hundred "2 ( corresponding to August 1107 of the Christian era ).

An explanation of the inscription is necessary since its phrasing bears relationship to the style of phrases used at the time of Faṭimid --- a form of expression which showed feelings in

1. Derek Hill and Oleg Grabar, *Islamic Architecture and its Decoration*, pp. 81.
2. Flury, *The Kufic Inscription of Kizimkazi Mosque, Zanzibar*, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1922.

religion, philosophy, literature; in their poetical imagery, legends, ideas as well as in their modes of life. The character of the people of that civilization is always demonstrable in their inscriptions.

Fāṭimid ( A.D. 909-1160 ), was a Muslim dynasty which claimed the caliphate through descent from Fāṭimah, Muḥammad's daughter, and hence the major Shī<sup>ʿ</sup>ite one in Islam. It was established in Raqqādah, al-Qayrawān, in the year A.D. 909, and later the empire was extended from the Morocco of the Idrisids to the confines of Egypt<sup>1</sup>, and in 972 Al-Mu<sup>ʿ</sup>izz-li-dīn-illāh ( Exalter of the Faith of God — 925-75 ), made the new City of Cairo his capital. The Shī<sup>ʿ</sup>ites, or also known the Fāṭimids exercised a considerable influence on the Islamic politics and their establishment, started by Abd-Allāh ibn Maimūn al-Qaddāh, a native of Ahwaz, in Persia, was deliberately set to challenge the religious headship represented by the <sup>ʿ</sup>Abbāsids of Baghdād. Since Jawhar,

1. Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, seventh edition, pp. 618.

In the medieval history of Egypt, Hitti writes that the Mamluk dynasty may be described as the Arabo-Persian era, for under the Mamluks, it is the influence of Persian culture that is paramount. It was an era that was characterized by works of architecture and art — the time when the famous mosque of al-Azhar was built (1073-74) — the structure that in general reveals the Eastern influence and displays the boldness of Latin inscriptions for which Mamluk art is famous.

Other inscriptions in the mosques at the head of New Africa are not common — the most recent and the only one of its type written in Latin characters is the one of al-Azhar-al-Gharbi mosque. The type of script used in the inscriptions



the general of Mu<sup>o</sup>izz, conquered Egypt and Syria from the Caliphs of Baghdād, there was an incessant struggle and animity between the two Caliphates<sup>1</sup>.

In the cultural history of Egypt, Hitti writes that the Fāṭimid dynasty may be described as the Arabo-Persian era, for under the Fāṭimids, it is the influence of Persian culture that is paramount<sup>2</sup>. It was an era that was characterised by works of architecture and art --- the time during which the famous mosque of Al-Azhar was built ( 972 ); the structure that in general reveals Iranian influence and displays the bold theme of Kufic inscriptions for which Fāṭimid art is famous.

Dated inscriptions in the mosques at the coast of East Africa are not common : the most renowned and the only one of its type written in Kufic character is the one of Kizinkazi-Dimbani mosque. The type of script used in the inscript-

1. Consult Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, seventh edition, pp. 619.

2. *Ibid.*, Hitti, pp. 625.

\* This name is the unaltered form of the  
 \*All / which he gave to the city of the  
 in / \*All / as is an ancient name  
 the land beyond the mountains of / from the  
 at / will be perfect / of the people  
 of / will be perfect / of the people  
 the city being the name of / in the year  
 [ 1. ] [ corresponding to A.D. 1700 ].  
 The other two names in the name have been  
 given.

ion is completely different in kind and type from that of the Utondwe mosque, in Bagamoyo, and that of Mbomaji mosque, south of Daresalam, of the Mnarani mosque of Kenya, and from the inscription on the tomb at Gedi, also in Kenya. The difference in type can be realized if the phrasing of the Kizimkazi-Dimbani inscription<sup>1</sup> is compared with the inscription of the Utondwe mosque which reads :

" This mosque is the munificent gift of Sulṭan °Ali / which he gave to Sheikh Sulṭan ibn Sulaimān / °Alawi ibn °Abdullah / it is an offering to our Lord Muḥammad the Messenger of God / from that very day until the perfection / of the people of Muḥammad the Messenger / God shall be achieved / the date being the month of Safar in the year ( A.H. ) 1196 " <sup>2</sup> ( corresponding to A.D. 1782 ). The other few mosques on the coast have dates alone.

1. See above, pp. 171, 172.

2. Freeman Grenville, *The Medieval History of the Coast of Tanganyika*, pp. 166.

On the value of inscriptions for the purpose of dating, Peter Garlake seems to have formed an opinion that " the gap between style and inscription date is so wide, and the inscriptions in several cases so ill adapted to their present positions, that there is little danger of confusion in the dating " <sup>1</sup>. He accepts Freeman-Grenville's assertion that the kufic inscription of Kizimkazi-Dimbani mosque is a similar case <sup>2</sup>. He adds that " like other elements of this mihrāb, has been reused in the eighteenth century, or even subsequent rebuildings. Once it is realized that inscribed plaques and blocks are preserved and incorporated in rebuildings several centuries later, as is so obvious in the Somali examples, all inscriptions must be used with reserve, except where it is clear that they are an integral and dominant part of their surrounds " <sup>3</sup>. Garlake's reasoning on this has been influenced by Grenville who wrote earlier that " at present the proper attitude is one of scepticism. Nowhere is

1. **Garlake, The Early Islamic Architecture of the East African Coast, pp. 11.** only medieval identification by Garlake a date within the century
2. **Unpublished report in files of the Antiquities Division of Tanganyika. Also cited by P. Garlake, pp. 11.** Garlake would be of first class importance. There are strong reasons for
3. **Ibid., Garlake, pp. 11.** The fragments of the wall, together with the pottery and possible other finds, must at present be treated with great reserve.

In the opinion of the writer, in the case of the inscription which is mentioned in Garlake's and Garlake's research in an attempt to throw light on the earlier history dating of the mosque as not acceptable. The other little inscriptions which follow the same curve (I, II, III and IV), as well as the date 1114 / 1115 (1702/3) appear to be the same which are dated Garlake and others in publishing the correct dating of the mosque — as not satisfactorily a valid script

this borne out more than by the mosque of Kizimkazi, Zanzibar, which possesses the only medieval inscription to furnish a date within the ambiance of Kilwa. If it could be shown that the inscription and the existing monument, or even its mihrāb, are integral, Kizimkazi would be of first class importance. There are strong reasons for supposing this to be not so. The monuments of the coast, together with the pottery and porcelain found, must at present be treated with greatest reserve "1.

In the opinion of the writer, in the case of Kizimkazi-Dimbani Kufic inscription, both Grenville's and Garlake's reasoning in an attempt to throw doubt on the twelfth century dating of the mosque is not acceptable. The other kufic inscription which follows the a pse curve (PLATE 2 and 3), on which the date A.H. 1184 / A.D. 1772/3 appears --- the date which has misled Grenville and Garlake in determining the correct dating of the mosque --- is not stylistically a kufic script

1. Freeman-Grenville, *The Medieval History*  
*of the Coast of Tanganyika*, pp. 11

A specimen of the style has been used by the latter  
 authority to illustrate the various styles of the  
 world's currency which were already known  
 even to the ancients. The style is, stylistically  
 the world's currency. It is the style of the  
 of a type which was being the standard and  
 the various currencies — and were being  
 the various currencies — in many countries such  
 as India, Persia, Egypt, Italy, Sicily, Afghanistan,  
 as well as in the various islands of the Pacific.  
 It was more generally and constantly used by the  
 ancients as a style in which currencies and  
 currencies were issued, as in the case of Chinese  
 currencies. The style of this style  
 of world's currency which were, contemporary to  
 the world, but in general. The various, and were  
 of this style appear as follows, India, and the  
 the style of a style, the style of the style,  
 a style of the style. The style is used by the



which can be related to any other form of kufic script at any period. It is very probable that a conscious effort had been made by the latter calligrapher to maintain an earlier style of the twelfth century kufic which was already incorporated to decorate the qiblah wall. Stylistically the twelfth century Kizimkazi-Dimbani kufic was of a type widely used during the eleventh and twelfth centuries respectively -- and rarely during the thirteenth century -- in many countries such as Iran, Turkey, Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, as well as in the Islamic buildings of the U.S.S.R. It was most commonly and constantly used by calligraphers as a motif in which decoration and architecture were blended, as in the case of Kizimkazi-Dimbani mosque. Many examples of this style of twelfth century kufic script, contemporary to Kizimkazi, can be given. For instance, such type of kufic script appears at Bistam, Iran, on the tomb tower<sup>1</sup> of a saint, Bayazid al-Bistami, now a centre of pilgrimages. The tomb is dated by an

1. See Figure 184, Derek Hill and Oleg Grabar,

**Islamic Architecture And its Decoration,**

*Journal of Islamic Studies*, 1962, and it belongs  
to the early 11th century. Above the main  
entrance is the Great Mihrab niche<sup>2</sup>. It  
has a type of relief which dates from  
the 10th century, although the design is of  
the early 11th century type. The great inscrip-  
tion<sup>3</sup> with the name of the<sup>4</sup> Caliph of Ghazni, is  
inscribed — better known as the Tower of Ghazni<sup>5</sup> —  
is decorated with magnificent stucco, in  
contrast with the typical 11th century type of  
tile with a date 400-1000-1115. Again the pla-  
teau of the<sup>6</sup>, is inscribed, with various geo-  
metric designs and is a fine example of  
the art of the 11th century. The tower is  
decorated with stucco and is known as the  
Tower of Ghazni<sup>7</sup> and is dated by the  
inscriptions 400 and 1000 A.D. which are  
of the 11th century type. Finally, the  
minaret of the<sup>8</sup> mosque of Ghazni, is known

inscription from round about 1120 A.D. Similarly the same type of kufic lettering decorates the mihrāb mosque of Gulpaygan<sup>1</sup>, Iran, and it belongs to the early twelfth century. Above the main entrance archway to the Great Diyarbakr mosque<sup>2</sup>, in Turkey, such type of kufic writing dated twelfth century is displayed, although the mosque is of the early Islamic Syrian type. The tower inscribed with the name of Mas<sup>o</sup>ud III at Ghazni, in Afghanistan -- better known as the Tower of Victory<sup>3</sup> -- decorated with magnificent stucco, is ornamented with typical twelfth century type of kufic with a date A.D. 1089-1115. Again the minaret of Jam<sup>4</sup>, in Afghanistan, with Koranic quotations showing that it was a commemorative monument of some sort, also common in towers in eastern Iran<sup>5</sup>; a minaret which is datable by its inscription between 1153 and 1203 A.D. exhibits the same type of twelfth century kufic. Similarly, the minaret of the Jāmi<sup>o</sup>i mosque of Aleppo<sup>6</sup>, in Syria,

1. See Fig. 284, Derek Hill and Oleg Grabar, *Islamic Architecture And Its Decoration*.
2. Fig. 385, *Ibid.*, Derek Hill and Oleg Grabar.
3. Figs. 147, 149, 150, *Ibid.*, Derek Hill and Oleg Grabar. Also see Illustration 52, Talbot Rice, *Islamic Art*, pp. 58.
4. Fig. 151, *Cf.*, Derek Hill and Oleg Grabar.
5. Consult Derek Hill and Oleg Grabar, *Islamic Architecture And Its Decoration*, pp. 57.
6. Fig. 518, *Ibid.*, Derek Hill and Oleg Grabar.

which belongs to the eleventh century --- and the earliest monument of Seljuq architecture in Syria --- has kufic inscription of similar type. Likewise, the southern mausoleum built for Jalal ad-din-al-Ḥusayn in Ferghanah<sup>1</sup>, in the city of Uzgend, U.S.S.R., dated A.D. 1187, which Oleg Grabar considers it to provide one of the richest dictionaries of twelfth century decorative motifs in Central Asia<sup>2</sup>, holds the same type of Kufic lettering that covers considerable space decoratively, on the inside arch at the entrance to the mausoleum, and on the pillars as well as on the entrance porch facade. In Egypt too, the famous mosques built by the Fāṭimids, display similar kufic lettering. For instance, the facade of the mosque of al-Ḥākim<sup>3</sup>, second in age to that of al-Azhar, built between 990 and 1013, and the mihrāb of al-Afdal<sup>4</sup> in the mosque of Ibn-Tulūn, Cairo, one of the fine example of the art of that period, are two good examples of mosques decorated by the twelfth century style of bold angular kufic. Not

1. Figs. 116 and 118, Cf., Derek Hill and Oleg Grabar.
2. Derek Hill and Oleg Grabar, *Islamic Architecture And Its Decoration*, pp. 55.
3. See Fig. 86, Talbot Rice, *Islamic Art*, pp. 88.

4. *Ibid.*, Talbot Rice, Fig. 88, pp. 89.

only buildings, but pottery too was influenced by twelfth century kufic style as a theme of decoration engraved on them. Bronze trays of the Seljuq time in Persia, were decorated with similar type of Kufic<sup>1</sup>. The silver dish made for the Seljuq Sulṭan, Alp Arsalan, in the year 1066 A.D.<sup>2</sup>, is characteristic of Kizimkazi-Dimbani kufic.

These are some of the examples of Kufic script typical of that period; hence it is no accident that the same style of lettering belonging to the late eleventh century and to most of the twelfth century also decorate the Kizimkazi-Dimbani mosque. Though it originated in the city of al-Kūfah, in Mesopotamia, <sup>o</sup>Irāq, it was later carried to many parts of the Islamic World, where it underwent a sort of an independent development, producing a slight variety in type that is hardly noticeable. But though the lettering was employed earlier, for instance on a tombstone found in the cemetery of Old Cairo, dated by a kufic inscription as A.H. 31 / A.D. 651-2<sup>3</sup>, now in the Arab Museum

1. Fig. 71, Cf., Talbot Rice, *Islamic Art*, pp. 74.
2. Illustration 99, *Ibid.*, Talbot Rice, pp. 102.
3. Hasan Muhammad al-Hawāri in al-Hilāl, Volume XXXVIII (1930). Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, seventh edition, pp. 264.

Like most of the other works of different periods of the Islamic world, the historical-linguistic and artistic development of the Arab world is characterized by the East African style. Many of these works are simple and others have complicated geometric designs. In connection with the use of historical-linguistic sources, the author writes: "In the very late thirteenth century, the hand of the master of the school of Hilāl, Meher, has been seen with the same design with the names of the



of Cairo, by the end of the twelfth century, it was transformed into the round "n a s k h i s c r i p t" in distinction to the angular form. The latter kufic was commonly and freely used with very fine and delicate effect during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries on buildings, on woven textiles, as well as on miniature paintings, an example of which could be found in the painting entitled "The Bier Of The Great Iskandar" painted in Tabriz, Iran, 1330-1336, in the Shah-nameh of Firdawsi<sup>1</sup>.

Like most of the mihrāb arches of different mosques of the Islamic World, the Kizimkazi-Dimbani mihrāb is decorated with bosses, as many other mihrābs of the East African Coast. Many of these bosses are simple and others have complicated geometric designs. In connection with the one of Kizimkazi-Dimbani mosque Peter Garlake writes "In the very late eighteenth century, the south door of the mosque of Kilindini, Mombasa, has tiny bosses with the same design while the bosses of the

1. The painting now belongs to the Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

late eighteenth century reconstruction of the mosque at Kizimkazi, Zanzibar, and the somewhat earlier Jamia of Chwaka on Pemba, have a scalloped edge to their designs of concentric circles"<sup>1</sup>.

If Peter Garlake formed his opinion on the origin of the construction of the Kizimkazi-Dimbani bosses from the supposedly date of reconstruction of the mihrāb as A.H. 1184 / A.D. 1773, ( and there is no reason to believe otherwise ), then his statement needs correction. The date, , meaning, date, year 1184 ( which corresponds to A.D. 1773 ), appears isolated and is expressed in Arabic numerals as opposed to the twelfth century kufic which is datable by letters and are decoratively integrated with the rest of the inscription as " On a Sunday, in the month of Dhul Ḥajj in the year five hundred ". The system of dating by numerals is definitely not a medieval method of recording dates on mihrābs : hence it is neither related to the celebrated twelfth century kufic inscription nor to the inscription of the latter



period, which is an imitation of the earlier style<sup>1</sup>. It is most probable that the 1184 A.H. numerical date was incised many years later since it is a fairly recent and unsophisticated method of dating. It may or it may not be necessarily a recording inscription or reconstruction of the mihrāb. It is very likely that the space on which the date 1184 A.H. now occupies was somehow damaged and that it was originally holding kufic script similar in type and design to the rest of the second kufic inscription curved on the apse curve. To make the space look similar in appearance with the one at the opposite side of the mihrāb -- the space which now holds kufic script ( of the latter period ) -- the person responsible for the 1184 A.H. dating had simply cut into the wet plaster with a sharp instrument to write the date, merely for the purpose of filling up the space. It is tempting to relate the quality of this particular dating to the sort of meaningless sgraffito found on historical monuments, for inst-



1. See above, pp. 181, 183.

ance on pyramid walls, or it could also be that the man who was repairing the broken piece of stone was working on the rigid instruction of the shaikh whose attitude to art was philistine<sup>1</sup>. The very difference between sgraffito and carved masonry would appear to be significant, and does not accord with those standards of workmanship which one would expect from a skilled craftsman.

The history of the origin of bosses is rather obscure, though it is evident that they were employed by builders of early times, as they could be seen on the walls of the Ajanta caves of India ( 200 B.C. and A.D. 700 ), and on the sculptured entrance to the ancient Buddhist temples of Mohamoggallana and Sariputa, at Sanchi. They were also applied on the ninth century pottery of Susa, known as Barbotine ware<sup>2</sup> as moulded decoration, and widely employed on Islamic buildings --- as early as eighth century A.D. to the present time --- on palaces, tombs, minarets, mausoleums as well as on mihrābs as applied decoration.



1. The word philistine is used here to mean ignorance, devoid of culture, and indifferent to art.
2. Talbot Rice, *Islamic Art*, pp. 37.

The several versions of Firdausi-Divani alifbā are not similar in design to the ones of the alifbā of the Jamī'ī Mosque of Ghazni, in Peshawar, as scholars seem to have thought. The Firdausi-Divani several versions are unique, both in type and purpose, because they were specifically designed to copy a single inscription; this is the only one of its kind on the walls of the Jamī'ī Mosque. The inscription on the base (the alifbā) has been deciphered, and appears for the first time in this book. In contrast to this, only the word *alif* has been identified with alifbā in the case of the inscription you considered for possible decipherment, and with the present version, the reading of the inscription is not guaranteed in any previous publication.

But not all mihrābs have them. It seems that the common practice was -- and still is -- that either the mihrāb was decorated with bosses at the time of its construction or never, but not as a motif that was added to the mihrāb at a later date.

The coral bosses at Kizimkazi-Dimbani mihrāb are not similar in design to the ones at the mihrāb of the Jami<sup>ḳ</sup> Mosque of Chwaka, in Pemba, as Garlake seems to have thought<sup>1</sup>. The Kizimkazi-Dimbani coral bosses are unique, both in type and purpose, because they were specifically designed to take a kufic inscription; thus it is the only one of its kind on the whole of the East African Coast. The inscription on the boss (left side of the mihrāb) has been deciphered, and appears for the first time in this thesis<sup>2</sup>. Previous to this, only the word *سالم* had been identified with clarity<sup>3</sup>, but the rest of the inscription was considered impossible to decipher. So, until the present work, the reading of the inscription is not contained in any previous publication.

1. **Garlake, The Early Islamic Architecture of the East African Coast, pp. 47.**
2. **In identifying the inscription, contacts have been made to scholars of Arabic language and literature before confirmation.**
3. **Flury, The Kufic Inscription of Kizimkazi Mosque, pp. 258**

The inscription on the bosses appears to have been written in pseudo-kufic character. The reason that the twelfth century kufic style had not been employed was probably due to difficulty in maintaining the complex character of the kufic on a circular form and above all, on a very small scale where an exceptionally high skill would be required. But even in pseudo-kufic, a calligrapher would have difficulty in keeping the letters consistent in character and arrangement throughout the entire circle and in avoiding the irregularities of spacing the letters. The inscription runs round the concentric circles in an anti-clockwise movement. But the calligrapher employed a very complex method of making the top of the letters face the outer circle, whereas it would have been simpler if he had instead made the top of the letters face the inner circle in a clock-wise movement. So, to avoid the possible disadvantage of having an uneven space left over within the

circle, he tried as much as possible to re-arrange some letters, and sometimes the whole word in different directions in order to maintain uniformity; thus making the inscription extremely difficult to read. For instance the word *سالم*, "s a l i m a", had been placed obliquely so as to leave no uninteresting space in relationship with the word that comes after it, *عمره*, "u m r a h u", which is properly displayed. And the Arabic letter *ر* "r a", (r), in the word *عمره*, which comes after *م* "m i m", (m), had been elongated so as to provide a diagonal line that nearly touches the edges of the two concentric circles for decorative reason. In this way the letters were bound to change appearance and to remain obscure even to the eyes of a keen observer. This diagnosis is in the main based on aesthetic consideration.

Although the whole inscription on the boss is difficult to read, the words *عمره* "u m r a h u" and *على الهدى سلم* "Ala-l-Idā salima",

meaning, --- in accordance with this particular context --- " may his life be safe and him be victorious upon his enemies " can, however, be read with some degree of clarity. The inscription ( FIGS. 3 & 4 ) contains about seven words, of which three are almost obliterated and virtually impossible to decipher, in comparison with the long twelfth century kufic inscription, which consists of some forty seven words. The three undecipherable words are in between *عمره* ( which is most likely a starting point ) and *على العدى سلم*, the words which are in a good state of preservation. The translation " may his life be safe and him be victorious upon his enemies " is considered by the author to be a more correct interpretation as the word, *على*, 'alā' ( a preposition ) which comes after the three obliterated words, would suggest, -- in this particular position -- that it is employed to express invocation, as to enable 'him' ( the sheikh ) to be victorious upon his enemies.

The inscription on the boss holds the two essential words which are contained in the other long inscription, namely (1) may his life be safe, and (2) enemies; presumably to destroy his enemies and to be victorious upon them.

The inscription however, does not include the name Abu <sup>o</sup>Imran Musā and the date A.H. 500. Judging from this, the inference to be made -- apart from the obvious reason that the essence of the long twelfth century kufic inscription is contained in the inscription on the bosses -- is that both inscriptions were incorporated on the mihrāb at the time of its construction. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that there was no apparent reason for recording the name of the founder and the date of the building twice on the same qiblah. And since there is strong reason to assume that the two inscriptions have common relationships, and that they were incorporated on the mihrāb at the same time; and that since the main inscription is dated A.H. 500 / A.D. 1107; and considering that

it is also customary that bosses are incorporated on mihrābs at the time of their construction, it is more than probable that the Kizimkazi-Dimbani mosque was built in A.H. 500

Like many other Islamic buildings of the early times, writing on qiblah walls, was not the only theme of decoration. There were several other themes of ornament, and in most cases, the combination of two or more of these elements produced the best result. On Kizimkazi-Dimbani mihrāb, the very same elements, such as the impressive kufic letterings, mouldings, and pilasters, which were meant to be purely decorative, were used in ornamental compositions. The circular bosses of coral, placed immediately beneath the long twelfth century kufic inscription ( PLATE 4 ) -- twelve in all, six on each side of the mihrāb ( FIG. 5 ) -- fill up the space between the interlaced trifoliate arches formed by the rising double cable patterns, in order to give a sense of richness to the wall. The circular bosses, 10 cm. in diameter, are div-



ided into sixteen palmettes. The two coral bosses on either side of the mihrāb arch have a similar number of palmettes (16), but they are arranged along the circumference, leaving the space between two concentric circles to take an inscription<sup>1</sup>, instead of pointing inwards from the circumference. Whether the number of palmettes has any significance appears to be uncertain, but from a study of other buildings, it is clear that circular bosses of this sort are very rare. The ones close to Kizimkazi-Dimbani type, similar in form and design, and which have exactly the same number of palmettes are to be found on the entrance to the Mama Hatun türbesi<sup>2</sup>, a mausoleum, in Tercan, Turkey, built in A.D. 1200. The circular bosses which decorate the facade of the Sitte Melik Türbe<sup>3</sup>, in Divrig, Turkey, built in A.D. 1196 are similar in design to those of Kizimkazi-Dimbani. And so are the ones on the carved stone facade of the Halifet Gazi türbesi<sup>4</sup>, built for a Wazir ( Vizier ) of the Danishmend dynasty of Turkey. It is

1. See above, pp. 199.

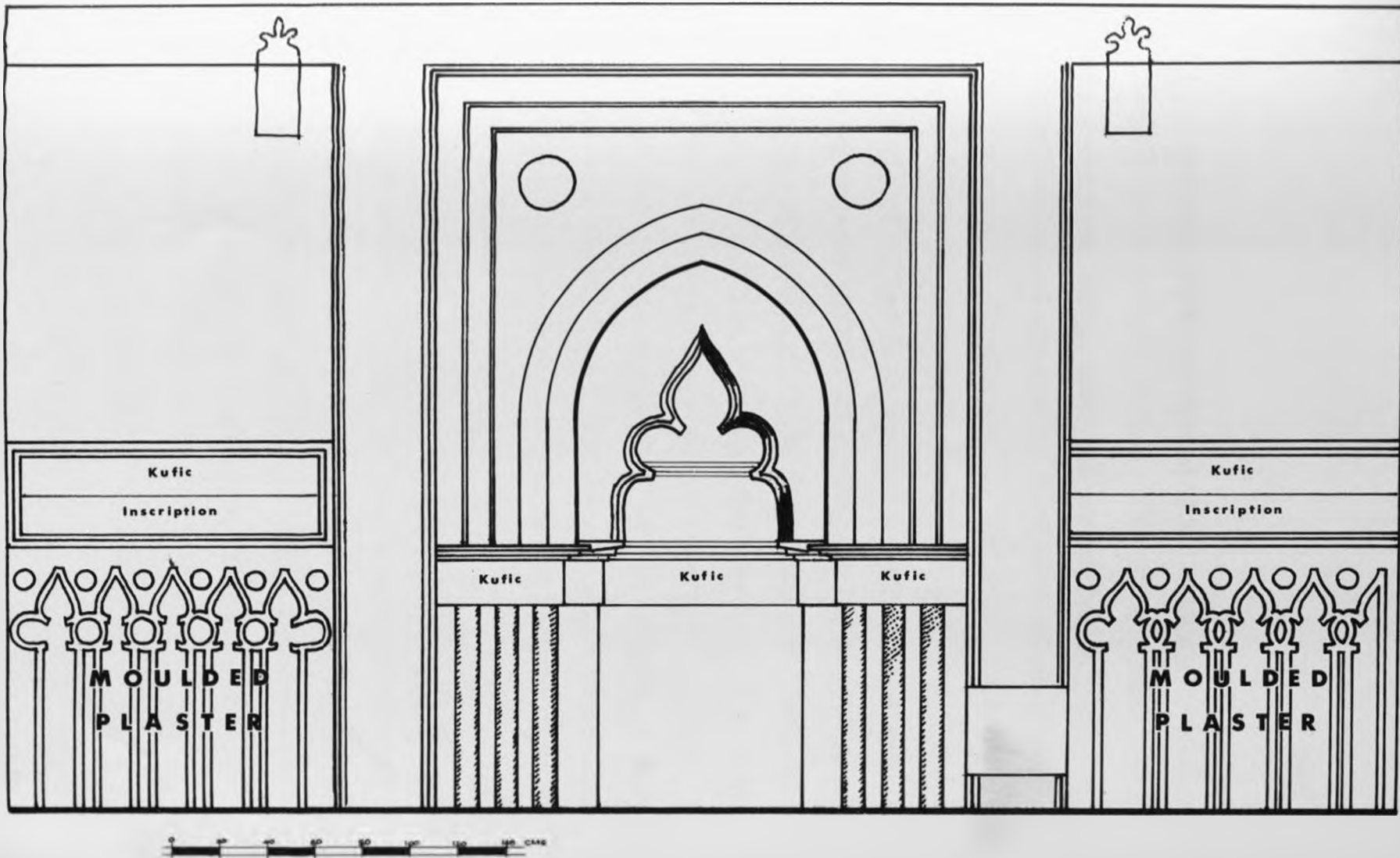
2. Fig. 346, Derek Hill and Oleg Grabar,  
Islamic Architecture And Its Decoration.

