

Bajuni: people, society, geography, history, language

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1. Introduction

For at least five centuries, the Bajuni subsisted simply but fairly peacefully, fishing, trading, and farming in a string of settlements from Kismayuu in southern Somalia down to the northern tip of Pate Island in Kenya, a distance of some 250 km. They were few, their mainland neighbours (recently Somali, formerly Oromo) were many, they were fairly defenceless, their mainland neighbours were armed and aggressive. The balance between them and the neighbours was fragile but stable. The main settlements were on the islands, with agricultural areas on the mainland opposite. When times got bad, Bajuni living or working on the mainland withdrew to the islands. There is little suggestion that their pastoral neighbours showed much inclination to cross over to the islands, probably because they were not too interested in what was on offer – a lot of fish, limited edible flora, and few domestic animals.

In Somalia this all changed in 1991, with the fall of Siad Barre, the President of Somalia. In what follows, this period and the events from 1991 on are referred to as The Troubles. The historical balance broke, ethnic Somalis rolled across the mainland settlements and flooded onto the islands. Ethnic Somalis (Hawiye, Darod/Marehan) decided to evict Bajunis from the islands where they had lived for centuries. Refugees tell horrific anecdotes of ethnic cleansing, involving chaos, theft, violence, rape, and murder: of mothers and daughters beaten and raped: of fathers and sons being beaten, stabbed, shot, having their heads held under water till they drowned, being forcibly taken to Kismayu and never returning: of whole communities being moved to forced labour camps in Kismayu: of fishermen going on a fishing trip for several days and returning to find their village empty, devoid of people and families. In all likelihood, the Bajunis and their culture will be gone from Somali in the near future. At the time of writing, no one can be sure how many Bajuni remain in Somali but an informed guesstimate would be some dozens, maybe a couple of hundred.

Linguistically, we can distinguish three periods in the history of Bajuni spoken in Somalia. The first, early stage lasted for centuries up to about 1990, and in this long period most members of the community learned Bajuni from their parents and most spoke it well. In the second stage, which started with The Troubles in 1991, the ancestral language was no longer passed down from one generation to the next, and has been replaced in the few Bajunis left by a Bajuni coloured Swahili (Swahili with a Bajuni accent), where the Bajuni component varies from person to person, generation to generation, and place to place. This second stage will be short, to be soon replaced by silence, the third stage, when

Bajuni will no longer be spoken in Somalia (see section 8b, below).

On the Kenya side of the border the problem is different. Massive tourism, starting in Lamu but now spreading across all the islands, and commercial development, with a projected new port, oil refinery, and railhead at Lamu, are changing the face of the islands and adjacent mainland. Old ethnic and cultural differences will fade under this commercial and touristic wave as local people are absorbed into the new economy and lose their traditional identity.

There has also been orthographic cleansing. As Bajunis were illiterate, their place names and language were rendered by others, in the orthographic conventions of others. Italian conventions were used in southern Somalia and reproduced by non-Italians who came later: the Bajuni village Kiamboni just north of the border with Kenya was spelt as *Chiamboni/Chiambone*. More recently, Somali nationalism has Somaliised names, so *Kaambooni*, which has no meaning in Somali, and thjs policy is now followed by bodies such as the National Geographic and the British Admiralty. The early British Admiralty maps of the Bajuni area had Bajuni names, some in Italian spelling, some in English. The most recent edition has combined the two early maps, replacing all other spellings by Somali. In Kenya, Bajuni names have long been replaced by Swahili ones, often not correct, as they were often recorded by writers who had never been to the places concerned, or were not linguists.

In view of this, it seems an appropriate time to record what is known of the Bajunis, their language, and culture, before they and it are gone. This database assembles in one place material that hitherto is only available in quite disparate places and despite the electronic world is often not easy to locate. I have made considerable effort to render Bajuni names and words accurately. Generally, this means using Swahili orthography, where appropriate, modified where necessary by conventions set out in the language section and word list.

2. Comments on sources

Documentation on the Bajuni, their language, their culture, is poor.

General. The best single source on Bajuni culture is Grottanelli (1955). Although it represents a culture, language, and society now fast disappearing in Somalia, although it is hard to find, although it is written in Italian, it contains a vast amount of information, and reading it will reward and enlighten those who persevere. Prins (1967) too, although concerned with the whole coast, has a lot of detailed and direct material on the Bajuni area.

Archaeology: Chittick (1976) and especially Wilson (various), who himself worked in northern Kenya in the late 1970's and early 1980's but meticulously examined all previous work done in southern Somalia, with the eye of an archaeologist used to operating and interpreting in the area.

Language: mainly Nurse (various, especially 1982), based on work done in the late 1970s. Since that time he has worked on many refugee cases involving Somali Bajunis. Vocabulary comes also from Sacleux' epic (1939) dictionary, based on work done in the 1880s: Grottanelli, based on work done in the early 1950s in southern Somalia: and Nurse mainly on work done thirty years later in northern Kenya but also to a lesser extent on listening in the early 2000s to young refugees from Somalia, many of whom might well be labeled as semi-speakers. This geographical and temporal range of over a century means that some readers will find lexical material that strikes them as unfamiliar.

History, ethnography, culture. These sources can be roughly divided into two, early (Barton, Boteler, Brenner, Elliott, FitzGerald, Haywood, Owen, Strandes, and maybe Stigand, although his view is more comprehensive) and late (Allen, Cassanelli, Lewis). Early Europeans, first travelers, then colonial servants, sailed (Barton, Elliott, Haywood) along the coast, or walked across the interior (Brenner, FitzGerald), usually for a few days or weeks and wrote down what they saw or were told. Their material, often short, local, and anecdotal, is interesting. The later authors have a broader overview

and knowledge base.

Geography. Of the many maps that exist of the coast, most are incomplete in some way. They tend to focus on one country or the other, on places that have or had a population, and on places with archaeological significance, and to omit smaller villages, islets, or reefs. Often the names of these latter are unknown. The most detailed maps are those of FitzGerald and those listed under British Admiralty and Great Britain War Office. If these are combined with the reports of early travelers, a reasonably - though not completely - comprehensive picture emerges. It is difficult to get all the detail into one map of reasonable size. The map here is selective. It tries to show areas of current and recent Bajuni habitation, and places with significant ruins likely to be Bajuni. It uses Bajuni versions of names, where known. It ignores other geographical features and the many islets, reefs, and dots that join the larger islands – they can be found on the other maps (British Admiralty, British War Office, British War Office and Air Ministry, Grottanelli 1955, Wilson 1984: 74, 76).

Readers will note that sources on the www are largely absent. It is possible on the web to find reports by commission, committees, and bodies, often made up of individuals whose successes were political and administrative and achieved in theatres other than Somalia. Their reports often deal mainly with refugees, and contain a large element of special pleading. Some of their alleged facts and figures are at odds with those from individuals who have direct and lengthy experience in the area.

The sources at the end themselves contain further (local) sources not mentioned here.

