

THE BLACK HISTORY MAN

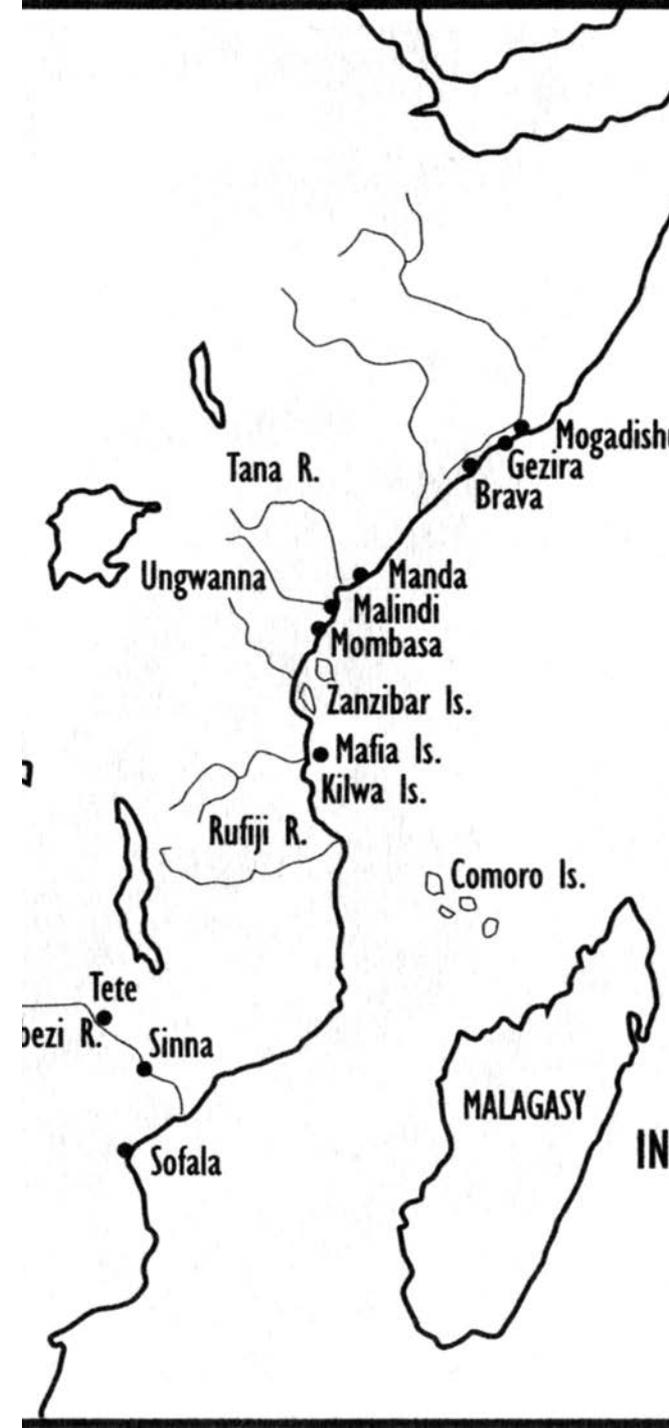
Leading Black History Educational Specialist since 2006

**The Lost Cities
and Amazing
Heritage of Kenya**

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The Kenyan coastal heritage was part of the Swahili Confederation

- The main Swahili cities were
- Mogadishu (Somalian coast)
- Malindi, Mombasa (Kenyan coast)
- Mafia, Kilwa (Tanzanian coast)
- Sofala (Mozambique coast)
- Sinna (Mozambique inland)
- Who were the people? Zanj, Berbers, or Swahili
- Later joined by Arabians, Persians and Indians





AERIAL VIEW OF LAMU.



East Africa Postcards "AERIAL VIEW OF LAMU, (KENYA PROTECTORATE)"



I visited the Lamu
Museum and took
photographs

Reconstructed
pieces of
kitchenware,
Lamu
Museum





Reconstructed coffee vases and rosewater containers, Lamu and Malindi Museums

Reconstructed
bedroom
goods: Gedi
Interpretation
Centre and
Lamu Museum



Surely
Africans
could not
have built
these
cities?

- Believing this, British archaeologist, James Kirkman, deceived a generation of scholars
- He misled historians into the error that the East African culture was partly, if not entirely, of Arab or Persian origins
- The Swahili language today has a number of Arabic words mixed up in it, and it was at one time argued that this demonstrates an important Arab element in the formation of Swahili culture
- Is this conclusive?

Surely
Africans
could not
have built
these
cities?

- Dr John Sutton of the BIEA wrote:
- What is less well understood however, is that the bulk of these borrowings are not ancient in (Ki)Swahili, but belong to the last two hundred years or so (the period of the “new” Arabs and the Zanzibari state)
- In the eighteenth century, well after the great East African culture had declined, Arab sultans in fact controlled East Africa

What does the archaeology really say?