3. Fig. 495, Ibid., Derek Hill and Oleg Grabar.

4. Fig. 352, Ibid., Derek Hill and Oleg Grabar.

dated around A.D. 1142-6. The only difference is that the Kizimkazi-Dimbani circular bosses are flatly incorporated on the wall -- though they stand high in relief -- while those in Turkey are characteristic of their concave form.

The double cable motifs ( FIG. 5, moulded plaster ) on both sides of the mihrāb are designed to form delicate trefoils which echo the arch of the mihrāb proper, and which, itself is trefoliate. A conscious effort however, has been made to show the difference between trefoils on the right side of the mihrāb and those on the left side. Here an explanation is all the more necessary since in Islam the right hand is considered sacred, as Sūrah ( revelation, chapter ) A l - I n s h i q a q<sup>1</sup> ( The Rendering Asunder ), shows in verses 7, 8, & 9, when it reads " He that is given his book in his right hand shall have a lenient reckoning and will go back rejoicing to his people ", or as shown in Sūrah A l - H a d i d<sup>2</sup> ( The Iron ) verse 12, " The day thou shalt see the faithful



**FIG.5 KIZIMKAZI, ZANZIBAR.**



men and faithful women, with their light running before them, and on their right hand ( shall be given ) glad tidings for you of that day Gardens 'neath which flow rivers, to abide therein; that is the great achievement ". And the right hand has also been mentioned in Sūrah A l - M u d d a s s i r<sup>1</sup> ( The Cloaked One ) to mean Heavens, as in verses 39, 40, 41, & 42, which read " Those on the right hand will in their gardens<sup>2</sup> ask the sinners: What has brought you into Hell ? . Hence the twelfth century kufic inscription which is placed on the right side of the mihrāb is Koranic, and therefore of religious significance, and the one on the left side of the mihrāb is historic and secular.

The remarkable use of coral shafts which appear on the lower part of the Kisimkazi-Dimbani mihrāb ( PLATE 2 ) , just below the latter kufic inscription, and made specifically for decorative as well as for constructional purposes is unique at the entire coast of East Africa. The shafts

1. Chapter LXXXIV, revealed at Makkah.

2. Gardens in this context means Heavens.

Their introduction was not merely to enhance the general appearance of the alijah, but also to provide an interesting feature in the wall and to describe the form of each separate garden. The names of Makkah walls gardens can be found in Iran, Turkey, Afghanistan, Syria, and U.S.A.R. In Iran, while pattern of this order is found in the entrance leads to the Masjid Naghsh-e Rostam, which is also very and also in the walls of the alijah of the village Naghsh-e Rostam, in Afghanistan, Iran, dated around A.D. 1550-60. With an arrangement of all, date patterns of this order are

are systematically and sensitively plaited with cable strands running diagonally from top to bottom, in a clock-wise spiral, and equally repeated on all other coral shafts. They are unique because the shafts which decorate many mihrābs of the coast have cable strands arranged in an entirely different way; with a sort of herring-bone pattern, and that the quality of their workmanship is inferior to that of Kizimkazi-Dimbani.

Their introduction was not merely to enhance the general appearance of the mihrāb, but also to provide an interesting texture on the wall and to describe the forms on each separate surface. Examples of similar cable patterns can be found in Iran, Turkey, Afghanistan, Syria, and U.S.S.R. In Iran, cable pattern of that order is found on the entrance facade to the Blue Mosque<sup>1</sup>, in Tabriz, built in A.D. 1465; and also on the outline of the mihrāb of the Village Mosque<sup>2</sup>, in Ashtarjan, Iran, dated around A.D. 1315-16. With no difference at all, cable patterns of that sort are



1. See Fig. 217, Derek Hill and Oleg Grabar,  
*Islamic Architecture and its Decoration.*

2. Fig. 302, *Ibid.*, Derek Hill and Oleg Grabar.

carved on two shafts -- one on each side -- to the entrance of the Kilzar tomb<sup>1</sup>, built in the mid. fifteenth century. It is a famous tomb in Turkey. With the same precision, although here the strands are actually adorned with floral design, they appear on the decorated shrine of Khwajah Abu Nasr Parsa<sup>2</sup>, built after A.D. 1460, in Balkh, Turkey. In Allepo, Syria, similar type of cable strands are carved on the facade at the main entrance to the al-Utrush mosque<sup>3</sup>, dated A.D. 1403, a structure that exhibits the style of the late Mamluk period that was inspired from Egypt. Such rare cable patterns are also to be found on the Islamic buildings of the U.S.S.R., for instance on the main entrance arch to the Ulugh beg madrasah<sup>4</sup>, in Bukhara, built in A.D. 1417 ( though restored in A.D. 1586 ); and also on the main entrance to the madrasah, with the same name Ulugh beg<sup>5</sup> -- but this one at Samarkand -- begun in A.D. 1420 ; and lastly on the arched gateway of Akserai palace<sup>6</sup> of Tīmūr Lang ( Tamerlane ),

1. Fig. 449, Cf., Derek Hill and Oleg Grabar,
2. See Figs. 164, 165, Ibid., Derek Hill  
and Oleg Grabar.
3. Fig. 522, Ibid., Derek Hill and Oleg Grabar.
4. Fig. 17, Ibid., Derek Hill and Oleg Grabar.
5. Fig. 62, Ibid., Derek Hill and Oleg Grabar.
6. Figs. 92, 97, 96, Ibid., Derek Hill and  
Oleg Grabar.

1. Fig. 449, Cf., Derek Hill and Oleg Grabar,
2. See Figs. 164, 165, Ibid., Derek Hill  
and Oleg Grabar.
3. Fig. 522, Ibid., Derek Hill and Oleg Grabar.
4. Fig. 17, Ibid., Derek Hill and Oleg Grabar.
5. Fig. 62, Ibid., Derek Hill and Oleg Grabar.
6. Figs. 92, 97, 96, Ibid., Derek Hill and  
Oleg Grabar.

in Shahr-i Sabz, built around the fourteenth century -- a construction that reveals much of the influence of the Ilkhanid buildings of north-western Iran.

Although the exact history of the development of mihrāb is rather obscure, it is quite evident however, that by the tenth century the mihrāb consisted of a central arched area, and that a frame was already provided for the arch, --- a frame which consisted of bands of different widths with decorative embellishments to fill in the spandrels. This rapidly and consistently became a standard feature of all mihrābs, and obviously like the Kizimkazi-Dimbani mosque, its mihrāb arch is contained within the rectangular frame. The frame, whether used with a simple or complex combinations of planes is necessary for the designer in enabling him to give grace and excitement to the wall which would otherwise be bare and empty. So the mihrāb arch is always closely connected with its framework from the time

the qiblah wall is built; and, in most cases, once it has been built, any future reconstruction will have to conform to the original structure; a tradition which has been created by the complexity of the Islamic culture and philosophy.

Just as there are endless variety of mihrāb arches, all over the Islamic World, so it is also true that the developments of mihrābs on the East African Coast are not always closely similar to one another in style and technique; and the point to be made on the Kizimkazi-Dimbani mihrāb, for instance, is that the niches which are made of fine coral shows a superb expertness in the art of carving. On this mihrāb, Peter Garlake points out that " the niches of the upper order are of fine coral, showing an extraordinary dexterity in carving. The arch spandrels of the small niches are cut from single panels of coral, only 2 cms. thick. These delicate little coral panels with foliate arches, carved at a time long before the foliate arch was known in buildings of the Coast,

may be compared with the marble reliefs in the mosque of Fakhr-ad-Din, Mogadisho and the Sultans mausoleum, Kilwa<sup>1</sup> ". And it was these most obvious features that made this mihrāb exell over all the others on the entire Coast, and it remained as a unique example for subsequent mihrābs.

1. Peter Garlake, *The Early Islamic Architecture Of The East African Coast*, pp. 70.

\* \* \* \* \*

A date about A.D. 700 is perhaps a convenient point at which to divide the early Islamic architecture of the East African coast for the purpose of study. On the other hand, for convenience of analysis, Peter Garlake divided the subject into the early (consisting of fifth-sixth century), developed, and neo-classic styles, defined as simplified and derived forms<sup>1</sup>.

The whole range of mosques built during the time from approximately 700 through the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries<sup>2</sup> in Somalia and Zanzibar, as well as in other parts of the coast, may be studied together. The Portuguese invasions, which began early in the sixteenth century, almost



## THE MIDDLE PERIOD

A date about A.D. 1300 is perhaps a convenient point at which to divide 'early' from 'late' Islamic Architecture of the East African Coast for the purpose of study. On the other hand, for convenience of analysis, Peter Garlake divided the mihrabs into the early (commencing at fifteenth century), developed, and neo-classic styles, followed by simplified and derived classic<sup>1</sup>.

The whole range of mosques built during the time when settlements flourished through the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries<sup>2</sup> in Zanzibar and Pemba, as well as in other parts of the coast, may be studied to-day. The Portuguese invasions, which began early in the sixteenth century, almost

1. Peter Garlake, *The Early Islamic Architecture Of The East African Coast*, pp. 59-68.
2. Documents left to us by Ibn-Baṭṭūṭah in 1331, and by other Portuguese voyagers of the early fifteenth century.

... of the Portuguese had no positive effect on ...  
 ... and by other Portuguese voyagers of the ear-  
 ...  
 ... distinguished between them. All the regions  
 ... a great early fundamental-architectural feature  
 ... that from the whole part west of the point in-  
 ... a geographical and cultural unity — features  
 ... which are of the most primitive, and on the whole  
 ... fail to show the degree of style present on the  
 ... islands. In Senigaglia, the mosque of El-  
 ... ( A.D. 1107 ) has already been  
 ... of large, and apart from this there is  
 ... other standing mosque of early date on the Is-  
 ... land. The only mosque extant is at Tumbatu, a  
 ... long island at Senigaglia's north-west  
 ...

... to this mosque ( Tumbatu — Fig. 4 ) ...  
 ... that \* the chief feature of interest in the

paralysed the trade and prosperity of the towns, but building works still continued, and the arrival of the Portuguese had no positive effect on the cultural life of the people. The types of decoration on the mihrāb arch of this long period are closely related so that one cannot often clearly distinguish between them. All the regions share a great many fundamental decorative features that draw the whole vast area of the coast into a geographical and cultural unity -- features which are often unattractive, and on the whole fail to show the elegance of style present on the Kisimkazi mihrāb. In Zanzibar, the mosque of Kisimkazi-Dimbani ( A.D. 1107 ) has already been discussed at large, and apart from this there is no other standing mosque of early date on the Island. The only mosque extant is at Tumbatu, a five-mile long island at Zanzibar's north-west tip.

On this mosque ( Tumbatu -- Fig. 6 ), Pearce writes that " the chief feature of interest in the

mosque is the range of four arched doorways in its eastern wall. These doorways gave access to a side mosque, which adjoins the main body of the large mosque. The doorways are worthy of attention, as typical of the best characteristics of the Shirazian style of architecture, and in proportion and design they would not disgrace some famous Gothic gateways of Europe. The mention of Europe reminds one of the fact that it was not until the twelfth century that Europe adopted the pointed arch from the East <sup>1</sup>.

Unlike Zanzibar, Pemba contains many more ruined sites. The ruins include mosques, and in this paper the mosques of Chwaka Jamia ( PLATE 9 ), Shengejuu ( PLATE 6 ), and that of Ras-Mkumbuu ( PLATE 5 ), are discussed and illustrated. Chwaka and Shengejuu lie along the eastern shore of Pemba; all three facing the open Indian Ocean. The ruins at Ras-Mkumbuu lie at the extreme point of a peninsula on the west-coast of Pemba. They were excavated by J.S.Kirkman in 1958, and include

1. Pearce, Zanzibar, the island metropolis of Eastern Africa, pp. 400.

Islamic yellow architecture, which are attributed to the late twelfth and early thirteenth century, and is assigned the date to the foundation of the settlement to be the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century.

The work of a period is not to be judged by a single building, but by the average standard. The long period of five hundred years at the least, which produced some two hundred and thirty mosque walls, so to speak, is expected to produce a striking evolution in style. Here, perhaps is given to the imaginative creation, the aesthetic experimentation and taste in the decorative art of a people. It is reasonable that in many cases, where the buildings were changed in style, these new elements are indicative of a feeling in architectural and aesthetic work. The absence of such stylistic developments should not be attributed to the lack of talent alone. In a society

a Jāmi<sup>o</sup>i mosque, or Congregational mosque and a number of pillared tombs. Kirkman found some Islamic yellow sgraffiato, which are attributed to the late twelfth and early thirteenth century<sup>1</sup>, and he assigns the date to the foundation of the settlement to be the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century.

The work of a period is not to be judged by a single building, but by the average standard. The long period of five hundred years at the coast, which produced some one hundred and forty mosques could, so to speak, be expected to produce a striking evolution in style. Here, reference is given to the imaginative creation, the aesthetic sophistication and taste in the decorative art of a mihrāb. It is remarkable that in many cases, where the buildings show changes in style, these new elements are indicative of a decline in architectural and aesthetic merit. The absence of vast stylistic developments should not be attributed to the lack of talent alone. In a society

1. Excavations at Ras-Mkumbuu on the Island of Pemba, Tanganyika Notes and Records, no. 53, October, 1959.

changes and modifications would certainly have long to develop; basic and radical changes should not often be required. As a more later date the feeling in technical and creative design is evident that the local builders of Indian origin had had their minds with foreign culture completely absorbed. Unconsciously they are also to develop with frequent throw-backs to decorative features of earlier times.

With the constant flow of movement and activity, and civilization being so well the over-riding quality of the East African scene, it does seem very difficult to assess and to interpret the accuracy and evolution of the decorative systems of the early East African Islamic architecture. Perhaps accepting Darwin's theory that evolution proceeds from Africa to Europe, one can still see the combined influence of decorative

where the art of building and its decoration is alien, any attempt to produce a new style of ornament must come from abroad. So, in this case, changes and modifications would certainly take long to develop; basic and radical changes should not often be expected. At a much later date the decline in technical and creative design is evident when the local builders of Indian origin loaded their mihrābs with foreign motifs improperly understood. Ornamental style was slow to develop with frequent throw-backs to decorative devices of earlier times.

With the constant tides of movements and settlements, and civilization coming to and fro over various centres of the East African Coast, it becomes very difficult to assess and to pinpoint with accuracy the inventors of the decorative features of the early East African Islamic architecture. Without accepting Garlake's theory that influence outside East Africa is rare<sup>1</sup>, one can still see the combined influence of decorative



1. **Garlake, The Early Islamic Architecture**  
**of the East African Coast, pp. 14.**

... give a few examples, ...  
 ... and are ... in  
 the ... of ...  
 ... and of a ... of ... in the ...  
 ... of ... and ... By comparison with  
 the earlier ... the latter would reveal that  
 they have not been ... with the ...  
 ... and ... seem equal to those of the  
 early times.

In describing the ruins of ... and ...  
 ... in 1880, Major ... the British Resident  
 in ... wrote that "in classifying the ruins  
 of ... and ... according to their architect-  
 ural style, we find that the oldest are the most  
 ... being of ... design; this archi-  
 tectural period was succeeded by that ...  
 ... which in turn gave way  
 to the ...". He goes on to say  
 that "Parake ... was long ... in Africa,

notifs from outside in a number of early mosques at the coast. The mihrābs decorated without outside influence, are, to give a few examples, those built after the 1850's, and are contained in the mosques at Nungwi, Bwejuu, Makunduchi, Chake-Chake, and at a number of mosques in the town areas of Zanzibar and Pemba. By comparison with the earlier mihrābs, the latter would reveal that they have not been handled with the skill, sensitivity, and aesthetic sense equal to those of the early times.

In describing the ruins of Zanzibar and Pemba, in 1920, Major Pearce, the British Resident in Zanzibar, wrote that " in classifying the ruins of Zanzibar and Pemba according to their architectural styles, we find that the oldest are the most artistic, being of Shirazian<sup>1</sup> design; this architectural period was succeeded by what may be called the Arab-Shirazian epoch, which in turn gave way to the cruder Arab-African<sup>2</sup>". He goes on to say that " Persian work did not long survive in Africa,

1. Shirazian denotes Shiraz, in Persia. of Arab influences, both as regards design and execution.

2. Pearce, Zanzibar, The Island Metropolis of Eastern Africa, pp. 352. and in some of the ruins of Pemba .... The definite substitution of the South Arabian cult can be traced clearly in the architecture of the various groups of ruins in Pemba, and leaves scarcely any doubt that the original Swahili colonists were succeeded by the less highly cultured Swahili races of North Arabia<sup>1</sup>. Regardless of any particular race, it will be much safer to assume that whoever succeeded the earlier builders, were people belonging to a much lower cultural group.

Major Pearce gives a brief description of the early architectural features of buildings in Zanzibar and Pemba — which he considers to be universally common — as follows:— "The chief characteristics of their architectural style are the pointed arch, the free employment of dressed limestone for the sills of pillars and doorways,

for it became modified by the introduction of Arab influences, both as regards design and execution. Fortunately there are examples of good Shirasian work still to be found in some of the ruins of Pemba .... The definite substitution of the South Arabian cult can be traced clearly in the architecture of the various groups of ruins in Pemba, and leaves scarcely any doubt that the original Persian Colonists were succeeded by the less highly cultured Semitic races of South Arabia<sup>1</sup>". Regardless of any particular race, it will be much safer to assume that whoever succeeded the earlier builders, were people belonging to a much lesser cultured group.

Major Pearce gives a brief description of the early architectural feature of buildings in Zanzibar and Pemba -- which Garlake considers to be extremely accurate -- as follows :- " The chief characteristics of their architectural style are the pointed arch, the free employment of dressed limestone for the edgings of pillars and doorways,

1. Pearce, Zanzibar, *The Island Metropolis of Eastern Africa*, pp. 352.

The ... distinct from the rounded or pointed recesses of the Arabian style, the rectangular window, and the peaked and divided bayonet — a very distinctive feature. It may be noted also that the stone masonry and masonry of their doorways and arches are invariably set at less than a right angle — generally 25°. Apart from these typical characteristics, the treatment of design which the Muslims work as different from all other styles met with in buildings in East Africa.

From references made to the East African coast by Arab travellers, the accounts of which have been dealt with in the first chapter of this volume, the reader will be reminded of the trading-centres established on the coast. During the fourteenth century, the trading-centres between the continental shores of Arabia and Somalia, and this possibly included some of the most of importance. It would be well to note that the

the utilization of squared roof and floor beams, the rectangular wall-recess as distinct from the rounded or pointed recesses of the Arabian style, the rectangular window, and the peaked and divided keystone -- a very distinctive feature. It may be noted also that the stone courses and mouldings of their doorways and arches are invariably cut at less than a right angle -- generally  $85^{\circ}$ . Apart from these typical characteristics, the refinement of design marks the Shirazian work as different from all other styles met with in buildings in East Africa "1.

From references made to the East African Coast by Arab travellers, the accounts of which have been dealt with in the first chapter of this thesis, the reader will be reminded of the trading-centres established on the coast. During the fourteenth century, the trading-stations became the substantial abodes of merchants and communities, and this possibly included more than one race of immigrants. It could as well have been that the

1. Pearce, Zanzibar, The Island Metropolis of  
Eastern Africa, pp. 351-352.

... there were also Indians.  
...  
...  
... of the ... of the ...

In this connection ... writes " ...  
of the ... and ...  
Arabs in general seem never to have ...  
... of ... It is ...  
... that the Indians were from the ...  
... that they still are in East Africa — the  
... of ... the ... and ...  
... and ...

Early in the sixteenth century Portuguese  
... that ... and ...  
... from the ... of  
... in ... Major ...  
... that ...  
... that ...

Indians had trade connection with the coast as early as the Arabs did. We know to-day that where there were Arabs, there were also Indians. But what we know for certain is that from early times, Indian ships brought merchandise from the ports of Gujerat to the shores of the Gulf of Arabia.

In this connection R.Coupland writes " Much of the Ocean-shipping was Indian-owned; and since Arabs in general seem never to have shown much aptitude for the technique of business, it is probable that the Indians were from the earliest days what they still are in East Africa -- the masters of finance, the bankers and money-changers and money-lenders<sup>1</sup> ".

Early in the sixteenth centuries Portuguese travellers tell us that Zanzibar and Pemba used to buy silks and cottons from the merchants of Cambay resident in Mombasa. Major Pearce writes that in 1591 Captain Lancaster noticed during his stay in Zanzibar harbour that vessels arrived from



1. R. Coupland, *East Africa and its Invaders*,

pp. 27.

... in 1512, ...  
 ... the Kings of ...  
 ... they are also in very fine silk and cotton garments, which they produce at Sofala from the ...  
 ... the ...  
 ... gold, silver, ...  
 ... and they go also in good silk garments ...  
 ... in Sofala ...  
 ... it is a place of great traffic, and has a great harbor, in which are always several hundred of ...  
 ... and also great ships, both of which ...  
 ... from Sofala and there which go ...  
 ... from the great Kingdom of ...  
 ... the Isles of ...

... by the early ...  
 ... East Africa ...  
 ... Duarte Barbosa ...  
 ... of the ...

Indian Ports<sup>1</sup> ". Duarte Barbosa visiting Pemba, Mafia, and Zanzibar, in A.D. 1512, writes that " the Kings of these Isles live in great luxury; they are clad in very fine silk and cotton garments, which they purchase at Mombasa from the Cambaya merchants. The women .... wear many jewels of fine Cofala gold, silver too in plenty, earrings, necklaces, bangles, and bracelets, and they go clad in good silk garments<sup>2</sup> ". Visiting Mombasa he tells the same story. He speaks of it as " a place of great traffic, and has a good harbour, in which are always moored craft of many kinds and also great ships, both of those which come from Cofala and those which go thither, and others which come from the great Kingdom of Cambaya, .....; others which sail to the Isles of Zanzibar<sup>3</sup> ".

Evidently, then, by the early sixteenth century, the East African Coast had been flourishing when Duarte Barbosa made his visit. From the substantial nature of the towns, it is fair and reas-

1. Cf., Pearce, pp. 254.
2. The Book of Duarte Barbosa, vol. 1, pp. 6-29, Hakluyt Society, 1918.
3. Ibid., The Book of Duarte Barbosa, pp. 6-29.

In the following works of history, we can be certain that the Indians to a large extent were modern Spaniards and came as far as their contemporary and ourselves. We also know and believe that during the reign of David of Castile (1184-1196), Indians were involved in building activities, and that the state of the then state of the Islands was in their hands. In 1175, the Spaniards alone, Indian Spaniards, and Spaniards both Spaniards and Indians, and others, were active. Major James appears that in 1175, most of the Indians in the Islands were active and active if all came from Spain and others, and the state of modernized Spaniards, and the state of

onable to assume that the trade was of no mushroom growth, but must have been going on for some many years back. And since that the trade from Cambay was part and parcel of it, the only logical inference one can draw is that the Indians represented a trading activity of many years, if not centuries.

In the building works of to-day, we know for certain that the Indian is a familiar figure in modern Zanzibar and Pemba as far as stone constructions are concerned. We also know for certain that during the reign of Seyyid Sa<sup>c</sup>id bin Sulṭān ( 1804-1856 ), Indians were involved in building activities, and that the whole of the local trade of the Islands was in their hands. By 1919, in Zanzibar alone, Indian Communities, comprising both Muslims and Hindus, numbered about 10,000 souls<sup>1</sup>. Major Pearce reports that in 1919, many of the Indians in Zanzibar were wealthy and nearly all came from Cutch and Cambay, and few speak or understand Hindustani<sup>2</sup>. Like the Arabs of

1. Cf., Pearce, pp. 254. Similar to their pre-  
 sented form, the great British nation was British.

2. In Ibid., Pearce, pp. 254. Major James observed  
 the same thing. His eyes at a much earlier date  
 through history in A.D. 1712, says that "some of  
 our men speak Arabic but the same part was the  
 language of the country". Although little de-  
 tailed knowledge has survived, remembering the con-  
 dition in which these ancient people lived and grow  
 through the Middle Ages, one could reasonably as-  
 sume that the immigrants have, since a long time,  
 established together a settlement throughout the  
 coast, of which they had become natives.

