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A Study of the East African Slave Trade in Bagamoyo

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A Study of the East African Slave trade in Bagamoyo

*“All I can add in my solitude is may Heaven’s rich blessings come down
to everyone, American, English, or Turk, who will help heal*

The Open Sore of the World.”

-Dr. David Livingston

Jake Salyers

Advisors: Samahani Ke Jeri and Father Daniel Bojou

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Abstract

The purpose of my study was to learn about the east African Slave trade and its relationship to the town of Bagamoyo. Bagamoyo was an important trading town on the coast of Tanzania during the peak of the Arab run slave and ivory trade. Slavery was only abolished in Tanganyika in 1922, so there are still many monuments and memories remaining in the town concerning the slave trade. I had two main methods of collecting information about the town, interviewing the descendants of slaves and slave owners and researching the history of Bagamoyo. I was able to get three different interviews in Bagamoyo with the descendants of slaves, two with people whose ancestors were slaves and one whose ancestors were slave owners. During these interviews I collected ethnographic information, asked them for specific stories regarding their family's history in the slave trade, and asked them their perspective on their ancestors. Though I only had limited data because of the lack of interviewees, I was still able to discern several themes and commonalities present in their stories. By combining the personal perspectives of the interviewees with the more factually based knowledge I garnered from my research in Bagamoyo, I was able to get a good picture of what slavery was like in Bagamoyo and how it affected the people of the town.

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Introduction

Throughout most of its history, Bagamoyo has been a terminus of trade routes on the east African coast. With its close proximity to the major trading port of Zanzibar, it rapidly developed as a gateway into the African hinterlands.

Figure 1 "Slave Caravan nearing the end of its journey in Bagamoyo"



Source: Bagamoyo Roman Catholic Mission Museum

However, the town of

Bagamoyo quickly rose and then fell in prominence with the infamous east African slave and ivory trade. Though it is not now the busy trade town it once was, Bagamoyo's rich history has been incredibly well preserved. From the Kaole Ruins to the Roman Catholic mission, Bagamoyo is filled with historical monuments that help to tell the story of the east African slave trade. Even more important than the historical artifacts that occupy Bagamoyo is its citizenry. Many of the town's residents are the direct descendants of slaves, slave traders, slave owners, and porters. After the slave trade and slavery slowly came to a close, those aforementioned groups of people settled and lived together in Bagamoyo. It is their stories that give us perspective of what life has been like in Bagamoyo.

For at least 2000 years, traders have visited the east African coast and connected it to the wider world of the Indian Ocean. Those from Arab nations, who represented a large portion

Figure 2 “Old Mosque at the Kaole Ruins”



Source: Personal Photography

of the aforementioned traders even began to settle on the east African coast, including the settlement formerly known as Pumbuji but is currently known as Kaole. Just a few kilometers south of Bagamoyo, Kaole began to be built around the 12th century AD.

During this time trade slowly began to grow between the Arabs and the Africans and, as a result, the Kiswahili language and culture started to develop. Trade included things like beads, porcelain, cloth, glass, copper, African Ivory and to a small degree, slaves. (Per. Comm. Father Bojou) Along with the material goods, the Arabs also brought their religion, Islam, to Bagamoyo. Even today Islam is the dominant religion in Bagamoyo.

Around 1540 AD the Portuguese took control of the east African coast and as a result the trade routes. Their presence on the coast only slowed the east African slave trade. Once the Sultan of Oman took back control of the east African coast in 1750 AD, the Arab world regained a foothold in the lucrative commercial happenings of the region. (Per. Comm. Ke Jeri)

The exact date of the formation of the town of Bagamoyo is unknown, but it seems to have begun merely as a tiny village, whose members subsisted on subsistence fishing and farming. The town of Bagamoyo was founded by the same Arabs, the Shomvi Diwans, who at one time occupied Kaole. The reason for its expansion was completely derived from Zanzibar's

emergence as a major trading town in the Indian Ocean. As Arab trade expanded and the Sultan of Oman began to take more interest in the east coast of Africa, Bagamoyo grew. In 1840 the Sultan actually moved his capital to Zanzibar. Because of the growing demand for African bull elephant ivory and slaves, Zanzibar needed a gateway to the interior of Africa. Bagamoyo was the clear choice because of its good harbor and close proximity of only 20 nautical miles to Zanzibar. In some ways Zanzibar was dependant on continental Africa and towns like Bagamoyo. Without the slaves for its plantations and the goods from the interior like Ivory, the power that now resided in Zanzibar would have greatly diminished. (Per. Com. Ke Jeri)

During its rise to prominence, Bagamoyo actually benefited from European attempts to abolish slavery. For a long time, Kilwa was the major port for the slave trade. European powers knew this and thus directed their abolitionist efforts towards Kilwa. Because of Bagamoyo's aforementioned close proximity and relative obscurity to abolitionist European powers, it was a clear second choice port for slave traders to utilize. As well, Kilwa's ivory supply was waning. Years of heavy pressure on the elephant population in Kilwa's hinterlands had exhausted the availability of ivory. By the middle of the 19th century, Bagamoyo had replaced Kilwa as Zanzibar's gateway to the interior of Africa.