- Dr Mark Horton, an English archaeologist, is a prominent scholar of Swahili antiquities
- His excavations have shown that the very earliest mosques on the East African coast date from the eighth century AD
- They were flimsy timber-thatched buildings and were much like temporary mosques built even now from time to time by East Africans. Swahili fishermen build fishing villages, including a mosque, to serve them only during the fishing seasons
- The wooden mosques excavated by Dr Horton indicate that the first Muslims on the coast were Africans and not Arabs
- From there, the Africans evolved mud and timber mosques, which were much larger
- Finally, they progressed to building stone-built mosques



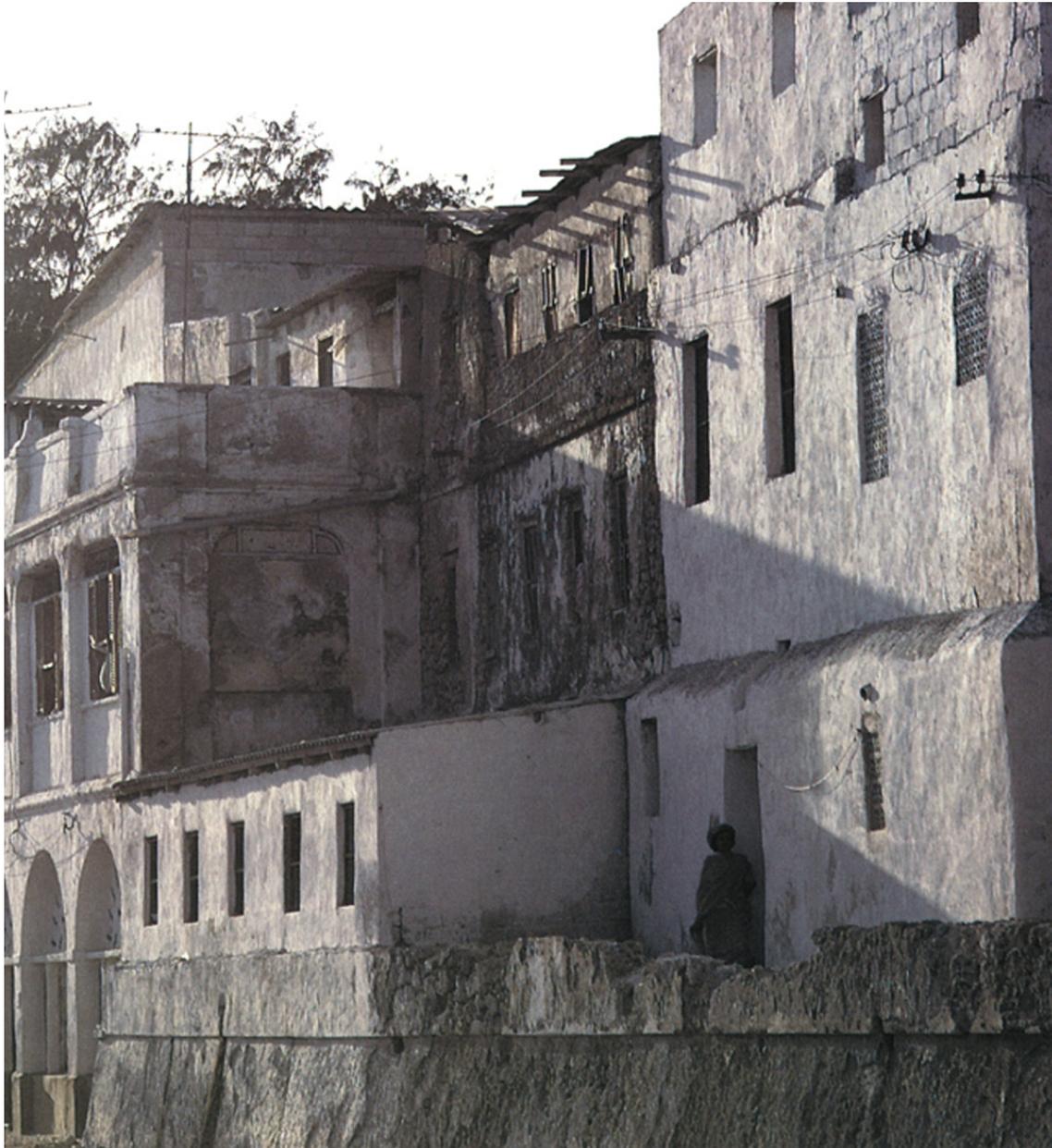
Tomb: Gedi



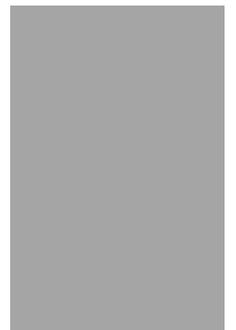
Tomb 1399 AD: Gedi. What do these grand burials tell us?



Tomb of
the Fluted
Pillar: Gedi



And not
just Lamu



A dark blue, irregularly shaped graphic with a splatter effect, containing white text. The graphic is centered on a white background and has a rough, hand-painted appearance with some lighter blue and white splatters around its edges.

Let us get
some visitor's
impressions

Ibn Battuta in Mogadishu, 1331

- The qadi took my hand and we came to that house which is near the shaikh's house. And it was bedded out and set up with what is necessary. Then he came with food from the shaikh's house. With him was one of his wazirs who was in charge of guests. He said, 'Maulana gives you *al-salamu 'alaikum* and he says to you, you are most welcome.' Then he put down the food and we ate. Their food is rice cooked with ghee placed on a large wooden dish. They put on top dishes of kushan – this is the relish, of chicken and meat and fish and vegetables. They cook banana before it is ripe in fresh milk and they put it on a dish, and they put sour milk in a dish with pickled lemon on it and bunches of pickled chillies, vinegared and salted, and green ginger and mangoes. These are like apples and they have a stone, and when they ripen they are very sweet and are eaten like fruit. But before they ripen they are bitter like lemons and they pickle them in vinegar. When they eat a ball of rice, they eat after it something from these salted and vinegared foods. Now one of the people in [Mogadishu] habitually eats as much as a group of us would. They are extremely large and fat of body

Ibn Battuta in Kilwa, 1331

- We spent a night on the island of [Mombasa], and then set sail for Kilwa, the principal city on the coast the greater part of whose inhabitants are Zanj of very black complexion ... Kilwa is one of the most beautiful and well-constructed cities in the world. The whole of it is elegantly built

What did another visitor say about the Kenya region?