While the Indian, the Arab of to-day in In-  
 diana and Syria, and most probably that of a cen-  
 tury years ago, has never involved himself in  
 the work of building. Since the great Arab, evolu-  
 tionary success to come from India, and from the In-  
 dian coast of Arabia, the Franks and Saracens,  
 living at the coast. The great African Arab also  
 and an interest in agriculture for the rest of build-

to-day, the Indians regard Zanzibar as their permanent home, and speak Swahili rather than Cutchi. This was true in 1919, when Major Pearce observed the same thing. But even at a much earlier date Duarte Barbosa in A.D. 1512, says that " some of the Moors speak Arabic but the more part use the language of the country<sup>1</sup> ". Although little detailed knowledge has survived, concerning the manner in which these Asiatic people lived and grew through the Middle Ages, one would reasonably assume that the Immigrants have, since a long time, established together a settlement throughout the coast, of which they had become natives.

Unlike the Indian, the Arab of to-day in Zanzibar and Pemba, and most probably that of a hundred years ago, has never involved himself in the work of building. Here the word Arab, obviously refers to those from <sup>c</sup>Umān, and from the Southern Coast of Arabia, the Sbatris and Mafazis, living at the Coast. The East African Arab showed no interest or aptitude for the art of build-

1. The Book of Duarte Barbosa, vol. i, pp. 6-29.

It is not known that even as an earlier date, the book had to depend very largely on Italian building methods to carry out architectural work. This realization is based upon the knowledge that the Italian of the last century was introducing the building arts of Italy, and assuming also that the building before him was a craftman in a similar position. Considering that there are no radical or fundamental changes in the architecture of the West, the given architecture seems to verify the other which nature of style and decoration, as the system also leads the power for local climates and conditions. This point is repeated to verify the fact that such a system was followed in most of building practices followed in the world before his or contemporary conditions.

A study of examples of this period would reveal the general in architectural style between

ing, and such a trade, therefore, was confined to the Indian alone.

So, one may assume that even at an earlier date, the Arab had to depend very largely on Indian building craftsmen to carry out architectural ventures. This consideration is based upon the assumption that the Indian of the last century was undertaking the building trade as hereditary, and assuming also that the builder before him was a craftsman in a codified tradition. Considering that there are no radical or fundamental changes in the architecture of the coast, the given assumption seems to explain the rather static nature of style and decoration, as the craftsman alone lacks the power for basic advances and experiments. This point is emphasized to explain the fact that such a craftsman was following a trend of building present before him on completely traditional methods.

A study of mosques of this period would reveal the contrast in architectural style between



the earlier mosque of Chwaka Jamia ( PLATE 9 ) and that of Msuka Mjini ( PLATE 16 ), which belongs to a later period. The difference between the two appears at once. The ignorance of the structural and decorative methods of the later coastal builder, whose sense for detail and capacity for harmonizing the various parts of design into a united whole reveals his individuality as a better designer. Here it is possible to trace the foreign influence of the decorative elements from outside East Africa when they were still fresh -- though not outstanding in creative design -- and how these elements were gradually diluted and gave way to the crude traditional taste.

In seeking the origins of the architecture belonging to this middle period at the coast, the best method of analysis is, perhaps, ably suggested by Garlake, who writes that " it is only by an exhaustive comparison of the most minor elements, by isolating each feature of decoration, plan and construction and then tracing the combinat-

ions and composition of each separate item as they are joined to form larger and broader design entities, that a sequence of development is traceable<sup>1</sup>". This method which may be called the 'selective stylistic framework' of the decorative elements of mihrābs, will result into ultimate groupings -- groups which have been divided according to their differences in the formation and shapes of their respective mihrābs and differences of their minor decorative details. Throughout such an analysis, the basic importance should be placed on selecting those groups of mihrābs which have common similarities.

In Pemba, an analysis of this sort reveals that the mihrābs of Chwaka Jamia and that of Ras-Mkumbuu, the only two mihrābs which form a single group, are strikingly different from other mihrābs such as that of Shengejuu, Kichokochwe, Chaoni, that on Fundo Island, Kiwani, and Mtangani. The latter mihrābs form groups which have similarities, and considering their aesthetic qualities,

1. **Garlake, The Early Islamic Architecture  
of the East African Coast, pp. 14.**

Further in their subsequent investigation of technical and aesthetic standards, therefore, there is a clear chronology of traditional East African architecture and its development. Conversely, the Chinese Jalis and Ras-Muhammads, with their elaborate decorative embellishments exhibit a higher standard of technical skill and a feeling for decorative style, consequently they are not likely to be the work of a local craftsman. The only explanation here, then, would be that since a local craftsman lived in a society where the art of building was still in its infancy, and where he was likely to be faced with limitations in the conventional techniques and the knowledge of applying the creative design into architecture, he would be unlikely to produce results better than those which could only be produced by an artisan of higher experience, such as an artisan from a country where architecture involved a more profound experience.

they fall far short of Chwaka Jamia and Ras-Mkumbuu. The study of these groups which have common factors in their subsequent deterioration of technical and aesthetic standards, therefore, show a clear chronology of traditional East African architecture and its decoration. Conversely, the Chwaka Jamia and Ras-Mkumbuu mihrabs with their elaborate decorative embellishments exhibit a higher standard of technical skill and a feeling for decorative style, consequently they are not likely to be the work of a local craftsman. The only explanation here, then, would be that since a local craftsman lived in a society where the art of building was still in its infancy, and where he was likely to be faced with limitations in the constructional techniques and the knowledge of applying the creative design into architecture, he would be unlikely to produce results better than those which could only be produced by an artisan of higher experience, such as an artisan from a country where architecture achieved a more profound expres-

ssion. The conclusion is that the mihrābs of Chwaka Jamia and Ras-Mkumbuu are unique and likely to be the products of foreign builders, and that they belong to an earlier date than the others. This theory should not exclude the possibilities that mosques other than the two mentioned were built by outside builders, but also that the outside influence gradually became increasingly rare.

The only legitimate approach to seek the origins of the architecture of Zanzibar and Pemba of this middle period would be, then, to study the decorative motifs manifest in the mihrābs of Chwaka Jamia and Ras-Mkumbuu -- mainly because these mihrābs are likely to have outside influences more than the others, insofar that they were built at the beginning of this period. Peter Garlake explains that " in no one region of the Near East are there sufficiently numerous or detailed parallels to enable clear conclusions on the origins to be confirmed without doubt<sup>1</sup> ". This is

**1. Carlisle, The Early Islamic Architecture of the East African Coast, pp. 113.**

Since we are dealing with a period which is the middle period of the coast, for the sake of comparison, it would be proper to compare this with the architecture of the medieval period outside East Africa. This is a more logical approach since the buildings of the East African coast are likely to be following the general types of architecture of their own time elsewhere. But since the standard and quality of the medieval architecture varies at the major cities from about

the middle period of the coast, for the sake of comparison, it would be proper to compare this with the architecture of the medieval period outside East Africa. This is a more logical approach since the buildings of the East African coast are likely to be following the general types of architecture of their own time elsewhere. But since the standard and quality of the medieval architecture varies at the major cities from about

very true, but one should not expect to find resemblances of decorative motifs, for instance, between the East African and the Near Eastern to be very close. The reasons for this have been given at large at the beginning of this chapter! The early mosques of the coast are insignificant if compared with those of the other parts of the Islamic World; mosques which have been master-planned by noted architects, and ornamented by competent designers, and financed by wealthy and renowned Caliphs and Sultāns,

Since we are dealing with mihrābs belonging to the middle period at the coast, for the sake of comparison, it would be proper to compare them with the architecture of the medieval period outside East Africa. This is a more logical approach since the builders of the East African mosques were likely to be following the current styles of architecture of their own home countries. But since the standard and quality of the medieval architectural styles of the major cities from abroad

1. See above, pp. 143-154.

The first African Court, the first African Court to be established in Africa, was the African Court of Conscience, established in 1961. The court was established in the context of the African continent, and its jurisdiction was limited to the African continent. The court was established in the context of the African continent, and its jurisdiction was limited to the African continent. The court was established in the context of the African continent, and its jurisdiction was limited to the African continent.

of all the African states, the African Court of Conscience, established in 1961, was the first African Court to be established in Africa. The court was established in the context of the African continent, and its jurisdiction was limited to the African continent. The court was established in the context of the African continent, and its jurisdiction was limited to the African continent. The court was established in the context of the African continent, and its jurisdiction was limited to the African continent.



are much more highly sophisticated than those of the East African Coast, one would hardly expect to find absolutely similar or common resemblances. The reasonable approach, perhaps, would be to compare the works of the East African builders to that of ordinary builders of small towns from abroad, as they were most likely to be the ones employed at the East African Coast. This is not an easy task because the provincial medieval architecture of Islam is insufficiently documented.

Of all the mihrābs of Pemba, Chwaka Jamia, ( PLATE 9 ) in spite of its present ruinous condition, is undoubtedly, the most elaborate example of all the mihrābs on the Island. Most of the subsequent builders, in one way or the other, have drawn architectural inspiration from it. The general aspect of the mihrāb arch and its decoration seems to be characteristic of Indian work. This characteristic of Indian architecture is emphasized by the treatment of its wall surfaces; features which are overworked with decorative embellis-

hments, producing a style which sometimes has been described as aesthetically uninteresting, or to put it crudely as aesthetically barren. This style of over-elaboration was an adaptation of the Hindu art tradition to Muslim ideals. Apart from the pointed arches ( and the domes, Islamic ), which may have been brought to India from Persia and Turkistan, the rest was taken over from the Hindu tradition, with, of course, all objectionable idolatrous elements removed. The surface walls were over-loaded with figurative works, depicting all the glorious gods, floral motifs, bosses or rosettes, or both. To give only two good examples, such decorative works are to be seen on the surface walls of Amarvati Stupa ( 3rd. century A.D. ), and Deogarh Temple ( 6th. century A.D. ). Figurative and animal representations are expurgated in Islam, but other decorative motifs appealed to the Indian builder of mosques, who looked back to his own cultural heritage. In the same way as Persian or Turkish decorative works are recognisable

on aesthetic considerations, the work of an Indian also remains distinctive.

Hindu motifs, therefore, continued to form a major part of Indo-Muslim architecture until at the end of the sixteenth century. The common decorative characteristics, apart from floral motifs, and very few Calligraphic friezes, are often clumsy. Rosettes laid out in great numbers on a background of floral design or plain surface. The mihrāb of Chhota Sona Masjid<sup>1</sup>, at Gaur, built between 1493-1519, would give the correct description of such ornamentation. A note on the decoration of the mihrāb wall may also be added. A number of rosettes, over hundred of them, consisting of different sizes, spreading from the vault to spandrel and to the upper part of the north wall ( qiblah ), dominate the decorative composition of the mihrāb. Similarly, the rosettes in Bagha Mosque<sup>2</sup>, in Rajshahi District, built in A.D. 1523, is richly embellished. The spandrel of the arch and the frame above the niche are over-loaded with some twenty

1. Dani, *Muslim Architecture in Bengal*, Fig. 56.

also in *Bejotikhi Chhantari*, Vol. II, p. 100.

2. Ibid., Dani, Fig. 69.

It is very common along the coast of the Bay of Bengal. The name is that of the famous mosque (17th century), at Dhaka, and the famous mosque (A.D. 1697), also at Dhaka. It is interesting to note that all these mosques were built during the fifteenth and the early sixteenth century.

It is most probably from here that the element of the Orissa style of ornamentation is derived, and that only a person possessing a decorative taste could produce this type of sculpture. The chief feature of Orissa style, the motif of the Orissa style or Kumbha, was the ornamentation of concrete decorative motifs, and all were the products of the Orissa style. The difference here is that instead of any ornament, there was no ornament by imported materials but the ornament was the wall, and as part of the ornamentation. The illustration. Any sculpture is not common in the

rosettes. This is even more so at Kasumba mihrāb<sup>1</sup>, also in Rajshahi District, built in A.D. 1558.

The mihrāb is excessively ornamented with some fifty or more rosettes along the framework of the mihrāb alone. The same is true of Dhunichak Mosque<sup>2</sup> ( 15th. century ), at Gaur, and Darasbari Mosque<sup>3</sup> ( A.D. 1497 ), also at Gaur. It is interesting to note that all these mosques were built during the fifteenth and the early sixteenth century.

It is most probably from here that the sources of the Chwaka Jamia style of ornamentation is derived, and that only a person possessing such a decorative taste could produce this type of mihrāb. The chief feature of Chwaka Jamia, like that of Chhota Sona or Kasumba, was the over-loading of numerous decorative motifs, spread all over the spandrels of the mihrāb arch. The difference here is that instead of many rosettes, these were substituted by imported porcelain bowls embedded into the wall, used as part of the decorative embellishments. Many mihrābs in East Africa, for inst-

1. Dani, *Muslim Architecture in Bengal*,  
Fig. 78.
2. *Ibid.*, Dani, Fig. 41.
3. *Ibid.*, Dani., Fig. 42.

Like the mosques of India, the mosques at Dhaka and Jessore are of different sizes, so as to give variety. They are grouped along the walls of the city and along the rivers, an arrangement commonly employed in India. The bodies of some of the original mosques, uncovered at the foot of the wall, proved to be of the style of the King dynasty, while some of the fragments with inscribed patterns on the walls of the bodies were assigned to date from the King dynasty (A.D. 150-175). In addition to the decorative carvings, the wall is also ornamented with three other kinds of ornament with a table-top-

ance, are decorated with porcelain insets on either side as a substitute for coral bosses, which probably take the place of the rosettes of India. Such a use of bowl insets is to be found on the mihrābs of Mbweni, Shengejuu, Ungwana, Pate, and Kua. And where there are no bowl insets -- one on each side -- the bosses provide such an embellishment.

Like the rosettes of India, the porcelain at Chwaka Jamia are of different sizes, so as to give variations. They are spread along the spandrels of the mihrāb arch and along the framework, an arrangement commonly employed in India. The broken fragments of some of the original bowls, excavated at the foot of the wall, proved to be Celadon-glaze pottery of the Ming dynasty, while some of the fragments with incised patterns on the inside of the bowls were adjudged to date from the Sung dynasty<sup>1</sup> ( A.D. 960-1279 ). In addition to the decorative porcelain, the wall is also ornamented with three stone bosses surrounded with a cable-pat-

1. Pearce, Zanzibar, The Island Metropolis of Eastern Africa, pp.

work, while the remaining two volumes are in various stages of the subject. The author and his assistants have set all the type patterns, while the text and the illustrations are in various stages. All these have a preliminary stage in their design of economic application. In design, the volume of Pearce is a valuable source of historical subjects.

Industrially speaking, the Zanzibar and Malindi, Malindi subjects of India are better specimens of Malindi are than Malindi India and Malindi are better specimens in their various parts of Malindi. The quality of Malindi of the Malindi are Malindi, and the high standard of their Malindi, and the quality of their Malindi, clearly show that the Malindi of these Malindi are Malindi greater Malindi and Malindi of Malindi Malindi, Malindi which are the Malindi the Malindi of the Malindi Malindi. Comparison of the Malindi Malindi and the Malindi Malindi



tern edging. The largest of the three, is placed about two inches over the point of the mihrāb arch, while the remaining two bosses are on either side of the mihrāb. The centre and right-hand bosses are of the same pattern, while the left one is ornamented with an extra ring. All three have a scalloped edge to their designs of concentric circles. In design, the bosses of Chwaka Jamia resemble those of Darasbari mihrāb.<sup>1</sup>

Architecturally speaking, the fifteenth and sixteenth century mihrābs of India are better examples of Islamic art than Chwaka Jamia, and somehow better proportioned in their various parts of decoration. The quality of execution of the Indian rosettes, and the high standard of their manipulation, and the stability of their construction, clearly shows that the builders of these mosques had acquired greater experience and knowledge of constructional techniques, qualities which are far beyond the reach of the Chwaka builder. Comparison of the Indian rosette and the Chwaka boss reveals

1. Dani, Muslim Architecture in Bengal, Fig. 42.

Reference is only given to two bosses along the arch spandrel above the mihrāb.

Though surprised by his limited knowledge and restricted skill, the young Sultan was fascinated by the high standards of decorative work of the builders, and he asked the Sultan to probably send some of his work to a workshop for his Indian master, perhaps to give a closer reflection of Indian styles to the otherwise severe simplicity of the mihrāb. This probably satisfied the craving of his people for a far embellished individuality, and above-all, probably satisfied his love for over-elaboration of design, a feature which was considered to be aesthetically attractive by India.

There was, also, further resemblance between them, as they both used a wide and Indian-Islamic architecture. After certain motifs like the floral, geometric, oval or almond shapes, the flat faced shells or scalloped patterns, and the pointed

that the latter is a work of a lesser craftsman, a designer whose knowledge and experience would not warrant him to decorate Bagha or Darasbari. Though hampered by his limited knowledge and technical skill, the Chwaka builder was knowledgeable of the high standards of decorative works of his homelands. And to adorn the walls, he probably used porcelain bowls as a substitute for his Indian rosettes, perhaps to give a closer reflection of Indian styles to the otherwise severe simplicity of the mihrāb. This probably satisfied the cravings of his patron and a few enlightened individuals, and above-all, probably satisfied his love for over-elaboration of design, a feature which was considered to be aesthetically attractive in India.

There are, also, further resemblances between Pemba, or East Africa as a whole and Indian Islamic architecture. Peter Garlake writes that " the simple, pointed, ogival or nicked arches, the flat faced false or corbelled pendentive, and the method

of transition between octagon and circular dome seat achieved by the varying projection of multiple stonework cornices ( the latter so characteristic of the Kilwa domed buildings ) are all characteristic of India. In India, like East Africa, the otherwise ubiquitous Islamic Stalac-tite vaulting is never found -- though in East Africa this can be easily explained as due to lack of skill and the technical complexities involved<sup>1</sup> " .

The simple, pointed and ogival arches of Indian type are very common in East Africa. The pointed mihrāb arch of Ras-Mkumbuu ( PLATE 5 ), can be traceable, for instance, at Bagerhat, in East Pakistan, at Sath Gumbad Mosque<sup>2</sup>. There are numerous mihrāb arches along the East African Coast with similar pointed arches. From the fourteenth century, in India, the ogival arches began to change into the rounded type, though in East Africa, the rounded type came much later in date. In Pemba, the mihrāb arches of Msuka

1. **Garlake, The Early Islamic Architecture of the East African Coast, pp. 115.**

2. **Dani, Muslim Architecture in Bengal, Fig. 61.**

small niches or pillars recessed on either side, usually two of the centre, sometimes higher or but very seldom below the centre-line of the mihrāb proper. In some instances, these niches are placed inside the mihrāb arch, their shafts placed above and their capitals, over the individual builder. Unlike India, mihrābs in East Africa very often have niches, usually in five rows, such as *ḥaram*<sup>1</sup> and *ḥaram*<sup>2</sup>, which have none. In India, mihrāb arches have four or more (sometimes the number of niches on a given wall exceeds twenty) small niches, often rectangular, on a miniature scale at the mihrāb arch, as in the mihrābs of *ḥaram* Ajmer, *ḥaram*, and *ḥaram* Kara, except that the number of niches in these cases is less.

The main difference between the Indian and the East African niches is that the latter are

Mjini and Verani are two good examples.

There is, yet, further resemblance between East African and Indian Islamic architecture. In India, like East Africa, mihrāb arches have small niches or pilaster recesses on either side, usually set at the centre, sometimes higher up but very seldom below the centre-line of the mihrāb proper. In some instances, these niches are placed inside the mihrāb arch, their exact placing, sizes and their number, rest upon the individual builder. Unlike India, mihrābs in East Africa very often have niches, except in few cases, such as Mafui<sup>1</sup> and Tundwa<sup>2</sup>, which have one. In India, mihrāb arches have four or more ( sometimes the number of niches on qiblah wall exceeds twenty ) small niches, often reduplicated, on a miniature scale of the mihrāb arch, as in the mihrābs of Msuka Mjini, Mbweni, and Songo Mnara, except that the number of niches in these three is less.

The main difference between the Indian and the East African niches is that the latter are

1. **Garlake, The Early Islamic Architecture of the East African Coast, Fig. 30.**

2. **Ibid., Garlake, Fig. 61.**

of the Yez niches in India, used both symmetrically and functionally, are those in the mosque of Muzaffar<sup>1</sup>, in Ponné district, built in the fifteenth century. Examples of these niches are to be found at the mosque of Sultan Khan Ghazi<sup>2</sup>, at Utriyah, in Adilshah<sup>3</sup>, at Sultan Pasha, where the blind niches are not inside the mihrāb — as is the case in India; in the main mosque of Jango Muzra<sup>4</sup>; and in many other mihrābs in the East African Mosques. Also the blind niches in India which extend on either side of the mihrāb are revealed at Chhatra Nama Masjid<sup>5</sup>, in Daur, at Fajra Masjid<sup>6</sup>, in Rajahmundry district, and in many others. In India, the arrangement of blind niches is very common in mosques and other walls of mosques as well as in the walls, balconies, gates, niches, and tombs of villages. The blind niches of the type-

deep, probably intended to be decorative as well as functional. Most of the Indian niches or recesses, to be more precise, are blind, hardly few inches deep, and therefore purely decorative. Of the few niches in India, used both decoratively and functionally, are those in the mosque of Shahzadpur<sup>1</sup>, in Pabna district, built in the fifteenth century. Examples of these niches are to be found at the mosque of Zafar Khan Ghazi<sup>2</sup>, at Tribeni; in Adina Masjid<sup>3</sup>, at Hazrat Pandua, where the blind niches are set inside the mihrab -- as in Kua Jamia<sup>4</sup>; in the main mosque of Songo Mnara<sup>5</sup>; and in many other mihrabs on the East African Coast. Also the blind niches in India which decorate either side of the mihrab are revealed at Chhota Sona Masjid<sup>6</sup>, in Gaur, at Bagha Mosque<sup>7</sup>, in Rajshahi District, and in many others. In India, the extensive use of blind niches is very common on facades and other walls of mosques as well as on tombs, palaces, forts, mausoleums, and domestic buildings. The blind niches at the tympan-



1. Dani, *Muslim Architecture in Bengal*,  
Fig. 73.
2. *Ibid.*, Dani, Fig. 3.
3. *Ibid.*, Dani, Fig. 22.
4. Garlake, *The Early Islamic Architecture of  
the East African Coast*, Fig. 43.
5. *Ibid.*, Garlake, Fig. 48.
6. *Cf.*, Dani, Fig. 57.
7. *Ibid.*, Dani, Fig. 69.

anum of Adina Masjid<sup>1</sup>, in Hazrat Pandua; on the Entrance Gate to the fort of Dakhil Darwaza<sup>2</sup>, in Gaur; at the Eastern facade of Tantipara Masjid<sup>3</sup>, in Gaur; also on the facade of Chhota Sona Masjid<sup>4</sup>, in Gaur; on the entrance-gate to Sankarpasa Masjid<sup>5</sup>, in Sylhet district; on the exterior walls of the mosque of Qutb<sup>6</sup>, in Ashtagram; on the facade of Kusumba Mosque<sup>7</sup>, in Rajshahi district; on the Tomb of Shah Niamatullah Wali<sup>8</sup>, in Gaur -- here the niches or pilaster recesses are functional and decorative as in East Africa; and similarly in the mosque of Shah Niamatullah Wali<sup>9</sup>, where the niches -- functionally, decoratively and in shape -- resemble those of the East African mosques; and also on the Shah Shuja's Gate<sup>10</sup>, in Gaur.

Like India, again, mihrāb arches such as that of Ras-Mkumbuu, Shengejuu, Chwaka Jamia, Kaole<sup>11</sup>, Pate<sup>12</sup>, Kimbiji<sup>13</sup>, Kua Jamia<sup>14</sup>, and many others on the East African Coast have niches of simple rectangular shape, in contrast to those of the reduplication of mihrāb proper, already mentioned<sup>15</sup>.

1. Dani, *Muslim Architecture in Bengal*,  
Fig. 19.
2. *Ibid.*, Dani, Fig. 38.
3. *Ibid.*, Dani, Fig. 39.
4. *Ibid.*, Dani, Fig. 58.
5. *Ibid.*, Dani, Fig. 67.
6. *Ibid.*, Dani, Fig. 75.
7. *Ibid.*, Dani, Fig. 76.
8. *Ibid.*, Dani, Fig. 84.
9. *Ibid.*, Dani, Fig. 85.
10. *Ibid.*, Dani, Fig. 86.

11. Garlake, *The Early Islamic Architecture of the East African Coast*, Fig. 20.

12. *Ibid.*, Garlake, Fig. 32.

13. *Ibid.*, Garlake, Fig. 40.

14. *Ibid.*, Garlake, Fig. 43.

15. See above, pp. 234, 236.

The Palace Gate at Zanzibar (PLATE VI), built during the late fifteenth century is decorated with simple rectangular niches, immediately above

In India, the rectangular type of niches -- some blind and some not -- are used in great numbers to decorate walls -- this can easily be explained as due to the much bigger sizes of walls, of which many niches will be required to cover the surface area of the exterior walls of mosques, tombs, and mausoleums. And when they are used for interior decoration, they are, like East Africa, used sparingly. But, unlike India, the exterior walls of East African mosques are simple and plain. In India, walls embellished with niches, which do not necessarily imitate the main arch form, are to be found on the facade of Shah Muhammad's mosque<sup>1</sup>, in Egarasindur; on a seventeenth century unknown tomb<sup>2</sup>, near Satgumbad, in Dacca; on the facade of Atiya Jami Masjid<sup>3</sup>; on the exterior walls of a mosque<sup>4</sup>, at Gurai; and on the eastern facade of Katra mosque<sup>5</sup>, in Murshidabad.

