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Names of Contemporary Wooden Boats of Coastal East Africa: Origins and Meanings

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ABSTRACT

The coast of eastern Africa, commonly referred to as the Swahili coast, has a rich artisanal heritage of boats — both in their building and use. This iconic history is marked by the presence of various boat types that have historically been used for fishing and transporting people and cargo between coastal settlements (of eastern Africa), the islands of Zanzibar, Pemba, Mafia, Comoros, Madagascar, and other distant parts of the Indian Ocean world. Currently, the sailing boats such as the double-outrigger logboat (*ngalawa*), various plank-built craft, and several other types, line the shores of Tanzania, Kenya, Mozambique, Somalia and the islands of Zanzibar, Mafia and the Comoros. Some of these boats, almost all locally built, have names, decorations, and engravings. However, the boats' names, decorations and engravings alongside the conveyed message(s) have remained undocumented. Thus, taking a maritime-heritage perspective, and by focusing on the nineteenth century historic port town of Bagamoyo in Tanzania, this paper documents the boats' names and the messages they carry.

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Introduction

The coast of eastern Africa, historically known as the Swahili coast, covers a distance of about 3000 km, stretching from Mogadishu in Somalia to Inhambane in Mozambique (Ichumbaki and Pollard 2021; Wynne-Jones and LaViolette 2018); its people traded with India and China, as well as Southwest and Southeast Asia (see Kusimba et al. 2020 and papers therein). These interactions, in terms of trade and contact enacted along the coast of Tanzania and Kenya, flourished in particular between the eleventh and eighteenth centuries, facilitated by seasonal winds (Bita 2020; Ichumbaki 2020). Locally built boats connected the ancient towns of eastern Africa and other parts of the Indian Ocean world (Kusimba 1999).

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The long history of seafaring of the region has received extensive attention from historical and archaeological perspectives (Fleisher et al. 2015; Wynne-Jones and LaViolette 2018; Rodland 2021), but its contemporary maritime cultural heritage has been less well researched until recently (Ichumbaki 2016; Ichumbaki and Pollard 2015; Pollard 2011, 2008; Lane 2005). Scholars have started to address this lacuna, not least through several projects associated with the Rising from the Depths Network (Henderson et al. 2021), of which the research underpinning this article is part. Some researchers have recently documented the types of boat found in the region (Cooper et al. 2022) as well as the construction of some of them (Ichumbaki et al. 2022; see also Falk 2014 and Leeuwe 2005). This paper builds on this renewed interest in the region's maritime heritage, and in particular its nautical traditions, by exploring the names and other text that owners and users inscribe on their boats. It considers the messages these inscriptions carry and underscores their importance in terms of the maritime cultural identities of the community who use them (Ichumbaki 2020; Ichumbaki 2015, 183; Schmidt and Ichumbaki 2020, 37). In doing so, it highlights the voices, choices and agency of individuals within the maritime community over the less personal process of assigning type-names that is more familiar to nautical scholarship. We focus on the historic port town of Bagamoyo in the United Republic of Tanzania, and its nearby villages of Mlingotini, Kaole and Mbegani (Figure 1).

Generally speaking, in Bagamoyo, like in many other coastal towns of the region, there are a variety of wooden boats in use, mainly for fishing and transport (Cooper et al. 2022). These can be categorised into four groups: logboats (e.g., *mitumbwi*, *ngalawa* and *hori*), some of which are sailed, paddled or engine-powered; plank-built lateen-rigged sailing vessels (e.g., *dau* and *mchoro*); plank-built motorised boats (e.g., *mashua*, *ngwanda* and *dingi*); and lateen-rigged or motorised cargo vessels that largely undertake coastal trade (e.g., cargo *mashua*, *jahazi* and *bumu*). Builders have developed a number of motorised vessel types in direct response to the growing availability of the outboard engine in recent decades, at least on larger craft.

Among these vessels, the double-outrigger, lateen-rigged logboat known as the *ngalawa* has become the region's iconic small-scale fishing vessel, partly because of its striking form, and partly because it is used by the large majority of artisanal practitioners in the Zanzibar Channel area; over 80% of the names presented in this paper are from vessels of that type. The *ngalawa* is found from Kenya in the north to over the Mozambique border in the south, as well as on the Comoros Islands and northern Madagascar. It is relatively cheap to commission and build (see Ichumbaki et al. 2022), and normally powered by a sail, making it the staple craft of low-income, artisanal fishers working in inshore waters along the east African coast.

Regardless of their size and uses, however, a wide range of the region's marine vessels, including the *mashua, jahazi, ngalawa, mitumbwi* and *bumu*, are given individual names that are painted, decorated, and engraved, some vessels

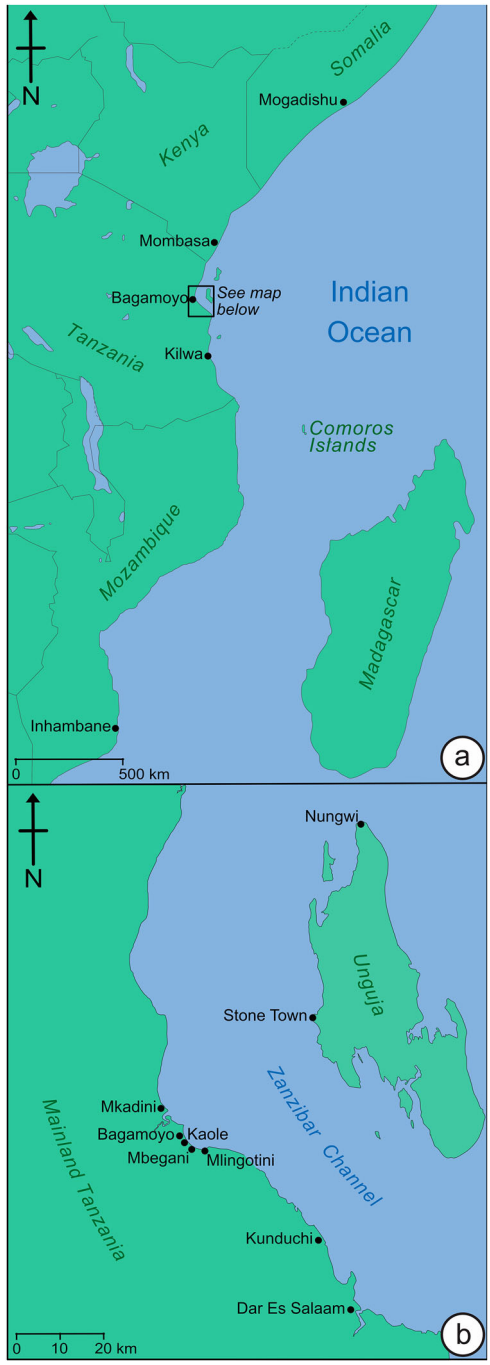


Figure 1. A map showing the study area and other places mentioned in the text

have a combination of all these. A question that has not been investigated is the reasons for boat owners and operators (captains, itinerant traders, etc.) naming and/or decorating these vessels in the way they do; nor has the meaning that the names on the vessels convey been explored. The principal objective of this

article is, therefore, to present some of these names, textual decorations and inscriptions found on local boats as a form of heritage documentation, as well as to explore their meanings, taking Bagamoyo as our case study.

