1. Final Publishable Summary Report

Temporality of permanence – material and socio-spatial practices in African urbanism

The ebbs and flows of urbanisation represent one of the key issues in research on human settlements as well as a major concern of global society today. The spatial structure of towns is a material representation and an active component in negotiations of social relationships, including political power, trade, and constructs of cultural identity.

This research project was designed with these ideas in mind to study the characteristics and changes in the spatial properties of urban settlements in sub-Saharan Africa over the long-term, focusing specifically on the thirteenth through to the nineteenth century. This allowed the researcher to analyse and assess how urban fabric developed over multiple generations, compare pre-colonial and colonial trajectories of changes, and draw conclusions about the connotations and under-the-surface causalities of the present-day structure of African towns.

The project centred on identifying patterns in structuring of the built environment and possible crossing points between social and spatial dynamics. The region studied in greatest depth was the East African coast, where the predominantly Islamic Swahili towns represented an ideal case study for analysis. Because the importance of trade, contacts with other regions, and Islam, all characterised these towns for much of the second millennium, comparative case-studies with similar characteristics were chosen from West Africa, specifically the towns on the edge of the Sahara that have broadly coeval histories with those on the Swahili coast.

Analyses of individual buildings and of town layouts were undertaken for sites on the Swahili coast. The study of individual buildings included comparative review of stone-built palatial complexes as well as stone houses. This brought new understanding of underlying principles shared along the Swahili coast for potential movement and visibility properties of space within the residential structures. The issue of visibility was explored for two other urban features in the built environment: pillar tombs and town walls, which included review of research on these phenomena and new considerations of their long-term role for the concepts of Swahili identity and social trust in this cosmopolitan urban society. On the settlement scale, street networks were analysed respective
to assess the positioning of open (public) spaces, mosques and town gates. This study was only possible for later living towns with colonial history such as Mombasa Old Town.

The outcomes were compared with similar analyses of West African trading towns, undertaken on the basis of satellite images, maps and recent surveys. The cross-regional and cross-cultural comparisons brought revelations about the important role the urban quarters played in maintaining an equilibrium of social power and how their structure created materially-constituted spatial terms for intra-town cooperation and competition such as access to trade-related spaces and opportunities.

The project was divided in three work packages, realised over the outgoing and incoming phase. The outgoing phase which took place at the Centre of African Studies, University of Basel, Switzerland was comprised of Interdisciplinary research on the themes of East African / Swahili urban studies and a Comparative review of social themes in urbanism of West and South Africa. The incoming phase, realized at the Department of Archaeology and Ancient History, Uppsala University, Sweden, was represented by the third work package Comparative analysis and implications for Swahili archaeology.

Objectives and achievements (expected and realised)
All the milestones and objectives were achieved, and the number of expected outcomes was exceeded.

Expected:
- Participation at 13 research seminars
• 6 conferences – participation and presentation
• 2 popular articles
• 2 public lectures
• 3 peer-reviewed articles (one of which might be a book chapter)
• Organisation of a workshop

Realised:
• 34 seminars attended with 10 presentations given (in 3 various departments of the University of Basel and 2 departments in Uppsala, and at universities in Geneva, London and Ceske Budejovice)
• 15 conferences and workshops were attended, all with presentations of the research on this project: (Africa Days (Pilsen, Czech Republic), “Territoriality” workshop (Basel), Structure of infrastructure (Liverpool, UK); Society of Africanist Archaeologists (Toulouse, France); World Archaeological Congress (Kyoto, Japan); Central Europe TAG (Bratislava, Slovakia); Socioenvironmental dynamics workshop (Kiel, Germany); “Secondary cities” workshop (Basel); Identities and identifications Euroacademia conference (Florence, Italy); ECAS (Basel); European Association of Archaeologists (Maastricht, the Netherlands); Central Europe TAG (Vienna, Austria); AARD (York, UK); CEA (Modena, Italy); Society for American Archaeology (Washington, USA)
• 3 popular articles (see Dissemination activities section below)
• 2 public lectures (Science Café, Pilsen, Czech Republic, 24th January 2017; Academic library, Prague 25th January 2018). (It was not possible to organise the public lectures in Basel/Uppsala as originally expected due to language issues – to have the desirable public impact they would have to be presented in German/Swedish).
• 5 peer-reviewed articles published, 1 submitted and 2 in preparation (see Dissemination activities section below)
• 1 conference (CRG African History) and roundtable/workshop will be organized in June 2018 (Material histories: interdisciplinary engagements of archaeology in Africa) in Pilsen, Czech Republic, a session at Swiss Researching Africa days was organized in October 2016 (see Dissemination activities section below)