- Duarte Barbosa published the following in 1517:
- **Mombasa** was apparently “a very fair place, with lofty stone and mortar houses, well aligned in streets after the fashion of Kilwa”
- **Malindi** had “many fair stone and mortar houses of many stories, with great plenty of windows and flat roofs ... The place was well laid out in streets.”
- **Pate** and **Lamu** were “well walled with stone and mortar”

Gedi

- The ruined city of Gedi is located about 10 miles south of the present Malindi and far from the coast
- The name 'Gedi' is said to a corruption of 'Gede', a Galla word meaning 'precious'
- It may also be the name of the last Galla ruler of the site
- Dr Basil Davidson (1959) identifies Gedi as the Malindi of the medieval maps and documents. If he is correct, the city must have been very much larger than the 45 acres enclosed by the wall traced by James Kirkman, or the 70 acres claimed by the Gedi Interpretation Centre. It must also have extended down to the coast
- Moreover, the overwhelming majority of the buildings must have been of a flimsier and perishable material, such as clay bricks. These clearly have not survived

Gedi

- James Kirkman (1975) himself held the view that Gedi was to be identified as the Kilimani of the medieval documents
- I believe, however, that his identification raises the same issues as Davidson's. If Kirkman is correct, perhaps Gedi extended south to Mida Creek and would thus be accessible to the Indian Ocean trade
- The National Museums of Kenya website says the following about Gedi: **“It traces its origin in the twelfth century but was rebuilt with new town walls in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. This rebuilding is connected with the emigration of many citizens of Kilwa to Mombasa, Malindi and other places along the coast”**
- This may indicate that the present traces of walls are more recent than the foundation of the coral stone buildings

Gedi

- There was a large baobab tree. Our guide pointed out that it is evidence of the traditional pre-Islamic belief system. In fact, on all three sites (Gedi, Jumba La Mtwana, and Mnarani) were baobab trees
- All three local guides confirmed the view that the baobab tree reflects a traditional belief system. One went further and said that the believers would post valuable items into the tree and offer a prayer
- Another important tree was the neem tree. Our guide said that it had anti-sickle cell properties. This supports the ideas of Dr Charles Finch (1992) who advances the same claim

Imports to Gedi, Chinese celadon and porcelain



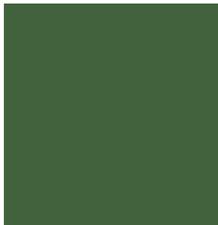
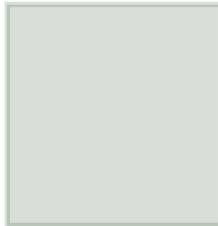
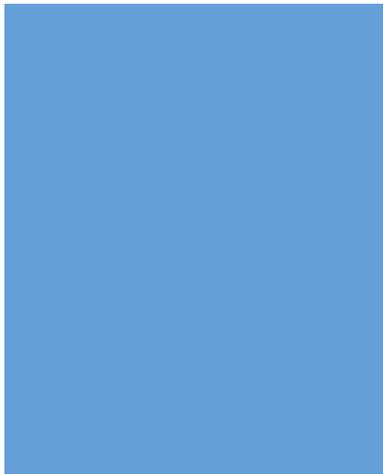
Blue and white Chinese plates:
15th century from Gedi, Marsabit and Ungweya



15th sites
16th

CHINESE
The earliest blue - and - white porcelain found in any quantity in east Africa was made in the second half of the fourteenth century. But it is by no means until the middle of the fifteenth century. In the sixteenth century it superseded celadon.