The Palace Gate of Gedi ( PLATE 14 ), built during the late fifteenth century is decorated with simple rectangular niches, immediately above

1. Dani, *Muslim Architecture in Bengal*, *Ibid.*,  
Fig. 106.
2. *Ibid.*, Dani, Fig. 95.
3. *Ibid.*, Dani, Fig. 109.
4. *Ibid.*, Dani, Fig. 110.
5. *Ibid.*, Dani, Fig. 119.

The extensive use of white, weathered stone  
or brick, particularly in the form of geometric  
masses, the use of simple, unadorned, or  
a few simple lines, as in the case of the  
of the, that characteristically, in the present  
condition of the culture in the, in the  
of the, of the, of the, of the, of the,

the gate. The niches, eight in all, completely cover the top part of the gate-frame, in an exactly the same way as the five arched door-ways of the Bagha mosque<sup>1</sup>, in Rajshahi district; as on the three arched door-ways of Qutb mosque<sup>2</sup>, in Ashtagram; as above the two arched door-ways of Bibi Pari Mausoleum<sup>3</sup>, in Dacca; as on the Lalbagh Mosque<sup>4</sup>, in Dacca; as on the arched door-ways of Kar Talab Khan's mosque<sup>5</sup>, also in Dacca; as on the four arched door-ways of Katra Mosque<sup>6</sup>, in Murshidabad; as above the gateway of the tomb of Alivardi Khan<sup>7</sup>, in Murshidabad; similarly also as on the gateway of an unknown tomb<sup>8</sup>, in Nauda; and on many other buildings in India.

The extensive use of niches, whether blind or real, reduplicated or of simple rectangular shape, whether used sparingly or numerously, is a characteristic common to India and East Africa at large. Such characteristic, to the present knowledge of the author -- is not to be found in other parts of the Islamic World such as <sup>c</sup>Iraq,

1. See above, pp. 269, 270, n.7.
2. See above, pp. 271, 272, n. 6.
3. Dani, *Muslim Architecture in Bengal*, Fig. 89.
4. *Ibid.*, Dani, Fig. 90.
5. *Ibid.*, Dani, Fig. 101.
6. *Ibid.*, Dani, Fig. 119.
7. *Ibid.*, Dani, Fig. 120.
8. *Ibid.*, Dani, Fig. 128.



Iran, Syria, Turkey, the U.S.S.R., Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, and the like. And even if such characteristic was present in the architecture of Islam of other countries, then its use was so small and insignificant as to assume that it was from these countries that the source of the East African Coastal style be derived. But since this characteristic feature is so widely present in Indian architecture; so widely, frequently and extensively used as to be easily recognized as exclusively Indian, and since that the same characteristic is so closely similar to the style of the East African Coast, it may be reasonably assumed that the Coastal builders of the middle period were of Indian origin. The extensive use of well proportioned niches which cover large parts of surface walls of domestic buildings in East Africa, in the same way as the walls in India are decorated, will be observed on the eighteenth century domestic buildings at Shela ( PLATES 10, 11, 12, 26, 27 ), Pate ( PLATE 28 ), and Lamu ( PLATES 13, 29, 30 ),

in Kenya.

The recovery and subsequent dating of imported porcelain and glazed ware, made possible by archaeological excavations of a number of sites along the East African Coast provided additional knowledge in an attempt to build a chronology of architectural development. The Islamic yellow sgraffiato found at Ras-Mkumbuu, in Pemba, are attributed to the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries by Arthur Lane<sup>1</sup>, but the finder of the sherds assigned the foundation of the settlement to the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century. His difficulty in giving a definite date is understandable as the date of the occurrence of sgraffiato at Ras-Mkumbuu is difficult to fix with precision. However, Peter Garlake is of the opinion that the mosque was built in the late fourteenth century. He writes that " the sherd pattern, not only from inside and outside the mosque, but also over the entire site is identical. It could not, therefore, have been occupied for more

1. Arthur Lane, *Early Islamic Pottery*,  
pp. 26, 34.

than two hundred years at the most, and such a completely stable sherd pattern is unlikely to span much more than one hundred years, with the building of the mosque taking place towards the end of this period. Not a single Chinese blue and white, Islamic monochrome or black on yellow sherd was found. The absence of the latter may not be significant, but the absence of the former types must mean that the site was abandoned by the mid-fifteenth century if not by the start of this century. The majority of the porcelain compares with fourteenth century, or very early fifteenth century sherds from Gedi, though the earlier sherds are wares of the late thirteenth century. The sgraffiato sherds are also comparable to sherds from late thirteenth and fourteenth century levels at Gedi, Kilepwa, and Ungwana. The evidence all indicates, therefore, an occupation basically of the fourteenth century, but probably stretching from the late thirteenth century to the early fourteenth century. The mosque was, there-

fore, probably built in the late fourteenth century<sup>1</sup> ". This is a reasonable assumption if the earlier sherds are wares of the late thirteenth century, but if they belong to the late twelfth century<sup>2</sup>, then the mosque, was probably built in the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century as Kirkman suggests.

The mosque of Ras-Mkumbuu appears to be, therefore, the earliest mosque on the Island of Pemba. The general excellence of the workmanship displayed in the mihrāb ( PLATE 5 ), its simplicity and its refined quality which exhibits a superior sense of architectural style over other mihrābs in Pemba, confirms the opinion that the mosque was built at an early date. Garlake classifies the mihrāb of this type -- for convenience of analysis -- to the early classic style, a style which occurs at Tongoni<sup>3</sup>, in the two mosques of Muhembo<sup>4</sup>, in mainland Tanzania, in the small Mosque at Gedi<sup>5</sup>, at Kiburugeni<sup>6</sup>, and in the mosque of Tumbatu<sup>7</sup> ( in the small mihrāb of the east

1. Garlake, *The Early Islamic Architecture of the East African Coast*, pp. 55.
2. Consult Arthur Lane, *Early Islamic Pottery*, pp. 26, 34.
3. Cf. Garlake, Fig. 5.
4. *Ibid.*, Garlake, Fig. 6.
5. *Ibid.*, Garlake, Fig. 10.
6. *Ibid.*, Garlake, Fig. 7.
7. *Ibid.*, Garlake, Fig. 12.

side room ). In classifying these mihrābs, that of Ras-Mkumbuu shows a better sense of proportion ( in its pointed niche at the apex ), and finished with a mature sense of refinement, and the touch of an experienced craftsman.

The mihrāb ( PLATE 5 ) consists of a plain, substantial arched recess, with pointed arch of two orders. It shows no sign of being decorated with porcelain of any type. Peter Garlake describes the mihrāb to be " surrounded by a plain architrave ( about 250 cms. wide and 280cms. high ), formed by pilasters and lintol ( all about 42 cms. wide, and projecting 8 cms. from the north wall ). The capital is a plain square block of coral about 10 cms. high, normally projecting from, but often flush with, the spandrel and outer jamb face. The semicircular mihrāb apse and semidome are regular in shape and have a completely plain plastered finish<sup>1</sup> ".

Of the early classic mihrabs, only Ras-Mkumbuu and Tongoni have rectangular niches or recess-





ses, one on either side of the mihrāb. They are framed by a single rebate, with their bases at the level of the capital. The complete absence of coral bosses on the early classic mihrābs gives a striking feature to their general appearances -- a feature which is very uncommon on mihrābs of the later period, with, perhaps, an exception of the few. This characteristic is significant in all mihrābs of the early period in Iran. For instance the mihrāb<sup>1</sup>, in a small village of Ashtarjan, ( in the area of Isfahan ), built around 1315-16; the mihrāb of Pir-i-Baqran<sup>2</sup> ( A.D. 1299-1311 ), in Linjan; that of Masjid-i Pa Minar<sup>3</sup> ( probably A.D. twelfth century ), in Zavareh; also the mihrāb in the main prayer chamber of the congregational mosque<sup>4</sup> -- an example of a typical classic mihrāb in Iran -- at Veramin ( near Rayy ), built in A.D. 1322-6; similarly a mihrāb in the mosque of Imamsadeh<sup>5</sup> of Shah Husayn, also in Veramin, ( probably fourteenth century ); that of the congregational mosque<sup>6</sup>, in Qazvin ( twe-

1. Derek Hill and Oleg Grabar, *Islamic Architecture And Its Decoration*, Fig. 303.
2. *Ibid.*, Derek Hill and Oleg Grabar, Fig. 290.
3. *Ibid.*, Derek Hill and Oleg Grabar, Fig. 280.
4. *Ibid.*, Derek Hill and Oleg Grabar, Fig. 263.
5. *Ibid.*, Derek Hill and Oleg Grabar, Fig. 253.
6. *Ibid.*, Derek Hill and Oleg Grabar, Fig. 250.

11th century ); and the mihrāb in the mosque of Bayazid al-Bistami Shrine<sup>1</sup>, in Bistam ( twelfth century ), are only few examples of mihrābs without bosses. Mihrābs of the later period in Iran, such as that in the Shah Mosque in Isfahan, and mihrāb in the mosque of Chahar Bagh, also in Isfahan, and many others, are without bosses or rosettes. Similarly, the early mihrābs in India, such as that of Adina Masjid<sup>2</sup> ( A.D. 1375 ), in Hazrat Pandua, has only two rosettes, one on either side. That was the time when Iranian influence on Indian architecture was strong. It was only late in the fifteenth century, that the number of rosettes used multiplied. This characteristic would seem to bring the architectural style of mihrābs of the early classic period in East Africa closer together, especially those of Muhembo, Kiburungeni, Tumbatu and Gedi ( the minor mosque ), in the sense that, like those of Iran, they are without niches or recesses. But on the other hand, the mihrābs of Ras-Mkumbuu, and Tongoni ( both of

1. Derek Hill and Oleg Grabar, *Islamic Architecture And Its Decoration*, Fig. 189.

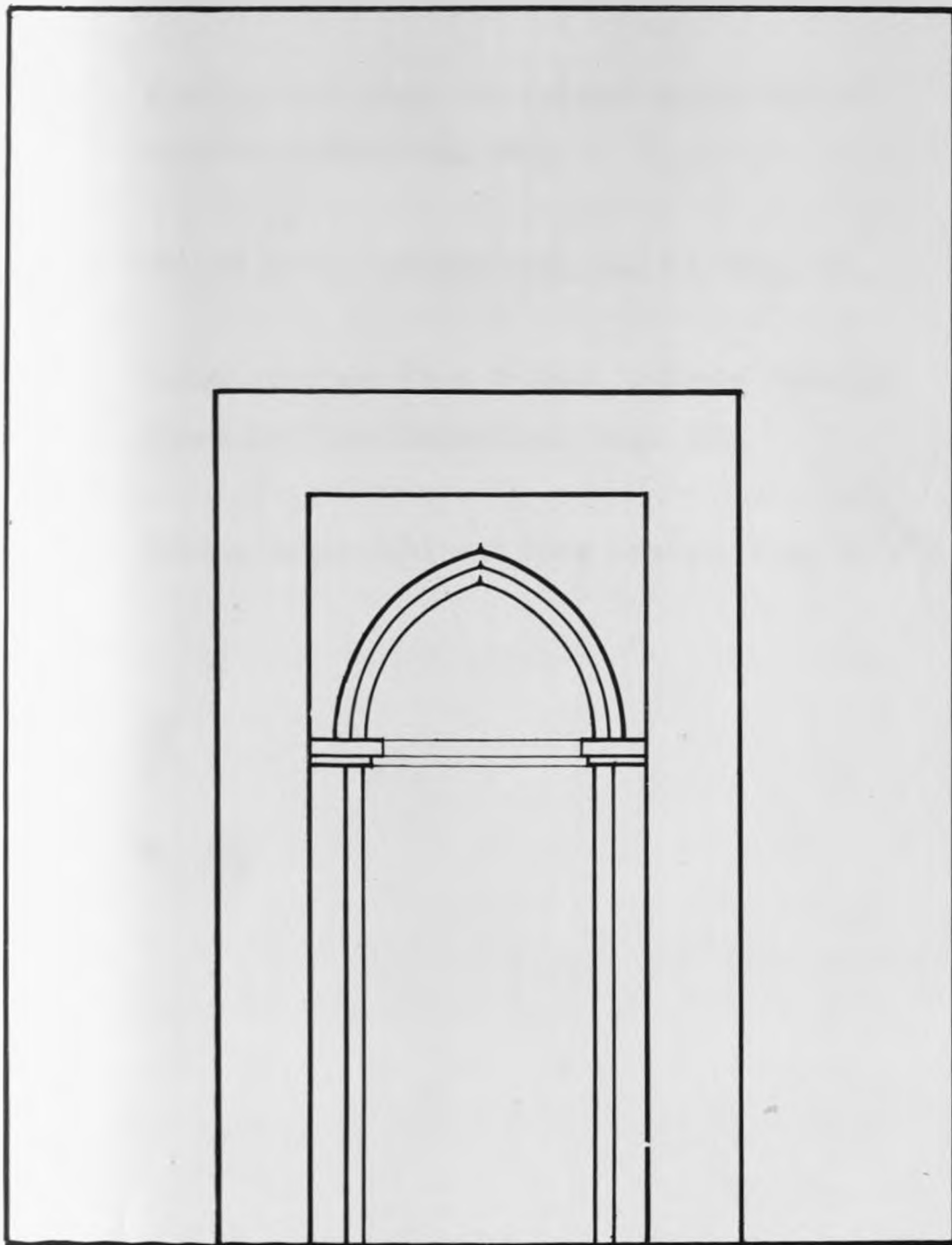
2. Dani, *Muslim Architecture in Bengal*, Fig. 22.

The design of the first window is the product of the early Islamic period, and is very different from all other windows of this period, and indeed from all other windows of the medieval period. It is perhaps the only window of the medieval period which is not a product of the early Islamic period. The design of the second window is the product of the early Islamic period, and is very different from all other windows of this period, and indeed from all other windows of the medieval period. It is perhaps the only window of the medieval period which is not a product of the early Islamic period. The design of the third window is the product of the early Islamic period, and is very different from all other windows of this period, and indeed from all other windows of the medieval period. It is perhaps the only window of the medieval period which is not a product of the early Islamic period.

the early classic period ) contain niches, and this would seem to negate the assumption that they are closer together in their architectural form, and such an evidence is, therefore, not conclusive. This evidence, however, may suggest that the influence on East African architecture during the early classic period was Indo-Iranian, and that it was only early in the sixteenth century that the influence on the Coastal East African architecture was predominantly Indian.

The design of the four arched door-ways in the eastern wall of the Tumbatu mosque -- also belonging to the early classic period -- is strikingly different from all other arches of this period, and indeed from all later arches of the coastal mosques. It is evident that the designer of the arcade was responsible for the erection of the arched small mihrāb ( FIG. 6 ), of the eastern side room, and that it is similar in form to the four arched door-ways. The arcades and the small mihrāb are attractively graceful, slender and elon-

gated, with its pointed arch beautifully set high up on the capital, giving a good sense of proportion. The mihrāb is simple and plain, with no pilaster recess or niche, coral bosses or ceramic insets. Describing the mihrāb in 1920, Pearce writes that " to-day we see it battered and crumbling, but in its decrepitude the touch of the true artist in stone is evident in its perfect proportion and grace of design. It is composed of the roughest blocks of rock, there is no embellishment whatever, and yet its merit is obvious<sup>1</sup>". The design of the Tumbatu arched door-ways is not different from that of arched door-ways contained in mosques, shrines, mausoleums, and tombs in Iran. Such a form at the Tumbatu arch -- though the arches are larger in size and scale in Iran -- shows similarities to the interior arches in the Masjid-i-Jami<sup>2</sup> of Isfahan ( A.D. 1088 ); to that of the entrance to shrine<sup>3</sup>, in Bistam, built between 1299-1313; to the blind arch of the Gunbadh-i Surkh<sup>4</sup> of Maraghab, built in A.D. 1147; to the



0 20 40 60 80 C.M.S.

**Fig. 6**  
**Mihrāb, Tumbatu,**  
**Zanzibar.**

1. Pearce, Zanzibar, The Island Metropolis of Eastern Africa, pp. 401.
2. Talbot Rice, Islamic Art, pp. 40, Fig. 56.
3. Derek Hill and Oleg Grabar, Islamic Architecture And Its Decoration, Fig. 185.
4. Ibid., Derek Hill and Oleg Grabar, Fig. 223.



doorway of mausoleum of Yusuf Kathir<sup>1</sup>, in Azerb-  
 ayjan, dated A.D. 1161-2; and to the arched niche  
 of a Khangah<sup>2</sup> ( Muslim equivalent of the monastery ),  
 in Natanz ( Central Iran ), dated between 1304-  
 1325. These arches show an Iranian inventiveness  
 of design, and as such, they are differentiated  
 from most of the arch forms of ether countries of  
 Islam. If the Tumbatu arched door-ways and mihrāb  
 ( of the eastern side room ) had adopted its arc-  
 hed design from abroad, then it is very probable,  
 therefore, that the style and their builders came  
 from Iran.

Tumbatu was an important settlement in the  
 thirteenth century, and that the people of the Is-  
 land of ' T u m b a t ' were already Muslims at  
 that time. This information is given by the Arab  
 geographer Yāqūt<sup>3</sup>, in his geographical dictionary,  
 Mu<sup>o</sup>jan al Buldān, 749 years ago. Its importance  
 is indicated by the considerable size of the rui-  
 ns. Major Pearce tells us that " Tumbatu group  
 of ruins is the largest and most extensive of any

1. Derek Hill and Oleg Grabar, *Islamic Architecture And Its Decooration*, Fig. 227.
2. *Ibid.*, Derek Hill and Oleg Grabar, Fig. 268.
3. In his geographical dictionary, Yāqūt says that Languja is a large Island in the land of Zanj, where their King lives. The vessels which trade on this coast come there to car-  
 een. .... The inhabitants have been removed from this island to another called ' T u m b a t ' , the inhabitants of which are Muslims. The word Tumbat is one of the few names of East African Coast mentioned in the writings of medieval writers. That the modern island of Tumbatu is referred to by Yāqūt is clear owing to the statement of the same writer that the people of Languja or, Lendguja, is certainly identical with the modern name ' U n g u j a ' , that is, the Swahili name for Zanzibar.

yet discovered in Zanzibar and Pemba Islands, and that they stretch for some two miles<sup>1</sup>". By A.D. 1500, the island had either been deserted, or had been of only minor importance. The Tumbatu settlement is, undoubtedly, much older than 749 years, if the city had been flourishing in A.D. 1220. Major Pearce seems to consider favourably the Watumbatu's traditional belief that the town was commenced as early as A.D. 900. He writes that "this date would only allow three centuries for the town to have attained sufficient importance to have been worthy of mention by an Arab geographer in A.D. 1220; and it is evident, from the substantial nature of the buildings, that the town ..... must represent an occupancy of many centuries<sup>2</sup>". This assumption may not be far from the truth, but what we know for certain from Mu<sup>C</sup>ajam al-Buldān is that the settlement was there in A.D. 1220. This may not include all the ruined buildings which exist to-day, as it is possible that more buildings were erected after 1220. But of

1. Pearce, Zanzibar, The Island Metropolis of Eastern Africa, pp. 399.
2. Ibid., Pearce, pp. 407.

the buildings which were in existence in 1220, a mosque would, most probably be one of them in a Muslim town. If this is so, Tumbatu mosque is probably of earlier date than Ras-Mkumbuu.

Although construction in brick predominates in Iran, there are many buildings which display structures of rubble masonry with a plaster finish, so typical of East Africa. This, in fact, was very much so prior to the seljuk period, that is before A.D. 1220. The mosque at Tumbatu and other buildings there are constructed of rubble-work, bound together with lime-mortar<sup>1</sup>. We have also seen that the design of arches at the Tumbatu mosque are similar to the arches in Iran -- a style which had been already in use from the late eleventh century and continued to the early fourteenth century, and probably even later than that. So the rubble-masonry and the arch design are two distinctive features of the Tumbatu work, supplemented by Yaqūti's written record of A.D. 1220. This enables us to classify the Tumbatu mosque as

1. Pearce, Zanzibar, The Island Metropolis of Eastern Africa, pp. 399.

belonging to the Iranian type, and to date around the thirteenth century, and also to differentiate the style from other possible influence from abroad.

The simplicity of the early mihrāb of Tumbatu is not visible in mosques built during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This feature does not occur in the later developed mihrābs of Chwaka Jamia ( PLATE 9 ), Shengejuu ( PLATE 6 ), both in Pemba, and Jamia of Gedi ( PLATE 8 ), in Kenya. Although the apse remains plain, the mihrāb of Shengejuu mosque takes a different shape altogether, and it is difficult to see that its architectural form is derived from the early mihrābs, or to have been continued from the classic mihrābs of the sixteenth century. The mihrāb at Shengejuu consists of five arch orders, and because of such increase in orders, the mihrāb has to be made much wider so that the innermost jamb provides a reasonable niche for a normal and average mihrāb. Many mosques of this later period

have their features in common, because their mihrāb arches are elaborated in an identical way. Such a development does not seem, however, to be derived from a desire to break up the large plain area of the architrave as Garlake suggests<sup>1</sup>, nor does it enhance the general appearance of the niche.

The earlier mihrābs of Tumbatu and Ras-Mkumbuu version still remain tasteful and distinctive of the skill and artistic perception of the builders of the earlier period. Similarly, the mihrābs of Shengejuu and Chwaka Jamia are contained in frames which comprise of two or even more mouldings. At the latter mosque, the mouldings are increased to give four orders to the spandrel frame. As a result the spandrel increases in width and reduces the height of the qiblah frame enough to make the mihrāb arch -- which has already been increased in width to give room for more arch orders<sup>2</sup> -- appear even wider and shorter, so that the arch loses its artistic and architectural



1. **Garlake, The Early Islamic Architecture of the East African Coast, pp. 62.**

2. **See above, pp. 300.**

identity. This new development subsequently became a common feature in other parts of the East African Coast. In the Shengejuu mihrāb, the inner frame is doubled, to comprise two mouldings, instead of four, as in the case of Chwaka Jamia, because the mihrāb arch itself consists of five order, and any increase of mouldings in the spandrel frame, would virtually destroy the entire mihrāb.

The mihrāb of Msuka Mjini, in Pemba, which was probably built in the late eighteenth century, consists of a semicircular arch. Like many other mosques of the late period, the mosque is characterised by its small size and simplicity of its plaster mouldings. On the left of the mihrāb is a pilaster recess which was believed by Major Pearce, to contain a number of hieroglyphics<sup>1</sup>, and the recess is identical in form to the mihrāb proper. The suggested hieroglyphics appear to be just patterns cut at random. However, it is probably rightly thought by Pearce, in that the mihrāb at Msuka

1. Pearce, Zanzibar, The Island Metropolis of Eastern Africa, pp. 411.

and only Arabs, and the fact must be in fact, to believe that there had been such a population of people of different races, would have the very least need to the art of history.

Among the land those countries, the British have had some learning from the history of people for the time, for they, eventually were to be the rulers of the islands. But the British themselves were not sufficiently united and organized at once. They were more divided the Portuguese had since then and before yet to India, the Portuguese seized the opportunity to remove the defect which was now inflicted upon them by the British India, and conquered nations. In the year 1505 the first of India, against the British of India to this day and the people of America had since, until the British had captured some of them that had been used as good evidence to believe. The situation was not that even the

Mjini is a specimen of another cult<sup>1</sup>. The workmanship of this mosque is notably crude, and for this reason one is inclined to believe that Msuka Mjini has been built or patronised by people of different race, possibly those who are the least versed in the art of building.

During the last three centuries, the <sup>C</sup>Umāni Arabs had some bearing upon the history of Zanzibar and Pemba, for they, eventually were to be the rulers of the islands. But the <sup>C</sup>Umānis themselves were not sufficiently united and organized at home. When this news reached the Portuguese that civil discord had broken out in <sup>C</sup>Umān, the Portuguese seized the opportunity to reverse the defeat which was once inflicted upon them by the <sup>C</sup>Umāni Arabs, and recaptured Mombasa. At the same time the discord in <sup>C</sup>Umān, caused the <sup>C</sup>Umānis of Mombasa to take one side and those of Zanzibar the other, until partisanship had reached such a pitch that Mombasa sent an armed expedition to Zanzibar. The situation was such that peace did

1. Pearce, Zanzibar, The Island Metropolis of Eastern Africa, pp. 410.

It was anticipated the abolition of the  
 system of indentured labour, such as that of  
 India, China, by land and sea, as practised by  
 the "British" States, as to be likely to be the case,  
 and was not to be far from the truth. After all,  
 "British" was only a name, and without any  
 particular basis for the holding down. The "British"  
 was nothing of the kind, and the "British" of  
 their kind had not, however, such a practical  
 effect in maintaining such a basis as had  
 been known of any sort of Government and economy.  
 which was to-day, in England and France, the  
 British had long been their chief allies and  
 allies, and the system of their kind was  
 made by their kind of money.

not prevail sufficiently to warrant time for the building of beautiful mosques.

If one attributes the eighteenth century mosques of semicircular mihrābs, such as that of Msuka Mjini, to have been built or patronized by the <sup>o</sup>Umāni Arabs, as is so likely to be the case, one may not be far from the truth. After all, <sup>o</sup>Umān was only a poor country, and without any particular bent for the building arts. The <sup>o</sup>Umāni are Muslims of the Ibādite sect, and one point of their belief has had, however, such a profound effect in maintaining that a house of God should be devoid of any sort of decoration and ornamentation. Even to-day, in Zanzibar and Pemba, the Ibādite mosques have their qiblah walls plain and simple, and the arches of their mihrābs typified mostly by their rounded forms.

## T H E F I N A L P H A S E

During the hundred and forty years between the reign of Seyyid Sa<sup>c</sup>Īd bin Sulṭān ( 1804-56 ) and the present day, so large a number of mosques were built that any detailed analysis of them is impossible within the scope of this paper. Reference is therefore given specifically to a few mosques as examples in an attempt to show a general survey of the influence at work.