It is not the intention of this article to present, *per se*, the types and forms of wooden watercraft of Bagamoyo and its surrounding, since this has already been done elsewhere (Cooper et al. 2022; Ichumbaki et al. 2022). The boats have also received scholarly attention from the nineteenth century onwards, albeit unevenly, and largely from a European perspective that is not without its problems, as discussed elsewhere (Ichumbaki et al. 2022). Since Esmond Pâris presented a very brief Africa section in his 1841 *Essai sur la Construction Navale des Peuples Extra-Européens* (Pâris 1841, 1.6), a number of publications have focused largely on particular and arguably 'exotic' technological features, such as outriggers and sewn construction (Warrington Smyth 1906, 315; Haddon 1918, 49; Lydekker 1919, 90–91; Robinson 1937, 65–67, 69–70; Morgan 1940, 28; Hornell 1920; 1941; 1942; 1943, 10, 17, 22–23; 1944a; 1944b; Prins 1959, 207, 208–213; Adams 1985; Gilbert 1998; Sheriff et al. 2006). However, more holistic and inclusive perspectives on contemporary East African nautical practice have been presented by Gilbert (2004) and Sheriff (2010), both providing a more cultural perspective on the 'dhow' trade, as did Prins (1965) in his anthropological work on the maritime lives of the people of Lamu. Rose de Leeuwe's works (2004; 2005; 2006) on the boatbuilders of Nungwi, north Unguja, are also of note. However, publications that address the broader maritime cultural context and perspectives of the region, and particularly from the perspective of maritime practitioners themselves, remain few, even though boatbuilding along this coast can be traced as far back as the early first millennium AD (Ichumbaki 2017; Casson 1989; Chittick 1980).

This article constitutes part of the outputs of various seasons of fieldwork conducted between August 2019 and June 2020 on the shores of Bagamoyo and its nearby villages of Mlingotini, Mkadini, Mbegani and Kaole, all in Tanzania's Coast Region. Although this is our case study area, we cite similar scenarios from other coastal areas in Tanzania, Kenya, and Mozambique where appropriate and necessary.

Bagamoyo and Its Maritime Heritage

Bagamoyo lies some 60 km up the Indian Ocean coast from Dar es Salaam — as do the nearby fishing villages of Kaole and Mlingotini (Figure 1). All these villages fall within the eponymous Bagamoyo District local-government area which, in 2012, had a population of some 310,000 people (National Bureau of Statistics 2012; Mkama et al. 2013; Ichumbaki 2015). In addition to being a local government centre, Bagamoyo has a strong maritime identity and historic links to the sea. The buildings of its central 'stone town' area — not least the Fort, the Arab Tea House, and various mosques — attest to Bagamoyo's nineteenth and

twentieth century connections with the Arab world, Europe, and India. Designated heritage buildings such as the Caravanserai recall the town's position at the coastal terminus of long-distance trade routes connecting with the African interior that brought ivory, copal, rubber and enslaved people to the coast for transportation on to Zanzibar and the wider world (Christie 1871, 268); Swahili traders in turn imported merchandise such as cloth, beads, weapons and copper wire to sell back into the interior (Biginagwa and Ichumbaki 2018; Rockel 2006). European colonial maritime incursions are recalled, meanwhile, by Bagamoyo's large Boma building — for a time (1885–1890) the administrative seat of German East Africa — and the Holy Ghost Mission, on the northern fringes of the town, which claims its 1872 church to be the oldest on the East African mainland (Brown 1971).

All these aspects of Bagamoyo's built heritage reflect the role that the Indian Ocean has played in shaping the town as a coastal settlement. One consequence of the town's nodal position has been the emergence of a diverse population in terms of identity, ethnicity and belief — something that is reflected, to some extent, in the boat names we go on to discuss. During the nineteenth century, porters arriving from the interior could remain in Bagamoyo for up to four months after their caravan's arrival, boosting the local economy and sometimes settling (Rockel 2006, 86–90). The town also attracted merchants, financiers, traders, farmers, sailors, fishers, and craftspeople, among others, from both surrounding regions and across the Indian Ocean (Brown 1971, 631). Most Indians and Arabs left Bagamoyo after Tanzanian independence, leaving a population today comprising mainly the Kwere, Zaramo, Doe, Luguru, Zigua, and Ndengereko ethnic groups. Some 90% of this population profess one or other form of Islam, with the remainder practising Christianity or an indigenous religion; the lines between these broad religious categories are, however, porous.

The environmental affordances underpinning Bagamoyo's maritime heritage are several. A moist, tropical climate (Lyimo et al. 2013, 64) supports ample inland forest-timber resources for boatbuilding and productive local agriculture, for example at Kingani and in the Ruvu Valley (Ichumbaki 2015). Meanwhile, Bagamoyo's location alongside a broad area of continental shelf, extending over to Zanzibar, offers rich inshore fishing grounds. In addition, the town's position near the southern end of the Indian Ocean monsoon wind regime tied it into longstanding transoceanic exchange systems. More immediately, its shallow bay offers a sheltered roadstead for cargo vessels and larger fishing craft, while smaller boats can easily be hauled out onto the beach.

Much has changed in Bagamoyo's maritime economy since the onset of European colonialism and, indeed, Tanzania's independence: slavery has, of course, been abolished and the interior caravan and transoceanic monsoon trade has ended. Meanwhile, increasing vessel sizes forced a relocation of major port activities to the deeper haven of Dar es Salaam. Nevertheless, many in Bagamoyo and its nearby villages continue to look to the sea for their livelihoods, with most of

the population depending on fishing as their major food source. Today, this is mainly through artisanal, inshore fishing — using wooden fishing boats that are the topic of this article — as well as mariculture (in the form of seaweed and prawn farming), salt production, and cargo trade with Zanzibar using wooden *mashua* sailing vessels. Construction materials such as timber, poles and aggregates, as well as foodstuffs such as flour and potatoes, are among the regular cargoes loaded for Zanzibar, while the return journey often includes cooking oil. It is also the sea that attracts a modest stream of tourists to the town, supporting a small number of hotels, restaurants, and bars. Non-maritime activities, meanwhile, include public services, retail, small-scale farming and charcoal-making (Axelsson and Blomquist 2014, 18; Torell et al. 2006).