Gedi: The Palace

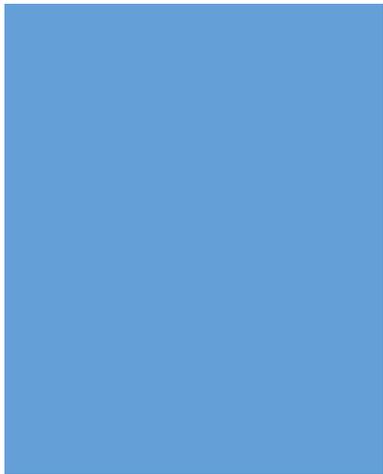
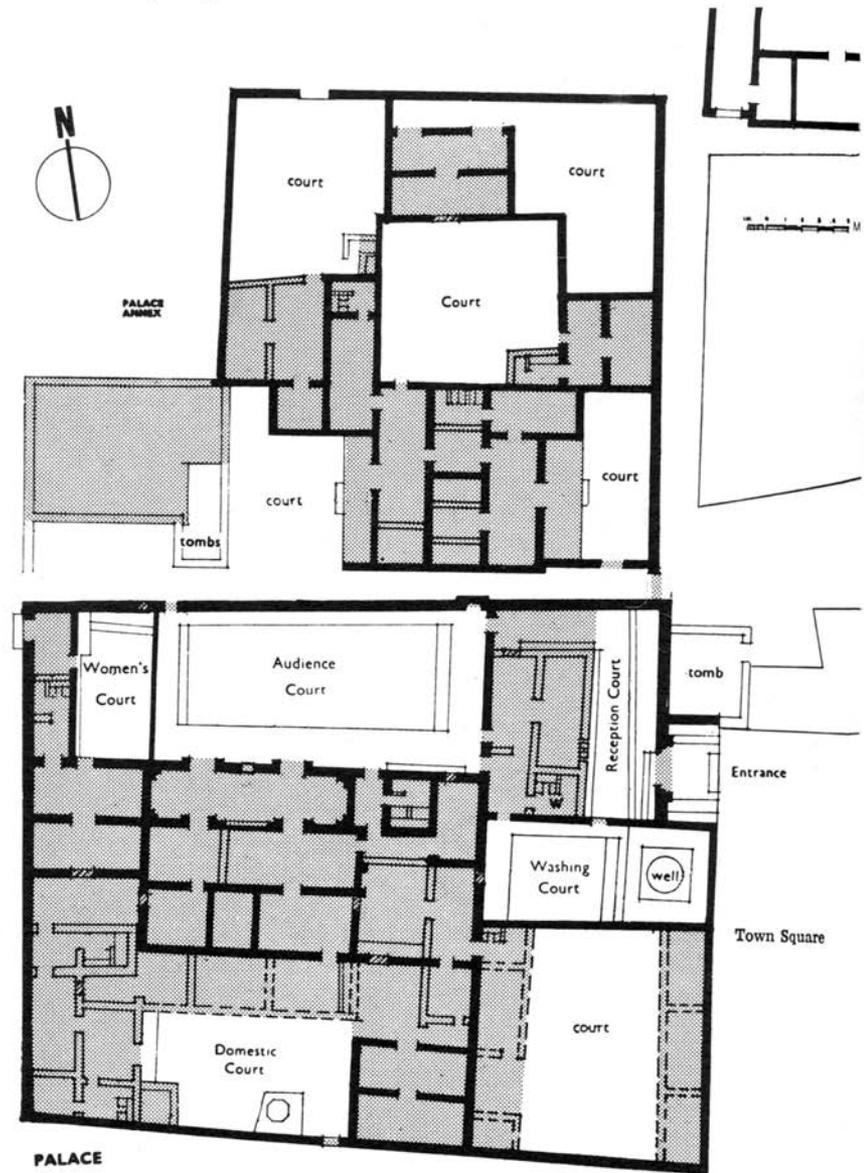




Let's walk around it

Is there a
plan of
this
complex?

Gedi. Plan of the palace and its annex.



UK£100 in the low season. Rack rates for residents start at KSh 6210/8280 up to KSh 8100/10,800 for singles/doubles including breakfast in the high season. Children up to

between KSh 250 and KSh 400 (more for crab or lobster). There's also a bar with cold beers, and a disco most nights.

That's about the limit if you're an independent traveller but, if you have money to

Getting There & Away

Matatus leave from the bus station in Malindi throughout the day. They cost KSh 25 to Watamu and take about 30 minutes. Most of these first go down to the Turtle Bay Beach Club after which they turn around and go to Watamu village. On the return journey they generally go direct from Watamu village to Malindi without first going down to the Turtle Bay Beach Club.

Getting Around

Bicycles can be hired for KSh 250 per day from Subira Bicycle Hire opposite the Ascot Residence Hotel.

Taxis can be found outside the Watamu Beach Hotel.

GEDI

Some four km from Watamu, just off the main Malindi–Mombasa road, are the famous Gedi ruins, one of the principal his-

operates some nights.

For better meals at a reasonable price (for Watamu) head for the *Watamu Paradise Restaurant & Cottages* where you can get seafood and European-style meals for

torical monuments on the coast. Though the ruins are extensive, this Arab-Swahili town is something of a mystery since it's not mentioned in any of the Portuguese or Arab chronicles of the time.

Excavations, which have uncovered such things as Ming Chinese porcelain and glass and glazed earthenware from Persia, have indicated the 13th century as the time of its foundation, however it was inexplicably

site. Other items are exhibited in Fort Jesus in Mombasa.

The Tombs

On your right as you enter the

In places it actually incorporates earlier houses into its structure. The site is lush and green with numerous baobab trees. Monkeys chatter in the tree tops, lizards rustle in the undergrowth and large, colourful butterflies flutter among the ruins.

The buildings were constructed of coral rag, coral lime and earth and some have pictures incised into the plaster finish of their walls, though many of these have deteriorated in recent years. The toilet facilities in the houses are particularly impressive, generally in a double-cubicle style with a squat toilet in one and a wash stand in the other where a bowl would have been used. Fancier versions even have double washbasins with a bidet between them.

The other notable feature of the site is the great number of wells, many of them remarkably deep.

Most of the interesting excavated buildings are concentrated in a dense cluster near

the entrance gate. There are several others scattered around the site within the inner wall and even between the inner and outer walls. Outside the site, by the car park, there's a small museum with some items found on the

The Houses

In all, 14 houses have been excavated at Gedi, 10 of which are in a compact group beside the Great Mosque and the Palace. They're named after particular features of

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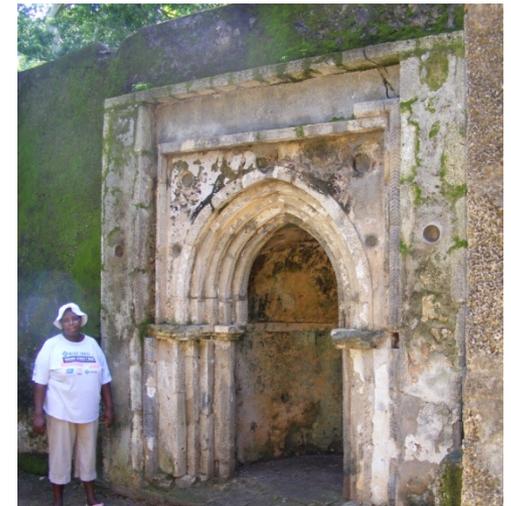
ables
hatch

kitchen
The

pillar
with

its own

Gedi: The Great Mosque





Mosque of Three Isles: Gedi



House 1: Gedi



House of the Cistern: Gedi



House of the Dhow: Gedi





House of the Dhow:
Gedi



House of the Dhow: Gedi



Dhows? Let us examine Fort Jesus Museum: Mombasa



African ships on the Indian Ocean?