Figure 3: "Sultan Bargash of Zanzibar (Center) surrounded by his advisors"



Source: Bagamoyo Roman Catholic Mission Museum

Porters played a large part in the development of the town. They were mainly from the regions of Wanyamwezi, Wasukuma, and Wamanyema. The capacity in which they came to Bagamoyo varied greatly as

Figure 4 “Caravan porters resting with their loads”

well. Richard Burton detailed what caravan life was like and who was in them in his 1857 book, “Lake Regions”: “The Wanyanwezi caravan porters make up large parties of men, some



Source: Bagamoyo Roman Catholic Mission Museum

carrying their own goods, others are hired by petty proprietors. The porters march from sunrise up to 11 a.m., sometimes even twice a day. They work with a strong will, carrying uncomplainingly huge tusks, some so heavy that they must be lashed between two men with a pole. Their shoulders are often raw with the weight, their feet are scored.” (Burton, 1857)

When porters reached Bagamoyo, they realized that they had reached the end of their long and perilous journey. During the end of the 19th century hundreds of thousands of porters traveled the trade routes to the coastal town. They would sing as they entered the village,

“Be happy, my soul, let go all worries;

Soon the place of your yearnings is reached;

The town of palms, Bagamoyo...

...Be quiet, my heart, all worries are gone!

We are reaching Bagamoyo!”

However, their joy was not shared by all. When slaves reached Bagamoyo, they realized that they were only a boat ride away from being sold and ushered into a life of servitude. Their song was much more melancholy,

“My heart is bleeding; bleed my heart.

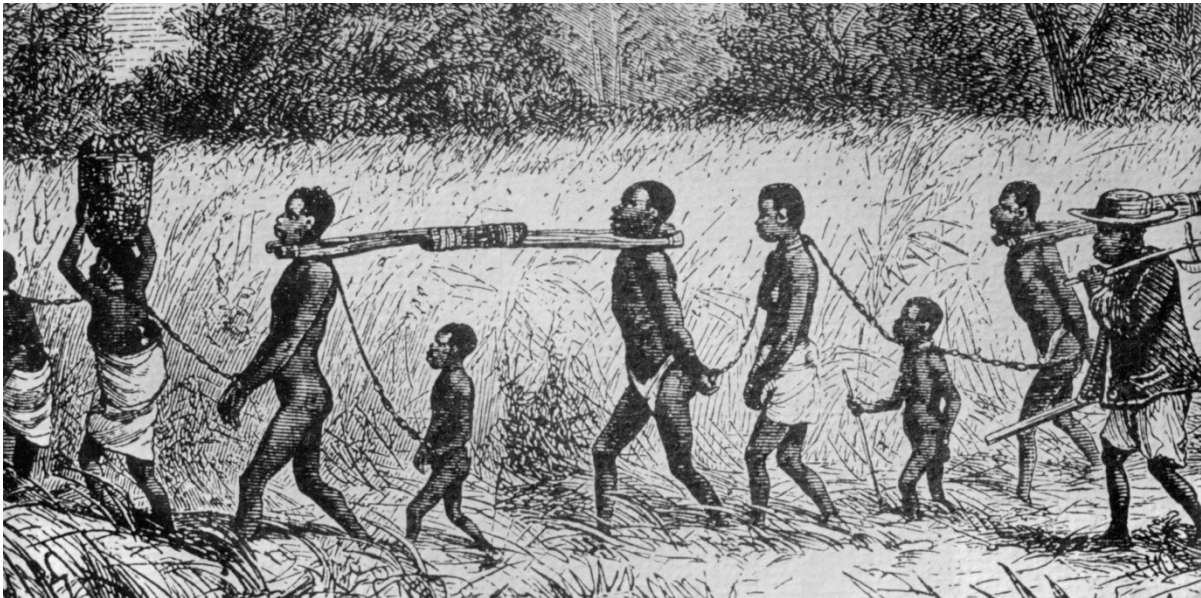
They forced us to march, miles and miles,

Not knowing where they take us.

No hope anymore in my life!

My heart is bleeding, bleed my heart.”

Figure 4 “Slaves shackled on their journey to the markets”



Source: Slaves shackled on their journey to the markets

For literally millions of individuals, seeing Bagamoyo was the end of a terrible journey but only the beginning of a worse one. The slaves that passed through Bagamoyo were bought

and went to many different places. About a quarter went to Arabic countries, India, and Persia. Nearly 20% went to south African countries and over half stayed on the east African coast.

