

SOMALIA

Operational action for
the safeguarding
of the immovable cultural heritage
and its reintegration
into modern life

Museum development and monuments conservation

by H. Crespo-Toral

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MUSEUM DEVELOPMENT AND MONUMENTS CONSERVATION

by H. Crespo-Toral

Report prepared for the Government of
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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The mission described in the present report was carried out from 11 to 29 July 1987 at the request of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Somalia and was funded by Unesco under its Regular Programme for 1986-1987 for the following purpose :

- a) to advise the Somali authorities in the Ministry of Culture and Higher Education on the preservation and presentation of the country's cultural heritage in general and the architectural heritage in Hargeisa in particular;
- b) to advise the above-mentioned authorities on the training needs of the Somali National Museum and Antiquities Service in the field of museum development and monuments preservation;
- c) to examine with the above-mentioned authorities, the facilities at the National Museum and Antiquities Service, with regard to the museum collections, two museum exhibitions and recommend reorganization or improvement where necessary.

Consultations

2. In order to have sufficient grounds on which to judge performance of his mission, the consultant interviewed the following national authorities and international officials :

Mr. N. Gurham	: Chargé d'Affaires Somali Embassy, Paris
Dr. Abdisalam Sheikh Hussein	: Minister of Culture and Higher Education
Mr. Yusuf Abdi Ibrahim	: Vice Minister of Culture and Higher Education
Mr. Hassan A. Keynan	: Executive Director National Commission for Unesco
Dr. Gaslam	: Legal Adviser People's National Assembly
Mr. Ibrahim Awed Mohamed	: Somali National Academy of Sciences and Arts
Mr. Adel M. Khalifa	: Deputy Resident Representative United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Mogadishu

3. Mr. Ahmed Farah Warsame, Director of the National Museum at Mogadishu was the national counterpart.

Work system

4. Given the work to be performed within a three-week period, an extremely short time to cover all of the goals of his mission, the consultant decided to make his comments and remarks directly "in situ" (at the site), i.e. during the visits he made to the museums and monuments.

He also had daily interviews and conversations with the directors and personnel of the museums to acquaint himself with the problems and suggest, whenever possible, immediate solutions or long-term actions as the case required.

5. The consultant took advantage of his final interviews with the Minister and Vice-Minister of Culture and Higher Education, the Legal Adviser of the People's Assembly and UNDP officials, in order to recommend immediate measures and possible future actions for the preservation of the Somali cultural heritage.

Prior Unesco missions

6. The Somali Government requested Unesco's cooperation in the formulation of policies and in performing necessary actions to carry out a study on the identification, preservation and diffusion of the nation's cultural heritage. This cooperation was crystallized by previous missions, of which the reports are listed in Annex III.

General recommendations from prior missions

7. In general, the experts' recommendations may be summarized as follows:

- a) Legal protection of the Somali cultural heritage should be enforced through the promulgation of a Law defining the property which constitutes this heritage and the creation and strengthening of the organizations called upon to execute the necessary policies and actions;
- b) A National Antiquities Service should be created and a research plan for the study, rescue, preservation and diffusion of the cultural heritage prepared;
- c) Emergency actions should be undertaken to preserve the movable cultural property and architectural monuments which are in the process of deterioration;
- d) An adequate infrastructure should be established for the study, preservation, restoration and exhibition of the cultural property (museums, laboratories, workshops, etc.);
- e) Personnel training.

Current conditions

8. The Somali Government attaches high priority to the preservation of its cultural heritage, as stated by the President of the Republic in his speech before the National Assembly on 5 January 1987* consecrating the third major objective of the five-year plan to "the preservation of our historical and cultural heritage". In accordance with this spirit, the Government has for some time been taking action both through specialized organizations and in cooperation with international institutions and experts for this purpose.

* Speech delivered by the President of the Somali Democratic Republic, Mr. Jaalle Mohamed Siad Barre before the National Assembly on the occasion of his oath-taking ceremony on 5 January 1987 in Mogadishu.

9. Nevertheless, due to the accelerated process of change brought about by the interaction produced by contemporary civilization, which at the same time brings deterioration or loss of ancestral values and disdain for material testimonies of the past, the actions carried out to date are insufficient.

10. However, it should be noted that two fundamental actions have been achieved, namely:

- (i) the study of the Antiquities Law, which is already in its final stages prior to official approval, and
- (ii) the founding and installation of the National Museum.

II. MAIN FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

11. The work performed by the consultant was concerned mainly with the following areas :

- a) Familiarization and inspection of the conditions of the National Museum and the Garesa Museum in Mogadishu, and the Provincial Museum of Hargeisa;
- b) Visits to the monuments and historical quarters of Mogadishu Berbera, Brava and Merka;
- c) Familiarization with the scientific and technical levels of personnel carrying out the study, preservation and presentation of the cultural heritage; and
- d) Informing the national authorities of the need to take urgent measures to preserve, for social purposes, the Somali cultural heritage.

A. The National Museum, Mogadishu

12. The consultant started his work at the National Museum after having made an exhaustive analysis of the historic, technical and administrative background.

13. The founding of the National Museum responded to the need to present to the Somali people an historical-cultural panorama of the nation's development from its most ancient human presence until the present time. For this, the Government appointed a national committee and ten sub-committees which worked in the National Academy of Sciences and Arts. These committees are responsible for the Museum's "doctrine" from the archaeological, ethnographic and historic points of view.

14. The new Mogadishu cultural centre was constructed to house the National Theatre, National Library and the National Museum. The building was especially designed to house the collections which had been previously selected by experts in the different fields, as well as to perform other specific museum duties. The architecture displays Islamic influences and consists of a main building with four exhibition floors, adjoining a rectangular four storied building where the technical and administrative offices are located (Figure 1). The buildings were opened in 1985. An area for parking, gardens and space where supplementary services for the Museum could be built, surrounds the buildings.

15. The exhibition rooms form the shape of an oval ring, with a concentric corridor or hall outside, joined to the other rooms by four doors situated on the ends of the axis. The room on the ground floor is elliptical in shape and houses a garden with a small paved area which also joins it to the other rooms by the lower axis. The exhibition rooms were opened in May 1987 (Figure 2).

16. The contents of the exhibition rooms consist of :

- Ground floor : Archaeological and Ethnographical Exhibitions;
- First floor : Historical Exhibition: Colonial Resistance and Post-Independence;
- Second floor : Historical Arms and modern Army Exhibitions; Language and Literature;
- Third floor : Temporary Exhibits.