- East African ships were on the Indian Ocean
- A first-century AD guidebook, *Periplus Maris Erythraei*, records that the East Africans made “sewn” boats

The Indian Ocean Trade

- The seasonal monsoon winds shaped the trading patterns between East Africa and Asia
- In April the southwest monsoon starts. By June or July it created a strong northerly current that flows up the Somali coast towards India
- The northeast monsoon started in November and reached its full strength in January. It blew from India and the Persian Gulf towards East Africa

What were the products?

- The Zanj had a trade in ivory with India and China with the traffic passing through Oman. The ivory was used to make the handles of daggers in India, and royal chairs in China. It was also used to make chess pieces
- They were skilled workers in metal
- What was this metal? We shall see
- They also exported ambergris (a perfume) and rhino-horn (it supposedly had medicinal purposes!!!)
- They traded leopard skins and also timber
- Mangrove-poles in particular were sold to the building industries of Oman and Persia

Jumba La Mtwana

- Located 10 miles north of Mombasa, nobody knows the true name of this city
- The contemporary Swahili name for what its worth is Jumba La Mtwana translated as 'The Large House of the Slave'. Our guide says it also may mean 'The Large House of the Strong man' or 'The Large House of the Leader'
- The National Museums of Kenya website says the following about Jumba La Mtwana: **"There are no written historical records of the town, but ceramic evidence showed that the town had been built in the fourteenth century but abandoned early in the fifteenth century"**



Central Mosque:
Jumba La Mtwana



Jumba La Mtwana:
Mosque by the Sea



Unknown
Building:
Jumba La
Mtwana



House of the Many
Doors: Jumba La Mtwana



House of the Many Doors: Jumba La Mtwana

What tableware could have been in this house?

- Kitchenware of Brass and Copper and Silver: Fort Jesus Museum



Mnarani

- The ruined town of Mnarani – i.e. the minaret – is located near the modern city of Kilifi near the waterway Kilifi Creek
- No one today knows the original name of the town and it is only called ‘Mnarani’ due to the claimed similarity between the pillar of Pillar Tomb of the Great Mosque and a minaret
- However, it must be pointed out that the pillar looks slightly more like a minaret (or perhaps less unlike a minaret) than the pillars in the tombs of Gedi
- The Gedi Museum houses one artefact from this site. The lone early 16th century artefact was described as ‘Toilet instruments [sic]’ and may have been a fragment of a pair of tweezers

Mnarani

- The National Museums of Kenya website says the following about Mnarani:
- “The site was first occupied in the early 14th century but the first mosque; the Great Mosque was not built until AD 1425. Enlargements were undertaken soon thereafter, followed by major reconstruction efforts later in the 15th century following the collapse of the earlier building. Close to the first Mosque is a smaller mosque which, prior to its construction a much similar but smaller mosque existed at its location; the foundation of its Mihrab may still be seen east of the present Mihrab. The original mosque was built around 1475, while the later mosque in about 1500; this is evident by the presence of a Portuguese dish in the cistern thus indicating that the final alterations to the mosques were probably not completed before the 16th century. Mnarani was eventually destroyed by the Galla in the early 17th century and archaeological evidence seems to confirm this”