Another important influence in Bagamoyo was the Roman Catholic Mission. The Congregation of the Holy Ghost—a Roman Catholic sect also known as the Spiritans—made it their mission to fight slavery in Africa. Though most of their efforts were focused on the east coast of the continent, a mission was set up in 1860 in Zanzibar by Father Anthony Horner. The Spiritans began to ransom slaves from the markets and free them. However, the freedom village established in Zanzibar was too small. So with permission from the sultan of Oman, Father Horner set up the Bagamoyo Roman Catholic Mission in 1868. Once the slaves were ransomed by the church, they often came to live in the freedom village on the grounds of the mission. The sisters and fathers taught the new free Africans trades and the children got elementary educations. The mission in Bagamoyo was a safe ground for these newly ransomed slaves.

Through the efforts of multiple sources; including the Roman Catholic Church, the British government, other world powers, and individuals like Dr. David Livingstone, the east African slave trade was slowly eliminated near the end of the 19th century. However, it took until 1922 for slavery to be completely abolished in Tanganyika. Because of this, the histories and stories of the people involved in the slave trade are still fresh in the hearts and minds of their descendants and the residents of Bagamoyo. It is those family histories and memories that I recorded during my ISP.

Study Question

What are the perceptions of the descendants of the players in the East Africa slave trade about the life of slaves and the slave trade? I interviewed descendants of slave traders, slave owners, porters and the slaves themselves; taking into account their gender, religion and age. By looking at these factors and how they relate, I was able to explore the differences in their opinions. From these conversations I have synthesized information pertaining to what life for a slave was like, how the slave trade functioned and the descendants' own perspectives on their ancestors, into a short historical thesis and accompanying video documentary.

Site Description

My Independent Study Project was conducted in the small coastal town of Bagamoyo. The town is situated about 60 km north of Dar es Salaam (See Appendix A). The town is rich with history. As the last stop on the trade route to Zanzibar, it is filled with many interesting and relevant historical sites. Some of the more famous ones include the Roman Catholic Mission. This was the first Catholic Church on the east coast of Africa. The church has many stories associated with it. Dr. Livingston's body spent a night in the church before its journey to Zanzibar and then London. One of the main missions of the church was buying and freeing slaves who came through Bagamoyo on their way to the slave markets in Zanzibar. There are many other important buildings and sites pertaining to the slave trade in and around Bagamoyo. There is the old slave house, where the slaves were kept before they were to be shipped to the markets in Zanzibar. After the slaves left the slave house they also had to pass through the old customs house, which still sits on the beach in the middle of Bagamoyo, before they made their final journey to Zanzibar. One of the oldest known Arab settlements on the East African coast is the Kaole Ruins, which dates back to the 13th century. The site includes an ancient mosque, the foundations of their homes and several graves. Though these ruins are evidence of history that occurred before my main area of study, they provide an interesting background to how the town and culture of Bagamoyo was formed. As with most of the Tanzanian coast, the population of Bagamoyo is largely Islamic. This is largely because of the influence that the Arab traders had on the Swahili coast. Over a quarter of the slaves that left the East African coast went to Arab countries.

Methods

There will be two main sources of information for my project; interviews with the descendants of those involved in the slave trade and secondary sources like books and museums. Those secondary sources will largely serve as background information to the interviews, in order to clarify references and ideas that the interviews present. By increasing my own knowledge of the history of the east African slave trade and of the town of Bagamoyo, it will give greater clarity to the lens with which I evaluate my interviewee's stories. Because of the limited availability of descendants of those involved in the slave trade, I will use non-random sampling for choosing my interviewees. However, I will do my best to collect stories from people with different perspectives on the slave trade. I do not want to just collect stories from the descendants of slaves but also slave owners, slave traders and porters. My analysis will be largely comparative in nature. I want to investigate how these differing individuals view their ancestors. I will ask basically the same questions of all of my interviewees. An example being: are they proud of their relatives or are they ashamed? I will have three different ways in which I will be analyzing and presenting the stories and information I collect. First will be the aforementioned analytical comparison of the differing group's perspective on the ancestors. Second, I hope to collect their personal family stories and compile them into a short work of historical fiction. With this piece I hope to paint a picture of what life was like for the slaves and all those involved in the slave trade in Bagamoyo. Finally I will be filming a documentary about the slave trade in Bagamoyo. I will be filming all of my interviews, the museums, the sites pertaining to the slave trade and some of my guided tours with my advisor Samahani Ke Jeri. My main issue with the documentary is the editing process. Though I think I will be able to get all the necessary footage, editing the tape into a cohesive film is going to be difficult in Tanzania and might have to be completed once I return to America. However, the process of filming the documentary is crucial to the progress of all parts of my project. Working with the concept of a film in mind will help me to do things like properly structure my interviews, focus my research and the creation of a complete and truthful picture of the viewpoints of slaves, slave owners, slave traders and their descendants.