When the Portuguese were expelled from Zanzibar and Pemba once and for all, Seyyid Sa<sup>c</sup>Īd's immediate concern was to defend his Sultanate from being ousted by some rival clan of <sup>c</sup>Umān, and to see that his sovereignty in Zanzibar was established in good order. But at the same time

he was confronted with the more pressing problem of reaching a political settlement with one other ruler on the Island, namely Mwenyi Mkuu, who was recognized by the Hadimu tribe -- who formed a large population of Zanzibar -- as their hereditary ruler.

Seyyid Sa<sup>C</sup>Id's whole revenue was extremely small. It is stated to be about 250,000 dollars a year; about 150,000 from Zanzibar and 100,000 from Muscat<sup>1</sup>. This revenue seemed to be very minimal for maintaining his force of three hundred or more troops, and for establishing his new Colony.

When the British officers from H.M.S. Faserur called at the Island in September, 1829, they were not impressed by what they saw. " The town is large but not populous. The streets are narrow, badly paved and dirty; and most of the best houses have been allowed to fall into decay. The shops are few and badly stocked ..... 2 "





This is certainly contrary to the previous records of the earlier times when the settlements of the East African Coast rose to a position of great commercial importance and prosperity, where the Kings and the inhabitants lived in a great luxury, and the buildings indicated a high artistic perception, and displayed a beauty and grace worthy of their importance.

It would seem that during the beginning of the nineteenth century, building activity was restricted for economic reasons, and that the policy of Seyyid Sa<sup>o</sup>Id was manifested in the building of his sovereignty rather than of erecting monuments. The Portuguese control of the Coast did not cease until early in the eighteenth century, and thereafter, he was engaged in eliminating the leading Mazruis from Mombasa. It was not until February 1837, that Rashid bin Salim, the last Mazrui ruler of Mombasa, sued for peace<sup>1</sup>. In the second half of the nineteenth century, however, the <sup>o</sup>Umāni ascendancy over Zanzibar was



strong enough to allow the revival of prosperity and to maintain the independence they had enjoyed some centuries before.

But even after 1837 there were some political events of far-reaching importance which have affected Zanzibar and Pemba. One of these was the separation of Zanzibar from <sup>c</sup>Umān. The administrative unification of the two had lasted for some seventy two years, that is from A.D.1784, when Zanzibar had accepted the supremacy of the ruler of Masqaṭ, until the death of Seyyid Sa<sup>o</sup>īd in 1856<sup>1</sup>. The second was the consequent reduction of the dominions claimed by the Sultāns of Zanzibar.<sup>2</sup>

Although Seyyid Sa<sup>o</sup>īd finally moved his Capital from Masqaṭ to Zanzibar in 1832, he never relinquished his dominion over his Sultanate in <sup>o</sup>Umān. In Zanzibar he built two palaces, one in the city and the other at Mtoni, about five miles to the north of Zanzibar town. The Sultān fr-

1. Pearce, Zanzibar, The Island Metropolis of Eastern Africa, pp. 130

2. Ibid., Pearce, pp. 261.

requently travelled to Masqaṭ, and by that time he had already established constant communications with India. The relationship between the Government of India and Seyyid Sa<sup>c</sup>īd's Government was an even more intimate one. In A.D.1809, and again in 1820, the Government of India assisted Seyyid Sa<sup>c</sup>īd in his military operations, by sending ships and Indian Sepoys to co-operate with the <sup>c</sup>Umāni forces against the Wahabies, who threatened his dominions. In fact, India has had a very lengthy association with Zanzibar, and during the reign of Seyyid Sa<sup>c</sup>īd there were thousands of Indians living on the Island.

Mention has been made of the fact that in modern Zanzibar, the work of building is carried out by Indians almost exclusively<sup>1</sup>. The architects and workmen are amongst those already resident in Zanzibar, and it is very seldom found that craftsmen are imported from India to-day.

1. See above, pp. 245.

There is evidence, however, to show that Indians were involved in building activities as early as the mid. nineteenth century. When Seyyid Sa<sup>o</sup>Id died in 1856, his son Majid bin Sa<sup>o</sup>Id commenced the erection of his father's tomb. Architects, workmen, stone and materials -- in this special instance -- were imported from India, but until this day the shrine stands uncompleted. Explaining this, Major Pearce, in 1920, wrote that " the unfinished tomb illustrates so forcibly one of the reasons why Zanzibar is deficient in beautiful buildings that a brief explanation may be given here how it comes about that the grave of the founder of Zanzibar is thus left desolate. After Seyyid Sa<sup>o</sup>Id's death, his son Majid dutifully commenced the erection of what undoubtedly would have been a most beautiful and artistic mausoleum to receive the body of his father ... .. the work proceeded until the time came for the erection of the roof. At this juncture the ' m u t a w a h s ', or puritans, of the Ibadhi



sect made a pronouncement that it was impious to cover a grave with a roof; and the further building of the tomb was in consequence abruptly stopped<sup>1</sup> ".

The type of embellishments on the wall of the uncompleted tomb are not superior in execution to any type of the fifteenth century work evident on the mihrābs of that period in Zanzibar. The arched doorway of the shrine is very similar, if not exactly the same as the arches on the facade of Katra Mosque<sup>2</sup>, in Murshidabad, built in A.D. 1723; to the arches of the Shah Poran Mosque<sup>3</sup>, in the Sylhet District ( seventeenth century ), East Pakistan; and equally similar to those of the Qadam Mubarik Mosque<sup>4</sup> ( A.D. 1719 ), in Chittagong, at Rasulmagar. Similarly they are found on the entrance to the Soneri Mosque<sup>5</sup> ( eighteenth century ), in Delhi, and to the gateway of the tomb of Safdar Jung<sup>6</sup> ( A.D. 1750 ), also in Delhi. This multifoil arch -- of the Moorish type -- was therefore commonly used in India during

1. Pearce, Zanzibar, The Island Metropolis of Eastern Africa, pp. 127.

2. Dani, Muslim Architecture in Bengal, Fig. 118.

3. Ibid., Dani, Fig. 114.

4. Ibid., Dani, Fig. 112.

5. Terry, The Charm of Indo-Islamic Architecture, Fig. 58.

6. Ibid., Terry, Fig. 57.

the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and the builder of the nineteenth century tomb of Seyyid Sa<sup>ḳ</sup>īd, in Zanzibar was not outdated, because in India that type of arch was still in use.

When Major Pearce wrote that the unfinished tomb indicated what a beautiful building had been lost to Zanzibar<sup>1</sup>, he probably had in mind that there were no buildings of the mid. nineteenth century in Zanzibar which could be comparable to the shrine, both in design and execution. This would be very true as most -- if not all -- the buildings, including mosques, were built by local Indians with much less skill, and without any perceptible artistic taste. Equally true is the explanation given by Pearce that because of the nature of the Ibaḳite sect, as belonging to the group of puritans of Islam, Zanzibar became to some extent deficient in beautiful buildings. In the middle of the nineteenth century, many <sup>C</sup>Umāni Arabs followed Seyyid Sa<sup>ḳ</sup>īd to Zanzibar and established for themselves Arab settlements

1. Pearce, Zanzibar, The Island Metropolis of Eastern Africa, pp. 127.

The following is a very faint and illegible text block, likely a scan of a page with extremely low contrast or significant fading. The text is mostly illegible but appears to be a list or a series of entries. The first line is the section header: "1. Pearce, Zanzibar, The Island Metropolis of Eastern Africa, pp. 127." The rest of the page contains several lines of text that are too light to read accurately. Some faint words like "Zanzibar" and "Metropolis" are visible in the first line. The text seems to be a list of items or a series of notes related to the subject of Zanzibar.

of the <sup>C</sup>Umāni type, better known in Zanzibar as "Waarabu wa Kimanga". Innumerable African communities became the followers of Islam, and absorbed some of the elements of the Ibāḍite sect, who regarded themselves as pious Muslims, and dutifully objected to any sort of decorative elements to be introduced into the house of God.

Unlike other states of the Islamic World, the nineteenth and twentieth century mosques in Zanzibar were not patronized by Sulṭāns. This is because the Sulṭāns themselves were Ibāḍites, and they were -- and still are -- far less in number than the Shāfi<sup>C</sup>i Sunni; the latter forming the majority of the population of Zanzibar and Pemba. The greater number of mosques, therefore, belong to the Shāfi<sup>C</sup>is, and the building of most of these mosques was financed by few individual contributions; and the amount of finance was too small to allow the building of distinguished and elegant mosque. On the little money collected, the mosque had to be built on a scale that could

only accommodate a few worshippers. The rather clumsy and pedestrian type of local craftsmen were therefore employed, and were left on their own to express what little they knew. There were also few mosques built by private individuals, and willed as ' w a q f ' ( religious endowment ) to the worshippers. After the death of the builder, these mosques are administered by appointed bodies of trustees.

It is now plain, however, that the forms of decoration are less Islamic than local, and that the construction and design is largely based on what is evident from the surviving buildings of that period in Zanzibar, which were mostly of the Indian type. On most occasions, the desire to imitate the past ( i.e. earlier buildings in Zanzibar ), was impeded by a lack of technical skill. Contacts with India were growing -- but whenever builders in Zanzibar tried to apply the current decorative elements of India, they did so without proper knowledge and understanding. On many

times, this led to serious structural difficulties. Apart from this, the builders were, as they are to-day, in the age of plasterwork. The medium allows the application of ornament and decoration, but the material is handled without relation to structure.

An examination of the nineteenth and twentieth century ornamentation of the mihrābs ( Zanzibar and Pemba ), will show how far the designs have deteriorated and strayed away from those of the past. The niches of the mosques of Msikiti Mnara ( PLATE 20 ), at Malindi, and that of Jamī<sup>1</sup> mosque of Foredhani ( PLATE 19 ), both in Zanzibar, as well as that of Chake-Chake ( PLATE 21 ), in Pemba, no longer show the simplicity of form manifest in the mihrābs of Tumbatu ( FIG. 6 ), Ras-Mkumbuu ( PLATE 5 ), or Shengejuu ( PLATE 6 ), but have developed into unattractive and shapeless niches, characterised by irregularity in design and form. From the early nineteenth century, many new elements in design were introduced, and as a

result produced entirely different forms. The grace, unity and discipline of the early designs gave way, not to the simplified forms and imitations of the past mihrābs, but to a series of dull and exaggerated distortions of basic forms. When these new elements were applied, they became, more often than not, meaningless and undisciplined deformities.

In the mosque of Msikiti Mnara ( PLATE 20 ), built about A.D. 1831, by Mohamed Abdul Qadir al-Mansabi, the mihrāb is of a stilted four centered arch with a pointed end to its apex. The mihrāb is framed by a moulding with a spandrel of one order. Inside the niche there are a number of blind recesses, composed somehow, in a similar arrangement to a number of other recesses of the nineteenth century mosques. Their form and workmanship, however, show a typical degeneration of the design of this period.



The mihrāb arch of the Jami<sup>o</sup>i mosque, at Forodhani ( PLATE 19 ), in Zanzibar, built probably during the end of the nineteenth century, has close affinities with Msikiti Mnara. The forms of the two mihrābs are exactly the same, except that the Forodhani is a three centered arch instead of four. The mihrāb is contained in a simple frame, and is ornamented with lines and dots. The stucco shows the limitations of the craftsman's skill, and has no true relationship with the qiblah wall. The shape of this type of mihrāb, has, however, since that time, been favourably considered by builders and worshippers alike, to be a respectable representation of art form in mosques, and became, a standard design of subsequent mihrābs.

In reference to stucco, the ornamented plasterwork incised on the outer frame of the mihrāb, at Chake-Chake ( PLATE 21 -- early twentieth century ), in Pemba, and treated without structural consideration to the niche, demonstrates an

unfortunate vulgarity of design, and this is exactly what one would expect to find in buildings designed by amateurs who have limited technical competence and less artistic taste to command. The two bosses ( or if they were meant to be rosettes ) on either side of the mihrāb are by no means comparable to the technical standard and beauty of the earlier ones. The lack of the designers' aesthetic taste is further demonstrated by hanging three shells of ostrich eggs on the three jamb arches. The blind recesses inside the Chake-Chake mihrāb are closely related to those of Msikiti Mnara, and to many other nineteenth and twentieth century mosques. They are easily identified by their lack of order and coherence.

The mihrāb of Nungwi ( PLATE 22 ), built about A.D. 1900, displays characteristic features of the mihrābs of the small provincial villages in Zanzibar. Nungwi is a small village situated at the most northerly headland of Zanzibar Island, and it is populated by Africans of the Wahadimu

tribe, plus few Indians better known as Kumbaros, who have lived with the Wahadimus for some generations. Many of the mosque builders of this sort are the local villagers themselves, and in the case of mosques at Nungwi, Bwejuu ( PLATE 23 ), Makunduchi, Paje, Kiwengwa and Jambiani, the Wahadimus were assisted, in many instances, by Kumbaros, who are accepted as members of the Wahadimu Community. Many of these Kumbaros are new comers to the skills of building, for it is not inherited as a trade. There are some cases where a third class type of builders, may it be Indians or Africans, are employed for very little money. The labour is provided free by the villagers, and materials, such as stone, lime and timber ( boriti ) are easily obtained locally and free of charge, or with minimal payment.

Many of these mosques are meant to imitate and to retain, in their arcaded apses, a form which goes back to earlier styles of mihrābs. The choice of mihrāb of any earlier mosque, which

is to be imitated here, is decided upon by the old man of the village, a decision which is happily accepted by the rest of the villagers. For instance, the mihrāb of Nungwi is said by the elders of the village<sup>1</sup>, to be a revival of Kizimkazi-Dimbani, which they say ( Nungwi ) was built about A.D. 1900, a date much more in accord with its construction, but in a style which displays a vulgarity of form and design, far from the grace and beauty of the original.

The difference between the style of the mihrāb of Nungwi -- which may be said to represent the style of the provincial mosques of the nineteenth and twentieth century mosques of Zanzibar and Pemba -- and those of the earlier ones, is great. An examination of these mihrābs will show how much of the ornamentation, technical ability and sense of creative design of the past has been forgotten. The builder's art of the mihrāb has reached its complete degeneration, where nothing intelligible remains. The story of Islamic build-

1. The author was told by elders of Nungwi in 1962, that the local builders of the mosque had instructions from the Sheha ( the old man of Nungwi ) to imitate the mihrab of Kizimkazi-Dimbani, as it was, and still is, considered to be the oldest, and therefore, the most respectable mosque of the Island.

ding has ended; the desire to preserve the past has stopped, and not even the shadow of a tradition in the building arts now remains.

The history of the building arts in the United States is a story of the gradual destruction of the old and the building of the new. The old is being destroyed not only by the new, but by the new itself. The new is being built not only on the old, but on the old itself. The old is being destroyed not only by the new, but by the new itself. The new is being built not only on the old, but on the old itself.

THE HISTORY OF THE BUILDING ARTS IN THE UNITED STATES

1880-1885	THE HISTORY OF THE BUILDING ARTS IN THE UNITED STATES, 1880-1885
1885-1890	THE HISTORY OF THE BUILDING ARTS IN THE UNITED STATES, 1885-1890
1890-1895	THE HISTORY OF THE BUILDING ARTS IN THE UNITED STATES, 1890-1895

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Plate 1. Mihrāb In Main Prayer Chamber Of Kizimkazi Mosque.



Plate 2. Mihrāb (A.H.500-A.D.1107), Kizimkazi.





Plate 3.  
Detail Of  
Plate 2.



Plate 4. Kufic Inscription Dated A.H.500-A.D.1107., Kizimkazi.



Plate. 5 Mihrāb, Ras-Mkumbuu, Pemba.





**Plate. 6**  
**Mihrāb,**  
**Shegejuu,**  
**Pemba.**

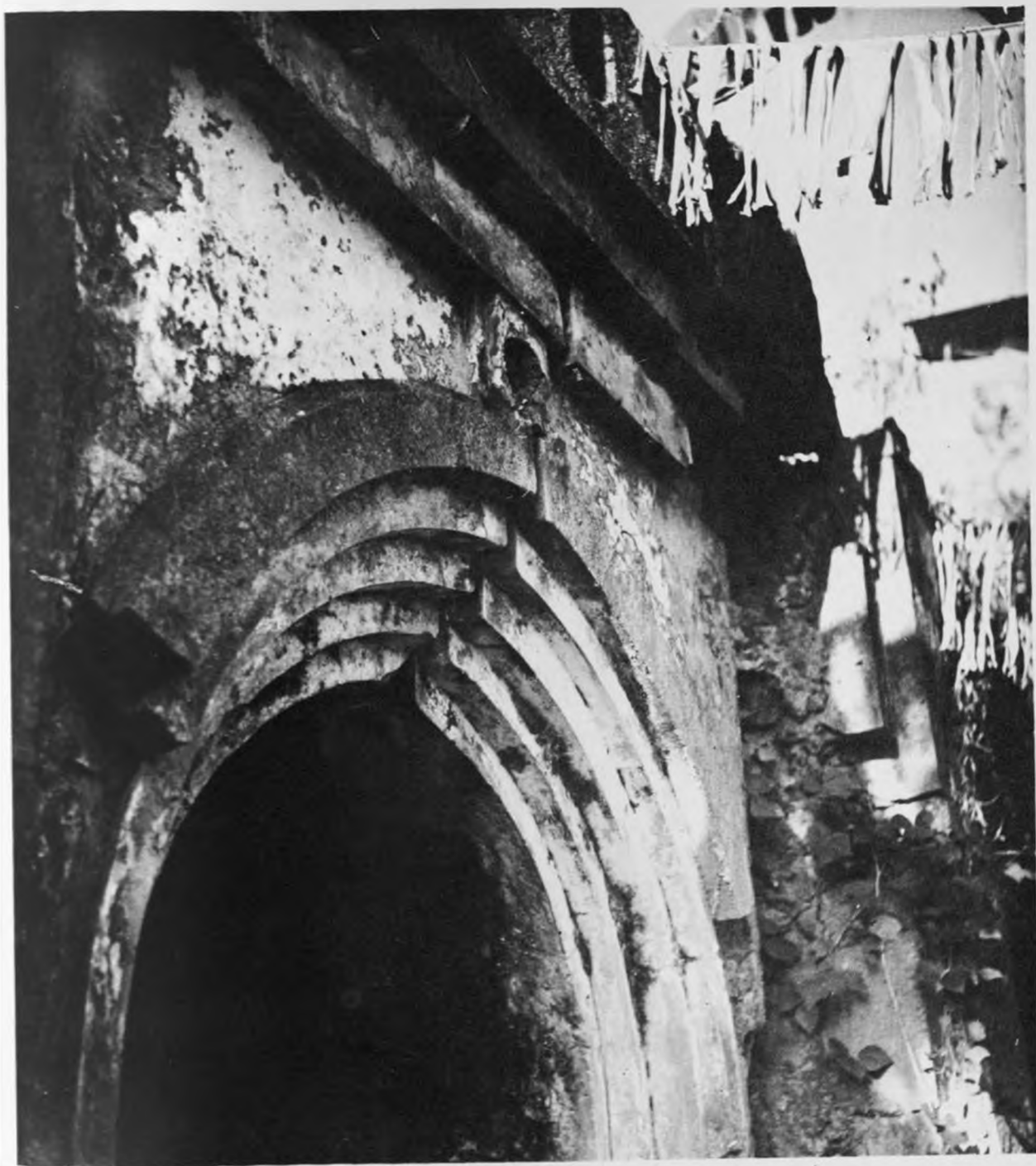


Plate 7.  
Detail Of Mihrāb At Shengejuu.