Museography

17. The national committee mentioned above worked on the National Museum during the setting up of the exhibitions. The archaeological area was conceived and set up with international cooperation, according to available credits. The following were contributors to the exhibit, "Archaeology of Somalia":

- M.S. Brandt
- S.A. Brandt
- British Institute in Eastern Africa
- N. Calder
- B. Cohen
- H. Costa-Sanseverino
- A.D. Jaamal and the Somali Academy of Sciences
- H. Bombard
- National Museum of Kenya
- M. Robyn, Robyn Color Lab., San Francisco, California
- Swedish Agency for Research Cooperation with developing countries
- D. Weiss-Gresham

The Ethnography exhibit rooms were set up by the Yugoslav expert, Stefanija Cobelj, assisted by National Museum personnel.

Circulation

18. Due to the shape of the exhibition rooms the visitor is obliged to follow a pre-established path.

19. The exhibition develops in a continuous manner. Changes of subject or period are marked only by signs or panels, without a break in continuity.

Lighting

20. The lighting is a mixture of natural lighting, through high windows which capture the light from a central well, and artificial lighting from fluorescent tubes located in the beams of the ceiling structure. Generally speaking, the lighting is insufficient, although it favours the preservation of objects.

Climate

21. In addition to the normal ventilation through the Museum doors, left permanently open, ventilation is by means of a continuous aperture located on top of the walls leading to an outdoor corridor and the slabs between floors. This opening for ventilation includes prefabricated materials which have been embedded, and a wire mesh for keeping out insects. It is not effective enough to stop the penetration of dust. The outer corridor contributes to cooling the area and humidity is atmospheric.

Exhibits

22. Panels are used as mountings for texts and illustrations. The objects are mostly displayed in glass showcases. Others are hung on nails on the walls, which causes deterioration.

23. There are four types of showcases. These are made of wood and glass and are locked with padlocks. The design is heavy and their structure prevents real appreciation of the objects. The locks are not aesthetic (Figure 3).

24. The cases are vertical with rigid divisions. The provision of stands would improve the layout and composition of objects, thus displaying their value to full advantage.

Texts and illustrations

25. The explanatory texts are too long and, as in the case of the archaeological exhibits, are designed for a well-informed public.

26. In some cases the printing used is too small, and in others too large.

27. Illustrations, in general, are too small.

Temporary exhibits

28. On the third floor, designed for temporary exhibits, graphic materials such as texts, ancient engravings and historical and modern photographs are stored. These include photographs from the travelling exhibition "Somalia in Word and Image", organized by the William Hammond Mathers Museum, Indiana University, United States of America (12 November 1983 - 15 May 1984). The exhibition provides an historic and cultural view of Somalia and the graphic materials (photographic panels) were donated to the National Museum.

Administration building

29. The administration building is located in the extreme north-east end of the large axis. It houses the following offices :

- Ground floor: Storage; Treasury office.
- First floor : Director's office; Planning Relations Department.
- Second floor: Exhibition Department; Ethnographical Department; Documentation office.
- Third floor : Administration Department; History Department.

Lack of space

30. The administration offices and the technical departments are located in large and well-appointed quarters. However, there are deficiencies such as :

- a) Storage space is limited, which means there is no possibility of enlarging the museum's collections.
- b) There are no areas appropriate for the installation of research, preservation and photographic laboratories.
- c) There are no areas for complementary education and diffusion programmes which should be carried out in addition to those carried out in the exhibition rooms, namely a conference room, workshops and a classroom for the Education Department.
- d) The Museum reception area is too small for large groups and lacks space to include a small shop for teaching materials and souvenirs.
- e) There are no facilities for the handicapped.

Analysis of the Museum's functions

31. In several conversations with the Director and Museum staff from each department, the functions performed by the National Museum, its achievements, problems and deficiencies were discussed and the following conclusions arrived at :

- a) Filing and inventory: After analysis, the filing system and models adopted were found to be inadequate. The consultant suggested pertinent changes both in the system as well as the format and content of the files. He provided models based on his own experience, as well as a study published by the International Council of Museums (ICOM) entitled "Documentation System for Museums", Porta, Eduard et al. Department of Culture, Generalitat of Catalunya, Barcelona, 1982.
- b) Preservation of cultural pieces: The periodic examination and cleaning of exhibits by the Exhibition Department is adequate. The consultant recommended the purchase of several thermo-hygrographs in order to ascertain the exact environmental conditions of the exhibition rooms. He also suggested that the Museum establish contacts with specialized institutions, such as the Meteorological Service in order to analyse the characteristics of the Mogadishu climate, maximum and minimum temperatures and relative humidity, and to take proper measures for the preservation of objects. In addition, he recommended links with the Biology Department of the University in order to determine organic agents, insects, fungus, etc. which cause deterioration.

- c) Teaching function: This should be the fundamental diffusion characteristic of a museum, but, in the case of the National Museum, it is restricted at present to receiving voluntary visitors only. The consultant considers that educational work, planned by the Education Department, should be started as a matter of urgency. The Education Department should be responsible for organizing programmes for different social groups, utilizing the existing infrastructure, so that the Museum can be transformed into an efficient vehicle for the promotion of the nation's cultural identity. Until the Education Department is fully operational, the consultant considers that the present Museum guides should deepen their knowledge through training, both from the scientific and teaching points of view.
- d) Planning and carrying out exhibits:
 - i) Given the existence of magnificent graphic material from the exhibition "Somalia in Word and Image", the consultant suggested the possibility of enhancing or transforming the current ethnographic exhibit at the National Museum by using those texts, engravings and photographs. This would alleviate the defects indicated in paras. 25-27 above and the exhibit would be more attractive and pleasant.
 - ii) Using existing panels, more intimate areas should be created thus modifying the space and continuity of the rooms. This system would enable the visitor to make a personal discovery of the history and culture of Somalia. Proper indications would also lead the visitor along a local path, without his having doubts or wasting time.
 - iii) Pieces should be arranged hierarchically, according to their cultural and aesthetic value. Stands could be used for this purpose, as well as lighting effects to make the pieces stand out.
 - iv) The use of video cassettes was suggested as a teaching tool for reinforcing the Museum's message. Short documentaries on everyday life, religion, holidays, architecture, etc. of the Somali people, strategically located in the ethnographic exhibit rooms, would enable cultural data to be presented with the real protagonist, man, lending the object its actual dimension in the cultural context.
- e) Within the Museum's History Department, archives and a library have been set up. The consultant pointed out the need for detailed classification of documents, as well as their preservation, and for a specialization of library funds for subjects focused on by the Museum.
- f) Technical and administration functions: The subject of personnel training in order to perform research, scientific and technical duties on a multi-disciplinary level, characteristic of the National Museum, was brought up several times. Although the Department Directors are graduates of the National University of Somalia (see Annex I), none of them has received specialized

training. The Museum has supported the candidacies of four of the Assistant Directors for government and international post-graduate scholarships, who are awaiting favourable replies. The Museum has four functions which urgently require specialized personnel, namely: Research, Preservation, Museology and Education. This matter should be attended to as soon as possible, otherwise the Museum will not be able to perform its social mission.