Results and Discussion

From the three interviews I recorded in Bagamoyo, I was able to create three brief ethnographies which included facts like their name, age, religion, ethnic origin and ancestor's role in the east African slave trade. I also asked them questions regarding their own personal perspective on the slave trade and their family's histories and any stories that their ancestors told them about life as a slave and the slave trade. Using these stories, I wrote a short piece of historical fiction.

Maimudo Mtumwa Maksudi

Age: 80

Religion: Muslim

Ethnic Origin: Grandfather, Maksudi Nyembo, was a Katanga from the Congo. Grandmother, Zafarani, was from the Nyakole tribe in Uganda.

Ancestor's role in the east African slave trade: Grandfather was captured as a slave in the Congo and taken to Zanzibar. He was sold to an ivory trader by the name Mselema. Because Maksudi was a Katanga, who was known as violent harsh warriors to the Arabs, he was utilized as a guard or a mpandi on the caravans. Zafarani was a slave as well, though what kind was unknown.

Perspective on their family's history and the slave trade:

He talked about how his grandfather was not caught by the Arabs but given to them by his tribes' chief. He believed that his grandfather was viewed as a *wapagazi* (hard worker) and as a result valuable asset. Because of this distinction, he believed that his grandfather did not view himself as a slave but merely as an obedient man doing the work that his chief has charged him with. Maimudo also made it clear that his grandfather was promoted to the position of an mpandi slave (guard) and had a great deal of responsibility and power as a result. With this power, he was able to make the journeys of the recently captured slaves in his caravans, especially those people that were Katanga and his relatives, much more bearable.

Maimudo was also eager to mention other freedoms that his grandfather enjoyed as a slave. These included the right to choose his own religion (though he did choose Islam, his Arab master's religion) and the ability to marry whoever he chose.

It was clear that Maimudo viewed his grandfather's history with a great deal of pride. When asked about his own opinions, he himself had very little bitterness towards the Arabs and events that occurred during the slave trade. He made the argument that it was a phenomenon that occurred all over the world and was not just his problem. Slavery was something that was present even in his religion, Islam. It was something common. And in closing he stated that "Since it is over, it is better to just take it easy."

Imani Mtelekezo Mnyikondo

Age: 90 (estimation)

Religion: Muslim

Ethnic Origin: Grandfather was from a place near Bagamoyo, Mnazi Konde.

Ancestor's role in the east African slave trade: Both Imani's Father and Grandfather owned slaves. When his grandfather died, his slaves were passed down to his father. The family owned anywhere from 15 to 20 slaves at a time. They purchased slaves from the slave traders in several different locations including: inland, in Bagamoyo, and at the Zanzibar slave markets.

Perspective on their family's history and the slave trade:

Imani was hesitant to talk about how his family was involved in the slave trade, especially questions revolving around the treatment of slaves. He emphasized the freedoms that his grandfather and father allowed their slaves, which included freedom of religion and the ability to marry who they choose. He also highlighted how decisions his family made revolving around the slave trade were purely business related. He stressed that the slave trade was a powerful business that dominated the surrounding area. When asked if he still had

relationships with his family's ex-slaves he said no, stating that "it's not easy to tell them that they were my grandfather's slave." He continued on to say that some "would be harsh and might hurt you for bringing that up." In conclusion Imani stated that despite the prior harshness of the slave trade "it is over now, so life is easy."

Imani clearly did not have a prideful view of what his father and grandfather involved in. Whether this perception was derived from personal guilt or the social unacceptability of slavery was hard to tell. But it was clear that Imani did not want to dwell on the infamous history his ancestors played an active role in.

Clotilda Joseph

Age: 87

Religion: Roman Catholic

Ethnic Origin: Her Grandfather, Altres Grojia, and Grandmother were from near Lake Nyasa in a small town called Banda.

Ancestor's role in the east African slave trade: Her whole family was captured in their Nyasaland fields by the Arab slave traders. This included her Grandfather, Grandmother, Great-grandmother and several others. However, the family was split up in the slave caravans. Clotilda's grandparents were taken to Bagamoyo, but they never saw their other family members again. When her grandparents reached Bagamoyo they were freed by the Fathers and Sisters at the Roman Catholic Mission and lived in the Freedom Village set up there.

Perspective on their family's history and the slave trade:

In all of her responses to questions about the slave caravans and the Arab traders, she highlighted the harsh and barbaric mentality that accompanied them. She told several stories that detailed their cruel methods which included: killing children, restraining slaves by running chains through holes in their ankles, and cutting off the heads of slaves who held up the

caravans. On the other hand she was adamant about the compassion of the Fathers and Sisters of the Roman Catholic Mission.

Though she had a few aforementioned stories about the Arabs cruelty, Clotilda had much more to say about how great life was in the freedom village and the kindness of the clergy. Her answers in the interview were much more focused on forgiveness and compassion than bitterness at the horrors her ancestors went through.