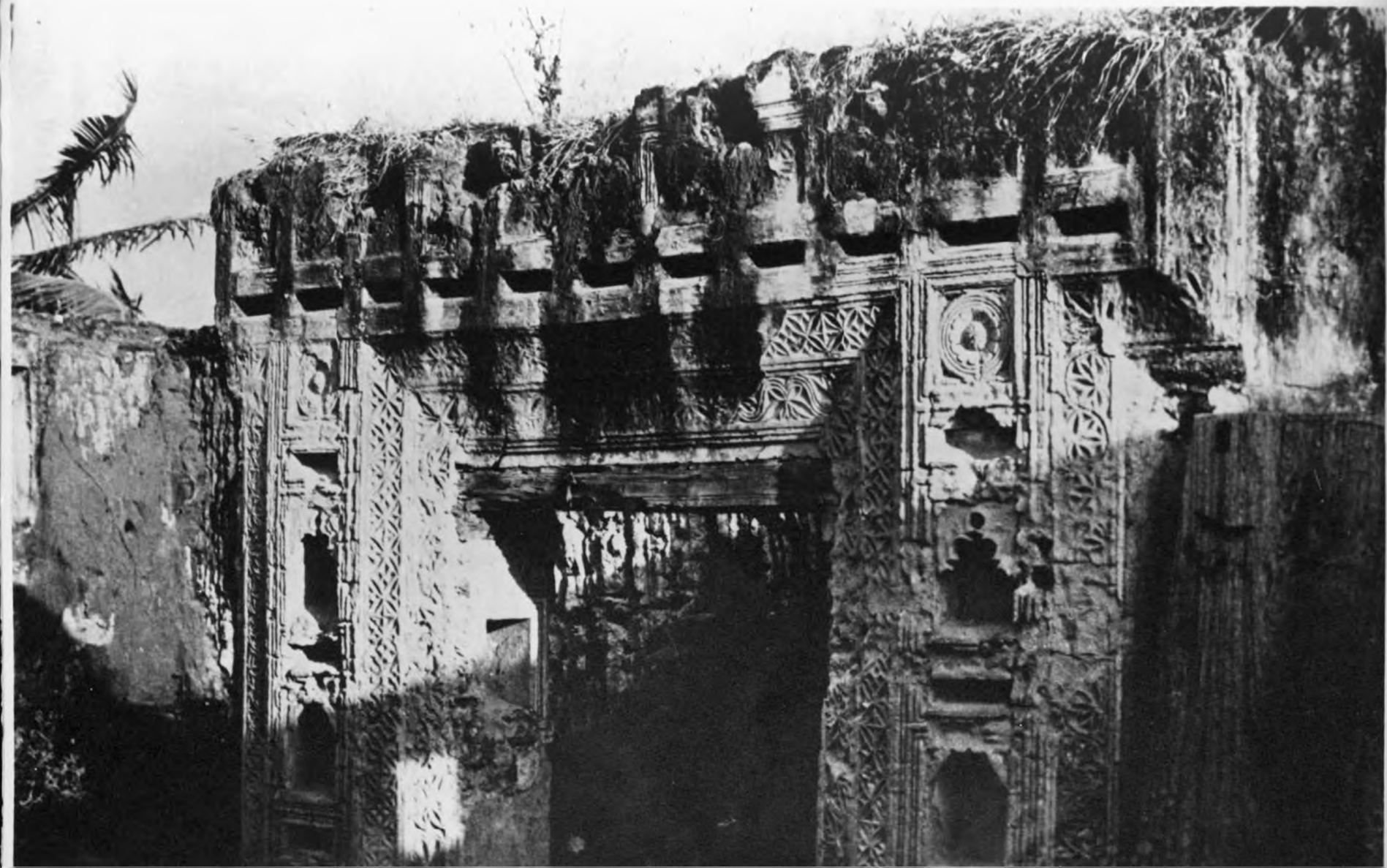


Plate 8    Mihrab, Jamia Mosque, Gedi



**Plate 9**  
**Mihrāb,**  
**Chwaka Jamia**  
**Pemba.**





**Plate 10. Decorative Embellishment On Gateway, Shela**

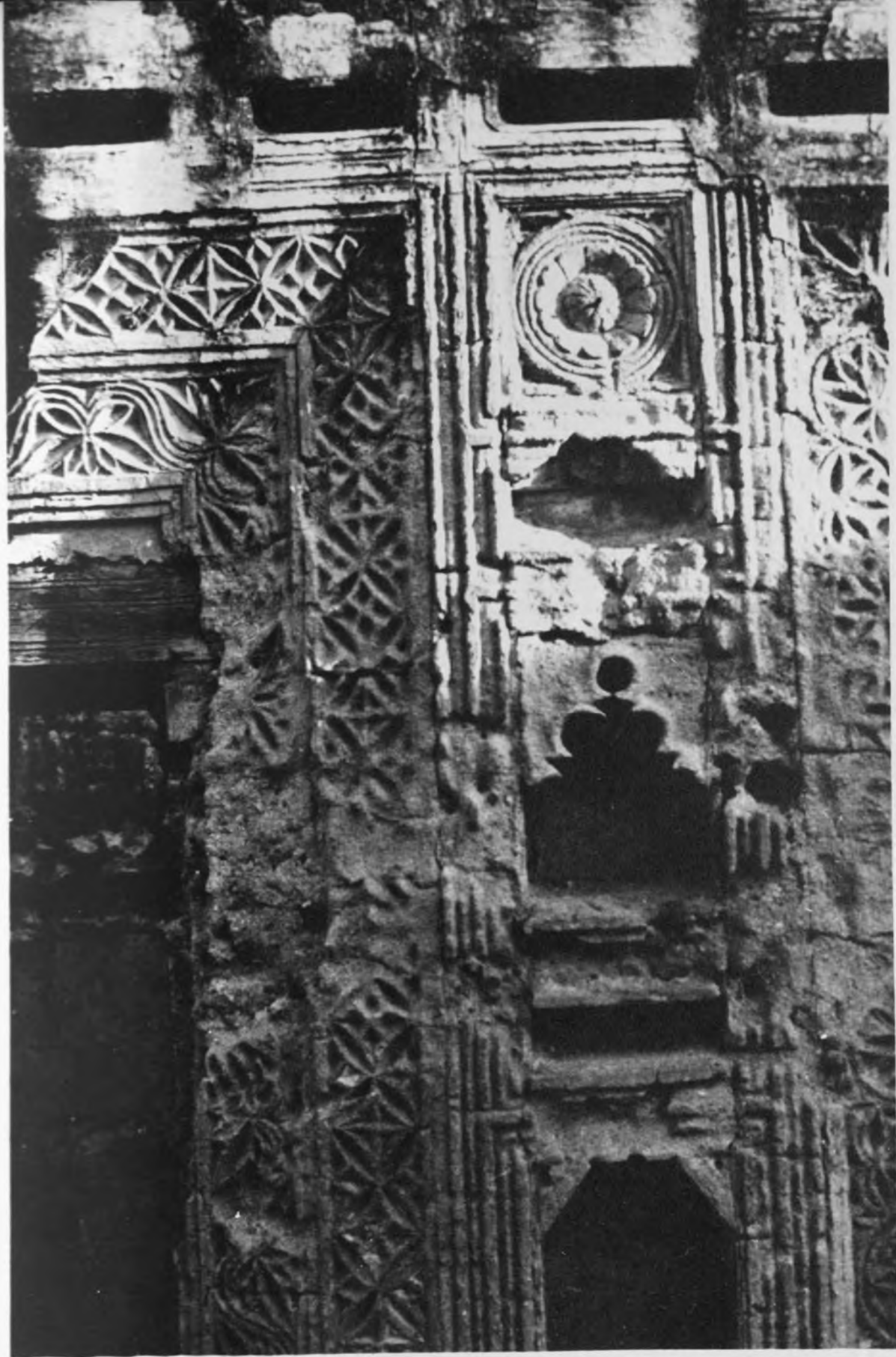
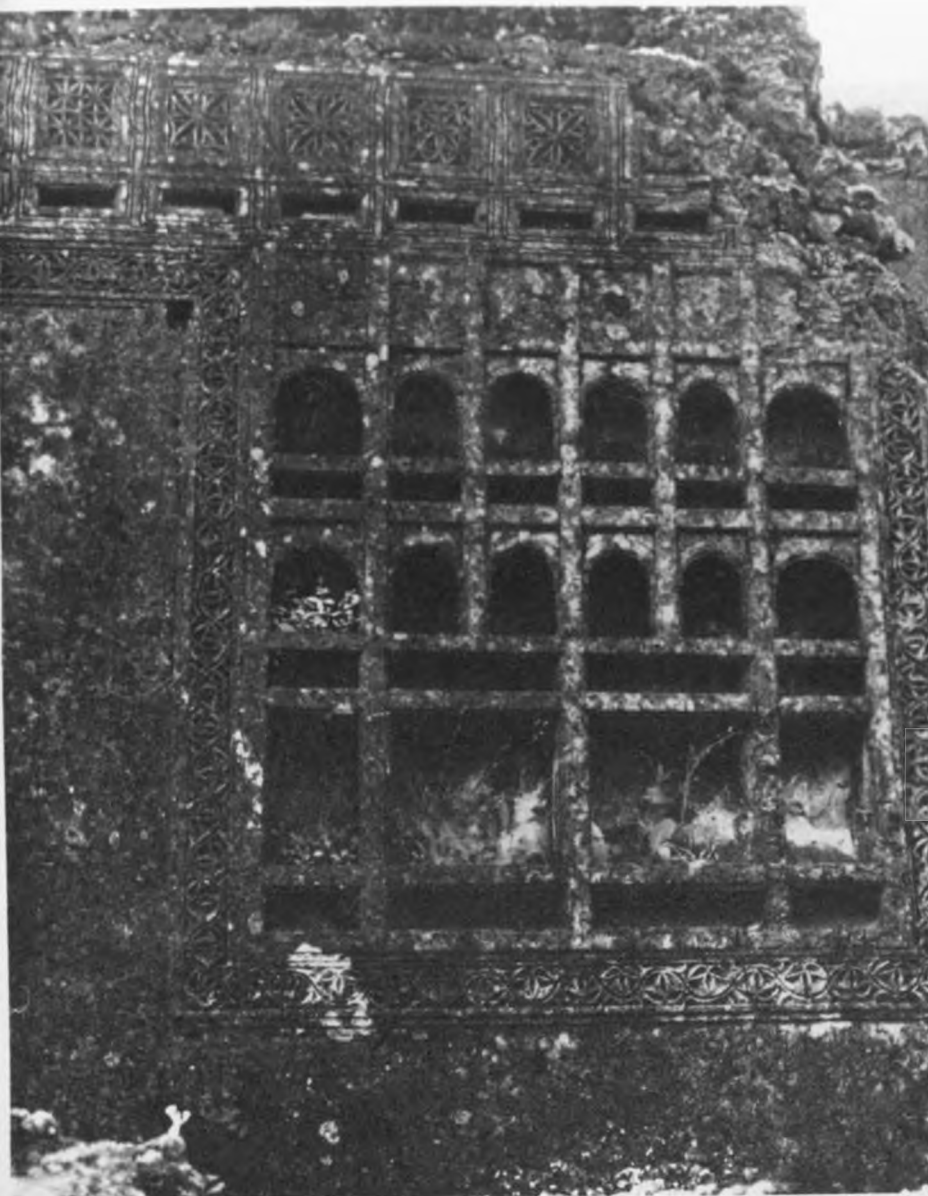
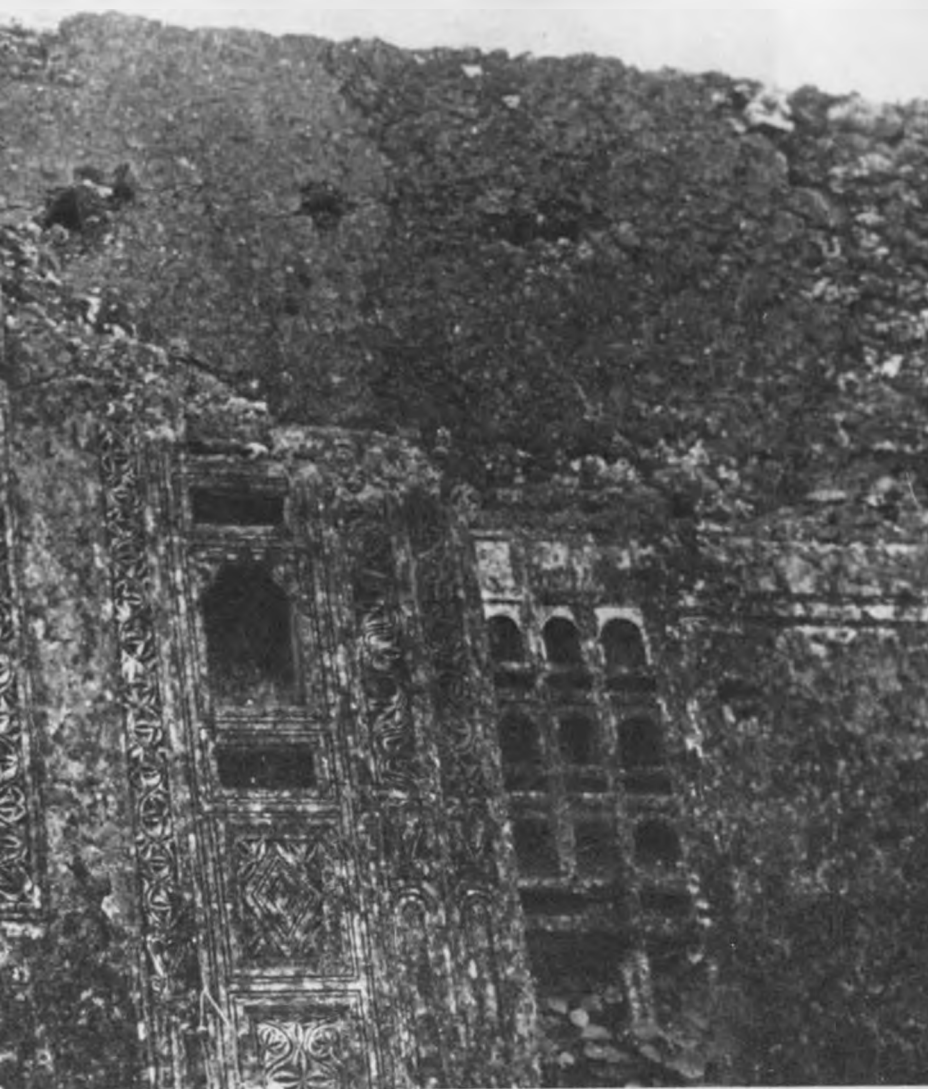


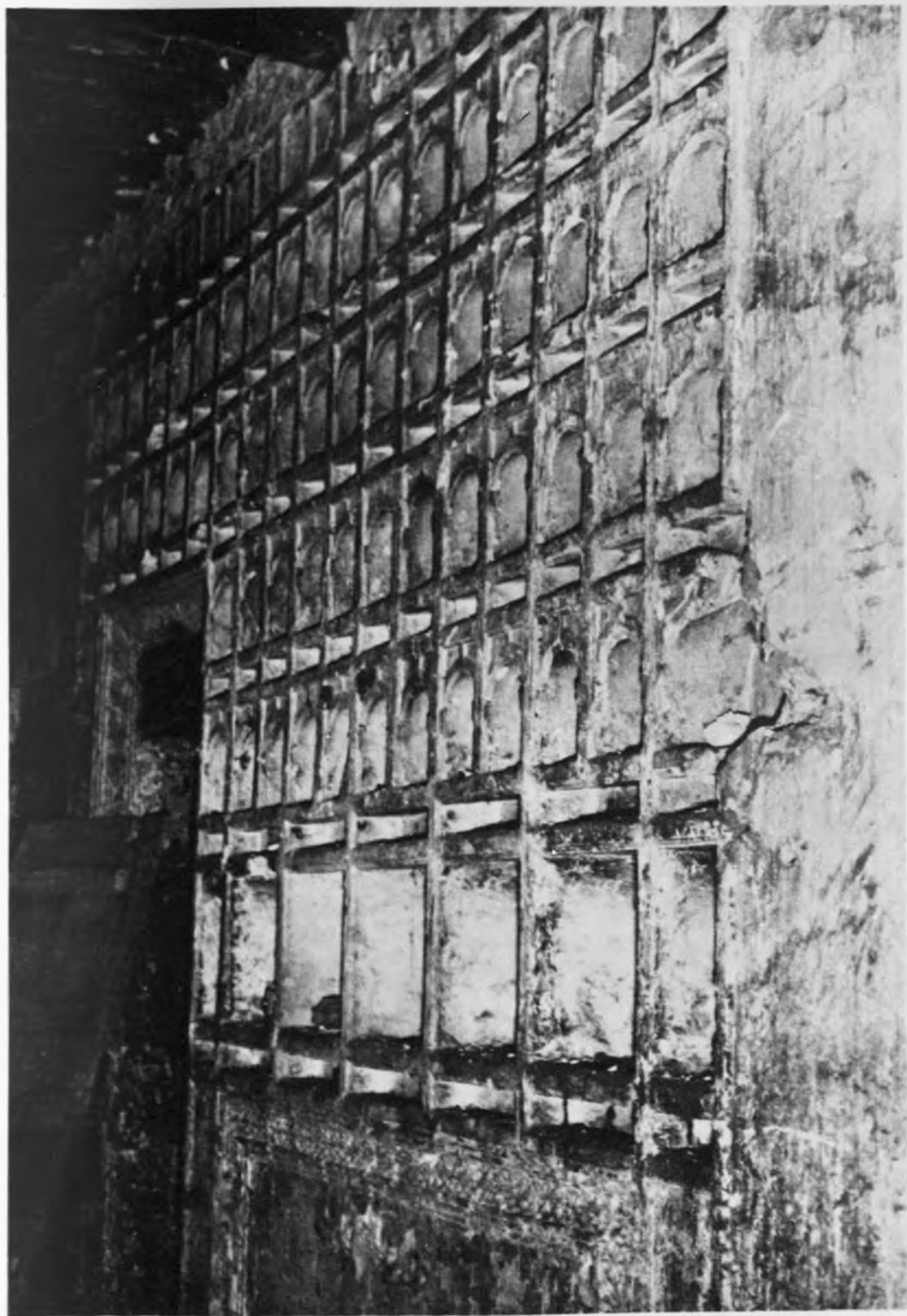
Plate 11. Detail of plate 10



**Plate 12. Facade Decorated With Numerous Niches**



**In a Typical Indian Style, Shela**



**Plate 13 Interior Of Domestic Building, Lamu**



Plate 14. Gateway to the Palace, Gedi



Plate 15. Example of  
Pilaster recess commonly used in  
East African Coast, Gedi



**PLATE 16** Semicircular Mihrab, Msuka Mjini, Pemba





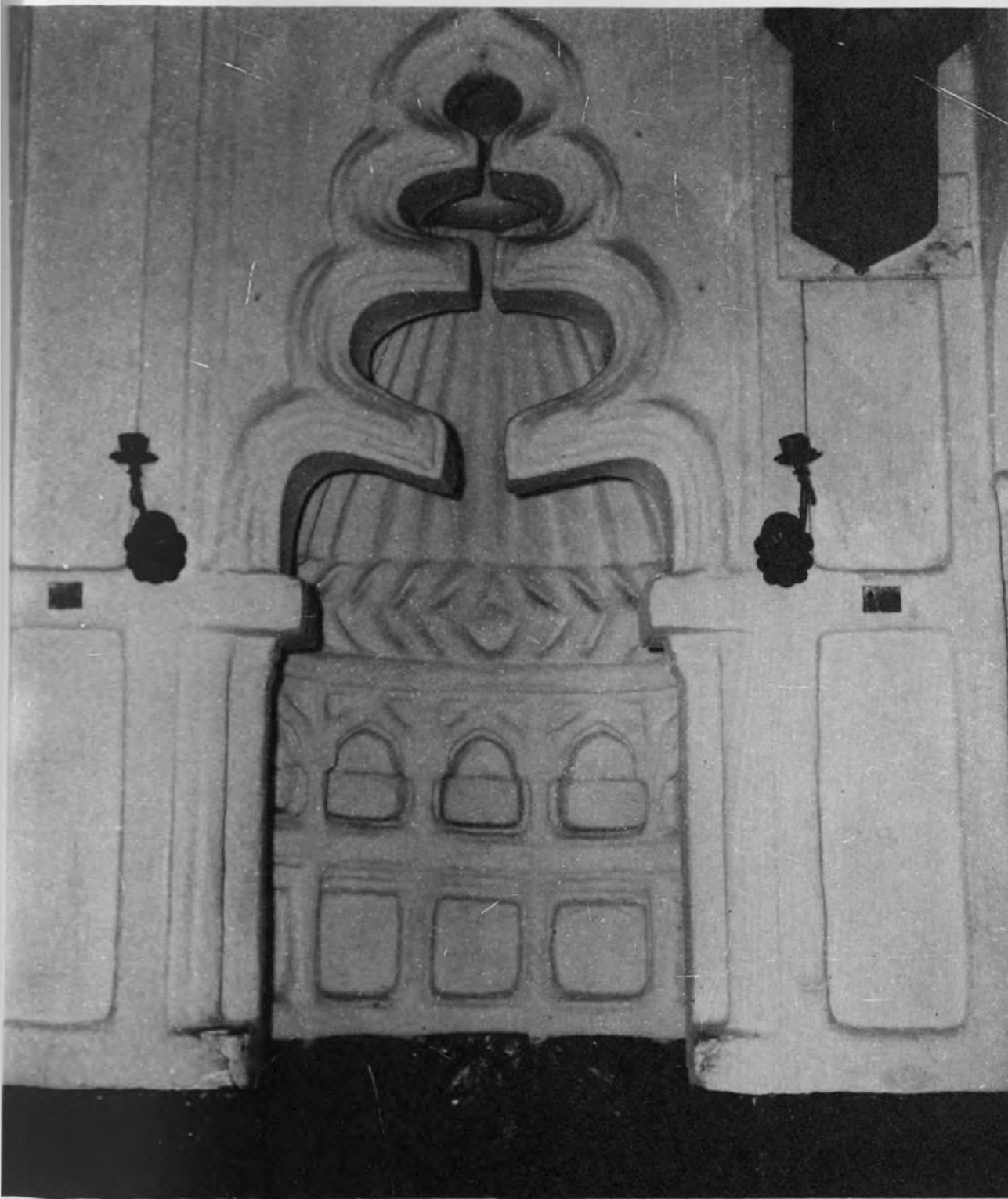
Plate 17 Pilaster recess on the left side of the mihrab, Msuka Mjini



**Plate. 18**  
**Mihrāb At**  
**Kichokochwe,**  
**Pemba.**



Plate 19.  
Mihrāb In Main Prayer Chamber  
Of Jāmi<sup>ci</sup> Mosque Of Forodhani,  
Zanzibar.



**Plate. 20**      **Mihrāb In The Jāmi'ī Mosque Of**  
**Msikiti Mnara, Malindi, Zanzibar.**



Plate 21.

Mihrāb In Chake Mosque, Pemba.



**Plate. 22**

**Mihrāb In The Mosque Of Nungwi. This Is An  
Exmple Of Small Provincial Mòsque In Zanzibar  
And Pemba.**



**Plate. 23**

**Mihrāb In The Mosque Of Bwejuu. Another Example  
Of Provincial Mosque.**



**Plate 24. Stone Fretwork On A Wall At Bububu  
( Mid.19th.Century )**



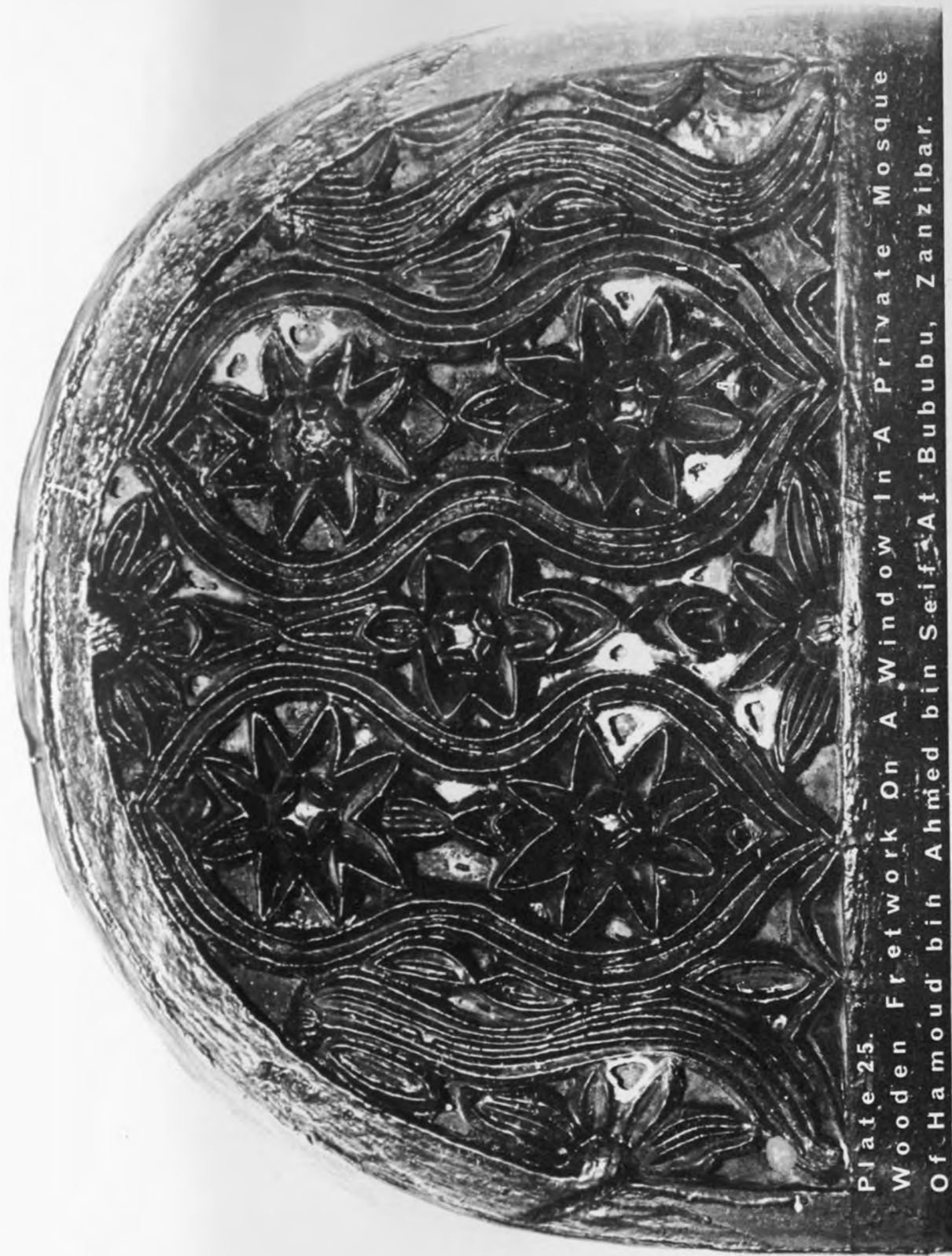


Plate 25.  
Wooden Fretwork On A Window In A Private Mosque  
Of Hamoud bin Ahmed bin Seif At Bububu, Zanzibar.