Networking and training:
Through her research on the project, the researcher was able to establish important academic contacts in a number of countries, including Switzerland, Sweden, South Africa, the UK and the USA. She will be able to draw on these networking links in her future research and grant applications. She was also able to compose and publish multiple publications, and undertake research which opens up important questions as well as possibilities for follow-up research into the social, sensory and material aspects of urban environments.

2. Dissemination activities

Publications in preparation:
• Baumanova, M. In prep. Context-specific applications of space syntax on African urban sites. For submission to African Archaeological Review
• Baumanova M. In prep. The socio-spatial dimension of urban quarters in Swahili towns For submission to Urban Studies.
Publications submitted:

Publications accepted for publication or in press:

Publications:

Popular articles and lectures (in popular magazines and media):
- Popular article in Koktejl (travel, ethnography and archaeology magazine) 1/2018, p. 24-29 – Tisíceletá města na afrických březích (A thousand years of towns on the East African coast)
- Public lecture at Science Café, Pilsen, Czech Republic, 24.1. 2017, Zlatá doba východní Afriky: Archeologie předkolononiálních měst (The archaeology of pre-colonial towns in (North-)East Africa)

Participation at conferences:
- Conference on Environmental Archaeology, Modena, Italy, 2018 – “(Pre)colonial urban sustainability in coastal Africa: environmental and social aspects”
- African Archaeology Research Day, York, UK, 2017, - “Networks of trade and communication: urban centres on the coasts of Sub-Saharan Africa”
- Central Europe TAG, Vienna, Austria, 2017 – “Multi-disciplinary perceptions of the built environment”
- **European Association of Archaeologists**, Maastricht, the Netherlands, 2017 – “Deploying the tomb: a spatial reference and material symbol of the urban Swahili”
- **European Conference on African Studies, Basel**, Switzerland, 2017 - roundtables
- Identities and identifications Euroacademia conference, Florence, Italy, June 2017 - “Archaeological perspectives on the materiality of urban space: identity and structure of historic built environment”
- **Socio-environmental dynamics over the last 12,000 years**, Kiel, Germany, March 2017 – “Urban spaces on the coast of the Sahara: moving goods, people and ideas”
- 3rd **Central European Theoretical Archaeology Group** meeting, Bratislava, Slovakia, 2016 – “The materiality of constructed space: between theory and methodology”
- 8th **World Archaeological Congress**, Kyoto, Japan, 2016 – “Global and local faces of Swahili built environment”
- **Structure of infrastructure**, University of Liverpool/Uppsala University, Liverpool, UK, March 2016 - “Swahili tombs as mortuary infrastructure in urban strategies of display”
- **Africa Days** Pilsen, Czech Republic, 2015 - roundtables

**Organisation of sessions and workshops:**
- **Swiss Researching Africa Days, Bern, Switzerland, 2016** – co-organisation of a session with Dr Anne Mayor (University of Geneva) - “Material representation and spatial patterning of practices in Africa” and presentation “Great residential buildings of pre-colonial Africa in a comparative perspective”
- **CRG African history conference, Pilsen, Czech Republic, 2018** – co-organisation of the conference and convenor of the panel “African archaeology”

**Invited lectures and talks:**
- **Department of Archaeology, University of Ceske Budejovice, Czech Republic**, 9th March 2017 (“The materiality of space and buildings in archaeology”)
- **University of Geneva, Switzerland**, 15 September 2016 (“Monumental mortuary architecture on the East African coast: urbanism and tombs in context”)