Mnarani: The Great Mosque





Mnarani: The Great Mosque



Mnarani: The Great Mosque



Mnarani: The Great Mosque

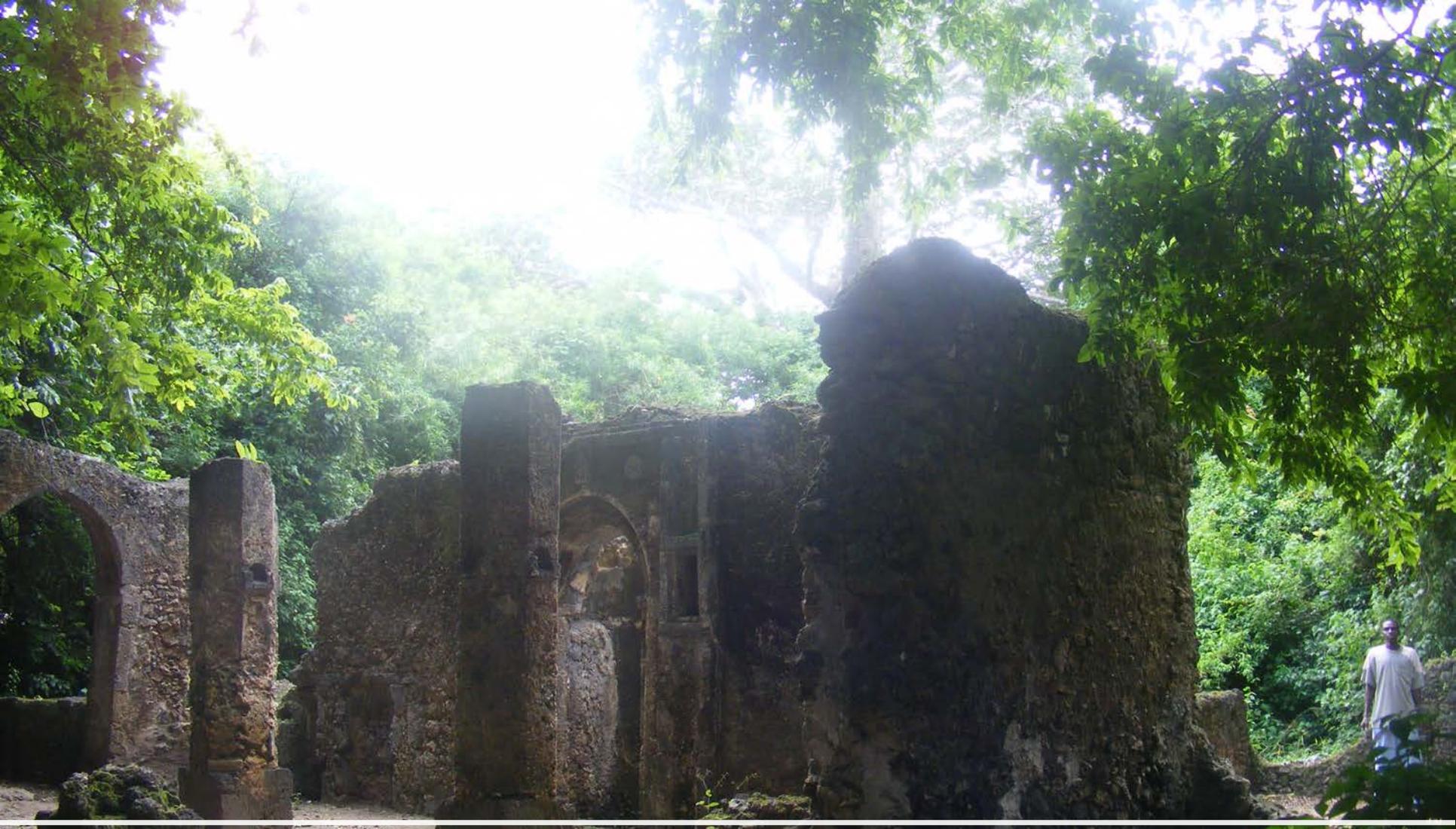


Mnarani: The Small Mosque





Mnarani: The Small Mosque



Mnarani: The Small Mosque and Madrassa



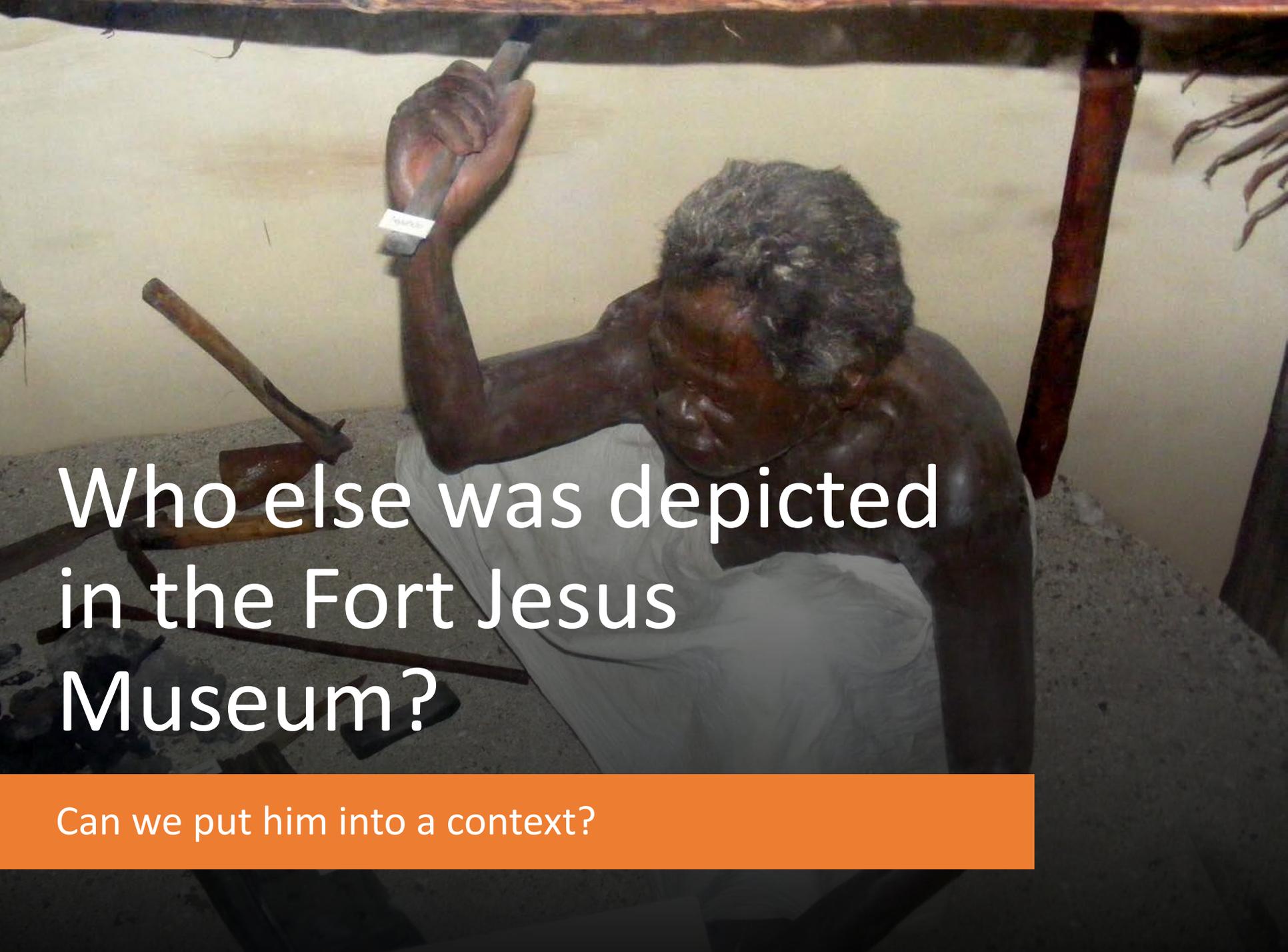
Mnarani: The Tomb

Did Duarte Barbosa describe the people?

- The Moors of **Sofala** ... clothe themselves from the waist down with cotton and silk cloths, and other cloths they wear over their shoulders like capes, and turbans on their heads. Some wear small caps dyed in grain in chequers and other woollen clothes in many tints, also camlets and other silks