3. Geography and economy

The Bajuni domain, at least since the 14/15th century, is associated with the string of coral islands that runs from Kismayuu, 16 kms south of the mouth of the Juba, down to Kiwayuu Island in northern Kenya, just north of Pate Island, a distance of some 150 miles = 250 kms. There is also a discontinuous string of mainland settlements opposite the islands, starting with Kismayu, and FitzGerald's (1898: 502) map shows Bajuni coastal settlements in the south ending at Dodori Creek, opposite Pate Island. Distances in kms: Kismayu to Koyama 40, Koyama to Ngumi 10, Ngumi to Chula 20, Chula to Buri Kavvo 25, Buri Kavvo to Kiamboni 60, Kiamboni to Dodori Creek 100.

Bajunis and other coastal Swahili refer to the islands as just “the islands”, other names being the Bajuni Islands, the 500 islands, and the Dundas group. In recent times the Bajuni area stretched onto northern Pate Island. The islands do not form a continuous line, there being a northern group from Kismayuu to Chand'aa Island, just north of Buri Kavvo, and a southern group from Kiungamwini in northern Kenya to Kiwayuu Island. The biggest settlements were on the islands, mostly facing inland, with agricultural areas, some quite fertile and large, on the adjacent mainland, especially along the four rivers (Bajuni *mucho*, pl. *micho*), some navigable, that run inland. The earliest reports suggest that in even earlier times these farming areas were run by slaves, controlled from the islands, but that was at a period when the Bajunis were more opulent and powerful. Today there are no settlements along the 35 miles stretch of mainland coast between Buri Kavvo and Ras Kiamboni and no islands facing that coast. There are however ruins of earlier and smaller settlements, often walled, to protect them against marauders, human and animal.

The islands are small, Grottanelli (1955) giving these estimates of size for the main islands: Koyama 7.5 sq.kms, Chovai 6.5, Chula 5, Ngumi 4.5. Prins (1967: 28) says:

“The islands are all low coral formations, withered by sea and breeze, only covered by low bush, scrub, and a few palms and trees. Only the two or three bigger islands (Simambaya, Kiungamwini, Kiwayuu) are somewhat hillier, and, especially the first, somewhat more wooded. The whole range, together with the outcrops in between, forms a barrier reef protecting the mainland coast and the straits”.

This makes it a relatively safe shipping lane for small local vessels, with larger cargo ships going outside the reef. Published accounts vary in their description of its width, at between 2 kms and 8 kms (5 miles). In recent times only Koyama, Chovai, and Chula were inhabited. When asked, Somali Bajunis will often mention seven islands, these three plus Kismayuu, Fuma, Ngumi, and Mdova. Kismayuu Island was separate from the town of the same name until the British built a connecting causeway starting in the 1960s. Examination of the oral traditions and the archaeological record suggests Ngumi was abandoned at the end of the 17th century. Mdova is a small island off the southern tip of Chula, the gap between them being easy to walk cross at low tide and fordable at high tide by leaping across rocks, so it might be considered a separate island or not. In northern Kenya, northern Pate Island is home to Bajuni communities, whose ancestors came from the north several centuries ago. Oral traditions, clan names, and archaeological ruins suggest earlier settlement on Chand'aa, Simambaya, and Kiwayuu Islands. Between most inhabited or once inhabited islands is a string of coral islets and outcrops, many with names given by fishermen.

The islands are not fertile, being solid coral. Although the diet centred on fish, it did depend to some extent on the availability of crops from the mainland. The 18th and 19th centuries were troubled times, when the farming areas and lines of communication with the islands were often interrupted by unfriendly Orma or, later, Somali, so this was a period of slow decline. Island populations were always small, a major limiting factor being the supply of fresh water from the wells. The wells supplied fresh water from underground caverns, in which fresh and salt water were in balance. When populations grew too large, too much fresh water was drawn off, disturbing the underground mixture, resulting in water undrinkable by humans and only fit for washing or cattle. Today or at various points during the 20th century the water in the wells at Koyama, Ngumi, Chovai, and Chula is/was described as brackish and fresh water has to be brought from adjacent wells or even other islands. In 1898 FitzGerald states that many of the mainland wells between Buri Kavoo and northern Kenya were brackish.

Various crops are recorded as being grown by Bajunis (Grottanelli (especially), Prins). Several kinds of millet (and sorghum), maize, several kinds of beans/peas, and sesame are mentioned in all sources as grown, and as contributing regularly to the diet. "Pumpkins", sweet potatoes, and tomatoes get less mention, as do cotton, tobacco, and a very few coconut trees (for example on Chula and Koyama). It is less clear from the sources where and when these are grown: islands or mainland, all islands or just some, today or in the past? Many wild plants are used for medicinal, cosmetic, magical, and industrial purposes (see Grottanelli).

Fishing was all important to Bajuni society. When asked what work Bajunis do, there is always the same simple answer: "They (= men) fish". They fish from the shore, inside the reef, and outside the reef in the open ocean. They use several different kinds of boats. They use hooks and lines, weirs, traps, plunge baskets, spears, and nets of different kinds. They catch dozens of types of fish, sharks, rays, shrimps, lobsters, and several varieties of turtle, the latter often by using sucker fish. Not only are fish important in the diet, they are/were also dried and exported to Kismayuu, Lamu, and Mombasa. Beside fish, a limited trade in mangrove timber, cowries, and sewn goods (mats, hats) exists. Reports into the twentieth century talk of cloth being made on Koyama and Chula. Boats were built, and the Bajuni icon, the *mtepe*, as still built on Chovai into the 20th century.

4. Settlements north to south

This section deals (mainly) with contemporary or recent settlements, while section 6 treats ruined, no longer inhabited, settlements.

Although the most northerly Bajuni settlement in recorded history is Kismayuu, there are other

Bantu and Swahili outposts in Somalia. 275 kms north of Kismayu is Brava, whose people speak Mwiini/Bravanese, a Swahili dialect. Inland are the people now curiously referred to as the Somali Bantu, along the Juba and further north. There may have been others earlier, because Mukdishu has two areas called *Shanga-ni* ('sand, beach') and *Mnara* ('monument'), rather clearly general Swahili in shape: between Muqdishu and Brava is Merca, whose original shape is *ma-rika* ('age-sets?'); and not far from Muqdishu is the island of *Makaya* (*-kaya* is a widespread Bantu root for 'homestead, settlement').

In some Bajuni islands, island and a/the village on the island have the same name, so Fuma refers either to the island or the village. Most have or had two or even three villages: so Chula in the late 19th century had Chula village and nearby Kitakundu: likewise Koyama has Gedeni (=Koyama), Ihenge, and Koyamani.