Recommendations

32. The National Museum constitutes a fundamental contribution to Somali culture. It is the ideal place, through intense diffusion work, for sponsoring national identity and knowledge of the past, and for strengthening ancestral values which are threatened with disappearance due to the growing acculturation process.

33. Since the Museum only opened its doors to the public in May 1987, it is appropriate to start community action founded on a solid cultural and scientific base. In order for the National Museum to efficiently perform its functions, the consultant recommends the following :

(a) Consolidation of infrastructure through immediate and mid-term actions

Immediate actions:

- i) Enlarging the reception area so that the Museum may offer proper space to groups (students/tourists) and for the setting up of a small shop to sell teaching materials and souvenirs.
- ii) Implementing a conference room, which is indispensable for the diffusion of cultural and teaching programmes. Until such a room is built, the Museum could use the existing infrastructure in the National Theatre, located close to the site.
- iii) Installing research, preservation and photographic laboratories which will not only serve the Museum but also activities developed on a national scale.
- iv) Enlarging and equipping the storage area.
- v) Implementing the Education Department with necessary classrooms and workshops.

Mid-term actions:

- vi) Adapting rest areas which could be located in the garden and in each exhibition room to combat "museum fatigue", especially of children and senior citizen groups.
- vii) Building parking facilities for staff vehicles and deliveries, and also for student/tourist groups.
- viii) Creating gardens for urbanistic, acoustic and environmental reasons.

ix) Building a cafeteria for internal service and visitors.

(b) Strengthening of diffusion work

- i) Creation of the Education Department as indicated above, to handle the preparation and execution of special programmes designed for students, military personnel, workers, artisans, salesmen, businessmen, housewives, etc.
- ii) Establishing a permanent link with the mass media: radio, television, press, in order to broadcast the Museum's message and attract the public to visit the exhibits.
- iii) Publication of a Museum guide and documentation. Provision of postcards, posters, slides, handicrafts and souvenirs.
- iv) Periodic exhibit of a 'Piece of the Month'.
- v) Periodic lectures on subjects on exhibit. The conference room could be used for projecting audio-visual material.
- vi) Extending the Museum's visiting hours (at present until 1:30 or 2:00 p.m.) to 5:00 or 6:00 p.m. at least twice a week in order to cater for groups of government employees, workers or students. The new hours should come into effect after an appropriate publicity campaign, with special invitations being issued to the above-mentioned groups.

(c) Implementation of a Preservation Laboratory

It is imperative that a Preservation Laboratory, responsible not only for the maintenance and care of pieces in the National Museum but also for activities on a national scale, be set up and implemented at an early date. The Laboratory would also be responsible for safeguarding the environmental conditions of the exhibit rooms, preventing and fighting destructive agents, etc.

(d) Personnel training

Personnel training should be carried out in the following fields :

- i) Research in the archaeology, ethnology and history of Somalia. Scholarship recipients should be sent to the United Kingdom, France, Italy, the Federal Republic of Germany and the United States of America and arrangements made for local personnel to participate in foreign scientific missions carrying out research in Somalia;
- ii) Preservation of movable cultural property, especially ethnographic pieces made of leather, wood, vegetable fibres, metals and ceramics, etc. Special courses are available at the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM) in Rome, Italy.

B. Garesa Museum

History

34. The history and avatars of the old Garesa Museum (Museo della Garesa), which became the National Museum after Independence, are described in various reports by Unesco experts dating from 1966 (cf. Reynolds, 1966; Ahmed, 1978; Cole-King, 1979; Ponsnansky, 1979; Trone, 1979; and Lengyel, 1982) (see Annex III). The recommendations in each report were intended to save both the valuable complex of cultural objects housed in the Museum, as well as the building itself, which is considered a national monument.

35. The building dates back to 1872 and was built at the request of the Sultan of Zanzibar as a residence for the Governor of Mogadishu, Suleiman bin Hamed. As from 1893 Italian occupation took place. Around 1933, reconstruction and adaptation of the Somalia Museum (Museo della Somalia) commenced, and was opened to the public in 1934. After Independence, it became the National Museum. Presently, when construction of the new building and modern installations for the National Museum are completed, it is intended to convert the old building into the Regional Museum (Figure 4).

36. The collections in the Garesa Museum comprise exhibits in the fields of natural science, archaeology, ethnography, numismatics, documents and bibliographies. In addition to the value and merits of the surviving objects, it should be pointed out that many of them were collected more than half a century ago.

Current state of the Museum

37. Due to a series of events, many of the Garesa Museum collections have been lost or have suffered deterioration.

38. Most of the pieces still preserved in the Museum area - documents, arms, coins, ethnographic items, including funeral steles found embedded in the walls of the building - are suffering considerably from the deterioration process.

39. The main cause of this problem is the location of the building. Its proximity to the sea causes much humidity and proliferation of fungi, rust and corrosion of metals. This is evidenced by the condensation (steam) on the glass displaycases where jewellery, coins, arms and documents are exhibited.

40. In order to keep the interior walls presentable, they were painted. However, this was done in such a way that it actually caused damage to the cultural pieces, as in the case of the steles mounted in the walls and the ancient maps and display cases which have been spattered with paint.

41. The building itself has not been properly maintained. The roof not only leaks, but its wooden structure has been attacked by termites. Action taken on the recommendation of experts has only partly solved the problem.

42. According to reports furnished by those responsible, and the consultant's personal observations, the Museum does not currently receive sufficient government attention, both from the point of view of economic needs and incentives, which should be given to the Museum personnel in order to transform it into a dynamic agent for the diffusion of cultural programmes.