Comparative conclusions to be drawn from the ethnographies

Both Maimudo and Imani ended our interview by saying that slavery was now over, so no worries. But the way in which they both said this was very different. Maimudo seemed to be trying to show how the slave trade did not bother him. He was not bitter or angry at what the slave owners and traders had done to his family. On the other hand Imani was insistent on realizing the finality of the slave trade, probably hoping to avoid the scorn and negative attention that comes with being associated with such atrocities. Imani also mentioned how it was not good, as the descendant of a slave owner, to bring up the family history of someone whose ancestors were slaves. It was clear that his decision to move on and away from the slave trade was because of a level of distaste for his family's history.

A Slave's Chains

The dream, which had occurred vividly almost every night of his journey, began as it always did. Mani was in the jungle near his home. He had spent most days in the dark, damp forest. He and the other young boys from the village knew the jungle well and could navigate it any time, day or night. Climbing up every hill and delving into every ditch, they had learned the minute intricacies of the forest. Most of Mani's time in the jungle was spent playing with his friends and hunting small rodents and birds. But today was different. As Mani and his friends traipsed around the dense jungle, they were surprised to hear an unfamiliar noise in the distance. It sounded human to them, but was unlike any tongue they had ever heard before.

Eager to investigate, they ran in the direction of the voices. As they approached the peculiar presence in the jungle, Mani hesitated, wary of what it could be. His friends roared past him but Mani timidly slowed down. The other boys disappeared into the trees in front of him rapidly but he knew they were headed for a clearing in the dense forest, which sat on the banks of the black and powerful Zambezi River. He was barely able to follow their progress by listening to the excited but muffled chatter seeping back to him through the jungle. Suddenly the tone of their voices changed. Though their voices were just seconds ago brimming with curiosity, they were now filled with terror. Mani rushed to the clearing to see what had caused the change.

Just before he burst into the riverside meadow, Mani heard a crack like the sound of a tree limb violently being snapped from its trunk. Hoping to avoid a torrent of falling debris, he dove beneath a fallen tree which bordered the clearing. As the echo of the crack slowly faded into the surrounding hills, Mani gingerly crawled out from under his cover. His nose stung with the smell of an acidic smoke that now filled the meadow. As the wind whisked the stinging gray smoke away from the clearing, it revealed an image that would haunt his memory.

The grassy clearing was not littered with bark and splinters, but filled with a great party of men. It was all too much for him to understand. First, he noticed men dressed in strange clothes with skin a lighter shade than he had ever seen before. Then there were men with skin like his —dark as night—shackled together in long chains. Women and children no older than

him were also confined to these chains. They all carried great loads on their backs — massive ivory tusks and objects Mani had never seen before. Their bodies drooped from the loads and their ankles and necks were rubbed raw from the iron chains wrapped around them. These horrors only briefly distracted him from what he was looking for. Mani frantically scanned the mass of men. Finally, he saw them. His companions from the village were surrounded and being held by the light skinned men in bizarre clothing. One of the boys was lying awkwardly face down on the ground, the grass in front of him speckled red with his blood. Because of the whole scene, Mani's usually heightened senses were numbed. He did not notice the sounds of footsteps behind him.

A pool of blood gradually grew around the dead boy. Scarlet droplets dripped off his forehead and nose, slowly beginning to run towards the river. The individual trickles of blood started merging into one stream, which flowed through the trampled grass. It passed unnoticed underneath the Arab who had shot the boy; his white linens remained clean and untouched. The crimson tide weaved down the steep bank, staining the rich earth and everything it washed over —grasses, roots and rocks— as it slipped down towards the water's edge. After a while, the ruby stream was swallowed up by the vast blackness of the river and whisked away with the current. But as the blood that once pumped life through the dead boy reached its terminus, a mist rose up from the cold dark waters. It glided up the riverbank, obscuring the path and tarnish of the blood. As the heavy white fog grew, it filled up the now empty meadow, covering all the damages done by the caravan of men from the coast.

CRACK! The sound of a gun firing quickly roused Mani from his dream. He attempted to sit up to see what had caused the gun shot, but was immediately jerked back to the ground by the iron chain around his neck. Though the iron shackles around his neck had been there for what seemed like forever, he still had not become accustomed to their rough, cold feeling. It was not even the worst of his restraints. Shortly after being captured both of his ankles were pierced with large rings. A long iron chain was then strung through his loop, connecting his feet to that of every other slave in the line.

Lying back on the ground in line with his fellow slaves, he already knew why the gun had been shot. One of the other captured individuals had given out and was gunned down by the guards. It was simple. If a slave held up the caravan or angered the Arab traders in any way, they would be killed. In the massive caravan Mani was now a part of, this was all too common. Because he and his fellow slaves were almost constantly blindfolded, he never knew who was killed or why.