The only official census of Somali Bajunis was made by the Italian administration in 1926, and covered the main Bajuni centres, Chovai (434 people), Kismayuu (334), Chula (301), and Koyama (172), reported in Grottanelli (1955: 25). Grottanelli, based on his own 1953 observations, estimated the population of Bur Kavo (mainland) at 80 (Fitzgerald said 50 in 1898), and put the whole Bajuni population in Somalia at not more than 2,000. The population is unlikely to have increased much meanwhile. The water in the wells on the major islands is brackish, so fresh water has to be brought in, and the agricultural areas on the mainland on which the Bajuni depended for most of their food other than fish was increasingly out of control of the Bajuni. Throughout the 20th century, Bajuni individuals and families trickled down into Kenya, long before the civil war of the 1990s. The size of the Bajuni population in Somalia in the years and decades before The Troubles is disputed, varying from "perhaps 3000 to 4000" (Cassanelli 1993) to 11,000, or more. Allowing for an annual compound increase of some 2%, Cassanelli's figure fits well with the 1926 figure. Both also fit well enough with part of the testimony given by Bajuni elders to a European delegation in 2000: at the start of The Troubles in 1991, "many" Bajuni had fled south into Kenya and were put in UN camps, and in 1997 "a large majority....some 2,500...returned to Somalia". A final piece of evidence comes from looking at the Google Earth Somalia map from the early 2000s. It is possible to look down at nearly all the Bajuni settlements and count the buildings: Kismayuu, hundreds of buildings: Fuma and adjacent island, perhaps 12: Koyama, 3 villages, some 150 buildings: Chovai, 2 villages, some 100 buildings: Istambuli, 50 buildings: Chula, three (?) villages on Chula, plus Mdova off the southern tip, only the most northerly village with 100+ buildings is visible on the satellite photo, a second village in the south has been described as being similar in size, while Mdova and the third Chula village are small, so we might guesstimate 250 buildings for Chula/Mdova: Rasini, "a few buildings": Kudai?: Buri Kavo, 100-150 buildings: Kiamboni. 100+ buildings. Excluding Kismayuu and Kiamboni, that makes a total of ca. 720 buildings, but what does 'building' mean? Inhabited or deserted? By Bajunis or others? How many are not houses, i.e. mosques or the like? What might be, or might have been just before the start of The Troubles, the average number of people per house/family? I assume four, so $4 \times 720 = 2880$, say, 3000.

What of Kiamboni, Kismayuu, (and Buri Kavo)? Kiamboni (see below) grew during the 20th century, and then its numbers were swollen by outsiders after 1991, so at a guess half the houses today have or recently had Bajuni occupants, so $50 \times 4 = 200$. The Bajuni population of Kismayuu is impossible to know now or in recent years: several hundred buildings are visible, but its population has ballooned in recent years with an influx of outsiders, many Bajuni are known to have fled south, many of the remaining Bajuni (usually women) have married or been forced to marry Somalis, so how large is the "Bajuni" population, even if it could be defined? It was 334 in 1926 (see below). A guesstimate on the generous side today might be 500. If the population of Buri Kavo is estimated at $150 \times 4 = 600$, how many are or were in recent decades Bajuni? The population in the earlier 20th century was much smaller (see below) and many of the buildings seen on the satellite photo look new, so it would be safe to

assume the habitants of many are not Bajuni, so the figure of 600 Bajuni is probably far too high,

So, extrapolating from the satellite buildings: 3000 + 200?+ 500?? + 600? = some 4,300, which fits well enough with the figures from the 1926 census and from Cassanelli.

In my opinion, the much higher figures sometimes given for Somalia (“11,000”) are not accurate.

Figures for Kenya are higher, with most of the population on northern Pate Island. Nurse & Hinnebusch (1993: 6) put the Bajuni population of northern Kenya at 15,000 to 20,000 in the late 20th century, but cite other sources with different estimates.

Kismayuu There is a dearth of hard factual information about Kismayu. Thus a search of web sites in November 2009 showed at least four population estimates: 70,000, 100,000, 165,000, 250,000. This compares to the official Italian census figure of 334 Bajunis in 1926 (Grottanelli 1955: 25). Likewise, as a search of web sites and other sources showed no comprehensive history of Kismayu over the last millennium, I asked a number of specialists and they agreed – no such thing exists. So we are reduced to generalities and likelihoods.

Unlike towns further north, Muqdishu, Marika, Brava, whose history goes back for a millennium or more, Kismayuu seems to be of fairly recent origin, having started just a few centuries ago as a small Bajuni fishing village, either on the mainland or on Kismayuu Island, which was only attached to the mainland in the 1960’s. The name is of Bajuni origin (see fn. 2). Although all Bajuni settlements, at least in recent centuries, were small in size and population, Kismayuu might have been somewhat larger because it was not just a fishing village but became a regional trading centre, in its own right, and on the route between other coastal towns. It grew into a small Bajuni town, starting in the late 19th century and continuing through much of the 20th century. As the result of economic and political events in the later 20th century, the population mushroomed, and most of the newcomers are not Bajunis. The village/town was divided into wards/quarters (Swahili *mitaa*, Bajuni *michaa*) with Bajuni names: *Majengo* (the oldest), *Sokoni*, *Garedhani*, *Hafa Badwi*. Bajunis, together with some Bravanese and Arabs, lived in the first two: the *wali*, *askaris*, and Arab traders lived in *Garedhani*: *Hafa Badwi* was exclusively Somali.

Other quarters are recent: *Campo Amhara* (‘Ethiopians’ Camp’) dates from 1937: *Villaggio Nuovo* (‘New Village’) is now called Faanoole: *Farjano* was created in 1967 as the road from Kismayu to Jilib was being built: *Siinay* dates from the 1980’s: *Buulo Obligo* is now called *Waamo*. The main areas of the town/city recognized today are *Farjano*, *Faanoole*, *Shaqaalaha*, *Siinay*, and *Calanleey*.

Hafa Badwi is now called *Calanleey* and includes *Majengo*. *Shaqaalaha* includes the former *Campo Amhara*. *Farjano*, *Faanoole*, and *Siinay* are recent and have no historical links to Bajunis. *Sokoni* is now called *Suuq Weyne* (‘Large Market’) because there is also a small market (*Suuq Yare*). In *Garedhani* there is a police station. While most Bajunis today live in the area called *Majengo*, some, especially those in mixed marriages, live outside *Majengo*. Many of these “facts” may have changed as a result of recent disturbances.

Majengo has/had: the large market, the small market (Mjinga), hospital, two mosques (Haj Jamal, Msikiti Nuur), football field/stadium, two schools (Haj Jamal, Halid Din walid), secondary school (Nukta). *Farjano* has/had: a mosque (Hamsa), small market, cinema (Omatha). In *Calanleey* there is/was: secondary school (Jamal), hospital (Burulhadi), bus station (Athmado), market (Suk Yar), clothing shop (Jafari Hindu), police station, two cinemas (Juba, Umathi). Near the ocean is the Golden Hotel.

Linguistically, while its traditional core was Bajuni, since at least the 19th century it has had a Swahili component, of a Kenyan coastal type: contact since the mid 19th century with the Bantu Mushunguli along the Juba River just to the north, speaking Zigua and a form of Swahili: longstanding proximity to a local Somali presence: a recent and massive influx of outside Somalis from further north.

Demographically, politically, and linguistically, Bajunis and Bajuni are now a very small force in

Kismayu.

Fuma Fuma appears in five shapes: i) Fuma, ii) Fuma Yúu (full form) = Fumáyu (shortened form), iii) Fuma Mkubwa, iv) Fuma Ndangwe = Fuma Nyangwe = Fuma Nangwe, v) Fuma Tini.