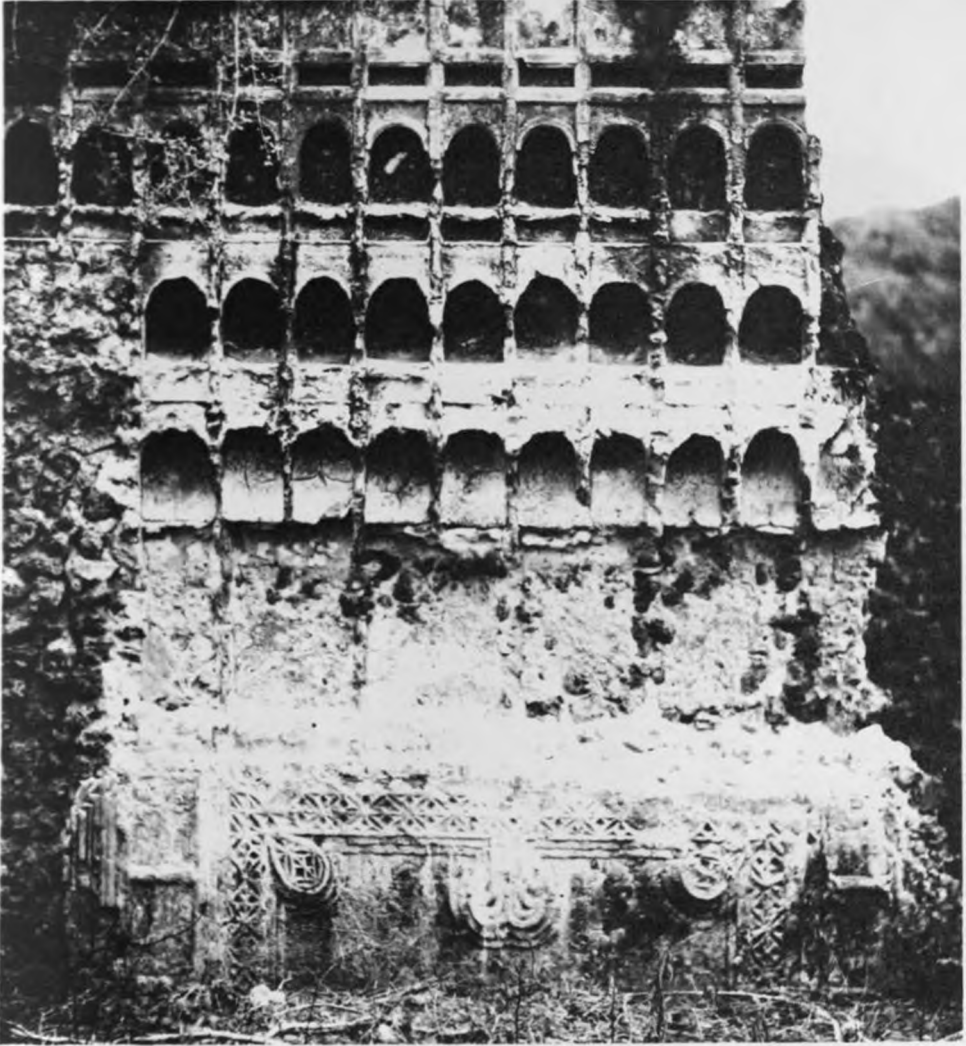


Plate 26. Decoration & numerous niches on a wall  
of domestic building at Shela



Plate 27. Main entrance of a domestic building at Shela

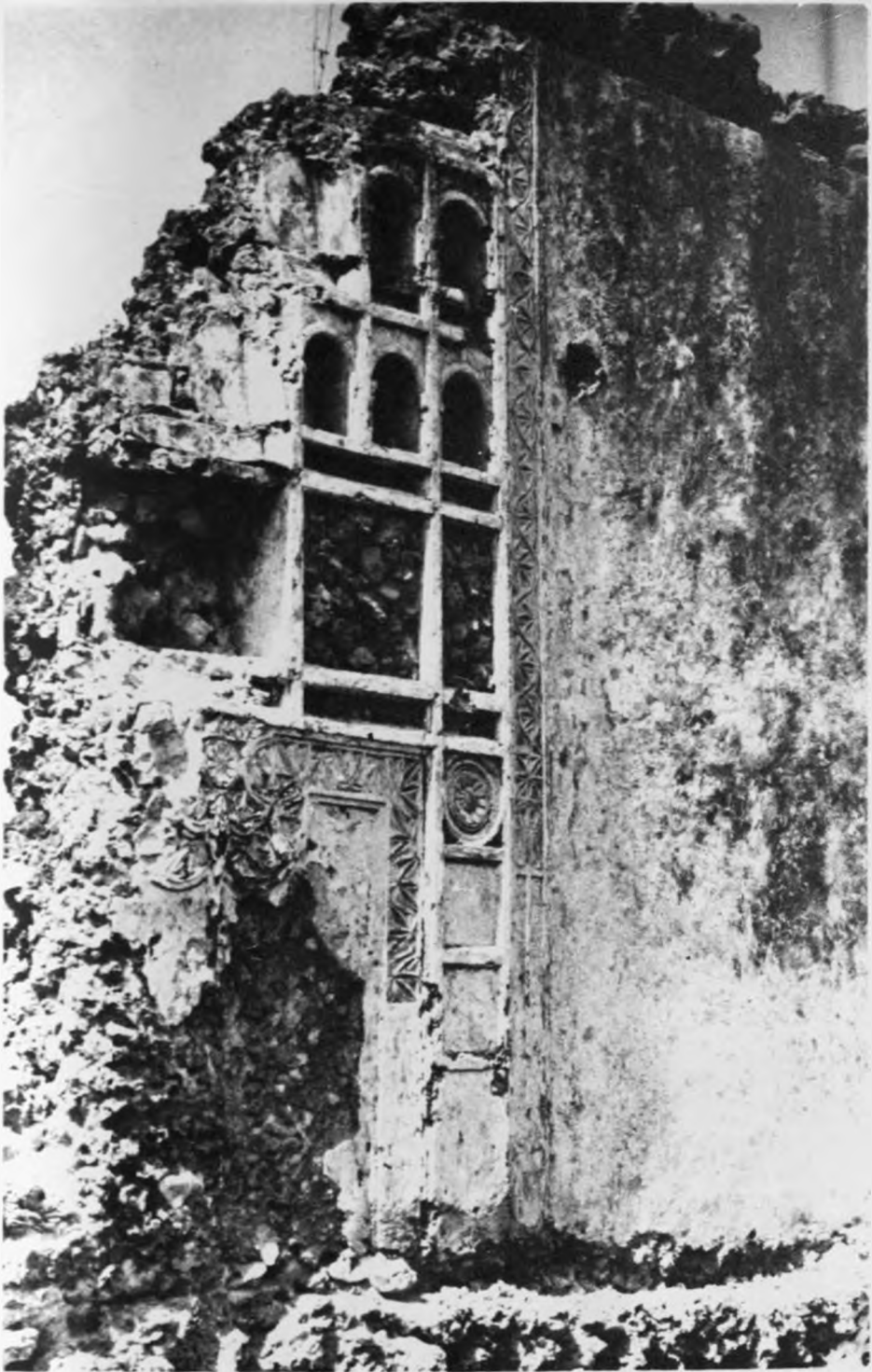


Plate 28. Detail of niches as  
decoration on a  
wall at Pate

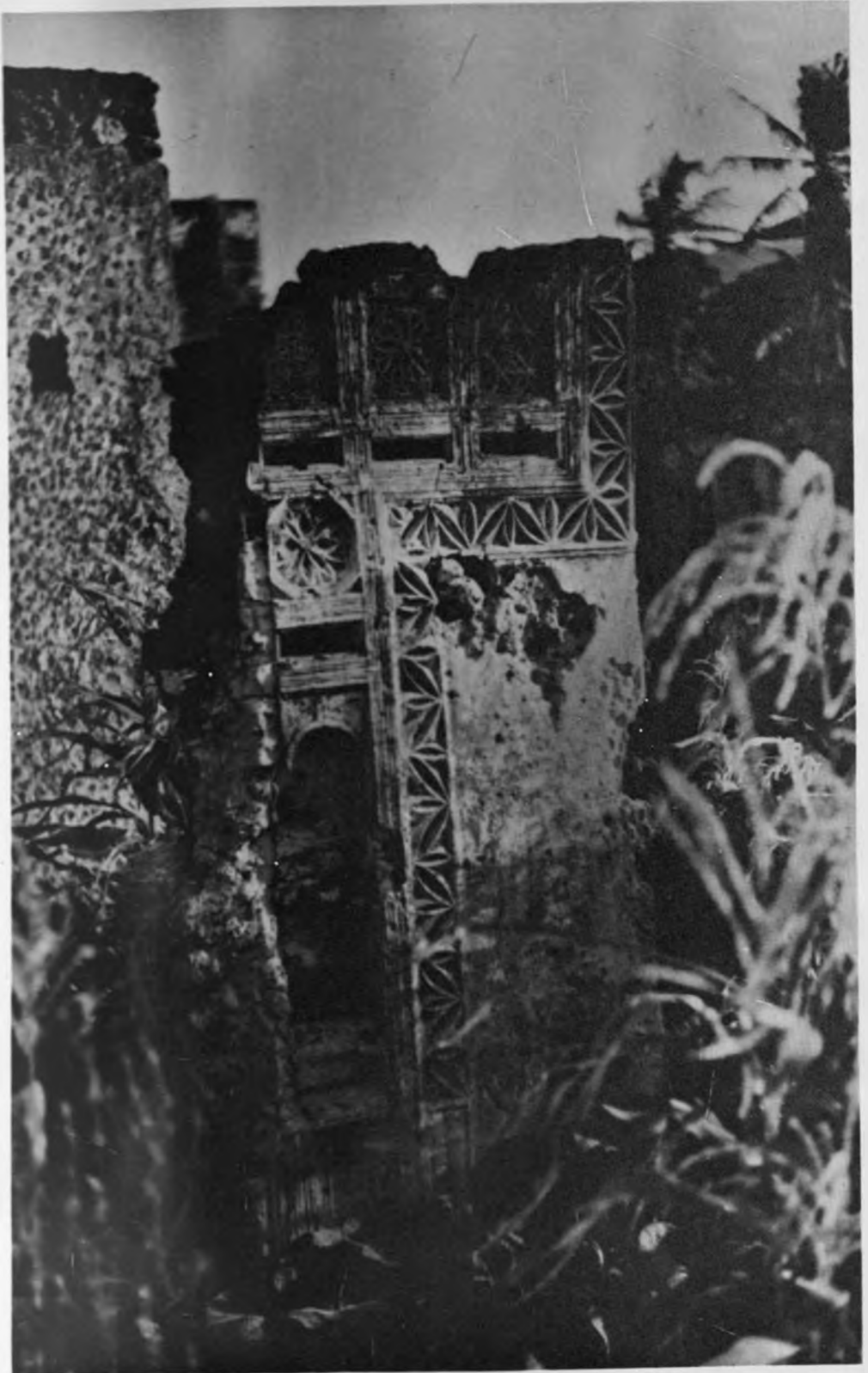


PLATE 29 DECORATION ON WALL, PATE



PLATE 30. NICHEs & DECORATION ON WALL AT SHELA



## INDEX

The Arab names appear without article (al-) and without titles such as Sultān, Seyyid, Shaikh etc., which are usually given to the names.

Swahili and Arabic words and technical terms also occur in the text.

Prefixes like abu-, meaning father of; ibn-, son of; al-, the; and dhu-, possessor of, are incorporated.

Arabic names are accentuated with guttural which has no correspondent in English, and therefore appear in dotted letters as ǧ and ẓ so as to be properly sounded. Similarly, some names are given the macron (-), generally over a vowel --- where in most cases the accent falls --- to show that it has a long sound, as ā.



## INDEX

- °Abbasid: dynasty, 39; empire, 41; government,  
 41
- °Abbasid caliphs, 37, 144
- °Abbasids, 173
- °Abdallāh Ṣāleh al-Fārīsi, Shaikh, 123, 125 n.1,  
 132, 135 n.1
- °Abd-al-Malik ibn Marwān, Umayyad, 37-39, 150 n.1
- °Abd-al-Rahim ibn Ja°far, al-Sirāfi, 48
- °Abd-al-Ṣamād, 48
- °Abdul Azis bin °Abdul Ghany al-Amawy, Shaikh, 124
- Abu-al-Mawahib, 64, 65 n.1
- Abu-al-Muzaffar Hassan, 64
- Abūbākr ibn Sa°d, Atābeg prince and ruler of Khū-  
 rasān, 134
- Abu °Imran Musā, see Sheikh As-Sa°id
- °Aden, 16
- Adina Masjid, 269, 271, 288
- Adulis, 11
- Afdal, al- , mihrāb
- Afghanistan, 183, 185, 214

## INDEX

- Ahasverus, 20
- Ahl-ul-Bayt: 133 n.1; muhibiyn lil-, 132
- Ahl-us-Sunnat, 128
- Aḥmad, 48
- Aḥmed, bin Seif, 108, 159 n.1
- Aḥsa, al-, 130
- Ahwas, 173
- Ajanta, caves, 197
- Akserai, Palace, 216
- °alā, 203
- °Ala-l-, °Idā, 202
- °Alawi ibn °Abdullah, 177
- Aleppo: 216; Jāmi°i mosque of-, 185
- Alexandria, 41
- Al-Hadid, sūrah, 209
- Al-Hakim, mosque of-, 187
- °Ali bin °Abdāllāh al-Mazru°ī, Shaikh, 124
- °Ali bin Khamis al-Barwany, Shaikh, 124
- °Ali bin °Uthmān, 159 n.1
- °Ali ibn Abū-Ḥalīb, 119, 121, 123, 130, 133 n.1

## INDEX

- °Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn °Ali, the founder and ruler of Kilwa, 117  
 °Ali ibn Muḥammad, 25  
 Al-Inshiqāq, sūrah, 209  
 Alivardi Khan, gateway of the tomb of-, 276  
 °Ali II, Zain-ul-Ābidīn, 126  
 Allah, 123, 128  
 Almirante, 96  
 Al-Muddassir, sūrah, 212  
 Alp Arsalan, 189  
 Amarvati, Stupa, walls of-, 255  
 Ameer Ali, 122 n.2  
 Amīr Ibrāhīm, 84  
 Amīr Muḥammad Kiwabi, 84  
 Amminius Marcellinus, 22, 23 n.1  
 Arab: 30, 33, 38, 41, 64, 119, 243; captains, 12; geographers, 25, 139, 296; historians, 136, 139; influence, 231; invasion of Sind, 144; merchants, 82, 83; pirates, 80; party, 119; raiders, 70; rule, 158; settlers, 33; state, 14, 19 n.2; traders, 24, 29; traveller, 43

## INDEX

- 235; writers, 35, 43
- Arab-African, 231
- Arab-East African, 243
- Arab, non-, 136
- Arab Muslims, 143
- Arab-Shirazian, 231
- Arabia: 12, 20, 37; gulf of-, 237; south-, 11, 29;  
southern, 8; south western-, 10
- Arabian: 14, 27, 30, 139; period, 18; south-, cu-  
lt, 233; southern coast of-, 243; style,  
235; -writers, 25
- Arabianized, 27
- Arabians, 18
- Arabic: numerals, 193; manuscript, 58; text, 65 n.2,  
140 n.1; version of Kilwa chronicle, 64,  
83, 85 n.1
- Arabic language, 25, 27, 29, 30, 31, 60, 62 n.1,  
200 n.2
- Arabo-Persian, 175

## INDEX

- Arabs: 15 n.1, 20, 21, 30, 42 n.1, 46 n.1, 70, 72, 82, 115, 237, 241; half-, 113; of south Arabian origin, 115; of Yemanite origin, 116; other-, 113
- Arabs, Muslim-, 18
- Arabs, <sup>c</sup>Umāni, 47, 76, 107, 116, 305, 307, 320
- Ardashīr I, 22, 24
- Ashtagram, 271, 276
- Ashtarjan: 214; mihrāb at-, 286
- Asia, 8, 45, 87
- Asiatic, people, 243
- Assasins, 130
- Atābegs, princes, 134
- Athīr, ibn-al-, <sup>c</sup>Izz-al-Dīn, 122 n.1
- Atiya Jami Masjid, 274
- Ausan, 14, 19 n.2
- Ausantic, 14
- Azania, 26 n.1
- Azerbaijan, 294
- Azhar, al-, Mosque, 175, 187

## INDEX

- Bāb al Mandab, 16  
 Bagamoyo, 177  
 Bagerhat, 265  
 Bagha, Mosque: 264, 269; doorways of the-, 276  
 Bagha, Rosettes, 256  
 Baghdād, 39, 43, 63, 121, 173  
 Bahmānī: dynasty, 87, 92; -kings, 87; rulers, 90  
 Bahrain, 20  
 Bahrayn, al-, 126  
 Balādhuri, 148 n.2  
 Balkh, 63, 216  
 Bantus, 24  
 Barbaria, 26 n.2  
 Barbotine, ware, 197  
 Barghash, Sulṭān of Zanzibar, 124  
 Basrah, al-, 41  
 Batoutah, ibn, 65 n.2, 140 n.1  
 Battūta, ibn, 62 n.1  
 Battūṭah, ibn, 10, 45, 48, 56-58, 60, 62 n.1, 63,  
 64, 65 n.1, 66, 115-117, 140 n.1, 223 n.2

## INDEX

- Bayazid al-Bistami, 183
- Bayazid al-Bistami, Shrine: 288; arches to the,  
291; mihrab in the  
mosque of-, 288
- Beit, al-Amani, 22
- Bengal, 60, 83
- Berbera, on the Somalia coast, 72
- Bibi Pari, Mausoleum, 276
- Bidar, 90
- Bistam, 183, 291
- Blue Mosque, 214
- Boheras, 116
- Bombay, 87
- boriti, 328
- British: officers from H .M.S. Fasseur, 309; rule,  
31, 123
- British Museum, 75 n.1, 85 n.1
- British Resident, in Zanzibar, 231
- Buddhist, temples, 197
- Bukhāra, 63, 216

## INDEX

- Bukhārī, al-, Muhammad ibn-Isma<sup>c</sup>īl, 168 n.1  
 Busa<sup>c</sup>īdi, 108  
 Busa<sup>c</sup>īdis, al-, 116, 159 n.1  
 Bwejuu: 34 n.1; Mihrab, 231; Mosque, 155, 328
- Cairo, 41, 187, 189, 191  
 caliphs: 252; of Baghdād, 175  
 caliphates, 175  
 Cambay: 237, 241; kingdom of, 239; merchants,  
 239  
 celadon-glaze, 260  
 Ceylon, 60  
 Chahar Bagh: Mihrab, 288; Mosque, 288  
 Chake-Chake: 231; Mihrab, 300, 301, 303, 326, 327  
 Chan Ju-Kua, Commissioner of foreign trade in  
 Chuan-Chou, 71 n. 1, 72  
 Chao-Ju-Kua, 73 n.1, 73 n.3  
 Chaoni, Mihrab, 247  
 Chhota Soma Masjid, mihrab, 256, 258, 269, 271  
 China, 8, 21, 22, 45, 50, 60, 82



## INDEX

- Chinese: blue & white ware, 281; information on  
East Africa, 68
- Chittagong, 318
- Chittick, H.N., 58, 59 n.2, 60, 62 n. 1
- Choroko, Msikiti wa, 92
- Christian, era, 8, 24
- Christians, 18, 139
- Chu-fan-Chih, description of Barbarous peoples, 72
- Chwaka, in Pemba island, 86, 90, 193, 225
- Chwaka Jāmi<sup>o</sup>i: bosses of, 262; builder of, 262,  
264; mihrāb, 300, 301, 303; mihrāb  
arch, 199, 247, 249, 250, 254, 260,  
271; mosque, 199, 225, 246, 249,  
258, 262; porcelain at-, 260; -style  
of ornamentation, 258
- Cofala: 239; -gold, 239
- Cosmas, Indicopleustes, 27
- Coupland, R., 237, 238 n. 1
- Courteille, P., 49 n.1, 52 n.1, 140 n.1
- Cutch, 241
- Cutchi, 243

## INDEX

- Dabhol, 87, 90
- Dābūli, tribe, 83
- Dacca, 274, 276
- Dakhil Darwaza, fort, 271
- Dallons, Captain: 110, 111; -letter, 111; report,  
112 n.1
- Damascus, 39, 147
- Dani, A.H., 257 n.1, n.2, 259 n.1, n.2, n.3, 263  
n.1, 266 n.2, 270 n.1, n.2, n.3, n.6, 272 n.1,  
n.2, n.3, n.4, n.5, n.6, n.8, n.9, n.10, 275  
n.1, n.2, n.3, n.4, n.5, 277 n.3, n.4, n.5, n.6,  
n.7, n.8, 289 n.2, 319 n.2, n.3, n.4
- Danishmend, dynasty of Turkey, 207
- Darasbari: Mihrāb, 262, 264; Mosque, 258, 264
- Daresalam, 177
- d a w l a h, 41
- De Barros, 117, 126, 128, 129 n.1, 130
- Deccan, 83, 87, 90, 92
- Defre'mery, C., 65 n.2, 140 n.1
- Delhi, 318



## INDEX

- English, language, 29, 31, 112, 140 n.1
- Ethiopia, 27, 50
- Euphrates, 23 n.1, 25
- Europe: 225; Gothic gateways of, 225
- Fakhr-ad-Din, Mosque, 220
- f a q i r, 65 n.1
- Fars, 134
- Fāṭimah, daughter of Muḥammad, 133 n.1, 173
- Fāṭimid: 171, 173; art, 175; dynasty, 130, 175
- Fāṭimids, 173, 175, 187
- Ferghanah, 187
- Ferrand, G., 25, 28 n.1, 140 n.1
- Firdawsi, 191
- Flīmī, 51
- Flury, S., 155, 171, 172 n.2
- Forodhani: 326; Jāmi<sup>o</sup>i Mosque of-, 324; miḥrāb  
of-, 326
- Fundo Island, miḥrāb at-, 247
- Funken, province of China, 72

## INDEX

g, 27

g, 27

Gabriel, 128, 130

Gama, Vasco da: 97, 98, 99 n.1; -visit, 99 n.1

Garlake, Peter, 155, 156 n.3, 179, 180 n.1, n.2,  
n.3, 181, 191, 193, 194 n.1, 199, 200 n.1,  
219, 221 n.1, 222, 223 n.1, 229, 230 n.1, 233,  
246, 248 n.1, 250, 251 n.1, 264, 266 n.1, 268  
n. 1, n.2, 270 n.4, n.5, 273 n.11, n.12, n.13,  
n.14, 279, 282, 283 n.1, n.3, n.4, n.5, n.6,  
n.7, 284, 285 n.1, 301, 302 n.1

Gaur, 256, 258, 269, 271

Gedi: 281; Palace-gate, 274; small mosque, 282,  
288; tomb, 177

German, 29

Ghāllia, 26

Ghaznavids, 147

Ghazni, 185

Ghullāt, 126

Glaser, E., 29

## INDEX

Geleonda, 87

Goncolo Vaz de Goes, 103

Graber, Oleg, 169, 172 n.1, 184 n.1, 186 n.1, n.2,  
n.3, n.4, n.5, n.6, 187, 188 n.1, n.2, 208 n.2,  
n.3, n.4, 215 n.1, n.2, 217 n.1, n.2, n.3, n.4,  
n.5, n.6, 287 n.1, n.2, n.3, n.4, n.5, n.6, 289  
n.1, 293 n.3, n.4, 295 n.1, n.2

Gray, J.M., 13 n.1, 17 n.2, 19 n.2, 40 n.1, 76  
77 n.2, 81 n.1, 84, 85 n.2, 86, 87, 88 n.1, 89,  
90, 93 n.1, 101, 104 n.1, 109 n.1, 111, 112 n.2,  
113, 114 n.1, 155, 156 n.1, 310 n.1, n.2, 312 n.1

Grenville, G.S.P. Freeman-, 13 n.1, 22, 29, 30,  
32 n.1, 44 n.1, 45, 46 n.2, 49 n.1, 52 n.1, 58,  
59 n.1, 60, 62 n.1, 67 n.1, 73 n.2, n.3, 89,  
91, 112 n.1, 140 n.1, 177 n.2, 179, 181, 182 n.1

Gujarat, 83, 237

Gujurati, 29

Gulbarga, 90

Gulf, 33

Gulpaygan, 185

Gunbadh-i-Surkh of Maraghah, blind arch, 291

## INDEX

- Gurai, 274
- Hadhranawt, 14, 20
- Hadimu, tribe, 309
- Hajj Muḥammad Rukn al-Dīn al-Dābūli, 83
- Hakīm, al-, Fāṭimid, 187
- Hakluyt, society, 99 n.1, 240 n.2
- Halifet Gazi türbesi, 207
- Hambalites, 115
- Hamdun, S., 62 n.1
- Hanafite, 134
- Hanafites, 115
- h a r a r i, 50
- Hārūn, al-Rashid: 37, 39, 41; government, 41
- Ḥasa, al-, 126, 128
- Ḥasan, al-, father of Sa<sup>c</sup>īd Abu <sup>c</sup>Imrān Mūsa, 171
- Ḥasan, al-, ibn Aḥmad, Sulṭān of Zanzibar, 89
- Ḥasan, al-, ibn <sup>c</sup>Ali, Sulṭān of Zanzibar, 89
- Ḥasan, al-, ibn Sulaymān III, Sulṭān of Kilwa, 64,

## INDEX

- Ḥasan, al-, ibn Sulaymān ibn <sup>c</sup>Ali, the founder of  
 Kilwa, 74, 76
- Ḥasan Muḥammad al-Hawāri, 190 n.3
- Ḥasb, min-al, 58
- Ḥawqal, ibn-, 43, 53, 55, 140 n.1
- Hazrat Pandua, 269, 271, 288
- hieroglyphics, 303
- Ḥijāz, 64
- Hijra, the, 39
- Hill, Derek, 172 n.1, 184, 186 n.1, n.2, n.3, n.4,  
 n.5, n.6, 188 n.1, n.2, 208 n.2, n.3, n.4, 215  
 n.1, n.2, 217 n.1, n.2, n.3, n.4, n.5, n.6, 287  
 n.1, n.2, n.3, n.4, n.5, n.6, 289 n.1, 293 n.3,  
 n.4, 295 n.1, n.2
- Hindu: art, 255; building craftsmen, 144; forms,  
 94; motifs, 256; tradition, 255
- Hindus, 241
- Hindustani, 29, 241
- Hippalus, 18, 24
- Hirth, F., 71 n.1, 72, 73 n.1, n.3



## INDEX

Hishām, Umayyad, 38

Hitti, P.K., 15 n.1, 17 n.1, 25, 42 n.1, 45, 46  
 n.1, 60, 62 n.2, 120 n.1, 122 n.1, 127 n.1,  
 131 n.1, 141 n.3, 148 n.1, n.2, 168 n.1, 174  
 n.1, 175, 176 n.1, n.2, 190 n.3

Homerites, 26 n.1

Ḥusayn, ibn <sup>°</sup>Ali: 119, 126; death of-, 123

Ibadhi, 317

<sup>°</sup>Ibāqīs, 116

<sup>°</sup>Ibāqīte: 116; mosques, 307; rulers, 124; sect,  
 307, 320, 322

<sup>°</sup>Ibāqītes: 116, 124, 322; belief, 124

<sup>°</sup>Id, al-Adḥa, 35

<sup>°</sup>Idd al-Ghadīr, 123

Idrīsī, al-, geographer, 53, 55, 56, 140 n.1

Idrīsids, 173

Ilkhanid, 218

Imām, 166

Imām Ahmed bin Seif, 108

## INDEX

- Imamate, 110  
 Imāmiya, 126  
 Imāms, Shi'ites Saintly-, 132  
 Imāms, of Masqaṭ, 108, 110  
 Imāmship, 119  
 Imamsadeh of Shah Husayn: Mosque, 286; mihrāb at-,  
 286  
 India: 8, 22, 45, 50, 82, 83, 87, 90, 98, 99 n.1,  
 144, 147, 152, 154, 197, 255, 260, 264,  
 265, 267, 269, 271, 274, 276, 278, 315,  
 317, 318, 320, 323; government of, 288;  
 north-, 20; mihrābs in, 288; mihrābs of,  
 262; rosettes of-, 260  
 Indian: 16, 24, 29, 241, 243, 245, 254, 278, 290,  
 323; -architecture, 254, 278; builder,  
 255; building, 92; building craftsmen, 245;  
 -communities, 241; goods, 90; -Islamic arch-  
 itecture, 264, 267; mosques, 147; niches,  
 267, 269; Ocean, 225; origin, 278; ports,  
 239; rosettes, 262, 264; sepoy, 315; ships,

## INDEX

- 237; -style of rosettes, 264; traders, 24;  
 type of arches, 265
- Indians: 50, 144, 237, 241, 243, 315, 317; local-,  
 in Zanzibar, 320, 328
- Indicopleustes, Cosmas, 25
- Indo-Iranian, 290
- Indo-Islamic, architecture, 144, 145 n.1, 148 n.3,  
 319 n.5
- Indo-Muslim, architecture, 256
- Indus, 16
- Inscription: kufic-, 156 n.2, 171, 172 n.2, 175,  
 179, 181, 187, 189, 195, 199, 203,  
 205, 212; phrasing of- 177
- Inscription, at Kisimkazi-Dimbani Mosque, 177, 179,  
 183, 201
- Iran: 33, 154, 183, 185, 191, 214, 218, 278, 288,  
 298; central-, 294
- Iranian: 22, 29, 30, 33, 48, 175; -influence on  
 Indian Architecture, 288; -inventiveness  
 of design, 294; -type, 300
- Iranians, 27

## INDEX

- Irāq, 64, 154, 183, 189, 276  
<sup>c</sup>Irāq, al-, 124  
<sup>c</sup>Irāqis, 116  
 Isfahan, 134, 286, 288  
 Iṣḥāq ibn Ḥasān, Sulṭān of Zanzibar, 89  
 Iskandar, 191  
 Islam: 35, 132, 136, 143, 144, 165, 166, 169,  
 173, 255, 294, 320, 322; architecture of-,  
 278; civilization of, 138; encyclopaedia  
 of-, 118 n.1; medieval architecture of-,  
 254; the spirit of-, 122 n.2  
 Islamic: 185, 323; -architecture, 154, 156 n.3,  
 164, 184 n.1, 186 n.1, n.5, 188 n.1, n.2,  
 194 n.1, 200 n.1, 215 n.1, 221 n.1, 222,  
 229, 230 n.1, 248 n.1, 251 n.1, 268 n.1,  
 270 n.4, 273 n.11, 283 n.1, 285 n.1, 287  
 n.1, 289 n.1, 293 n.3, 295 n.1; Art, 186  
 n.3, 188 n.3, 190 n.1, 198 n.2, 262, 293  
 n.2; -buildings, 183, 197, 206, 216, 329;  
 -civilization, 138; -decorative art, 167;