Recommendations

43. Given the state of the pieces, it is recommended to urgently transfer the collections to an appropriate site, necessarily the National Museum, which in turn should have adequate facilities (see para. 32 (a)(iv)). The objects should only be moved after prior detailed examination and disinfection to guarantee their preservation and to prevent fungus, moulds, etc. (see para. 32 (c)).
44. It is also recommended to proceed with immediate and complete restoration of the Garesa Museum building. The restoration should not only include prompt action for the monument itself, such as repairs to the roof, killing of termites, etc., but should also embrace certain structural problems and plans for new use. The assignment of new use should be preceded by a thorough study of the country's needs in the museum field. The restoration project should be undertaken by specialists.
45. One good example of what museum exhibitions should not be is the proposed Regional Museum of Garesa. Before a decision is taken to turn the former Garesa Museum into a Regional Museum, it will be necessary to prepare replicas of the original cultural objects for use in the exhibits. The use of these models would eliminate accelerated deterioration which is due to the humid climatic conditions in the building. It would be worthwhile to have an exhibition with reusable materials such as photographic reproductions, scale models, etc. This could lead to the establishment of a Museum of the City of Mogadishu, since the building itself is part of the city's history and contains relevant testimonies of its development (i.e. steles embedded in the walls, architectural elements, furniture, etc.).
46. Both now and during the architectural restoration of the building, the elements embedded in the walls should be preserved, cleaned and protected by plastic covers.

C. Hargeisa Museum

History

47. Around the mid-70s, in Hargeisa, the most important city in the north-eastern region of Somalia, a cultural movement arose. One of its most important achievements was the building of a cultural centre, consisting of a theatre, a library and a provincial museum. The museum opened in 1977 with an exhibition of a rich ethnographic collection obtained for the most part from donations from the people of Hargeisa themselves.^{1/}
48. The Museum building itself is the product of local technology and consists of two concentric rings with a meeting area and temporary exhibit rooms at the end. This circular plan is inspired by the "mundul", a circular hut with cone-shaped straw roof, the typical dwelling of

^{1/} Further details on the history and development of activities at Hargeisa Museum are given in the reports by Cole-King, 1979; Posnansky, 1979; Trone, 1979 (see reference in Annex III).

traditional Somali farmers. The outer ring houses the exhibit rooms and at the bottom is a garden which creates a pleasant, refreshing atmosphere (Figure 5). The building's structure is made of concrete while the floors are cement, and ventilation as well as lighting are through a narrow, continuous upper window.

49. The first exhibit used local resources without expert technical assistance, and the entire collection was displayed in large, heavy showcases. Although the creation of a museum on the community's initiative is praiseworthy, it is important that its life be properly guaranteed so that the Museum can perform its social functions and ensure that the pieces in its custody are preserved in good conditions.

50. Around 1981, Sefanija Cobelj, a Yugoslav art historian specializing in ethnography, cooperated with the Ministry of Culture and Higher Education in refurbishing the Hargeisa Museum. The expert endeavoured to organize the exhibit based on a theme and on the chronology of pieces in the collections, selecting items in order to avoid unnecessary duplication. She also aimed to improve the museographic conditions of exhibits and emergency action to halt deterioration of the pieces.

Current state of the Museum

51. Once the initial enthusiasm over the founding and reconditioning of the Museum had subsided, it appeared that the methods used in the development of the Hargeisa Museum were in fact precarious, resulting in failure to efficiently perform its social function. The collections are suffering from accelerated deterioration and the Museum lacks the necessary economic facilities and technical assistance.

52. At present, despite remodelling, the actual conception of the exhibition is deficient and the Museum fails to deliver a coherent message. The exhibition, in contrast to the view given by Posnansky (cf. Posnansky, 1979, p. 16) only constitutes an ethnographic sample of the nomadic peoples of Somalia, being more or less classified according to the use of objects, without situating them in a cultural context. No information is given on the objects, nor are there supporting illustrations regarding their use. The historical exhibit has been eliminated and it was this exhibit that joined the people to their roots.

53. The museographic conditions of the Museum are extremely bad. Objects are exposed to continuous deterioration since periodic disinfection, which would prevent the attack of insects on organic materials, is not performed.

54. Given the ventilation system - through a sliding window above the walls - dust penetrates the showcases and affects the objects. The showcases are not hermetically sealed to prevent dust penetration and some have broken panes.

55. Lighting in the Museum - through a sliding window as described above - is insufficient and should be complemented with artificial lighting. However, the Museum has been without electricity for several months.

56. The exhibit showcases are inadequate, due to their design as well as size and weight. Panels included by the Yugoslav expert, to which many objects were attached directly by nailing, do not provide protection for the pieces (Figure 6).

57. Substances used for the preservation of leather and metal objects, besides being inadequate, have weakened their texture. Many objects in storage are in a very bad condition. Pieces made of organic materials such as mats, wooden containers and bells worn by animals, etc. are moth-eaten. (Due to this dramatic situation, immediate disinfection of such objects was suggested, and their transfer to another area to avoid contamination.)

Recommendations

58. The Hargeisa Museum needs to be completely renovated and refurbished.

59. The exhibition requires a new museological conception. It should be created taking into consideration the possibility of showing the people of Hargeisa their cultural heritage and present personality. The Museum should also be used as a way of promoting a link with the cultures of other regions of Somalia. Therefore, the creation of an introductory room would be justified, where the visitor could consult a socio-political and cultural map as well as documentation on the characteristics of the different peoples who make up the Somali nationality.

60. From the museographic point of view, it would be advantageous to :

- a) Guarantee preservation of the cultural pieces, both those on display as well as those in storage, through the participation of experts;
- b) Complete the inventory of Museum pieces - started some time ago - to enable the Museum to assess the extent of its heritage;
- c) Replan the exhibition through the participation of an interdisciplinary team and carry it out according to technical criteria;
- d) Provide an electric generator to enable proper lighting to be installed;
- e) Train personnel on proper museum duties, especially in preservation and museology.

D. Preservation of monuments

61. Monuments are the authentic witnesses of a people's cultural memory. This is especially true for architectural heritage, through which history is visualized. A city is a collective, anonymous work and is the crucible in which the personality of a people is forged; it synthesizes the evolution of a people's cultural heritage. Seeing and reading about monuments informs man of the spirit of a nation, its past, present and perhaps even its destiny. Violent changes in the world today, the rapid

progress in communications and the aspiration to a development model endeavouring to become universal, have brought as a consequence, especially for "Third World" peoples, accelerated destruction of their architectural heritage and subsequent loss of their cultural identity.

62. In the case of Somalia, it is certain that destruction of its architectural monuments has worsened in the last few years. The sedentarization process, the increased growth of migration to the cities, the "progressive" zeal for urban renewal and the construction of an infrastructure, have brought with them the sudden loss of the historic physiognomy. This destruction of monuments is prevalent not only in the cities, but also in small towns. Even isolated monuments, previously preserved because of their religious nature or inaccessibility, have become dilapidated or are falling into ruin. Preservation measures are therefore imperative.