The simple form i) Fuma refers to the island, and both ii) Fumayuu and iii) Fuma Kubwa to the village. The village is small, the satellite picture showing very few buildings: 6, with some ruins. Information from refugees is a little contradictory. One recent source says no more permanent population in 2009. The other says a small but dispersed population due to repeated Somali (Darood) attacks. Said to have two large buildings (*yumba*). Fuma had more people in the past. One source said “two mosques” (is that two in Fumayuu alone, or (more likely) one each in Fuma Yuu and Fuma Tini?). Another source said one mosque (Msikiti Sharifu) on the island and the Sheikh is Mohammed Abdullah. People grew sweet potato, maize, peppers, coconuts, bananas, and kept hens, ducks, goats, sheep, but no cattle (fear of raids).

iv) Fuma Nangwe (Ndangwe? Nyangwe?) refers to a small island just to the south, where Bajuni went to clean and dry fish. Elliott (1925) says that, sailing south from Kismayu with the coast on his right and the islands on the left, he came to Ilisi, Buli, Fuma Mkubwa (which he calls “the Big Beach”), and Fuma Ndanwgwe (“the Small Beach”), in that order. On the satellite map, an island just to the south (Kiwasi?) appears to have two or three houses today.

On the mainland, opposite and slightly NE of Fumayuu, is (v) Fuma Tini, with no permanent population in 2009. The satellite picture shows maybe 6 buildings, some ruined. There is/was a market, which serves/served the island.

The contrast between *Yuu* and *Tini*, seen in the pairing here, also occurs often in other settlements below: *yuu* means ‘up, upper, above, high(er), northern’, while *tini* is the opposite. The *Yuu* member is always on the island, with *Tini* on the mainland.

Fuma had a permanent (and presumably larger) settlement before 1976, when Siad Barre forced the Bajunis to go and live at Kudai, now Kulmis.

Koyama Island has two/three villages. On the NW lee side, there is Gedeni/Ghedeni, a village, on the coast, with apparently (satellite view) some 30+ buildings in 2009. Along a path, almost due south, in the dunes, not far from the east coast, is a much larger village, Koyamani (about 100 buildings). About equidistant between the two the satellite picture shows a very small village, away from the coast a bit but on the lee side, with 12+ buildings (Ihembe, I think - not recognized by Mr. Mshamu). The name situation here is puzzling, because refugees have also referred to Koyama and Koyama Yuu: my guess is that these are the same as Gedeni.

Gedeni has three quarters: Tavalani (north), Michaa ya Kachi (centre), Michaa Kachi (south). Koyamani has two: Ukwani wa Juu (west), Ukwani wa Pwani (east).

The 1926 population of the island was given as 172. Barton (1922: 3) describes the wells on Koyama as “extremely brackish”.

Refugees talk of two active mosques (*Koyamani* = *Msikichi Nuur*, and *Msikichi wa Gedeni* = *Msikichi Kadhiria*). There is a *madrasa* in the “main mosque” (*nsikichi kuu*) and a market called Shamsi (also in Chula). They also talk of graves “of white people”, ruins, a pillar tomb, and a large “Portuguese” *geredha*. Cultivation of sweet potatoes, cassava, maize, bananas, papaya, oranges, mangoes, coconuts, mikoko (used for building boats) and mtali trees. Keeping of hens, goats, sheep, cattle, camels is also reported. There are also two ruined mosques, one in west of Koyama, the other (*Msikichi Uvanda*) between Gedeni and Koyamani.

On the mainland, south of Koyama, is Koyama Tini, now just a ruin, but once a rich agricultural

area. Barton and Elliott both say there is/was a baobab tree on the mainland opposite Koyama where the original islanders are said to have carved their marks before crossing the water. Elliott mentions Nofali (mainly) and (also) Garre.

Ngumi Island is deserted today but was important in the past. European travelers in the 20th century talk of “brackish water” in the wells. Opposite the island was **Ngumi Tini**, still extant in 1926 (Elliott).

Chovai Island Two villages: Chovai village on the midwest side (70 buildings), a little inland from the coast, and in the far SW is Lukuva, also called Igome la Yuu (30+ buildings). In Chovai, there is the Msikichi wa Nuuru. Said to be two mosques on the island (Msikiti was Pwani, Msikiti was Jamaa). Elliott says “Brackish water in wells at Chovai, water brought from the east of island”. Chovai consists of small groups of houses (*michaa*) called Mchikachi, Firadoni, Kadori, Kisiu, Iburini (see also Chula and Mdova, below). Said to be/have been a small school on the island, beside the *madrassa*. It is said to take several (four?) hours to walk the length of the island. Two “shores”, Pwani Ngadi (larger, where boats could land, part concrete), and Pwani wa Kisiu.

In the early 20th century, Chovai had the largest population of all the islands, with 434 inhabitants in 1926. Grottanelli (1955:196) says *dau* and *mtepe* were built at Chovai into the 20th century. There were carpenters at Chula and Chovai. Elliott passed a *mtepe* north of Koyama in 1926.

People grew maize, bananas, coconuts, oranges, *mikonadhi* (a small fruit) and kept hens, ducks, goats, sheep.

Opposite Chovai on the mainland is Chovai Creek, which splits into two, the Lac Badana (north) and the Mucho (“stream”) wa Yamani (south). On the north bank of the creek, directly west of Chovai, is the village of Istambuli. Although one refugee said that no one lives at Istambuli now, the satellite view shows some 50 buildings there. Istambuli and the Mucho wa Yamani were mentioned as former agricultural areas for Chovai.

Chula Island (also pronounced **Tula**). In the late 20th century, up to 1991 at least, Chula had the largest island population, although in 1926 it had only “301” inhabitants.

It is not easy to talk with certainty of the villages on Chula (excluding Mdova). There seem to be two villages today: “Chula” and Hinarini. Chula is in the NW. Hinarini is much smaller, off to the east. In 1926, Elliott reported another village, Kitakundu, “half mile south of Chula”. A recent source said it was approximately 90 minutes’ walk from the north to south of the island. The names/places Chamanangwa and Michaka Tini have also been mentioned. Michaka Tini is a small village with a mosque (is this Elliott’s Kitakundu?).

Another source said that up to c. 1976, before being vacated, “Chula” had four *michaa* (‘quarters’): Fuli-ni (also Ki-fili-ni, Ku-fulii, Ku-ful, in the north), Firado-ni (centre south), Hinarani (east), and Iburini. The disagreement here rests on whether these are now quarters (*michaa*) of one village or are separate villages. Our sources disagree on this. The recent source just mentioned, questioned about this, said Fulini and Firadoni were 30 minutes walk apart. For other islands, the Google satellite makes a clear identification possible, but on the day it flew over Chula Island, clouds obscured the southern half of the island. The satellite image shows one village, with over 100 buildings visible, presumably Feradoni. One source refers to Firadoni as a *kiambo*. Both Fulini and Firadoni have a mosque and a *madrassa*. Maybe Fulini also had a school. Two mosques called Sharif Badawi/Jumaa (Fulini, also called *Msikiti Mkuu*) and Sharif Athumani/Osman (Firadoni). For Firadoni the mosque name Msikichi Jamuye is also mentioned. A third source says one is called just the mosque while the other is called the Somali mosque.