- In **Kilwa**, the level of luxury reached was astonishing
- [T]hey are finely clad in many rich garments of gold and silk and cotton, and the women as well; also with much gold and silver chains and bracelets, which they wear on their legs and arms, and many jewelled earrings in their ears
- The people of the island cities of **Pemba**, **Mafia** and **Zanzibar** dressed in the same style as described for Kilwa also with the associated opulence

Traditional dress
of the Mijikenda
in the Fort Jesus
Museum – Have
we heard it
described
before?

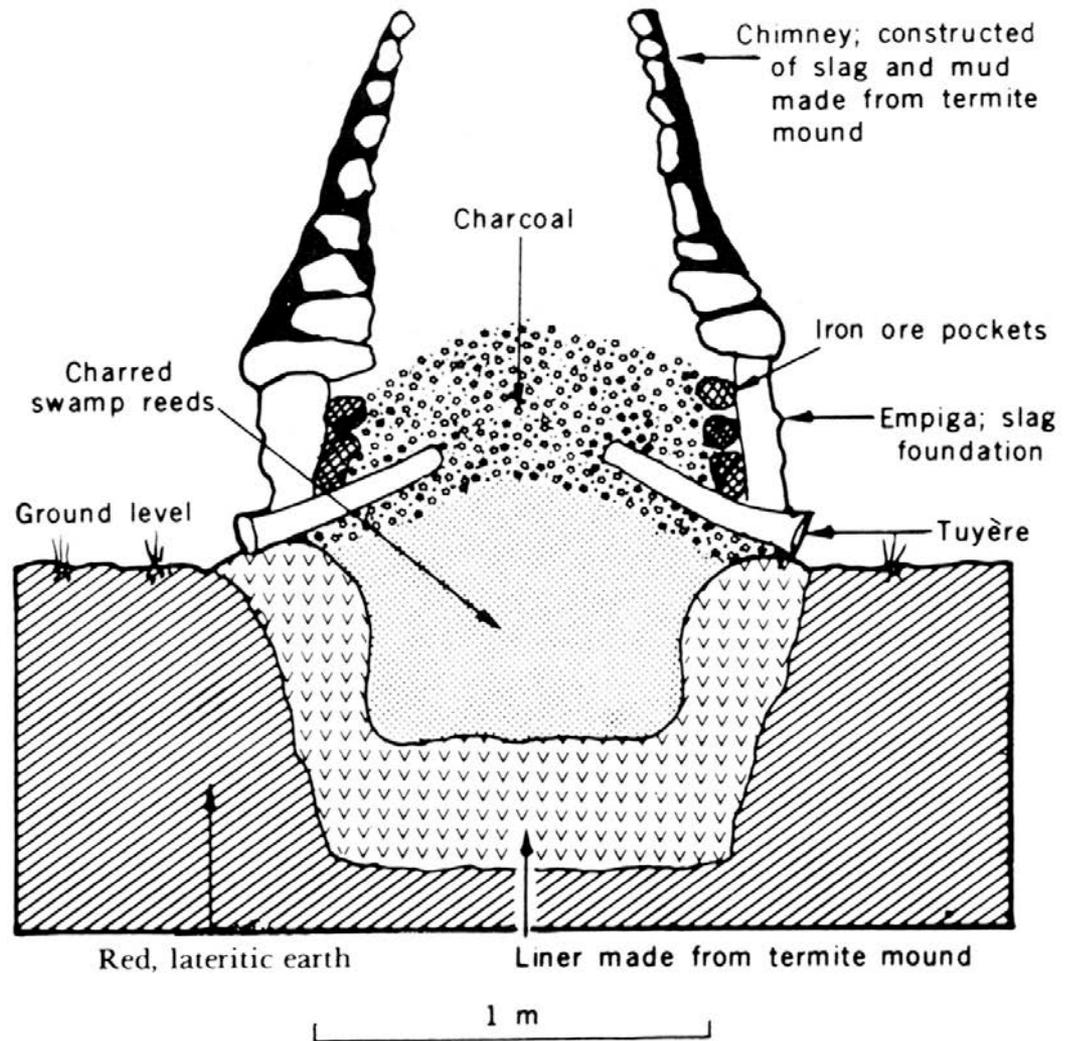




Who else was depicted in the Fort Jesus Museum?