63. Although, due to the short period of his mission, the consultant was unable to fully acquaint himself with the problems of urban architectural monuments, he was, through repeated observation of the situation in the historic centre of the capital and short visits to Berbera, Brava and Merka, able to grasp the severity of deterioration as a whole.

64. Unfortunately, the consultant was not able to visit any archaeological monuments except for the ruins at Gogeysa, near the city of Gabiley, Galbeed Province. From conversations with local experts, he learned of the abandonment of monuments in certain areas and the depredation they are subject to. (A detailed description of the monuments and their condition is given in Mr. N. Ahmed's report, 1978, referred to in Annex III.)

Historical centre, Mogadishu

65. Despite the growing process of urban transformation characterized by the construction of modern buildings, the historical centre of Mogadishu still contains important monuments which are worthy of preservation. The definition of a monument is applied in this context not only to isolated buildings which have been consecrated by tradition and history as cultural items, such as palaces, mosques, etc., but also to an entire urban complex with historic or environmental value.

66. This is the case of the old quarters of Shingani and Hamarwyne, which form the nucleus of the ancient city. Despite recent alterations, they still maintain their traditional physiognomy and form an important part of the "cultural memory" of Mogadishu. These quarters are located near the beach and within the vicinity of the old port. The houses have been built on a promontory which dominates the sea. The narrow streets are adapted to the topography producing a labyrinth-like urban space which from time to time gives a view of the sea (Figure 7). The buildings have been constructed with local materials, i.e. coralliferous rock. The urban facade is a testimony of past historical events. Despite depredation, it is still possible to find rich examples of finely carved wood decorating doors and windows (Figure 8).

67. In Shingani and Hamarweyne, traditional monuments such as palaces (Figure 4), mosques and minarets, notably the Fakr-ad-din Mosque, the Jamia Mosque and minara, the Arba-Rukn Mosque (Figure 9) and the Catholic

Cathedral or the Arch, erected in honour of Umberto di Savoia (Figure 10) are landmarks in Somali culture. Unfortunately, the urban plan and facade have been broken or adulterated in some central areas of the city for economic reasons as in the case of the Uruba Hotel (Figure 4), the Somali Development Bank, the American Embassy, etc., and there is no law to prevent this. In other cases, valuable religious testimonies have been destroyed for renovation, such as the ancient Shingani Mosque (Figure 11), recently rebuilt on the ancient ruins (cf. report by Lutfi A. Khalil, Paris, 1986) and the Fakhr-ad-din Mosque, mutilated, according to tradition, during the Italian occupation for the construction of a railroad.

69. Other valuable monuments are located in the outskirts of the historical centre of the capital, such as the Tower and Mosque of Abdul Aziz, an historic landmark, which has been the subject of improper and inadequate restoration (Figure 12). (A detailed study should be made of this monument and the complex taken out of what initially must have included the sea as background scenery. Some of the architectural elements have deteriorated and require immediate consolidation. Vegetation, destroying the tombs adjacent to the tower, should be removed.)

70. A monument of extraordinary beauty is the "Sea Pool", a large cubic tank carved in the coralliferous rock, characteristic of the marine border corresponding to the Hamarweyne quarter. This "pool" has the unique quality of one wall facing the ocean with a high opening through which the water enters, softening the force of the waves. According to Mr. Ahmed's description (cf. Report, 1978), there exists a series of complementary constructions to the "Sea Pool" carved in living rock, which might be of the same period as the Jamia Mosque and possibly could have been associated to it.

71. Marine erosion is causing serious damage to this monument. But it is, perhaps, suffering worse depredation from man, since this entire area has been converted into a huge refuse dump.

Urgent measures to be taken in the historical centre of Mogadishu

72. Until the Antiquities Law comes into effect, immediate measures should be taken to preserve the Mogadishu monuments, namely :

- a) An emergency ordinance should be issued by the competent institution of the Mogadishu Historical Centre setting strict limits on the areas to be respected with regard to demolition and new construction. Incentives should be given to owners of ancient buildings for maintenance and preservation.
- b) An education campaign should be launched to incite the population, and notably the residents, to preserve and clean the monuments in their respective quarters (Figure 13).
- c) The Ministry of Culture and Higher Education, through the competent institution, should arrange for an explanatory plaque to be placed in front of each monument in the historical centre informing visitors of the characteristics of the building, together with an architectural plan and pertinent illustrations. Texts should be written in Somali, English, Arabic and Italian.

- d) The Ministry of Culture and Higher Education should launch a campaign, aimed at school children and young people, to enable them to become acquainted with their urban heritage and its preservation.

Berbera and Brava

73. The town of Berbera is situated on a large cove in the Gulf of Aden. Tradition attributes the founding of Berbera to the Ptolemies of Egypt. It is known that the city was conquered by the Arabs in the XIIth century, when it came under the rule of the Mohammeden Sultanate of Adal. There are no consistent remnants of such remote times. However, in the central part of the city interesting fragments of its ancient physionomy remain, such as houses with wooden windows decorated with fine artisan work - examples of the vernacular religious architecture of the period. Above all, the traditional urban environment should be preserved (Figure 14). Examples of the architecture of the British occupation should also be studied and preserved.

74. The small port of Brava lies south of Mogadishu, located on a magnificent site - a kind of knoll - on the Indian Ocean (Figure 15). Brava is a testimony of one of the most ancient Islamic settlements. The town was destroyed, around 1506, by the Portuguese fleet allied with the Negus of Abyssinia, during the reign of the Somali leader, Ahmed Ibrahim Burey.

75. Brava is characterized by a labyrinth-like design, which remains almost intact with its ancient plan. The narrow streets lead into small squares or crossroads, sharpening the perspective towards urban landmarks such as mosques or stately homes (Figure 16). The ancient residences still bear testimony of their primitive beauty, notably the polyovular arches (Figures 17) and splendidly carved doors (Figure 18).

76. Unfortunately, this exceptional urban complex is suffering depredation due to lack of maintenance and the popular "modernization" zeal.

General recommendations for the preservation of monuments

77. The cases described above are only examples of the problems which the consultant was able to witness, and which exist in a large number of towns in Somalia (cf. Mr. N. Ahmed's report, 1987, Annex III). Until the Antiquities Law is promulgated, which should include the study, inventory, preservation and evaluation of architectural heritage, and the efficient operation of the institutions called on to carry out these duties comes into effect, the following actions are recommended :

- a) Provisional marking of the historic-environmental zones of cities and towns should be carried out, together with mapping, and photographic inventories drawn up. Exceptional elements should be the object of exhaustive documentation.
- b) Instructions on the safeguarding of the architectural heritage should be given to local authorities and periodic controls carried out.
- c) A national campaign should be launched through the mass media on the need to preserve the country's heritage as the basis of national identity and inestimable economic research for future cultural tourism.