There are ruins of an old Geredha, said to be “Portuguese”, near the Msikiti Mkuu. Market (*suku*) and fish auction. *madrassa*, no secular school. The market is variously referred to as Shamsi, Suku Shamsi, Suku la Shamsa (see also Koyama). Much fresh water brought from Mdova, because Chula water is brackish. Jahazi racing competitions. People grew maize, cassava, millet, leaf veggies, bananas, coconuts, oranges, kept goats, sheep, cattle, donkeys, camels.

M(u)dova Island and village Some 30 minutes’ walk south of Chula village, just off the southern tip of the island is Mdova, with a village of the same name. At low tide, it can be walked to from Chula, at high tide only by jumping from rock to rock. It is said to be small, with less than 50 houses. It has a mosque and *madrassa*, and a white tower, “built by the Portuguese”. There are said to be three wards: Mnara-ni, Mungala, Iburini. The wells in Chula are salty today and fresh water has to be brought from Mdova. It was “formerly all Bajuni, now Bajuni and Somali”. There is also a village Ndoa not far away on the mainland, just north of Buri Kavvo.

Opposite Chula Island is Rasini village. It appears to have just a few buildings on the satellite picture. Just south is the Mcho wa Anole = Lak Salamo/Salaam, mentioned by Grottanelli as a farming area for Chula. South again are Kudai (now Kulmisi) on the mainland, and Darakasi and Chand’aa Islands. They were not visible on the satellite image, due to cloud. Darakasi and Chand’aa are uninhabited. Kudai may still have a population, said by refugees to have been “largely Bajuni before 1991, now largely Somali”.

South again is Buri Kavvo Creek, which splits into two, Mcho wa Kimoti (north) and the Mcho wa Hola = Mcho wa Bushbushi (south). Buri Kavvo is the Port Durnford of colonial maps. On the south side of the creek is Buri Kavvo village, which has 100-150 buildings on the satellite picture. Since the population in 1890’s was estimated at 150 (Fitzgerald) and in 1953 at 80, the current number of buildings seems to have increased again lately. The well water here is described as so brackish as to be undrinkable, so fresh water is brought down from Bushbushi, 20 miles away. In 2009 the population at Buri Kavvo is described as “mainly Somali”.

From Buri Kavvo to Ras Kiamboni today, there are no permanent Bajuni villages nor offshore islands.

Kiamboni, village, and **Ras Kiamboni** (‘promontory at the village’), just north of the Kenya border. These show quite clearly on the satellite photo. The Ras is hammer shaped, with little habitation on the head, and most habitation on the mainland handle leading out to the head, and now stretching inland/west. The clustering of houses and the boats anchored nearby suggests the original Bajuni settlement is further out/east, with newer buildings to the west. Refugees talk of three areas: *Kwa yuu* (*yuu* ‘up’, or ‘north’), *Kwa kachi* ‘middle’, *Kwa tini* ‘lower’ or ‘south’. Another source expresses these as Majengo, Mzee Famau, Mzee Fumo, the last two being local elders. There is/was an army camp, police post, naval base, customs house, a hospital, shops, cafes serving tea, a market, and two mosques (Friday mosque with *madrassa*, Nuuru (?) mosque, Takwa mosque in Upper Kiamboni). Police post, naval base, and hospital no longer operating. Cultivation takes place inland. Refugees also mention an “Islamic camp”, which is presumably what the US airforce bombed in January 2007.

The population is something of a puzzle. One middle aged Bajuni refugee, a fisherman, talks of having gone away on a fishing trip for several days (in/around 2003) and coming back to find everyone in his village vanished in a raid, and having never found his family again. Another refugee talks of Bajunis, “Swahili”, Ashraf, Bravanese, Somalis, and an “extremist political group” all living and cooperating fairly well. Well over 100 buildings are visible on the satellite picture.

There seem to have been four historical stages. The earliest is attested to by the ruins discussed in section 6. That early prosperous stage gave way to the second, described by FitzGerald (1898), who walked past Ras Kiamboni and talks of a water hole but no human habitation. Kiamboni's fortunes revived during the 20th century as it grew into a sizeable Bajuni village. Finally, after 1991, it changed from being a purely Bajuni village into the multi-ethnic place it is today.

Bajunis from Kiamboni had the reputation of speaking a rather Swahiliised Bajuni, due to its proximity to the border with Kenya. From Kiamboni to the nearest village in Kenya is seven miles, as the crow flies, that is, under two hours by foot. The use of Swahili is probably enhanced by the presence of the many outsiders.

South of the border, in Kenya, is a line of mainland Bajuni villages, from Kiunga to Dodori Creek, north of Pate Island. Offshore are other islands, stretching on to northern Pate Island. These are much better mapped than those in Somalia, though there is some discrepancy between which mainland villages exist and which used to exist.

From north to south, the mainland villages, mainly small (Fitzgerald 1898 talks of 100 - 200 people each) are: Ishakani, Kiunga, Mambore, Omwe, Rubu, Sendeni, Mvinden, Ashuwei, Mataroni, Vumwe, Mkokoni, Itembe, Dondo, Mpeia, Kilimandaro, Dodori. With the exception of Kiunga and those on northern Pate Island, most of these are very small (see the description by Fitz Gerald (1898)), who walked through them. Some, and others now defunct, may have been larger in the past.

From north to south the islands are: Kiungamwini Is, Shakani Is, Kiwayuu Is, Shimambaya Is, Faza = Rasini, Kidhingitini, Chundwa, Myabogi, Mb wajumali (the last five on Pate Island).

5. Clans

As other tribal groupings in Somalia, Bajunis are divided into clans. Their names have historical significance and the clans have contemporary meaning for some societal matters, e.g. marriages. There are three published sources for the clans, Grottanelli (1955, but 1953 fieldwork), Prins (1967), Nurse (1982, but field work a couple of years prior), and bajuni.com. Grottanelli had his information from a sheikh or sheikhs in Kismayuu, Prins does not state his source, Nurse interviewed Mzee Bwana Boramusa, then a resident of Kiunga but born in Somalia (?). Bajuni.com's sources are not mentioned. As the sources overlap largely but not totally, they are repeated here.

Grottanelli (1955: 202ff) talks of "4 original clans, all originating in Yemen or Hijaz": al-Kindi (descendants of Banu Kindi), al-Ausii (descendants of al-Khadhrjii), al-Khadherajii (as preceding), Nofáli (descendants of Nofali wa 'Abd-i-Shamis wa...", said to be more recent Arabian origin)". Bajuni.com has al-Ausi, al-Khadhraji, al-Nofali, Banu Stambuli, al-Nadhiri.

From these 4 the other 18 are said to "descend": Chandraa, Chovai, Ferado = Firado, Kachwa, Chisimayu, Kudai, Ndipingoni, Ngumi, Shiradhi, Shungwaya, Simambaya = Shimambaya = Simambae, Tawayu, Umbuyi, Kiunga, Rasini, Chundra, Veku, Vekwaa, Vumbu, Womwe. It should be noted that although the number 18 (see Nurse, just below) is mentioned, there are in fact 20 in this list.

He also says (p.204) that Chula and Koyama were mentioned to him by others as clans.

So Grottanelli has a total of 26 names (4 + 20 + 2).