Some 96% of the marine fishery of the District of Bagamoyo is artisanal — in other words, conducted by individuals and small family groups to support individual households. The district has around 10 permanent and official landing sites for artisanal craft; in 2009 these hosted about 1751 fishers (Mkama et al. 2010). Most people fish around reefs and sandbanks in the relatively shallow waters of the Zanzibar Channel using vernacular sailing and, to a lesser extent, motorised craft of diverse types. These include the logboats, such as the *mtumbwi*, and the plank-built vessels including the fishing *mashua*, *mchoro*, *ngwanda* and *boti la mtando* (Cooper et al. 2022). By far, the most common, however, is the double-outrigger sailing logboat known as the *ngalawa*, a type that has been presented in detail elsewhere (Ichumbaki et al. 2022).

Bagamoyo's artisanal fishers face a number of challenges. The relatively high cost of outboard engines leaves most dependent on sails, limiting range and restricting fishing location according to wind, tide and season (Lyimo *e*t al. 2013, 66). The best fishing is in the time of the south-easterly *Kusi* monsoon winds, blowing from July to September, and of the northerly-easterly *Kaskazi* winds, blowing from November to January. Fish catches decline during the windiest months: from April to June — a period known locally known as the *Parataza* — and in October — a period known as the *Maleleje*. Since most fishers use the sail for propulsion, they are restricted in range and location in the same manner, concentrating fishing within the same inshore area. As a result, while Tanzania's deep-ocean fishing grounds remain under-developed, inshore fisheries are overexploited, limiting catch and increasing competition. It is from these inshore areas that Bagamoyo's fishing community seeks to make a living.

When their boats are not in use, the fishers of Bagamoyo District leave their vessels along the shore. Smaller craft, such as the *ngalawa* and the even smaller *mtumbwi*, are usually hauled out and left at the head of the beach; larger vessels — the *mashua*, *mchoro*, *ngwanda* and *boti la mtando* — tend to be anchored or moored in the shallows. It was the visible presence of so many vessels along the shore, their sometimes humorous and bawdy names often painted large along their hulls, that first drew our attention to this aspect of self-expression among the fishing community and prompted the survey we

report in this article. In the next section we present our methodological approaches to exploring the boat names and conveyed messages.

Research Methods and Approaches

The data collection for this article is a product of the *Bahari Yetu, Urithi Wetu* ('Our Ocean, Our Heritage') Project, jointly implemented by the Universities of Dar es Salaam, Exeter, and Southampton and funded by the Rising from the Depths Network. The data presented in this paper were collected through physical surveys, interviews and collaborative mapping, all of which were participatory: members of the local community and our team members engaged collaboratively, adopting what Peter Schmidt calls 'community-based research' (see Schmidt 2016, 2017a-b; Schmidt and Kehoe 2018). Employing this approach was crucial for confirming data whose accuracy needed triangulation.

The physical survey strategy was conducted at three fish-landing sites — Bagamoyo's central waterfront area, and in the villages of Kaole and Mlingotini. The survey was of two types: first, walking along the beach and observing the boats without asking people about the boat names; and second, moving from one boat to another, recording the inscriptions on the boats, talking to people nearby, and making photographic records. The former aimed at getting a general view of the names and other inscriptions on the boats, as well as confirming whether there were enough candidates to warrant a study. Once this was established, the subsequent survey was conducted at different times (mornings, afternoons and evenings) on different days of the week. This aimed at identifying the times and the days when the vessels were plentiful, few, or somewhere in between. Indeed, this strategy effectively established that, while there were very few vessels each morning and early afternoon, nearly three quarters of all the fishing vessels were on the beach from around 3 pm.[1] On one evening in the last week of August 2019, for example, we counted over 100 double-outrigger *ngalawa* dugouts, and over 50 other *madau* (the Swahili plural of *dau*). On another evening, in the first week of June 2020, we counted over 120 *ngalawa* and over 60 other *madau*. Considering that these boats depart for fishing and return on a daily basis — and some could have been absent during our counts — there is every possibility that the area has over 200 operational boats, two thirds of these being officially registered. When combined with those found at Kaole, Mlingotini, Mbegani and Mkadini, the fish-landing sites of Bagamoyo and vicinity may have over 300 operational wooden watercraft of various sizes, which people use for fishing, navigation, as well as cargo transport.

In order to record the names and other text on the boats, we used a recording form we developed for the purpose. This aimed at capturing various categories of information that would enable an understanding of the type of boats with inscriptions or names, size and functions of the respective boats. We also recorded the type of inscriptions, the boats' name, and other contextual

information, such as date of registration, registration number, owner, etc. We obtained this information by observing the boats, engaging with people going on with their activities round about, and following up by talking with either the boat owners, captains, or any other person aware of them. To collect as much accurate data as possible, our recording of names on boats began at the villages of Kaole and Mlingotini where there were fewer boats and our methodology piloted and refined: our experience in these villages set the benchmark for either continuing or revising the data collection form before shifting to Bagamoyo.

This strategy proved effective, since we noted that some boat owners and captains were not ready to admit that they were indeed owners of the boats or their appointees. This suspicion was due to the participants being wary of our team, thinking that we were government officials spying on matters of illegal fishing. Their caution was triggered by a government operation on such 'illegal fishing' that had taken place in May 2019, about two months before our first season of fieldwork, in which many small fishing vessels and nets had been burnt. This incident had also resulted in some people being injured and others imprisoned for several months. Some fishers therefore thought that our team was following up to see whether illegal fishing was continuing or had stopped. We assured them of their security and anonymity, however, by informing them that we were from the University of Dar es Salaam, and totally unlinked to government officials making follow-ups on illegal fishing. An understanding of the operation that had happened some months before our research also helped us to revise our approach when undertaking a similar survey at Bagamoyo port. Instead of beginning by inquiring on the boats' contextual information, we began by building friendships and having general discussions on matters related to naming boats before asking for specific and more detailed information of several of the selected candidates. Eventually, a majority of the fishers captains, and boat owners became aware of the research we were doing and continued to inform us of the names of boats which had either moved to other locations, were no longer operational, or which they had seen somewhere else, outside the study area.

Walking surveys in the target areas over a number of weeks recorded about 200 boats in Bagamoyo port, 50 in Mligotini and 20 in Kaole. To ensure that boats were not missed, the team began at the northern end of the beach each time and headed south (see Figure 1). Whereas the majority of boats had their names inscribed on them, a few did not. Such a lack of name might be because these vessels never had one written on them or that they had been erased. Our team recorded names that were clearly legible and others with only part of the name visible. We recorded several at Bagamoyo that had their names on both sides — usually one on the starboard-side bow quarter and the other on the port-side stern quarter. There were also a very small number

of boats which, in addition to having names inscribed on them, had other decorations or features added; a scenario also recorded on the boats of the Winneba people of the central coast of Ghana (Anane 2019, 76). In terms of language use, over 95% of boat names and inscriptions were in Kiswahili. Fewer than 10 boats had names in English, Arabic or another language.