After he was first captured, Mani was chained with the other boys who had survived their initial interaction with the Arab slave traders in the Congolese jungle. But as the months dragged on, each of his friends disappeared one by one. He had no way of knowing if they had been sold or killed, only that they were probably gone forever. In what time Mani marched without his blindfold, he had been amazed with the country they had passed. Before being captured, he had never been very far from the village he was born in. All he knew were the tall trees of the thick jungle surrounding home. The vastness of the land they slowly traipsed through was scary to him. The first time they marched out of the close confines of the forest, the world opened up into a vast grassy plain, barren of trees in all directions around him. After making it across this seemingly infinite grassland, they came to a lake so large that Mani could not tell where the water ended and the sky began. The world had never seemed so large and strange.

Once they made it to the shores of the lake, Mani was unchained. His excitement wore off rapidly when he realized that he was merely being sold to another group of Arabs. The sight of unfamiliar faces was disheartening. Even the other slaves had different features than him. As the guards pushed him into a new line, he was forced between a man and a woman. They did not seem pleased to be separated like this. While they began to march on, he could tell that the woman he was forced next to was newly captured. Her neck was not yet scarred from the chains. More importantly, her eyes didn't have the dull glaze of hopelessness that covered all the other slaves' eyes. Hers instead had a wildness and rage in them. She tried to resist the shackles, not seeming to care how it must have choked her and tore at her freshly pierced ankles. He tried to talk to her in the trader's language.

“Were you taken near here?” hoping to confirm what his eyes had detected.

“My baby!” she moaned paying no heed to Mani. The woman continued to thrash madly against her restraints.

“We were,” the man behind him coldly stated. “Not even a day ago.”

“How did they get you two?”

“Oh, they got more than just us. Our whole family was in our maize field,” his voice was strangely calm, as if he was merely reporting on something he had not experienced, but only heard about. “Before we even noticed, they had surrounded our farm, firing their guns wildly. They killed my uncle. They took at least five of us that I know of. The Arabs dragged us away so fast, we really had no way of knowing.”

“Did they take your children?” The howls of the woman in front of them began to increase.

“I don’t know...” the man said slowly. “Everything was moving so quickly. When the light skinned men grabbed my wife, they ripped the baby away from her back and threw it to the ground. The last I saw before they blindfolded me was the child barely crawling in the dirt.” The stricken woman was now pulling at her chains so hard, they choked her. She wheezed and coughed because of this. Several of the guards looked around to see what the commotion was. “My wife begged for her child but they wouldn’t listen. As quickly as they came, we were whisked away. I have no idea what happened to our son. He may have been taken, he may have been left, he may have been killed.” His voice trailed off. The story of her baby’s peril did nothing to calm the woman either. Arab guards began to yell at her.

“Please be quiet” the man whispered. But his desperate pleas were only drowned out by her screams. The nearest guard stormed over, now furious at her earsplitting screeching. As the guard got close to her, the despondent mother lunged so violently at him that she pulled Mani and her husband behind him to the ground. Clearly surprised by the strength of her fierce outburst, the guard did not get out of the way before she could grab and tore the front of his

tunic open. Her minor triumph was quickly over though and defeated harshly. With one swift motion, the guard broke free from her grasp and ripped the sword on his hip from its sheath. Before she could even recoil in fear, he severed her head.

It was not five minutes before the caravan was on the move again. Her body was thrown in a ditch and the once empty chains were quickly reoccupied. The caravan was slowly approaching a mountain range. Mani noticed that her husband now too had the dull glaze of hopelessness in his eyes.

Crossing the mountains was a cold and damp experience. Every day they trudged up through mountains, slipping down the muddy paths and clambering up rocky hillsides. The feet and hands of some of his fellow slaves, already worn from the long journey, began to rot from the constant moisture. The sores of their chains began to fester as well. Though satisfying at first to escape the heat of the plains, the cold of the mountain nights quickly became torturous. Every early morning, Mani yearned for the warmth of the morning sun.

On one of those cold mornings, the warming rays of the sun were delayed by a dense fog. It was so thick that Mani could barely see the trunks of trees a few feet in front of him. As he sat there shivering, waiting for the morning caravan march to begin, a man came out of the fog. Dressed in long flowing black robes that draped to the forest floor, he seemed to float out of the fog. Mani had never seen a man like this before. He had skin whiter than ivory and a long dark beard. Soon after he glided out of the forest, he was followed by several other men dressed similarly. Those men walked over to the Arab traders, but the first man approached the slaves. He walked from one chained individual to another, sometimes delicately placing his hand on their heads or sometimes bending over to whisper in their ear. When the white man approached Mani, he couldn't help but stare at his strikingly clear blue eyes. Instantly he reached out to the man's hand, compelled to feel if his white skin felt different. Allowing him to grab his hand, the white man began to talk to Mani in the trader's language.

"Have you been saved my son?" Mani shook his head, still clutching the man's hand.
"What is your name my child?"