Prins (1967: 82) lists Amshiri, Avutila, Birkao, Daile, Dili, Faradho (= Firado?), Hartikawa, Kilio, Kisimayu, Kiunga, Kiwayuu, Koyama, Mrivi, Ndipingoni, Ngumi, Omwe, Rasmali, Simambaya, Shungwaya, Takwa, Tawayu, Tendaa (= Chandraa?), Uero, Umbuyi, Upembo, Utanuni, Uwani, Vekuu, Vumwe (same as Omwe?), Zitindini, "to which should be added Il Barawi and Il Famaui", a total of 32.

Nurse: 18 clans (“*kamasi kumi na nane*”), divided into the ten (*kumi dha miuli*) and the eight (*nane dha bana*). I asked several elders about the meaning of *miuli* and *bana* but there was no consensus.

Kumi dha miuli: Kiwayuu, Koyama, Omwe, Pingoni, Shungwaya, Simambaye, Taka, Veku, Vekwa, Vumwe. Bajuni.com has Angove, Chandaa, Chismayu, Chithindani, Gede, Koyama, Ngumi, Omwe, Veko, Dhipingoni. Many of these are Bantu names. Shared names are underlined.

Nane dha bana: Abugado/Abimali, Amishiri, Avutila, Firado, Gare, Kilio, Rasmili, Yava. Bajuni.com has Amishiri, Avutila, Daile, Firado, Hatikawa, Kava (= Yava?), Na-kilio, Rasmali. These are areal Cushitic (mainly southern Somali) names.

Putting these all together alphabetically gives: al-Ausi(i), al-Kindi, al-Khadheraji(i) al-Nadhiri, Nofali, Banu Stambuli: Abimali, Abugado, Amshiri, Angove, Avutila, Birkao (some equate Birkao/Buri Gavo with Shungwaya), il-Barawi, Chand^raa/Tendaa, Chithindani, Chovai, Chula, Chund^ra, Daile (= Dili?), Dili, al-Famaui, Firado/Ferado, Garre/Gare, Gede, Ha(r)tikawa, Kachwa, Kava(= Yava?), (Na)Kilio. Kismayu(u), Kiunga, Kiwayuu, Koyama, Kudai, Ngumi, (W)omwe/Vumwe/Vumbe, Rasini (there are two Rasini, one in Somali, one in Kenya), Rasmali, Simambaya/Shimambaya/Simambae, Shiradhi, Shungwaya, Tak(w)a, Uero, Umbuyi, Upembo, Utanuni, Uwani, Veku, Vekwaa, Vumbu, Yava, Dhipingoni, Dhitindini, 52 (?).

Some of these also found further south, in clan lists from Siu, Pate, Lamu, and further afield.

Although three of the four sources (bajuni.com, Grottanelli, Nurse) agree that the number 18 is somehow important, there are in fact some 50 names here, allowing for possible overlap (Ferado = Firado = Faradho, Shungwaya = Birkao?, Omwe/Vumwe/Vumbe, Chand^raa = Tendaa, etc). Only four appear in all four lists (Firado, Pingoni (various spellings), (W)omwe, Veku). Ten occur in three of the four lists (Amshiri, Avutila, Chand^raa, (Na-)Kilio, Kismayu, Koyama, Ngumi, Rasmali/Rasmili, Shungwaya, Simambaye). Ten occur in two lists (al-Ausii, al-Khadherajii, Nofali, Tawayu, Kiwayuu, Taka/Takwa (is Kachwa the same?), Umbuyi, Vekwaa, Vumwe, Zitindini/Chithindani). Although on the basis of the available data it is not possible to draw up any definitive list, it is possible to make certain generalizations about the names. Seven reflect perceived connections to southern Arabia (older Shiradhi: more recent al-Kindi, al-Ausii, al-Khadherajii, al-Nadhiri. Nofali, maybe Banu Stambuli)) and some of these also occur among the Benadiri Somali further north). 13 (perhaps a couple more) are or reflect an origin in southern Somali groups – southern Somali here is used geographically and linguistically (Firado, Kachwa, Kismayu, Tawayu, Avutila, Kilio, Rasmili, Daile, Amshiri, Hartikawa, Dili, Gar(r)e, Abugado/Abimali. 7 of these 13 are in the 8 (*nane dha bana*) of Nurse’s list. A very few are of unknown origin (Al-Famaui (possibly Chinese), Uero). All the rest, the majority, appear to reflect their toponymic status: il-Barawi, Koyama, Ngumi, Chovai, Chula, Rasini (there are two Rasini, one in Somali, one in Kenya), Kudai, Chand^raa, Birkao (some equate Birkao/Buri Gavo with Shungwaya but see below), Veku (Elliott mentions Veku, at the foot of Veku Hill, just south of Buri Kavo), Kiunga, Omwe, Simambaya, Uwani, Vumwe, Vumbu (?), Kiwayuu, Chund^ra (= Chundwa?), Dhipingoni. The following would also seem to be locations but not known today: Umbuyi, Vekwaa, Zitindini, Upembo, Utanuni, Tak(w)a.

Ignoring Il-Barawi (= Barawa near Muqdishu) and the unknown places, all the rest of these place names reflect the two stretches from Koyama to Buri Kavo, and from Kiunga to Pate Island and near Dodori Creek in northern Kenya. It will be noted that some locations do not appear in this list. Thus Fuma Island, south of Kismayuu, and Ras Kiamboni – since it appears nowhere on this list and since FitzGerald in 1898 says it was only a watering hole, it must be a new settlement (but see below). It will

also be noted that some are not inhabited or are sparsely inhabited today (Ngumi, Chand^raa, Kiwayuu, Simambaya). Recent work with refugees involved listening to what they said about clans, and some of these clans appear to be defunct (e.g. al-Kindi).

I am not inclined to believe the chronological primacy of Shiradhi, al-Kindi, al-Ausii, al-Khadherajii, al-Nadhiri, Nofali, (and Banu Stambuli). I agree some settlers came from the Middle East, but to claim they were the chronologically original settlers is a piece of religious-cultural baggage, whereby any origin in, or institution from, the Middle East is held to be culturally supreme and primary. It does not correspond to what can be seen of chronology or genesis (see section 7).

The current pattern of clan distribution no longer reflects the likely original settlement pattern. The disastrous events of the last two decades have dispersed individuals, families, and clans all along the coast and further afield. Even before that, there had been movement and displacement. The end of the 1600's also appears to have been a time of considerable movement. Elliott was told that Garre Somali then took over Gedeni, in the NW of Koyama, displacing the earlier inhabitants to Koyamani. Similarly, Firado (also a Garre subset) moved into Firadoni, in the NW of Chula, and the former villagers moved out. Ngumi was abandoned, after being bombarded by the Portuguese (?), and the Ngumi scattered to other islands – Koyama is mentioned, not surprising, given its proximity.

Despite this, it is worthwhile relating briefly what Grottanelli was told in the 1950's about the original areas of at least some clans:

Chand^raa: originally on Chand^raa Island, dispersed to Buri Kavó, Kismayu, and Chula.

Chovai: the oldest inhabitants of Chovai, before Firado arrived.

Firado: went to Chovai and Kismayu.

Kachwa: went to Koyama and Chula.

Kismayu: originally of Kismayu Island, went to Gedeni on Koyama.

Kudai: Kudai

Ndipingoni: "mainland near Lamu".