We recorded some 270 boats in total on the shores of Bagamoyo, Kaole and Mlingotini; most were operational, with others awaiting repair. These included *ngalawa*, small logboats (*mitumbwi ya wanyasa*) of a type originally from Lake Nyasa, plank-built vessels such as the *mashua* and *ngwanda*, as well as cargo boats such as the *bumu* and *jahazi*. In the end, we recorded a total of 168 individual boat names: these are presented some of which are presented in Table 1. We used the vessels' registration numbers to verify some of the names that were either missing from the physical boats, were not easily confirmed from the interviews, or missed in the Bagamoyo District's Fisheries Department's boat registration register.

The number of vessels we recorded was considerably less than the over 850 registered with the Fisheries Department in Bagamoyo. Yet it was also the case that some of those vessels we recorded along the beach were missing from the Fisheries Department register. This suggests either that the register was incomplete or that some vessels were operating without registration. Concomitantly, we did not find along the coast a number of vessels that had been registered between 2016 and 2018: it might be that some were at sea or had relocated elsewhere,[2] or were otherwise defunct. Various districts along the Tanzanian coast register boats, and, once registered, those boats can operate anywhere along the mainland coast or in Zanzibar.[3] Another possibility is that the owners might have sold their boats to other fishers who were not from the fishing villages nearby our research area.[4]

The Fisheries Department register proved particularly useful in expanding our list of boat names. Having learned from local collaborators (fishers) that a well-cared-for boat could survive for up to 15 years, we requested the information from early 2000 to 2019. By requesting access to these data, we aimed to record all vessel names from the earliest registered to the most recent. From the registration books, we recorded a total of 855 boats registered within a period of 18 years; that is, between January 2001 and December 2018, an average of 48 boats each year.

The register contains each boat's registration date, the name of its owner(s), its area of operation, its name and its official registration number. The majority (840, or 98%) were owned by individuals, with just a few (15, or 2%) having group ownership. These boats were registered to operate at Bagamoyo and the surrounding settlements of Mlingotini, Pande, Changwehera, Kaole, Kondo, Mkadini and Mbegani. There were also few cargo boats registered to operate between Bagamoyo and Unguja (Zanzibar), Tanga and Dar es Salaam. Regardless of where registered to operate, each boat has a unique registration number inscribed on

Table 1. A sample of documented boat names/sayings.

Boat official registered name	Saying engraved on the boat	Other engravings (images, colours, paints, etc.)	Description accompanying the name/saying from interviews
MV SWAHIBA	Swahiba	s-like strips	Friendship, love and socialisation
MV Uwe Makini No. 4	Uwe Makini	Nil	Workers are warned to be careful in observing rules and regulations in their work environment; and possibly faithful
MV WEMA UJINGA	Halichachi	White, blue and red lines	The name *Wema Ujinga* can be understood as 'Being Nice is Stupidity' because some people abuse niceness
MV Salam Zao	Usiyempenda Karudi	Black colour on the enzirani	The workers of the vessel are unhappy with one of their fellows, so whenever he is away, they become happy. He then realised that every time he comes back his colleagues are unhappy, he then decided to write the phrase *Usiyempenda karudi* meaning 'The one you dislike is back'
MV Jitihada Wajada	Jitihada	White colour on the Kinara	Efforts in doing any work
MV Zina Mola	Zina Mola	White, blue and red lines	It is Allah who provides
MV Takbir	Takbir	Nil	God is Great
MV CHURA	Chura	Nil	The name means 'frog', and it is possibly because the vessel is very slow, and its middle part is wide
Kiswaswadu	Kiswaswadu	White and blue striped on the wings	It is a colloquialism for 'a small size' girl – one who is portable
MV Yenu Jee?	Yenu Jee?	White and blue strips on the wings	People like to talk about other peoples' affairs, but not theirs. So, the boat name *Yenu jee*? meaning is meant to ask such people: 'What about your own affairs?'
MV Hapa Kazi	Hapa kazi	Nil	This used to be President Magufuli's guiding slogan which meant: 'It's all work here', and it discouraged laziness
MV Kubwa Lijao	Kubwa lijalo	Nil	People have got a lot of things; the owner considers having such a vessel as just a small thing; he therefore predicts that something big is coming
MV Kikanzu	Mtoto hakimbii kwao	Nil	This saying is aimed at encouraging people not to run away from problems – *Mtoto hakimbii kwao* – 'A child doesn't run away from home'
MV MAPITO	Mapito Baba lao	Blue and white colours	*Mapito* are temporary challenges one is going through; but *Baba lao* (their [big] father) means their vessel is on top
MV WMJU	Sio poa	Red colour in the bottom	At some point things were not well; thus the captain wrote *Sio poa,* meaning 'It's not OK'
MV Quality	Sorry! Zitabaki story!	Red colour in the bottom	One of the colleagues was cheated on by his wife. He then decided to marry another woman. When the ex-wife came back to him, he responded with the boat saying *Sorry! Zimebaki story* meaning that their relationship is over, what remained were stories about the previous relationship
MV GOD help me	GOD Help me!!!	White and red colour	Prayers to God so He can guard and help them throughout their work
Bombadia	Bombadia	Blue and white colours	Influence of new bombardier aircraft bought by the Government of Tanzania – so this is a Swahili nonce borrowing
Digitali	Kidigitali	Red and white colours	Swahili borrowing, meaning "Of the digital era"
MV Sasa Jee?	Nibebe	Image of a knife; blue and white colour paintings at the back	Written by someone else who was requesting to go fishing together with the boat owner – *nibebe* means 'carry me with you'

(*Continued*)

Table 1. Continued.