## INDEX

- faith, 149; forms, 94; politics, 173;  
 pottery, 280 n.1, 283 n.2; pre-, 29;  
 sect, 26 n.2, 119, 128; settlers, 162;  
 sherd, 281; stalactite vaulting, 265;  
 state, 136; -world, 164, 169, 189, 191,  
 219, 276, 322; -yellow sgraffiato, 279
- Islamization, 149
- Ismā<sup>o</sup>īliā, 126
- Ismā<sup>o</sup>īlīs, 116
- Isnā<sup>o</sup>ashiria, 126
- Isnā<sup>o</sup>ashirialism, 132
- Isnā<sup>o</sup>ashirias, 130
- Ithnā<sup>o</sup>ashiriyya, 116
- Ivān, 146
- Jalal ad-Din-al-Ḥusayn, 187
- Jam, minaret of-, 185
- Jambiani: 34 n.1; mosque, 328
- Jāmi<sup>o</sup>i Mosque, at Forodhani, Zanzibar, 324
- Jārudias, 128

## INDEX

Jawhar, ibn-Aḥmad ibn Sirāh, 47, 173

Jews, 18

Jibriyl, 128

Jubayr, ibn-, 148 n.2

Kaisānia, 126

Kanbalu, Island of-, 47, 48, 53

Kaole, Mosque, miḥrāb arch of-, 271

Karbala, 119

k a r t a l, 50

Kar Talab Khan, Mosque, 276

Kasumba, Miḥrāb, 258

Kasumba Mosque, facade of-, 271

k a t a, 57

Katra, Mosque: 274, 318; doorways of-, 276

Khalfan bin Ahmed, 110

Khangah, arched niche of-, 294

Khashab, min-al-, 58

Khazan, 45

Khumbar, 115

Khurāsān, 124

## INDEX

- Khwajah Abu Nasr Parsa, Shrine, 216  
 k i b a n d a, 143  
 Kiburugeni, Mosque, 282, 288  
 Kichakachoni, 57  
 Kichokochwe, 247  
 Kilepwa, 281  
 Kilindini, 191  
 Kilwa: 10, 56, 58, 62 n.1, 74, 76, 78, 83, 92, 101,  
 116, 117, 152, 181, 220, 265; -chronicle,  
 74, 78; coinage of-, 87; coins of, 89; hist-  
 ory of, 67 n.1; kingdom of, 74; notes of,  
 59 n.2, 63, 64, 66, 95  
 Kilzar, Tomb, 216  
 Kimbiji, mihrāb arch, 271  
 Kirk, Sir John, 75 n.1  
 Kirkman, J.S., 225, 227, 282  
 Kiwani, mihrāb, 247  
 Kiwengwa, 34 n.1, 89, 328  
 Kizimkazi, 34 n.1, 156 n.2, 181, 183, 193  
 Kizimkazi-Dimbani: 207, 214; -bosses, 193, 199,  
 209; mihrāb, 171, 191, 193, 199,

## INDEX

- 206, 212, 219, 224, 329, 330  
 n.1; Mosque, 154, 155, 169,  
 171, 175, 181, 183, 189, 191,  
 206, 218, 324
- Koran, 64, 128, 132, 139
- Koranic, 169, 185, 212
- Krumm, B., 20, 27, 28 n.1, n.2, 29, 30
- Kua, mihrāb, 260
- Kua Jamia: mihrāb arch of-, 271; -Mosque, 269
- Kūfah, al-, 189
- Kufic: 183, 185, 187, 189; -character, 175; inscrip-  
 tion, 156 n.2, 171, 172 n.2, 175, 179,  
 181, 187, 189, 195, 199, 203, 205, 212; Ki-  
 zinkazi-Dimbani-, 189; lettering, 187, 206;  
 pseudo-, 201; -script, 183, 189, 193, 195;  
 -writing, 185
- Kumbaros, 328
- Lalbagh, Mosque, 276
- Lamu: 95; domestic building at-, 278
- Lancaster, Captain, 237



## INDEX

- Lane, A., 279, 280 n.1, 283 n.2  
 Languja, 295 n.3  
 Latham, R.E., 67 n.2  
 Latin, historian, 23 n.1  
 lendguja, 295 n.3  
 Levy, R., 35, 36 n.1  
 Lewis, B., 137 n.1  
 Linjan, 286  
  
 Ma<sup>c</sup>āfir, 14  
 Madā<sup>c</sup>in, al-, 146  
 madhhab, 123  
 madhhabs, 117, 123  
 Madīnah, 211 n.2  
 Madrasah: 90, 216; Ulugh beg-, 216  
 Mafazis, 243  
 Mafia, 12, 50, 78, 239  
 Mafui, Mosque, 267  
 Maḥmūd, of Ghaznah, 134, 144  
 Majid bin Said, Sultan of Zanzibar, 325

## INDEX

- Makkah, 16, 117, 166, 211 n.1, 213 n.1
- Makunduchi: 34 n.1, 231; Mosque, 328
- Malay, 29
- Malikites, 115
- malikmajlu, 51
- Malindi, Kenya: 55, 73 n.2, 95, 98; King of, 98
- Malindi, Zanzibar, 324
- Mama Hatun Türbesi, 207
- Mameluk, 12
- Mamluk, period, 216
- Mandhiri, al-, 74, 76
- Mansabi, al-, Mohamed Abdul Qadir, 325
- Mapharite, 14
- Mapharatic, 12
- Maraghah, 291
- Marco Polo: 66, 67 n.2, 68, 69 n.2; travels of,  
69 n.1
- Māsālik wal-Mamālik, al-, 140, n.1
- Masjid-i-Jami, of Isfahan, 291
- Masjid-i-Pa Minar, 286

## INDEX

- Masqat: 111, 113, 309, 313, 315; government of, 111; prince of, 110; ruler of, 313
- Mas<sup>o</sup>ud III, 185
- Mas<sup>o</sup>ūdi, al-, historian, 43, 45, 47, 48, 49 n.1, 50, 51, 53, 55, 82, 140 n.1
- Mauny, R., 62 n.1
- Mawahib, Abu-al-, 64, 65 n.1
- Maymūn al-Qaddāh, 173
- Mazrui: Arabs, 108, 111; domination, 111
- Mazruis, 116, 311
- Mbomaji, Mosque, 177
- Mbweni, mihrāb, 260, 267
- Medouna, 55
- Memons, 115
- Menouthias, 12, 14
- Mesopotamia, 189
- Meynard, de- C.B., 49 n.1, 52 n.1, 140 n.1
- Mfalme, 51
- Miohamvi, 34 n.1
- Middle Ages, 243

## INDEX

- Mihrāb:** 166, 167, 179, 181, 195, 199, 205, 206, 209, 212, 214, 218, 220, 227, 256, 258, 262, 264, 267, 269, 271, 282, 286, 290, 291, 300, 303, 326-329; of al-Afdal, 187; -arch, 207, 218, 224, 262, 267, 301; -arches, 191, 219, 265, 267, 271, 301; of Chhota Sona Masjid, 256; of Gulpaygan, 185; of Jāmi<sup>o</sup>i Mosque of Ohwaka, 199, 247, 249, 250, 254, 271; of Village Mosque, 214
- Mihrābs:** 167, 191, 193, 197, 199, 206, 214, 218, 219, 220, 222, 229, 231, 247, 250, 252, 254, 258, 262, 267, 269, 282, 284, 285, 288, 300, 307, 318, 324-329; of India, 262; semicircular-, 307
- Mikan,** 48
- Mildive Islands,** 60
- m i m,** 202
- Min-al-Hasb,** 58
- Min-al-Khashab,** 58
- m i n b a r,** 167

## INDEX

- Ming, dynasty, 260
- Mkumbuu, 86
- Mnarani, Mosque, 177
- Mogadishu, 56, 220
- Mohamed Abdul Qadir, al-Mansabi, 325
- Mohamoggallana, 197
- Mombasa: 55, 56, 58, 95, 98, 103, 106, 107, 111,  
191, 237, 239, 305, 311; -harbour, 97,  
108
- Moorish, arch, 318
- Moors, 243
- Morocco, 278
- Mozambique, 95, 101
- Msikiti wa Choroko, 92
- Msikiti Mnara: mihrāb, 325, 326, 327; mosque,  
324, 325
- Msuka Mjini, mihrāb, 303, 307
- Msuka Mjini, Mosque: 246, 305; mihrāb arch of,  
265, 267
- Mtangani, mihrāb, 247
- Mtende, 34 n.1
- Mtoni, 313

## INDEX

- Mu<sup>c</sup>āwiyah, ibn-abi-Sufyān, 38
- Muḥammad: Prophet of Islam, 128, 130, 132, 166, 177; prophethood, 130
- Muḥammad, grandfather of Sa<sup>c</sup>id Abu Imrān Mūsa, 171
- Muḥammad, ibn-al-Zaidbud, 47
- Muḥammad ibn Idrīs al-Shāfi<sup>c</sup>i, 115
- Muḥammad, Rukun al-Dīn al-Dābūli, 83
- Muḥarram: 119; tenth of-, 123
- Muhembo, Mosque, 282, 288
- Muḥibiyn, lil Ahl-ul-Bayt, 132
- Mu<sup>c</sup>izz, al-Fāṭimid, 173, 175
- Mu<sup>c</sup>jam al Buldān, 78, 294, 296
- Mukha/Mocha, 14
- Murshidabad, 274, 276, 318
- Murūj al-Dhahab, 45, 49 n.1, 82, 140 n.1
- Musā al-Kāzim, the 7th. Imām of Shi<sup>c</sup>ah, 126
- Muslim: 57, 115, 144; architects, 165; architecture, 257 n.1, 259 n.1, 163 n.1, 266 n.2, 270 n.1, 272 n.1, 275 n.1, 277 n.3, 289 n.2, 319 n.2; community, 115; -converts, 63; dynasty, 173; globe-trotters, 60;

## INDEX

- ideals, 255; immigrants, 147, 149; Indo-,  
 architecture, 256; lands, 82; non-, 149;  
 -places of worship, 90; population, 53;  
 settlers, 151; town, 298; traders, 138;  
 world, 121
- Muslims: 55, 66, 78, 84, 151, 167, 241, 294, 295  
 n.3, 307, 322; population of-, 53
- Mussalmans, 53
- Musta<sup>o</sup>līs, 116
- mutawahs, 317
- Mutawakkil, al-, 119
- Muyuni, 57
- Mwenyi Mkuu, ruler of Zanzibar, 309
- m z i m u, 143
- Nādir Shah, 134
- Najaf, al-, 119
- n a s k h i, 191
- Natanz, 294
- Nauda, 276
- Nau-ruš, 33, 35

## INDEX

- Nearchus, 18**  
**Negro, -population, 83**  
**Ngamiani, town known as-, 73 n.2**  
**Ngwana, 86**  
**Nungwi: 34 n.1, 155, 231, 327, 330 n.1; mihrāb,**  
     **327, 329; mosque, 328**  
**Nusayris, 126, 130**  
**Nuzhat, al Mushtāq, 53, 140 n.1**
- Opone, 26 n.1**  
**Oriental, 20, 28 n.1, 44 n.1**  
**Orthodox: 119; Sunni, 115, 116**  
**Ottoman, 12**  
**Oudh, Court of-, 144**  
**Ousley, W., 44 n.1, 54 n.1, 140 n.1**  
**Pabna, district, 269**  
**Paje, 34 n.1**  
**Pakistan, East-, 265, 318**  
**Pakistani-Indians, 116**  
**Parthia, 22**



## INDEX

Parthian, 24

Pate: domestic building; 278; chronicle, 37, 111,  
150 n.1; chronicler, 41; mihrāb, 260; mihr-  
āb arch of-, 271

Pearce, F.B., 224, 226 n.1, 231, 232 n.2, 233, 234  
n.1, 236 n.1, 237, 240 n.1, 241, 242 n.1, n.2,  
243, 293 n.1, 294, 296, 297 n.1, n.2, 299 n.1,  
303, 304 n.1, 306 n.1, 314 n.1, n.2, 317, 319  
n.1, 320, 321 n.1

Pemba: 12, 22, 33, 47, 78, 84, 86, 89, 90, 92, 98,  
101, 103, 106, 108, 111, 115-117, 121, 124,  
125 n.1, 134, 154, 155, 157, 159 n.1, 199,  
222, 225, 228 n.1, 231, 133, 237, 239, 241,  
243, 247, 250, 254, 264, 265, 279, 282, 296,  
300, 303, 305, 307, 313, 324, 326, 329; gov-  
ernor of, 108; government of, 108; Qāḍi of,  
123; ruins of, 231, 233

Periplus, 8, 9 n.1, 11, 12, 14, 16, 24

Persia: 18, 22, 33, 34 n.1, 35, 36 n.1, 37, 43,  
45, 92, 124, 126, 132, 134, 144, 152, 173,  
189, 255; builders from, 92; rule of, 20

## INDEX

- Persian:** 24, 27, 29, 30, 33, 43; art, 44 n.2; colonists, 233; culture, 175; decorative work, 255; -emperor, 146; Gulf, 8, 20-22, 23 n.1, 31, 130, 139; king, 20, language, 33; merchants, 21, 70; origin, 80; settlements, 76; settlers, 33; traders, 24, 70; words, 31; work, 231
- Persians:** 20-22, 31, 37, 41, 47, 64, 70, 76, 82, 134; -shipbuilders, 21
- Pets,** 57
- Petra,** 16
- Phalangis,** 26 n.1
- Pi-p'a-lo,** the country of-, 72
- Pir-i-Baqran,** mihrāb, 286
- Pokomo,** 86
- Pongwe,** 34 n.1
- Pope, A.U.,** 44 n.2
- Portugal:** 95, 96, 101, 103, 105, 106; king of, 100
- Portuguese:** 29, 30, 78, 84, 86, 95, 98, 100, 103, 105, 107, 157, 305, 308; -coastal States of East Africa, 106; -control of

## INDEX

- the East African Coast, 311; empire, 107; fighting skills of the-, 100; -interest, 97; -invasion, 107, 222; possessions, 95; settlements, 101, 103; -ship, 98, 101; soldiers, 105, 107; travellers, 237; voyagers, 223 n.2
- Ptolomaïos, 27
- Ptolomy, geographer, 24, 26 n.1
- Punt, 10
- Qadam Mubarak, Mosque, 318
- Qāḍī, of Zanzibar and Pemba, 123, 132
- Qadir, al, <sup>c</sup>Abbāsīd, 121
- Qarmatians, the, 126, 128, 130
- Qayrawān, al-, 173
- Qazvin, Congregational mosque in-, 286
- q i b l a h, 166, 183, 205, 219, 301; -walls, 206, 267, 307, 326
- Qulzum, 47
- Qūmm, 132

## INDEX

Qutb, Mosque: 271; doorways of-, 276

Qutub-Shāhs, 87

ra, 202

Raqqādah, 173

Rajshahi, district, 256, 258, 269, 271, 276

Rashid bin Salim, Mazrui ruler of Mombasa, 311

Ras-Mkumbuu, 47, 86, 157, 228 n.1, 279

Ras-Mkumbuu: mihrāb of, 247, 249, 250, 282, 284,

288, 301, 324; mihrāb arch of, 265,

271; Mosque, 225, 249, 282, 298;

-ruins, 225

Rasulmagar, 318

Ravasco, Ruy Lourenco, 98, 100

Ravestein, E.G., 99 n.1

Rayy, 286

Reusch, 117, 118 n.1

Rice, Talbot, 186 n.3, 188 n.3, n.4, 190 n.1, n.2,

198 n.2, 293 n.2

Rockhill, W.W., 71 n.1, 73 n.1, n.3

## INDEX

Rujār, 53, 140 n.1

Rum, 45

Sabeans, 14

Sa<sup>o</sup>d, ibn-, 168 n.1

Sa<sup>o</sup>d, ibn-abi-Waqqās, 146

Sa<sup>o</sup>d ibn Abubakr, Atābegs prince and ruler of  
Khūrasān, 134

safar, month of-, 177

Safawids: 126; dynasty, 132

Safdar Jung, 318

Sāhib, al-Zanj, 25

Sa<sup>o</sup>īd, As-, Abu <sup>o</sup>Imran Mūsa, 171

Sa<sup>o</sup>īd bin Sulṭān, Seyyid, 111, 113, 121, 241, 308,  
309, 311, 313, 315, 317, 320

Said el-Ma<sup>o</sup>amirī, 107

Sālehias, 128

s a l i m a, 202

Samarkand, 216

Samarqand, 63

## INDEX

- Sanchi, 197
- Sanguinetti, B.R., 65 n.2, 140 n.1
- Sanjar, 47
- Sankarpasa Masjid, 271
- Sanskrit, 29
- Sariputa, 197
- Sassanian, 22
- Sassanid, 23 n.1
- Satgumbad, 274
- Sath Gumbad, Mosque, 265
- Seif bin Ahmed, 110, 159 n.1
- Seif bin Sulṭān, 159 n.1
- Seljuq: 189; architecture, 187; period, 298;  
Sulṭān, 189
- Semitic races, of South Arabia, 233
- Seyyid Barghash, see Barghash
- Seyyid Sa<sup>c</sup>īd bin Sulṭān, see Saīd bin Sulṭān
- Sgraffiato, 227
- sgraffito, 195
- Shāfi<sup>c</sup>i: 115, 117, 126, 134, 322; Orthodoxy, 117;

## INDEX

- Sunni, 322; rites, 56, 63, 115, 116, 117
- Shāfi<sup>c</sup>is, 322
- Shah, Mosque, 288
- Shāh Ismā<sup>c</sup>īl, 132
- Shah Muhammad, Mosque, 274
- Shah-nameh, 191
- Shah Niamatullah Wali: Mosque, 271; Tomb, 271
- Shah Poran, Mosque, 318
- Shah Shuja, Gate, 271
- Shahr-i Sabz, 218
- Shahristani, 126
- Shahzadpur, Mosque, 269
- Sharifs, 64
- Shatris, 243
- sheha, 330 n.1
- Sheikh Sulṭān ibn Sulaiman, see Sulṭān ibn Sulaiman
- Sheikh As-Sa<sup>c</sup>īd Abu <sup>c</sup>Imrān Mūsa, see Sa<sup>c</sup>īd Abu  
<sup>c</sup>Imrān Mūsa
- Shela, domestic building at-, 278
- Shengejuu: 225; mihrāb, 247, 260, 300, 301, 303
- Shengejuu Mosque: 225; mihrāb arch of-, 271

## INDEX

- Shī<sup>c</sup>ah: 117, 119, 121, 123; religious festivals,  
123
- Shī<sup>c</sup>ahs, 123, 124, 126
- Shī<sup>c</sup>ism, 119, 124, 126
- Shī<sup>c</sup>ite: 130, 173; community, 126; rite, 126, 132;  
sect, 126, 130
- Shī<sup>c</sup>ites, 116, 119, 121, 132, 173
- Shīrāz, 33, 34 n.1, 80, 134, 232
- Shirazian: 232 n.1; Arab-, 231; architecture, 225;  
design, 231; work, 231, 235
- Sind, 144
- Sīrāf, 41, 43, 47, 48
- Sitte Melik Türbe, 207
- Socotra, 95
- Sofala, 78, 95, 101, 152
- Somali: 179; Coast of-, 55, 72
- Somalia, 10, 11, 72
- Somaliland, Eastern-, 22, 23 n.2
- Soneri, Mosque, 318
- Songo Mnara: mihrāb, 267; -main mosque, 269



## INDEX

- Sulaimaniāns, 128  
 Sulayman ibn Al-Ḥasān ibn Dā<sup>o</sup>ūd, 76, 78  
 Sulaymān ibn al-Malik al-<sup>o</sup>Adil, Sulṭān, 66  
 Sulṭān: 64, 65 n.1, 78, 101, 110, 189, 313; of  
     Kilwa, 89  
 Sulṭān <sup>o</sup>Ali, 177  
 Sultanate, 110  
 Sulṭān ibn Sulaimān, Sheikh, 177  
 Sultans: 252, 313, 322; mausoleum, 220  
 Sung, -dynasty, 260  
 Sunni: Church, 121; Orthodox of-, 115; -Shāfi<sup>1</sup>,  
     134  
 Sunnis, 134  
 Sunnite: 121, 132; Islam, 132, 134; rite, 134;  
     Shaikhs, 124  
 Sunnites, 119, 124  
 Sūrah, 209, 212  
 Susa, 197  
 Swahili: 20, 24, 28 n.1, 29, 30, 31, 51, 57, 243;  
     name, 295

## INDEX

- Sylhet, district, 271, 318
- Syria, 16, 20, 22, 48, 175, 183, 185, 187, 214,  
216, 278
- Syrian, type, 185
- Syrians, 37, 150 n.1
- Tabari, al-, Muhammad ibn-Jarīr, 42 n.1, 148 n.1
- Tabarias, 128
- Tabriz, 134, 191, 214
- Tamerlane, see Tīmūr Lang
- Tanga, 72, 73 n.2
- Tanganyika, coast of-, 32 n.1, 46 n.2, 59 n.1
- Tantipara Masjid, 271
- Tanzania, 72, 282
- Tercan, 207
- Terry, J., 145 n.1, 148 n.3, 319 n.5, n.6
- Theal, G.M., 102 n.1
- Tīmūr Lang, 216
- Tongoni: 282, 288; mihrāb, 284
- Tuan Chieng-Shih, 68, 70

## INDEX

- Tūlūn, ibn-, Mosque, 187  
 Tumbāt, 78, 294, 295 n.3  
 Tumbatu: 34 n.1, 78, 80, 224, 288, 294, 295 n.3,  
 296; arched doorways, 291, 294; Mosque,  
 290, 298; small mihrāb, 282, 290, 294,  
 300, 301, 324; ruins, 294  
 Tundwa, Mosque, 267  
 Tunisia, 278  
 Turkey, 167, 183, 185, 207, 209, 214, 216, 278  
 Turkish: 29; decorative work, 255  
 Turkistan, 255  
 Tribeni, 269  
 Twaka, kingdom of, 86  
  
 Ukomo, 86  
 Ulugh beg, Madrasah, 216  
 °Umān: 20, 48, 50, 82, 107, 108, 111, 113, 116,  
 155, 158, 159 n.1, 243, 305, 307, 308,  
 313; capital of-, 47; -colonies, 76; rulers,  
 108; tribes of, 76

## INDEX

- °Umāni: 307; Arabs, 47, 76, 107, 113, 116, 305,  
 307, 320, 322; ascendancy, 311; forces,  
 315; governors, 159 n.1
- °Umānis, 47, 305
- °Umar, ibn-al-Khaṭṭāb, 132, 136
- Umayyad: caliphs, 37, 38, 144, 150 n.1; empire,  
 41; period, 38, 136
- umrah, 202
- Unguja, 295 n.3
- Ungwana: 281; mihrāb, 260
- Uroa, 34 n.1, 89
- U.S.S.R.: 214, 278; Islamic buildings of, 183,  
 187, 216
- Utenzi, 86
- Utondwe, Mosque, 177
- Utrush, al-, Mosque, 216
- Uzgend, 187
- Veramin: 267; mihrāb at-, 286
- Village Mosque, 214

## INDEX

- Waarabu wa Kimanga, 322  
 Wadebuli, 83, 84, 86, 87, 89, 90  
 Wahabies, 315  
 Wahadimu, tribe, 327, 328  
 Walid, al-, I, 39, 147  
 Waliyyu llah, 123  
 waqf, 323  
 Washirasi, 35  
 Watumbatu, tribe, 296  
 Wazir, 207  
 Werner, A., 27  
  
 Yakut, 111  
 Yaman, al-, 10, 14, 16  
 Yaqut ibn Abdulla Ul-Rumi, geographer, 78, 79 n.1,  
 148 n.2, 294, 295 n.3; -written record, 298  
 Yazid II, 38  
 Yazīdis, 126  
 Yeman, northern, 128  
 Yemen, 47, 65 n.1

## INDEX

- Yorubi, 108, 159 n.1
- Yosuf Kathir, doorways of mausoleum, 294
- Yu-Yang-tsa-tsu, 68, 71 n.1
- Zafar Khan Ghazi, Mosque, 269
- Zaid, son of Zain-ul-Ābidīn, 126, 128
- Zaidia: 126; -Imām, 128
- Zaidis, 126, 128
- Zaidite, 130
- Zaidites, 126
- Zain-ul-Ābidīn, <sup>c</sup>Ali II, 126
- Zand, Afrik Shah, 23 n.2
- Zang: 27; king of-, 23 n.2, 27
- Zang<sup>v</sup>, 25, 27
- Zangel, 27
- Zanj: 27, 47, 50, 53, 295; -coast, 55; country of, 55, 64; kings of, 51; the land of, 45, 56; pagan-, 63; -sea, 47; town of, 55; the word-, 25

## INDEX

Zanzibar: 12, 22, 25, 33, 35, 37, 43, 45, 56,  
 57, 66, 68, 74, 76, 78, 80, 83, 84,  
 86, 89, 90, 95, 98, 100, 101, 103,  
 105, 108, 110, 111, 113, 115-117, 121,  
 123, 126, 134, 154, 155, 169, 181,  
 193, 222, 224, 225, 231, 233, 237,  
 239, 241, 243, 250, 296, 305, 307-309,  
 311, 313, 315, 317, 318, 320, 322-324,  
 326, 327, 329; British rule in-, 31;  
 coast of-, 89; coinage of, 87; coins  
 of, 89; description of, 67 n.2; govern-  
 ment of, 108; -harbour, 237; inhabitants  
 of, 78; kings of, 155, 100; ruins of,  
 231; -tradition, 83

Zanzibaris, 100

Zeng, 27

Zeng<sup>v</sup>, 27

Zing, 27

Zingion: 26 n.2; Ocean of, 25

## INDEX

Zingis: 25, 26 n.1; cape-, 27

Zinj, 27

Zoroastrian, -Persia, 20

Zoroastrians, 18