Ngumi: originally Ngumi, moved to Koyama.

Nofali: mainly at Koyamani, displaced south from Gedeni. Also on Chula.

Shiradhi: Kiwayuu, Mkokoni.

Shungwaya: to Buri Kavó and nearby Ndoa (mainland)

Tawayu: various, eventually Mombasa

Umbuyi: Kiunga, Rasini, Chundwa.

Veku: originally Chondo, "the other Buri Kavó", then dispersed.

Vekwaa: Ndoa, on mainland, near Buri Kavó.

Vumbu: originally near mouth of the Juba, then north to Brava.

Womwe: Omwe, Mambore.

If these are rearranged in terms of place, we get:

Kismayuu: Kismayuu, Chand^raa, Firado, Kachwa. Recent refugees have also mentioned: Nofali, al-Ausi, Shiradhi, al-Khazeraji, Shungwaya, Veku. Tikuu also mentioned although unclear whether it referred to a clan or to all Bajunis. One young source claimed Tikuu and Shiradhi were identical. Kismayuu was a magnet in recent years for islanders. Young people in Kismayuu today are often ignorant of Bajuni clans

Fuma: recent refugees have mentioned al-Ausii, al-Khazerajia, Ferado, Ngumi, Chand^faa.

Koyama: Kachwa, Ngumi, Nofali, Kismayu. Recent refugees have also mentioned: al-Ausi, al-Khaziraji, Firado, Tikuu, Chand^faa. It would be more accurate to distinguish these by village.

Grottanelli (p204) says those at Gedeni were from the Kisimayu clan, descendants of the Garre, said to be recent arrivals (ca AD1700). Mentioned in same breath as Garre are the Kilyo, Uvari, Osmani, Tawayu, Kudai, Ras Imale, Artikadha (sic). Garre said to be quite recent arrivals (ca AD1700). So Garre (from somewhere near Afmado) to Kismayuu to Koyama.

He also says that those at Koyamani were Nofali (< Yemen, the “aristocracy”, said to have arrived at the end of 1600’s): also Firado, and refugees from Ngumi after Portuguese bombardment in 1686 (?).

Chovai: Chovai, Firado. Refugees have mentioned Chand^faa (pronounced Chanda), Khadheraia, Nofali, Grottanelli (p.204) recounts that Firado (“< Sham”, cf Sacleux, p.829) found a local fisherman/fishermen of the Chovai clan living there, when they arrived, and that also Nofali and Kismayu came later.

Chula: Chand^faa, Chula, Kachwa, Womwe. Refugees also mentioned al-Ausi/Ausii, al-Hadheraji, al-Nofali, Firado, Munghumi = Ngumi, Veku, Ndekwa/Ndeku (?). Also Tikuu (= Bajuni?) mentioned. Gunya also mentioned – language? dialect? ethnonym? One source had al-Vasia for al-Ausi, and Al-Imkid = al-Kindi?? One source said Chandaa and Tikuu darker skinned, al-Haziraji and al-Ausii lighter. Grottanelli (p.209) says there were Arab and Garre right from first mzee in 17th century.

M(u)dova Island. Refugees mentioned Kachwa.

Buri Kavo: Chand^faa, Shungwaya. Fitzgerald mentions a Kachwa headman, Grottanelli mentions a Chand^faa headman, Others have mentioned refugees from Shee in the interior, Koyama, Fuma.

Kudai: Refugees mentioned Shungwaya, Mdova, Kachwa.

Kiamboni. Refugees have mentioned: Chand^faa, Nofali, al-Ausi, al-Hazeraji, Koyama, Kachwa, talk of Tikuu (3 mention this as a clan, or as something different from Chand^faa – “Tikuu” also lived in the village”) and Gunya but not clear if clans or names for Bajunis, also mentions Boni.

Kiunga: Umbuyi.

Rasini: Umbuyi.

Chundwa: Umbuyi.

Mambore/Omwe: Womwe.

Fadha (from Prins): Masherifu, Wa-katwa (or Al Somali), Vekuu, Omwe, Dhipingoni, Tendaa, Kiwayuu, Kisimayu, Kiunga, Dhitindini, Umbuyi, Tawayu, Koyama, Barawa.

6. Ruins north to south

In three articles (1982, 1984, 1992) Wilson surveys the ruins of the southern Somali and northern Kenya coast. Kenya is much better served archaeologically than Somalia. The whole coast has been reasonably covered, there are monographs on the bigger sites, and Wilson himself dug extensively on the northern coast. In contrast, the southern Somali coast is not well covered, there are no monographs, and Wilson did not work there, so had to rely on mainly surface collections by mainly non-archaeologists (with the exception of Chittick). In view of the current unfriendly environment, this is unlikely to change in the near future. When it does change, it may be possible to improve the accuracy of what is said here. What follows summarises Wilson (1984, 1992).

The Kismayuu area = Kismayuu Town, Kismayuu Fort, Kismayuu Island, Old Kismayuu. Of these Wilson emphasizes Old Kismayuu, on and behind the headland called Cape Bissell, to the east of the present town, as having the oldest and the most ruins. These include a ruined mosque, a cemetery, tombs, “habitations”, human bones, ceramics, cannonballs, glass, ivory, and a water duct. He says that as a group these suggest the 15th and 16th century period, and thinks the depth of deposit and the range of artifacts would repay further archaeological investigation.

To the south lies **Ras Mchoni** ‘promontory at the river’, where no one lived in 2009, and a little further are the ruins at **Gondal = Kandali**, which include two buildings and a mosque.

Next is **Koyama** Island, with most ruins in the northwest, near the harbour just northeast of **Ghedeni**. It was a walled area, and includes three or four mosques and two large pillar tombs. The dating of AD1600 is uncertain, depending on the reading of an inscription. There are more tombs at **Koyamani**. Wilson says the inscription, and style of the pottery and the tombs, leads to the general conclusion for Koyama that the main occupation of the island would not seem to predate the 16th century.

There are also ruins at **Koyama Tini**, opposite Koyama Island, a few minutes inland from the coast. A tradition survives that the island was populated from the mainland opposite, with each section of people cutting its mark on a baobab tree before crossing. Demarcating boundaries in this way occurs widely in Somalia (Lewis).

Further south, **Ngumi** is not inhabited permanently today, having been allegedly deserted after being bombarded by the Portuguese around AD1700, supposedly in retaliation for having been tricked commercially by the locals. Resettlement might have been inhibited by the unavailability of fresh water. There are reports of local traditions that Ngumi has a long and ancient history, but none seems to have been recorded. Ngumi was also a walled settlement, on the landward side of the island, and settlement was “dense”. The ruins include a large mosque, a cemetery with tombs, and masonry houses. Some have said some graves might be “Portuguese”. Wilson concludes that the architectural styling suggests a somewhat later date than the ceramic collection, which “appears to predate the 15th century”.

Elliott reports a mosque and “one or two houses” at **Ngumi Tini**, on the mainland opposite.

On **Chovai**, while there are some ruins (cemetery, tombstones) near the present village of **Chovai** on the landward side, “the main area of old settlement is at the southern end of the island” at **Lukuva/Igome la Yuu**, with remains of two mosques, tombs, and at least two stone houses. Wilson concludes “from the few chronological indications available, settlement at Chovai does not seem to predate the 16th century”.