Conclusions

78. In order to preserve the nation's cultural heritage, the Government of Somalia initiated the building and installation of the new National Museum and the study of the Antiquities Law.

79. The Government of Somalia is anxious to continue and intensify the preservation of the nation's historical and cultural heritage, which constitutes the third major objective of the national five-year plan.

80. From the study and analysis undertaken in this report, it is recognized and evident that urgent measures should be taken to prevent depredation and loss of Somalia's cultural heritage.

81. The issuing of the Antiquities Law should, according to Dr. Gaslam, Legal Adviser of the People's National Assembly, be approved and promulgated by the corresponding Government institutions by December 1987. The law will be a positive step towards the preservation of the nation's cultural heritage. In order to determine the exact responsibilities of the institutions in charge of the said Law in the fields of research, rescue, preservation and diffusion of the nation's heritage, corresponding regulations should be issued immediately after promulgation of the Law.

82. At the same time as the Law is issued, the Government should provide the necessary funds to the pertinent institutions in order that they may meet their obligations.

III. FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

83. The following recommendations are made :

- a) Given the high priority which the Government of Somalia attaches to the preservation of the nation's historical and cultural heritage, a long-term plan for say, initially, five years, should be urgently drawn up to :
 - i) Train personnel in the proper handling of duties in respect of the preservation of the historical and cultural heritage of Somalia;
 - ii) Issue a plan for intensive archaeological research;
 - iii) Issue a plan for intensive ethnological research;
 - iv) Rescue cultural features characteristic of secular cultures, especially in areas of oral tradition, i.e. literature, music, etc.;
 - v) Draw up an inventory of property which constitutes the cultural heritage: archaeological sites, historical buildings, urban centres and isolated architectural monuments, etc.;
 - vi) Draw up an inventory of movable cultural property which constitutes the cultural heritage;

- vii) Develop emergency action for the preservation of cultural property constituting the heritage: consolidation of buildings, restoration, etc.;
 - viii) Develop emergency action for preservation of movable cultural property constituting the cultural heritage: setting-up laboratories for preservation, participation in improving conditions in museums, etc.;
 - ix) Implement a plan for diffusion and evaluation of the historical and cultural heritage through the establishment of new museums and use of the mass media;
- b) Given the high priority which the Government of Somalia attaches to the preservation of the nation's historical and cultural heritage, it is recommended that an international agency specializing in cultural heritage participate in the preparation and execution of the long-term plan, and that financial aid be sought from international financing institutions.

ANNEX I

The National Museum of Mogadishu Staff

Mr. Ahmed FARAH WARSAME
Director-General

Mr. Ahmed M. NUR
Assistant Director in Planning
and Relations

Mr. Mohamed H. DINLE
Assistant Director in
Administration

Mr. Abdi M. SULLEMAN
Assistant Director in
History

Mr. Forkan M. MURSAL
Assistant Director in
Exhibition

Ms. Amina Sh. ABDI
Assistant Director in
Ethnology

B.A. Degree in History
National University of
Somalia

B.Sc. Degree in Mathematics
National University of
Somalia

B.A. Degree in History
National University of
Somalia

B.A. Degree in History
National University of
Somalia

B.A. Degree in Geography
National University of
Somalia

ANNEX II

Other persons interviewed by the consultant

Mrs. Samsam ABDI ADEN
Director, Regional Ministry of
Culture and Higher Education,
Hargeisa

Mr. Yousef ABDULAHE ELMI
Director of the Museum,
Hargeisa

Mr. Ala MAGAN
Archaeologist, Somali National
Academy of Sciences and Arts,
Hargeisa

Mr. Ali AHMED HUSSEIN
Director a.i., Garesa Museum,
Mogadishu

ANNEX III

List of previous mission reports

REYNOLDS, Barry: "Museum Development".
Serial No. WS/0566, 24-CLT. Paris. April 1966.

AHMED, Nazimuddin: "A General Survey and Plan for the Preservation
of Cultural Heritage". Serial No. FMR/CC/CH/77/309(Rev). Paris, 1978.

COLE-KING, P.A.: "Museum Organization".
Serial No. FMR/CC/CH/79/130. Paris, 1979.

POSNANSKY, Merrick: "Museum and Antiquities Development".
Serial No. FMR/CC/CH/79/129. Paris, 1979.

TRONE, Alexandra: "Aspects of Conservation at the National Museum".
Serial No. FMR/CC/CH/79/128. Paris, 1979.

LENGYEL, Oguz Janos: "National Museum of Somalia, Mogadishu :
Roof Restoration Project". Serial No. FMR/CLT/CH/82/160. Paris, 1982.

KHALIL, Lufti A.: "Excavation of Shangani Mosque - Museum Development
and Antiquities Preservation". Serial No. FMR/CC/CH/86/135.
Paris, 1986.