Boat official registered name	Saying engraved on the boat	Other engravings (images, colours, paints, etc.)	Description accompanying the name/saying from interviews
MV Manyaka	Dela tupa kule	Nil	Telling a woman to get ready for sex
?	Mambo ni kiasi		Owned by someone from Pemba Island, M*ambo ni kiasi* meant to say things need to be done with moderation
?	Ukimaindi poa	Nil	If you mind, I don't care
MV Vita Akili	Vita Akili	Nil	War needs intelligence. There are various challenges in the ocean which the owner compares to a war. He then opines that warring needs one to be clever
MV Wabaya Watu	Wabaya watu	Black colour painting (sifa)	It is people who are not good to one another (beasts are better)
MV JIPE MOYO	Jipe Moyo	Blue colour painting	The owner taught himself how to fish and he was later given other people's vessels to operate. He and his wife were very patient and courageous hoping that one day things will be well. In the end, they successfully owned their own *ngalawa* which they decided to name *'Jipe Moyo*' meaning 'Don't Lose Hope'
MV Swahiba	Sura siyo roho	Blue and red colour with white impressions, fish drawing	There are good looking and beautiful people, but not with a good heart. It means that it is not the outside that matters
MV Takadam	Mazoea	Red and blue paintings	There was a girl who forced a relationship with the owner. The owner decided to write *Mazoea* on his vessel as a way of discouraging the woman. Since then, the woman has stayed away
MV Sisemi	Sisemi	Nil	People like to talk about others, but he has decided to remain quiet
MV Hunter to be hunted	Hunter to be hunted	Nil	The working environment in the ocean is very challenging. Sometimes fish can be dangerous and attack you; therefore, you are hunting but you are also being hunted
MV Iko Siku	Iko siku	Nil	The owner believes that one day he will be successful and fulfil his dream of becoming rich
MV Yana Mola	Yana Mola	Nil	One day, the owner and the colleague went to fish but the waves were very strong making their trip back very difficult. When they were close to the beach, a colleague screamed *Yana Mola* meaning 'God is Great' and it was a miracle for them to survive. Since then, the vessel has been named *Yana Mola*
MV Najuwa Mtasema	Najua Mtasema	Nil	*Najua Mtasema*, which means 'I know that you talk' has been written because the owner of the vessel knows that people will not stop talking about him
MV Peace and Love	Kila mtu linamtosha lake	Nil	Everyone has his/her own problems; what matters is to live in peace and love with everyone.
MV Fitina hana sababu	Fitina hana sababu	Nil	Cabalists do not need a cause – some people may just talk badly about you in order to ruin your plans and success without any reason
MV Heshimu Kazi	Heshimu kazi	Nil	*Heshimu kazi* is a call to people to respect the work they do. Work is what earns them a living
?	Inama Unipe	Nil	Feedback to a person who had no boat but all along request assistance to go fishing with others. Before accepting his request, they asked him to 'bend' so that they could fuck him (seemingly a nasty joke). When he managed to purchase his own boat, he then named it *Inama Unipe*'

the prow or on one of the rear planks. Although all the boats are registered as having a specific name, which does not necessarily need to be unique, it is not mandatory to have these inscribed on the vessels themselves; accordingly, the boats' owners and/or captains are free to either inscribe the name on the boat or not.

It was by following the above methodology that we encountered a total of 168 physical boats with names that we could identify, whether registered originally in Bagamoyo or elsewhere but now operating there. This is just 20% of the total vessels registered in the district over 18 years. Notably, a few boats registered within the past two to three years were nowhere to be seen in the entire surveyed area during the research period. This is not surprising because, along the coast of Tanzania, fishers move from one village to another. Thus, it might be possible that, during our surveys, they had moved to other coastal villages. Indeed, some of the fishers and boat captains we interacted with had moved from other landing sites to the south or north of Bagamoyo.

As a follow up, and in order to understand where the boats recorded on the beach go for fishing, we printed various maps showing various islands, sandbanks and coral reefs on the Zanzibar Channel, including the lagoon of Mlingotini. The maps without any text were shared with several fishers on the study area who were also requested to label and name islands, sandbanks, coral reefs, etc. which they used for fishing and could observe on the map. The filled and labelled maps were then studied to compare the responses of various fishers. The places repeated several times were considered accurate, while those that were not were confirmed by further consultation with the fishers. This exercise was repeated multiple times until a map that we thought represented relatively accurate fishing grounds' names and locations was produced (see Figure 2). Initiatives to obtain this map aimed at locating fishing grounds within the area and the type of fish that are found on those respective reefs. As will become apparent in the next section, these data helped us understand the meaning of some of the boat names, since some are linked, for example, to distances they travel for fishing, as well as the type of fish they catch.

The analysis of all the data collected via the above approaches was guided by multimodality theory: This theory guided our team to look into different modes through which boats have been named. A multimodality approach, according to Bateman et al. (2017, 8–9), refers to a research orientation that seeks to address what happens when diverse communicative forms combine in the process of 'making meanings', regardless of how and where it is done (see Kress 2010). The use of this approach enabled us to view the communication of boat owners, captains and other users as drawing on different aspects of coastal marine life, to generate meanings which they inscribe on their vessels (see



Figure 2. A map of the Zanzibar Channel showing popular fishing grounds where Bagamoyo fishers go for fishing activities

Jewitt et al. 2001). We thus managed to look at written texts on the boats on the Bagamoyo coastal landscape and obtain a better understanding of this quite public discourse.

Names of Contemporary Wooden Boats in Bagamoyo

The 168 names of the boats represented various life situations relating to and expressed by the coastal people of Bagamoyo and its environs. We grouped the boat names in Bagamoyo, Kaole and Mlingotini into six themes: (1) Proverbs — conflict and competition, (2) Hope, encouragement and cautions; (3) Religious beliefs and practice; (4) Slang, colloquialisms and popular-cultural references — covering modernity, politics, and current issues; (5) Sex and/or love; and (6) Economic and social life/status. As can be noted from Table 2, the second-largest number of boats have names that give a message of hope, encouragement and/or warning, followed by those reflecting religion/beliefs, proverbs, and conflicts and competition. There were also boats with names reflecting current issues, sexual relations, politics and others which make a small percent of the total. We present the names in further detail below.

1. Proverbs — conflicts, and competition

This category represents the first group of boats' names we recorded in the study area; it comprises a total of 55 names, equivalent to one-third of the total (see Table 2). This demonstrates that boat names in Bagamoyo are often used to express social tensions without resorting to physical confrontation, while at the same time ensuring that the intended messages get across to other members of the community. Boats names such as *Wema ujinga* ('Being nice is stupidity') or *Mchawi ndugu* ('It's a relative who causes you harm'), reflect sentiments that are quite the opposite of what might be expected and point towards conflicts commonly found among related people. Names such as *Fitina haina posho* ('Rancour attracts no wage'), *Majungu si mtaji* ('Gossip is not capital'), *Kazi kuishi na watu* ('It's hard to live with people'), *Najuwa mtasema* ('I know you will speak'; Figure 3a) and *Wamezoe*a ('They've become accustomed') further prove that some fishers or their families have problems, and that they can express their grievances through boat names. Names such as *Waja wana kazi* ('The arrivals are always problematic'; Figure 3b) *Sitasahau* ('I will not forget'), *Yenu jee* ('What about yours?'; Figure 3c): *Si wema* ('They are not kind'), *Mna yenu* ('You have a reason') and *Wabaya watu* ('People are not good'; Figure 3d)

Table 2. Categorisation of themes of boat names on the coast of Bagamoyo.