“Manniii,” he stuttered. Suddenly he was unnerved by the white man’s tranquility.

“I’m Father Anthony Horner. I come from the Catholic Mission in Bagamoyo.”

“Why are you here? Where is Bagamoyo?” the white man’s presence puzzled him.

“We are on our way to a new mission to spread the word of God.”

“God?” Mani asked. “Who is God?”

“God is our father and creator. He put us on this earth and he can save us from our pain and misery. I am his servant and I do his bidding.”

“Can he help me?”

“Yes, my son. God offers salvation for all the men of his creation, slave or free man. The chains you are in now cannot hold you forever.”

“Will you free me?” Mani realized that this man could buy him and free him, just like the Arabs had at the lake.

“I am afraid not today my child. We did not expect to meet a caravan on our journey. But I will send word to Bagamoyo —to the mission— that a caravan is approaching and that the priests and sisters should collect what money they can to free you and your fellow slaves.” Mani began to cry, the faint glimmer of hope the priest had presented was too much for him to handle. “Fear not my son, even if you are not freed in this life, the chains that bind you now cannot follow you into eternity.” With that the white man in the black robes moved on down the line of slaves and was gone.

Around the fourth month of his journey, the Arab traders decided to set up camp with a passing group of traders who were heading in the opposite direction. As the sun began to set, Mani was surprised to see a tall man —with skin just as dark as his— walk freely up to him. He was even more taken aback when the man greeted him in his mother tongue.

“My friend, it seems we are a long way from home,” the tall man whispered. He was dressed in clothes that Mani had seen on Arabs of lower stature.

“How do you speak my language? Why are you here?!? Are you a slave like me?” the questions flowed rapidly out of Mani, with no hesitation for an answer.

“Shhhh, don’t make a racket or you will get us both in trouble!” his voice immediately quieted Mani. He took a minute before asking another question.

“Are you a Katanga too?” he nodded. “Why are you not chained up?” Mani continued.

“I’m an *mpandi*. I’m a guard for the Arab traders.”

“So you are a slave just like me?”

“No! I’m not a slave like you. You were captured. I was given as a gift by my chief to the Arabs. It showed that I was a valuable hard worker, a *wapagazi*. I walked away freely with them. It was an honor.” Mani was stunned; he could not understand the man’s pride in being a slave. Sensing his confusion, the tall dark man continued. “I was just a farmer. But the Arabs in Zanzibar knew I was a Katanga. They knew we are fierce warriors. They made me a guard because of that.”

“But you are still a slave! You have to harm your own people?” Mani could still not comprehend the slave guard’s pride.

“I do not harm our people, the Arabs do that. I help them. Why do you think you are resting right now?” Mani gazed at him blankly. “Because I told the head Arab to stop. I have power, I have responsibility. I can do as I please. I have a wife in Bagamoyo from Uganda whose skin is almost as light as the Arabs.”

“Will they make me an *mpandi*? Though I am young, I am a Katanga too.”

“I do not know, I can only hope the best for you. But I must go now.”

“Wait?! I have one more question,” the man stopped to acknowledge the last request. “Where are we? We have been walking for so long, are we near the end?”

“You are not far from Bagamoyo. When the ground begins to get sandy, you know you will be getting close.”

And he was right, in a few days the caravan made camp in a place with very sandy soil. He heard the guards mention that they were in a place called Mnazi Konde, just outside of Bagamoyo. They would march into town the next day.

Now that they were near Bagamoyo, a new desperation rose up out of Mani’s fellow slaves. Several tried to break free of their chains with no success. The next day they were lined up just as they had been on so many mornings before that and walked into the bustling trading town of Bagamoyo. The town was filled with Africans from all over. Some had dark skin like Mani’s and some had skin almost as light as the Arabs. They passed large piles of ivory and other goods. Mani even saw another white man walking through town.

As the sun began to set on the bustling town, the caravan was herded into a large stone building. Before their caravan even entered the slave house, he heard the metal clang of the chains. Dozens of slaves were chained throughout the building, to the walls, to the support columns, to each other. Everywhere was active with business. Slave traders, mostly Arabs, were ushering their slaves into the holding cells that surrounded a tree filled courtyard. They loudly negotiated prices and planned the next movement of their product.

The fading sunlight cast long shadows on the sorrowful faces of the doomed slaves. From what Mani had gathered from listening to the Arab guards and other slaves during their trip through the town, they would only spend a short time in this building, only to be ushered in the early morning to the waiting dhows bound for Zanzibar. They had to leave at such an hour to avoid detection by the abolitionist Europeans, who patrolled the waters around Zanzibar. Once they, the slaves, got to Zanzibar they could be sold and taken anywhere.