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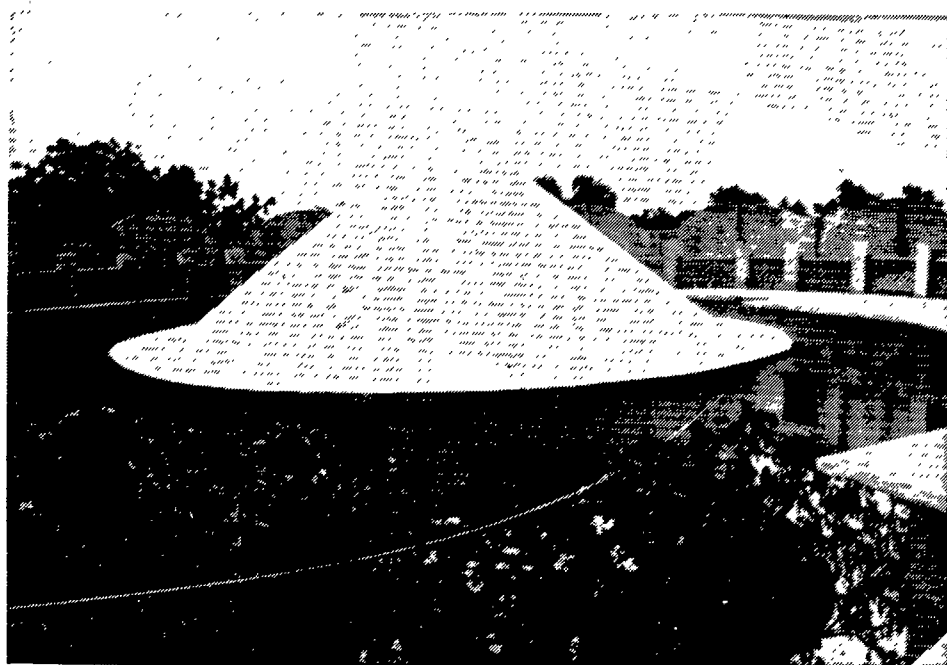
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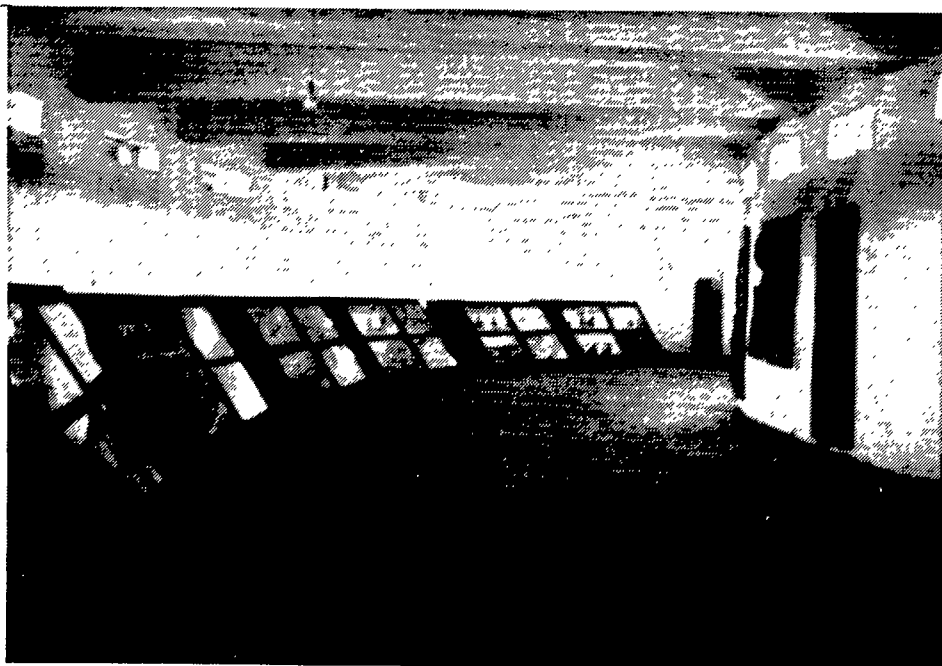




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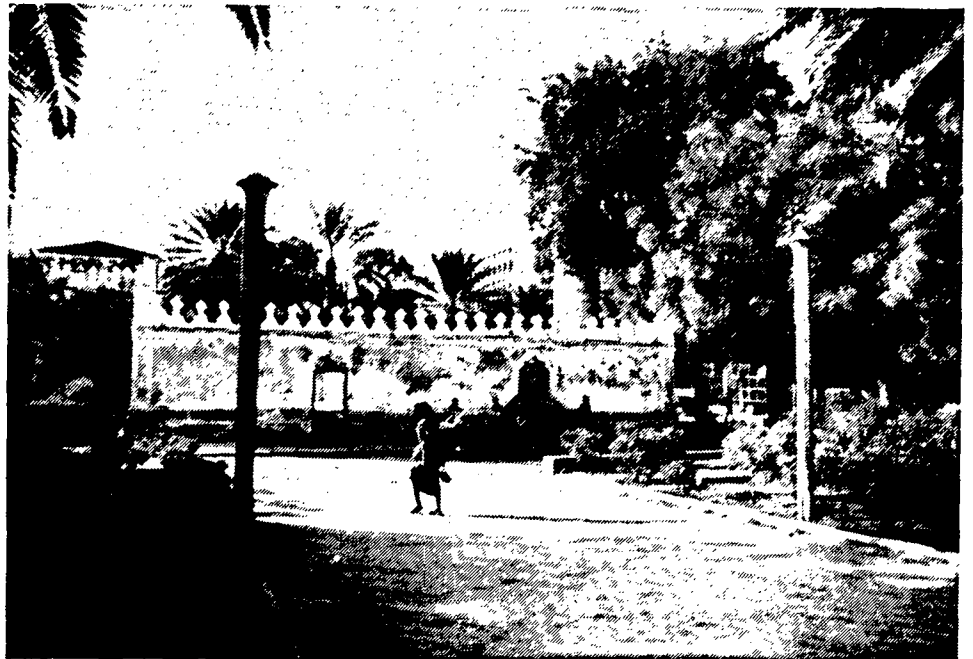


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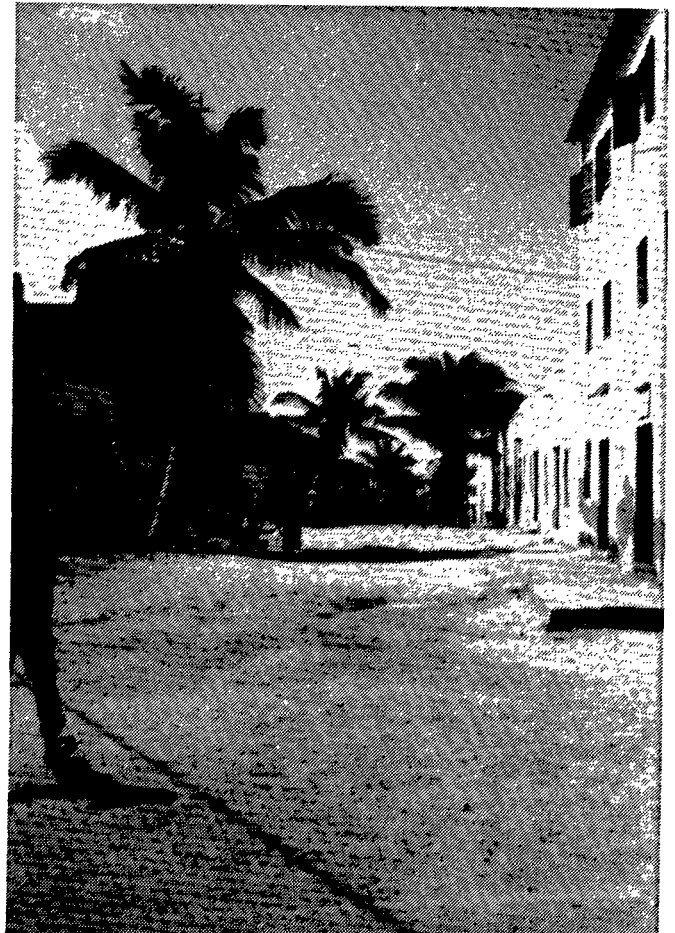