S/N	Theme Category	Number	Percentages (%)
1.	Proverbs, conflicts and competition	55	33%
2.	Hope, encouragement and cautions	45	27%
3.	Religious beliefs and practice	31	19%
4.	Slang, colloquialisms and popular-cultural references	17	10%
5.	Political issues	7	4%
6.	Relationships	7	4%
7.	Others	6	3%
Total		**168**	**100%**



Figure 3. Boat names on the Bagamoyo waterfront based on proverbs: (a) *Najuwa mtasema* ('I know you will speak'); (b) *Waja wana kazi* ('The arrivals are always problematic'); (c) *Yenu jee* ('What about yours?'); (d) *Wabaya watu* 'People are not good'); (e) *Vita akili* ('Warring needs thinking'). (Images: Elgidius Ichumbaki)

reflect the existence of conflicts and caution people to be careful, since not everybody wishes good or success for others.

Because of these existing tensions among either fishers or their families, some boat names give warnings that each person should be careful with his/her enemy. Names such as *Nyani mbaya usimuonee haya* ('Do not be ashamed of dealing with a wicked baboon'), *Vita akili* ('War needs thought' Figure 3e) and *Mtoto hatumwi dukani* ('Do not send a child to the shop') are designed as cautionary messages to warn people to be careful with their enemies. Despite this situation, however, there are names that encourage people to tolerate each other. For example, names such as *Wema hauozi* ('Kindness is a lasting treasure'), *Isiwe sababu* ('It should not be a problem'), *Macho si moyo* ('The eyes view things differently from the heart'), *Tatizo kauli* ('It's the poison tongue that is the problem') and *Ongea na moyo wako* ('Speak to your heart') provide a message of acceptance so that people can continue living harmoniously.

2. Hope, encouragement and cautions

A total of 45 (27%) of the boat names studied relate to either offering hope, encouragement and/or warning against some eventuality. Several boat names urge people to be patient and believe they will succeed. The encouragement names, however, operate on different levels. For example, names such as *Iko siku* ('There is a day'; Figure 4a), *Jipe Moyo* ('Take heart'), *Huwezi jua* ('You never know'), *Jambo nia* ('Everything depends on the will') and *Mwanzo*



Figure 4. Boat names on the Bagamoyo waterfront conveying hope, encouragement or warning: (a) *Iko siku* ('There is a day'); (b) *Kila mtu linamtosha lake* ('Every person is satisfied by what is his/hers') (c) *Usitanie kazi* ('Do not joke with work'). (Images: Elgidius Ichumbaki

mgumu ('The start is hard') show that boat owners and/or captains, encourage one another to have hope that they will succeed in the future and that they should continue working hard. Unsurprisingly, many of the boats with these names are also the first boats that their owners or captains owned, after they had been struggling either to possess their own boats or be trusted and given a boat to use.[5]

There were also some boats with names that encourage fishers to continue working even when some fishing trips are unsuccessful. Names such as *Kubali matokeo* ('Accept the results'), *Nyota* ('Star'), *Mtoaji Mungu* ('God is the giver'), *Riziki* ('Providence') and *Mwenda pole* ('Slow mover'), are examples of names that provide a message that the fishers may not obtain something today but will be able to get it in future; what is needed is to keep hope alive. Some boats have names that aim to please the fishers. These include *Poleni* ('Take it easy') and *Pole kwa kazi* ('Sorry that you have been busy'). To make sure that nobody loses hope after missing a catch, some boats have names that encourage fishers to travel to even further fishing grounds. Names such as *Njaa kali hatulali* ('Too much hunger, no sleeping'), *Mtaji wa maskini* ('The poor person's capital'), *Hapa kazi* ('Only work') and *Kambi popote* ('A camp could be anywhere'), aim to encourage fishers to keep on trying, navigating to places where they will reap greater rewards.

There are other names which insist that everyone should work hard and become independent. Names such as *Mtu chake* ('A person is defined by what he or she has'), *Kila mtu linamtosha lake* ('Every person is satisfied by what is his/hers', Figure 4b) and *Cha Mtu mavi* ('Beware of another person's property') give a message that people should struggle to obtain their own wealth instead of depending on others. More importantly, there are names that encourage fishers to do whatever they can to keep their jobs, use the wealth they have wisely and not be satisfied with little income or limited success. This is exemplified by names such as *Moja haitoshi* ('One [boat?] is not enough'), *Heshimu kazi* ('Respect work'), *Usitanie kazi* ('Do not joke with work', Figure 4c) and *Usitombe kazi* ('Do not fuck a job up'). These names intend to deliver a message that a job is important, and that people should not play with it.

3. Religious beliefs and practice

Bagamoyo's coastal landscape manifests itself as a space harbouring an amalgamation of people from a conflation of cultures and languages from within and outside Tanzania. The manifestation of linguistic elements from different parts of the world results, *prima facie,* in what commonly happens in a language-contact situation (see, e.g., Mapunda and Rosendal 2015), *inter alia* the emergence of elements borrowed between languages. The featuring of different languages on watercraft is a common feature of multilingualism, which attests to the question of long-term contact between languages and

cultures. From the collected data, traces of Arabic and Islamic culture are visible through names and Islamic phrases such as *Umulkheri* ('The mother of goodness'; Ar. أم الخير), *Takbir* ('Exalting God'; Ar. تكبير) and *Masha Allah* ('As God wills it'; Ar. ما شاء الله), among others.

Although many people in Bagamoyo and the nearby villages present themselves as either Muslim or Christian, to a large extent they still practice traditional religions, albeit secretly. Such practices are marked by the presence of numerous spiritual sites where they go for traditional ritual practices (Alex 2020), in addition to visiting major baobab trees, sacred forests, and monumental ruins such as Kaole to undertake pilgrimages (Ichumbaki 2015). It is, therefore, not surprising to find boats with names that reflect their namers' commitment to and belief in Islam, Christianity, or traditional religions. A total of 31 — some 19% of named boats surveyed — had names that reflect religious messages. Of these, 16 had names reflecting Islam, 5 reflecting Christianity, and 10 representing a mixture of the two. Names such as '*Yana Mola*' ('Everything is in the hands of God') and '*Ajuae Mola*' ('It is God who knows') reflect Islamic sensibilities, while names such as '*Fimbo ya Musa*' ('Moses's Rod'), '*Kanani*' ('Canaan') and '*Kanaani*' ('Canaan') reflect Christianity. However, some names are more general and could be reflective of Islam, Christianity or even traditional religious beliefs.