As the light disappeared and the darkness Mani sat in the cramped cell, silently contemplating his future. Father Horner had promised him salvation and possibly freedom, but

that had not occurred. The tall, dark Katanga man had told him of a slaves' life that was filled with power and privilege. However, he was still only a young boy and not a powerful warrior like that man. He knew no Arab would buy him to be an *mpandi*. Just like the journey he had just completed, his future looked desolate and bleak.

After the moon set, the guards came into the cells, lined the slaves up in two parallel rows and led them out. Once outside, they were blindfolded and led down a hill. Because of the blindfolds and their utter exhaustion and terror, the slaves stumbled and wept as they walked the path. Mani could not tell what direction they were going or where they were, but the clang of the iron chains echoed and even the faintest light coming from the night sky faded. It was as if they were in a tunnel. Mani was right. For whatever reason, his blindfold loosened and he was able to peek out from underneath it. The slaves were marching down a long narrow tunnel. He could barely see a slight glimmer of light in the distance. With the exception of the clattering chains and the occasional sobbing slave, the tunnel was nearly silent. Mani listened to the rhythmic sound of their footsteps, something that he had gotten so used to. Suddenly he tasted a salty tinge on the air. A sea breeze was flowing up the tunnel. As they moved farther and farther down the tunnel he could begin to hear the rolling waves on the shore. In no time they were at the mouth of the tunnel and on the beach. The raw skin on his ankles was irritated by the cool sand they kicked up as they walked to the water. The slaves were lined up again on the edge of the water. Some of the Arab guards left to make sure that the dhows were ready.

The slaves stood there obedient and defeated. All knew that they had reached the end of their journey and that hope was lost. Some of the slaves cried out in fear, others whispered prayers. Mani suffered in silence.

A white man dressed in long black robes stood on a hill overlooking the ocean. He could see a long chain of slaves lined up on the edge of the water, with a dhow approaching to take them away. The water crashed in and out over their feet. Moments before, they had been caked in the blood, dirt and, dust of a thousand miles walked. Now the warm Indian Ocean was there, removing the African earth from their raw feet. The slaves' open sores burned as the salt water rushed in.

Authors Note

I wrote this story with the initial intention of putting the stories I collected from my three interviews into one cohesive narrative. However as the story progressed, I realized that I could use it as well to express a lot of the themes and information I learned about during my time in Bagamoyo. First off, I wanted to discuss the role of the Arabs in the east African slave trade, and what repercussions or lack–there-of they experienced because of it. I tried to show both examples of the horrors they executed and use metaphoric imagery to show how they have largely escaped consequence free from those actions.

I also wanted to discuss the role the Roman Catholic Church played in the slave trade. Though I decided to not take my main character, Mani, to the Roman Catholic Mission itself, I thought it was crucial to make the church's presence known. So I had Mani meet the founding priest of the Bagamoyo mission, Father Anthony Horner and used that character to address some of the issues. The Holy Ghost Spiritans, the fathers who ran the mission, made it their practice to free slaves by ransoming them from the slave traders. Though admirable to free what slaves they could, on a whole this was an ineffective method for ending the entire slave trade. Why would a slave trader stop, if you continued to effectively pay him for his services? To a degree, I felt like their methodology only covered up the larger issue, hence the constant mist imagery that accompanied Father Horner.

Biases/Limitations

- Translation issues – Sometimes the questions I asked in English during my interviews were not asked as I intended. I also only got paraphrased translation responses most of the time, so it was difficult to ask follow questions.
- Lack of interviews – I was only able to get three interviews, which limited the amount of data I was able to collect.

Conclusion

In my interviews, I learned about what life as a slave was like and what trials and tribulations they went through. I also learned a lot about the perspectives of the players descendants. Both of the descendants of slaves were proud of their relatives and had no problems discussing the details of their lives. The descendant of the slave owners on the other hand was much more hesitant to discuss some of the darker sides of what life as a slave was like. He did not talk about his older relatives with the same reverence that the other two did.

Throughout my time in Bagamoyo, I was constantly surprised and amazed at things I learned about the east African slave trade. From its surprisingly recent end to the horrific methods that were utilized on the slaves, the east African slave trade is something we as westerners do not hear about much. I set up my interviews with the intention of learning about these unknowns, with the hope of learning about a part of Africa's history that the western world very rarely focuses on. I came away with a collection of revealing stories and a wealth of information that gave me an illuminating picture of what the slave trade was like in Bagamoyo and east Africa.

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Nuts and Bolts

- Be very clear with people in Bagamoyo about what you want and what your intentions are. I had a lot of problems with people I worked with, specifically Samahani Ke Jeri, doing the things that they wanted to first and not listening to what I was trying to do.
- My project was very expensive and took a lot of extra financial help from my parents. I had to spend money on camera gear and other things to do with the movie. Any time you pull a camera out in Bagamoyo, people are going to ask for money.
- Take Piki-piki's not cabs around town. You shouldn't pay more than 500 for any destination, except the kaole ruins, in town.

Appendix A: Map of Bagamoyo