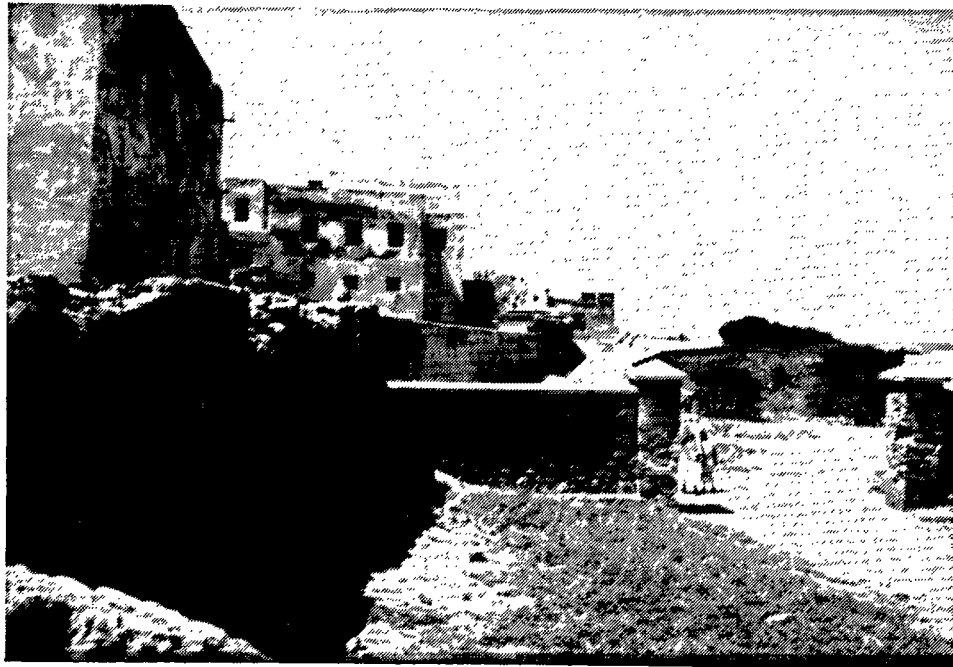
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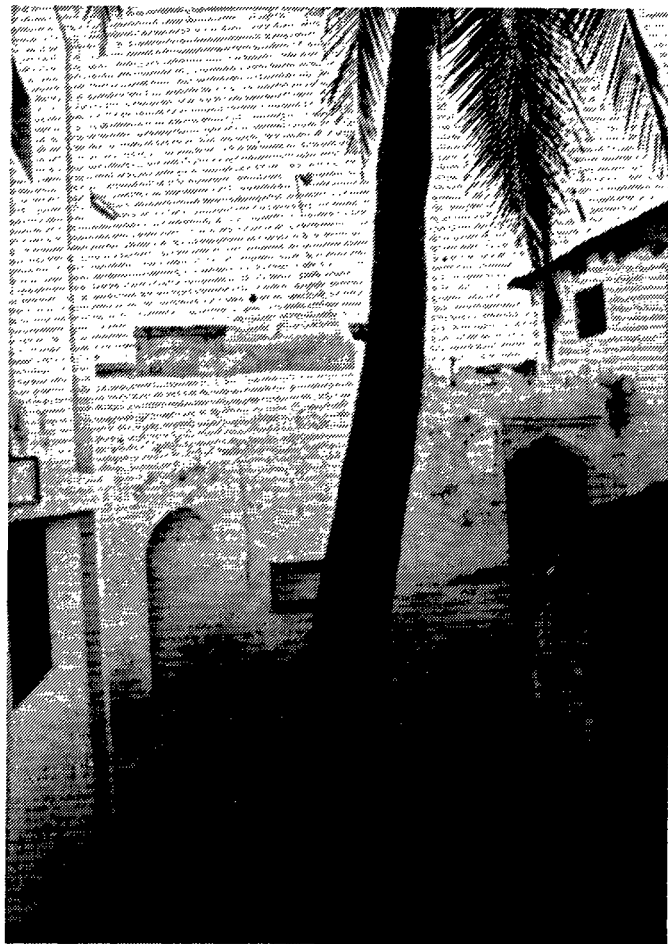
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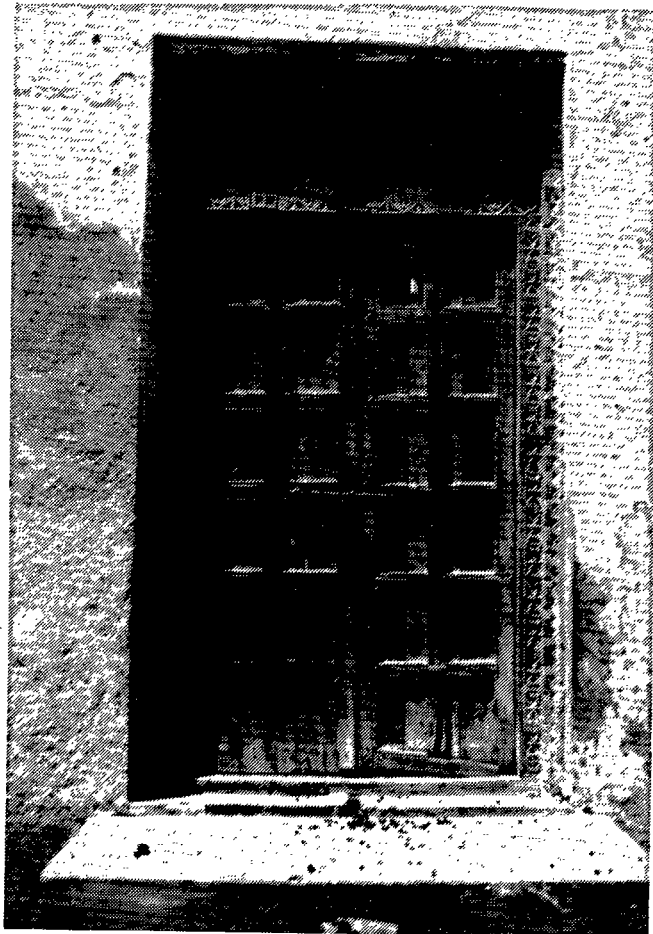
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