4. Slang, colloquialisms and popular-cultural references

Another group of boat names is made up of new slang coinages, colloquialisms and popular-cultural references in general. Of the boat names studied, a total of 17, or 10%, reflected such themes, including popular-music groups, pop songs and lyrics, new inventions, current global issues, and other contemporary topics; it seems the names are meant to capture topical national, regional, and even global issues. Some of these boats have the names of currently successful music groups. One example is the boat *Wasafi*, named after WCB Wasafi, a record label founded by the famous Tanzanian musician Nasib Abdul, also known as Diamond Platinumz who started as a sole artist in 2008–2009 but has since come to own a record label and radio and television station, all going by the name of *Wasafi*. This label has coached other young musicians who have gone on to perform well in Tanzania and beyond. Some other boat names reflect love for musicians and pop groups. One such was *Wagosi wakaya* named after a hip-hop music group that was famous between 2003–2007 and based in Tanga City, about 150km north of Bagamoyo. It was famous for releasing songs that addressed problems facing either particular professions or individuals; for example, they had a major hit that discussed the problems facing teachers, nurses and hospital auxiliaries, taxi drivers and farmers, among others.

Other boat names represent a song name or lyrics and terms within a pop song. Among these are *Chura* which in Kiswahili is literally 'frog', but in Tanzania's *Bongo*

Flava music genre (see Ichumbaki and Lubao 2020) is used colloquially to refer to a woman who has large hips and buttocks. Another slang term is *Kiswaswadu*, which, according to *#tujadilikiswahili* on Twitter is defined as *Msichana aliye na mwili mdogomdogo* or 'a girl who has a small body'. The boats named *Chura* and *Kiswaswadu* reflected these characteristics in their form: the former was relatively large, and the latter small. Other names derived from popular music include *Pamba Nyepesi* ('affluent clothing'), and [Mapito] *Baba Lao* ('[Mapito] is the big father of all').

Other boats in this category referenced local and international issues ranging across medical issues, conflicts, technological innovations, etc. We recorded a boat named *Fansida*, derived from Fansidar, a brand name for the antimalarial drug sulfadoxine-pyrimethamine (SP), which replaced chloroquine in Tanzania in the early 2000s (Mugittu et al. 2005). This drug became especially well known in 2002–2003 as it was recommended for any Tanzanian hospitalised for malaria. We also recorded vessel names indicative of knowledge of international politics, such as *Alquida* and *Alikaida* (both from 'al-Qaida'; Ar. القائدة), and *Osama* (Ar. أسامة,) all of which reference violent transnational Islamist movements and confirm fishers' knowledge of the existence of such groups. There were also names showing fishers' interest in technology. Names such as *Computer*, *Mtandao* ('Network') and *Kidigitali* ('Digitally') attest to this.

5. Politics

The theme of politics was not uncommon among the recorded boat names, with a total of seven (4%) of the total making references to politics, mostly in Tanzania. One obvious name was *CCM*, the acronym for Tanzania's ruling party *Chama cha Mapinduzi* ('The Revolution Party'). The boat named had the green and yellow colours of the party. Other politically charged names included *Bombadia*, a misspelling of the aircraft brand name 'Bombardier'. In 2017 and 2018, the Tanzanian government bought three Bombardier aircraft, which it often used to parade its political achievements. The Bombardier has been criticised by CHADEMA (the main opposition party in Tanzania) as a weak aircraft that is prone to crashing. The owner of the boat explained that it was not he who had named it but friends who joked that it had limited speed.[6] Another politically oriented name was *Dream Liner* also a misspelt aircraft brand that was bought by the Tanzanian government. This boat was new and good looking, and the fishers interviewed informed us that it was quite speedy. A final politically charged name was *Mwendo kasi*, referring to Dar es Salaam's bus-based rapid transport system, also masterminded by the government. One might argue that naming the boats after the airplanes and bus transit systems reflect fishers' knowledge of current issues. Nevertheless, interviews with the boats' owners and captains did not reflect this. Instead, they said that these boats navigated the sea very easily and were speedy (*Dream Liner* and *Mwendokasi*) when compared to *Bombadia,* which, according to some boat captains, was slow and unstable. Considering the then-ongoing discussion around the quality of

the bought airplanes — the ruling party glorifying them and the opposition party criticising them — and also considering that the boat owners in question declared their support for different parties, then, this naming is very much linked to the political situation.

6. Relationships

We also recorded seven boats with names related to love, sex and friendship. These included *Inama Unipe* ('Bend over and give it me'), *Dela tupa kule* ('Throw off your dress'), *Akitaka mpe* ('If s/he needs, give") and *Tupendane* ('Let's love one another'). Others included *Tatizo kauli* ('The way you speak'), *Kiduchu* ('A very little amount') and the English *Peace and Love*.

7. Other names

Some boats had names which did not fall within the above thematic categories. These included names of various fish, such as *Chewa*, *Changu* and *Tuna,* reflecting the targeting of particularly fast species. There were also boats with names of countries, for example, *Panama*, and cities/regions, such as *California*. We also recorded names of villages that were engraved on paddles. For example, a fisherman from near Lake Nyasa in Southern Tanzania, had the name of his home village engraved on his paddle.[7] Among the names we collected, there were also explicit and implicit clues that attested to the presence of poverty. Examples include *Njaa kali, hatulali* ('So much hunger, we do not sleep'), *Nibebe* ('Carry me') as well as a name that suggests living by hope '*Iko siku* ('A day is coming'), among others.

Discussion

For reasons that are difficult to understand, boat names have been widely neglected in scholarship, not only along the Swahili coast in Tanzania but almost throughout the world (Franzen 1967, 52); it is only recently that scholars have turned to documenting them (e.g., see Gray 1996; Anane 2019). Such a scenario is surprising not only because the boat names are highly visible, but also because the majority of local people, and particularly men, on the Swahili coast feel that without a fishing boat they cannot make a living; a boat is their most precious possession. With this understanding in mind, we have, in this paper, presented the manner by which these important objects are named.

The names presented in this article were obtained by one of two means: accessing the registration list from the Fisheries Department in Bagamoyo District; and/or through field survey — collecting pictorial materials and information through interview about the origin of the names from the respective study area. Having analysed the data from the current study, we argue that boats'

names represent strategies or measures adopted by fishers to communicate their daily lives and livelihoods to the public in general, as well as the wider fishing community: the fact that vessels are hauled out on the waterfront when not in use makes then highly visible. We have seen from the data that these names serve many purposes, ranging from communicating to their supreme God, expressing love and desire or even hatred, gossiping and backbiting. Through their names, the fishers encourage one another to either work hard or not to despair when things do not work well in their day-to-day contact with the sea and the people around them. In other words, through these names, one gains insight into the social life of the people who interact with the coastal landscape, as well as of their past and present history. In this case, the names of contemporary wooden boats along the Bagamoyo coast serve as a platform for expressing social, cultural, political, religious and economic concerns of the people who name them.