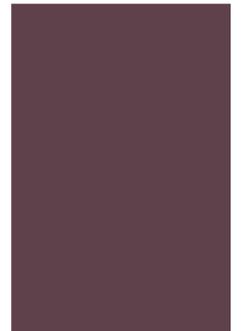
Can we put him into a context?

What was discovered in 1978?





Did you know
that East
Africans
minted their
own coins of
copper and
silver?





BREAKING NEWS

Top Tory donor Lord worth £500million



Price war at the checkout: Rival



We should be tougher with



Ban all petrol and diesel cars by 2040



Lewis Hamilton makes bizarre 'all



Average house costs ten times

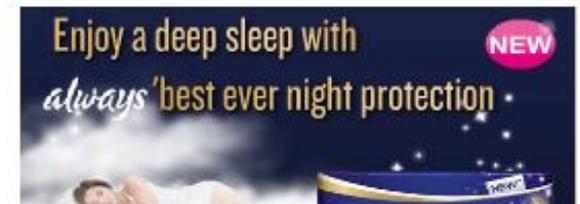


Cyber forme

How 900-year-old African coins found in Australia may finally solve the mystery of who arrived Down Under first

- Coins date back to six centuries before Captain Cook claimed the island for the British throne in 1770- but where they came from remains a mystery

Site Web Search



Where have these coins
been discovered?





4



5

6



7



8



4

6

5

2

1

Name: Hair Pin
Local Name: Kidani cha kopa cha njuga
Silver hair pin worn by grown up women behind the head. It is tied with hair at the back.



Rings
nashikio
rated.



Name: Arm band
Local Name: Vigogeya
Silver arm band worn on the upper part of the arm by children.

Name: silver bracelets
Local Name: Vikukuu
Silver bracelets worn by children around the legs.



Name: Silver handbag
Local name: kikebe cha Fedha
Silver handbag used by very rich people to store jewelry, perfumes and other personal effects. It is also a personal adornment when attending special ceremonies.

Name: Silver Ear Rings
Local Name: Vipuli vya mashikio
Silver earrings finely decorated.



Name: Hair Pin
Local Name: Kidani cha kopa cha njuga
Silver hair pin worn by grown up women behind the head. It is tied with hair at the back.

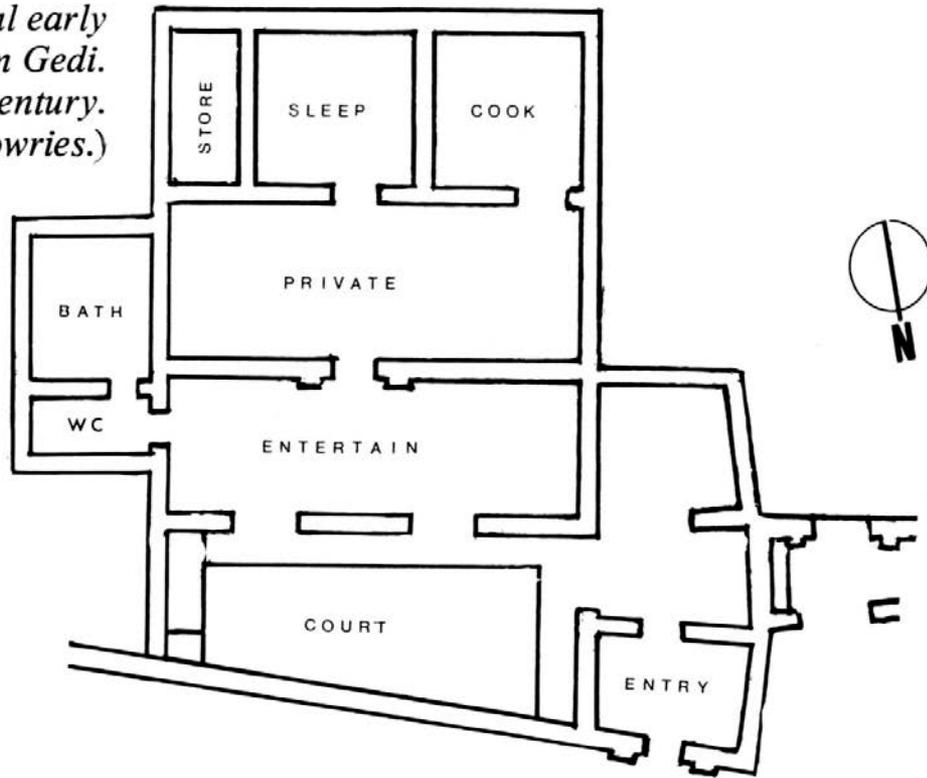


Name: Arm band
Local Name: Vigogeya
Silver arm band worn on the upper part of the arm by children.

Role of the Portuguese in Africa

- Early in the sixteenth century, the Portuguese sent their fleets and armies into this region
- Dr Davidson explained this unfortunate episode:
 - It was at Mozambique, during his first voyage, that da Gama exchanged the first shots. Back again on the coast in 1502, this time with a score of ships from home, da Gama threatens to burn Kilwa unless its ruler will acknowledge the supremacy of the king of Portugal and pay him yearly tribute in gold. Ravasio does the same at Zanzibar and Brava. Meeting resistance, Almeida storms Kilwa and Mombasa, burning and destroying. Saldanha ravages Berbera. Soares destroys Zeila. D'Acunha attacks Brava

Plan of a typical early house from Gedi. Fourteenth century. (House of the Cowries.)



Some things to remember about Kenya: Lamu Museum



Some things to
remember
about East
Africa: Gedi



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Heritage of Kenya**

- This concludes the presentation