A study of texts on *khanga* printed textiles in Zanzibar points to similar functions, considering also the fact that Zanzibar people are in many ways similar to other East African coastal people in terms of their socio-economic activities, religion and culture. The *khanga* texts serve as a way of indirectly delivering even unpleasant information, as well as pleasant ones such as consolation or congratulatory messages, to intended individuals. As such, *khanga* texts are used as a strategy for:

> … avoidance of physical contact, the upholding of *heshima* (respect), and the fact that the addressee would have no basis for accusing the wearer of insulting her, because she has no way of proving that the *khanga* name was addressed to her … She cannot for that reason come and pick a quarrel with the wearer … (Yahya-Othman 1997, 143)

Furthermore, with the *khanga* in Zanzibar, there is no connection between the design itself and the texts on it, as in special issues commemorating some national event, or raising social awareness (Yahya-Othman 1997, 137). This is entirely different from what the Bagamoyo boat study shows. There is a dominance of current issues which partly do not convey a message to specific people but are rather a reflection of either being informed of current issues or comparing their vessels with whatever innovation and introduction of new technologies. Whereas messages on the *khanga* have been interpreted as 'a uniquely female form of communication … a [peaceful] strategy which allows them to make strong statements about their concerns' (Yahya-Othman 1997, 135), the messages on boats imply the general lifestyle and means of accommodating their livelihoods and day-to-day activities of fishers along the coast of Bagamoyo.

Another notable feature of the boat names on the Bagamoyo beachscape is incorrect — or at least informal — spelling. This is likely to be a result of limited literacy, since many boat owners and operators lack formal education; they simply inscribe names on their vessels as they pronounce them in their dialect. In the registry also, considering that officers may be from a different

linguistic community, they also write what they hear. Examples of these are *Yang Dragon*, for Young Dragon, *Dream Liner*, for Dreamliner, *Bombadia* for Bombardier, and even the Swahili word *Sikweri* (sic) for 'It's untrue'. As the level of education of most people who engage in small-scale marine activity is usually very low, awareness of the standard spelling may be lacking; but it may also be the case that conventional spelling is not their preoccupation.

The coastal people of this region are native speakers of the Swahili language, so they have many different ways of showing their dexterity in the language. Swahili is full of sayings and proverbs, and these are used as lessons, warnings, and a strategy for expressing irony, bluff, and sarcasm, among many other uses. Going through the various proverbs, we see a number of different intended themes. For example, the proverb *Elimu ya mjinga majungu* ('What a fool knows is slander') is an indirect way of telling all those who spread slander to regard themselves as fools. Indeed, it is a strategy of avoiding direct confrontation with those who backbite others. Likewise, the proverb *Fitina haina posho* ('Rancour is not paid for', or 'There is no payment of an allowance for rancour') also suggests that there is rancour on the coastal landscape, but which the boat owner/user decided to play down.

Furthermore, it must be noted that the linguistic landscape of Bagamoyo and its coast are somewhat different from that recorded on other coasts worldwide. For instance, whereas boats based on the nicknames of the owners are common on other coastal areas, for example in the Faroe Islands (Franzen 1967, 56) and at Winneba in Ghana (Anane 2019, 83), as well as on *daladala* minibuses in Tanzania (Spier 2019, 381), we recorded no boat in Bagamoyo that communicated or symbolised a person's nickname. A similar observation can be noted with respect to the naming of boats after countries, as well as decorating the same boats with respective countries' flag as observed in Winneba, Cape Coast, and South Africa (Anane 2019, 86; Gray 1996, 19). Hence, we recorded very few boats in Bagamoyo with either a name or a flag of another country. Instead, many boat names in Bagamoyo reflect local people's cultures and daily lives. This scenario implies that, despite the modern technology which, through radio and television, gives Bagamoyo residents an opportunity to experience European and American lifestyles, they have not been very much influenced by such western cultures in this regard.

Some studies conducted elsewhere, for example, in the Faroe Islands (Franzen 1967), recorded fifteen categories of boat names. The naming of the boats reflected: 1) partnership; 2) certain characteristics; 3) comparatives; 4) animals; 5) botany/trees; and 6) personal names and designations or occupation. Other categories included, 7) geography or area; 8) nicknames and derogatory expressions; 9) special incidents; 10) abstracts; 11) breakers/waves/winds; 12) stars and atmospheric phenomena; 13) foreign; 14) folk literature/mythology/history; and 15) miscellaneous names. The current study at Bagamoyo indicates a different picture from that which Franzen (1967) observed, as very few names representative of the same scenario were found in Bagamoyo. For example, we

did not record any boat named after a land animal. Instead, there were a few boats with names of fish. The only places after which boats were named were towns of both Tanzania and beyond. We also did not record a boat given a fisherman's nickname or named after trees. Even the boats with names comparable to the Faroese case — such *Bombardier*, *Mwendokasi*, *Kirikuu*, and *Dream Liner* which refer to the boats' speed — were very few. The explanation for this scenario is that people in Bagamoyo are much more concerned with their social lives, rather than with aspects that rarely affect them on a daily basis.

Conclusion

This article investigated boat names on the coast around Bagamoyo, Tanzania. Previous studies relating to boats nomenclature in Africa have focused, in contrast, on names inscribed on *khanga* textiles (Yahya-Othman 1997), and on various types of vehicles ranging from public transport such as *daladala* in Tanzania (Speir 2019) and *Matatu* in Kenya (Kayi 2016), to other forms of vehicles in various African countries (Kipacha 2014; van der Geest 2009; Guseh 2008; Lewis 1998). We are also aware of similar studies on boat names, for example, on the Ghanaian coast (Anane 2019; Gray 1996) as well as on the Faroe Islands (Franzen 1967). The focus of these studies, however, have neither been on the Swahili coastal landscape nor from a maritime-heritage perspective. In this article, for the first time, we have presented names of boats on the coast of Bagamoyo and the linkages between them and the lives of fishers. Our paper offers insights on a part of the boat which carries a message in Kiswahili and, only occasionally, in Arabic and English.[8]

Notes

1. This trend changes on Fridays as there are few people who go out fishing; the majority stay at the beach and go to the mosque to attend prayers.
2. Interview with various fishers and boat captains on the coast of Bagamoyo and Mlingotini, August-December 2019; February-March 2020.
3. Interview with a fisheries officer in Bagamoyo, 23 October 2019.
4. Interview with Juma Bakari, fisherman and boat builder in Bagamoyo, April 2020.
5. Interview with a boat owner, Bagamoyo, August 28, 2019; Kaole, 13 September 2018; interview with a captain 19 December 2019.
6. Interview with a boat owner at the beach of Bagamoyo, 14 December 2019.
7. Interview with a group of fishers from Nyasa, 6 December 2019.
8. While boat names are more populous, we included in our discussion other messages (textual and non-textual) inscribed on the marine vessels.

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