On the south bank of Chovai Creek, on the mainland, near **Bagdad**, are the remains of a mosque,

pillar tombs, and the foundations of other buildings. Just to the south, near Stirikani, are further tombs.

On **Chula**, at **Chula village**, are the ruins of many tombs, a mosque, and some house ruins. Wilson (says “the best-dated of these tombs is probably late 14th or early 15th century” (1992: 105). At the end of the 17th century Chula was important enough that Portuguese vessels were directed to call there and at “Shungwaya”. Grottanelli’s pottery collection from Chula contains what Wilson interprets as “one plain sherd” of Sassanian-Islamic ware, associated with the 9th to 10th century period along the coast. Elliott (1926: 343, mentioned in Wilson (p.85)) observed a Somali headrest sculpted on one tomb near Chula village and suggested a connection with the Garre.

Mdova, off the southern tip of Chula, has two “sarcophagus-like masonry graves” (Elliott) and refugees talk of a tower, “built by the Portuguese”, on the beach”. Mdova has good wells.

Opposite Chula Island, centred on Rasini/Kikoni/Kituni, are a mosque and several tombs, one 5.64 m tall, another 4.27 high. A little further south, Kudai has ruins of a mosque and several tombs.

Just north of **Buri Kavvo** is a cluster of little known ruins, at and near Ndoa. Buri Kavvo is the best port on the whole southern shore. Chittick distinguishes three sites at Buri Kavvo, of which Buri Kavvo 2 “might have been” the earliest. All three are a little north of the current village.

Buri Kavvo 2 “was apparently extensive and might have been walled”. There are many ruins, including several unidentified structures, one of which was likely a mosque, and several tombs, one of which, at eleven metres, was the tallest on the coast. Chittick’s ceramic collection suggests a “15th and 16th century date”.

Buri Kavvo 3 is just a fortified defensive wall at Mabruk Hill.

Buri Kavvo 1 is surrounded by a masonry wall and the area includes tombs and other ruins but apparently no mosques. This is odd, as all other sites have mosques, and because Bajuni sites, current or historical, have a mosque as their spiritual centre. Chittick found no sherds predating the 16th century.

Buri Kavvo is regarded by most 20th century observers as the site of the legendary Shungwaya. Notable exceptions to this opinion are the archaeologist Chittick, who investigated but failed to find traces, and the Italian Cerulli. Grottanelli (1955: 385-7) reports on the coins found at Buri Kavvo in 1913 by Capt. Haywood, reported in the *Numismatic Chronicle* in 1932, near a “walled-in fortress” (probably Buri Kavvo 1), no houses nearby. This is a large trove, consisting of coins from the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th centuries AD (Ptolemy, Alexandria, Constantine, Rome, Nero, etc).

South of Buri Kavvo, for nearly 60 kms, the coast “lacks offshore islands, seasonal creeks, or protected anchorages “(Wilson”), until Kiamboni. There is a string of small sites, from north to south, Veku, Shamkuu, Mnarani, Mbarabala, Miandi, and Odo. These are all small. Elliott suggested Miandi was the most substantial and possibly interesting, with remains of a mosque, pillar tombs, and other structures.

The southernmost site in Somalia is Kiamboni, with a large pillar tomb, mosque, and “the remains of a considerable settlement”. No dates are available for Miandi or Kiamboni.

In Kenya there is a string of mainland sites dating to the 14th or 15th century, from north to south, Ishakani, Kiunga, Mwana Mchama, Omwe, Shee Umuro, Shee Jafari, Dondo. Most others on the mainland are a couple of centuries later. The only two islands mentioned with early sites are Shimambaya (16th, 15th century?) and Pate Island (Atu 16th century?), Fadha = Faza = Rasini (16th century on), Chundwa (17th century on).

Since the Bajunis traditionally had their large sites on islands, it seems strange to this non-archaeologist that there is no reference here to the Kenya offshore islands (Kiungamini Is, Shakani Is,

Shimambaya Is, Kiwayuu Is).

If we arrange these by dates, then the earliest, that is, those starting in the 14th or 15th century, are: Old Kismayuu, (Koyama (16th century?)), Ngumi, Chovai, Chula, Buri Kavo, Ishakani, Kiunga, Ishakani, Kiunga, Mwana Mchama, Omwe, Shee Umuro, Shee Jafari, and Dondo. To those who hold to the idea that any 'original' Bajuni migration proceeded from north to south, the fact that the southern dates are just as early as those in the north is an embarrassment.

The early dates in Somalia are probably more significant for Bajuni settlement than those in Kenya because in Somalia there are no candidates for the sites other than Bajunis. In Kenya, on the other hand, there are equally early sites such as Siu and Pate, and much earlier ones such as Shanga, Manda, and Lamu Ginnars. These sites are not now nor were ever host to Bajuni populations. They were island sites in their own right, and the mainland sites opposite, or at least some of them, were quite possibly the agricultural areas for these early towns. In that case, Bajunis may have come from the north and moved into the mainland sites, taking over from the previous populations. That certainly happened on northern Pate Island, and Bajuni songs sing of assaulting the towns of Siu and Pate. Archaeologists would need to examine island and the mainland sites for evidence of a change of culture – that might be tricky since Bajuni culture would presumably not differ much from that on the Kenya mainland and islands.

Another way to arrange these sites is by size. Wilson (1984, 1992) does this, though his criteria differ a little from one publication to the next. Large sites (over 2.5 or 3 hectares) are Ghedeni, Ngumi, Chula, Buri Kavo 2 (?), Kiamboni, Ishakani, Kiunga, Omwe, Shee Jafari, Fadha, and Chundwa. Again, there are as many large sites in Kenya as in Somalia. Smaller sites are Old Kismayuu, Koyama Tini, Ngumi Tini, Chovai, Bagdadi, Simba Hill (inland from Chula), Veku, Miandi. Mwana Mchama, and Dondo. All other sites consist of scattered tombs or buildings.

It should be stressed that these dates and sizes are preliminary. Somali is not well served archaeologically compared to Kenya. The only work by an archaeologist in Somalia was by Chittick (1976) and was a survey, without serious excavation. Wilson surveys all that had been written up to his time of writing (and nothing significant has been done since, as far as I know). Somalia may contain earlier dates and larger sites. So historical conclusions based on these data have to be preliminary.

Lacunae worth investigating would be the islands of Fuma, Chand'aa, Kiwayuu, and Shimambaya. At all four no excavation has been carried out, yet at least the last three are the names of oft cited clans, and clans are often named after places.

Other features also need investigation. If the evidence from current towns and villages, and those well excavated from the past, can be extrapolated backwards, then all settlements of some size had a mix of stone houses, mud-and-thatch houses, mosques, and cemeteries and tombs. Well-to-do places were not just larger but had more stone houses and bigger tombs – pillar tombs. Larger places might have accommodated more than one mosque.

Underlying this section is an assumption shared by those who work on historical coastal matters but perhaps unfamiliar to others. It is that a common (Swahili, including Bajuni) culture and archaeology once stretched from Muqdisho down to the coast of Mozambique, from the 9th century on. Despite local and temporal variations, there was always a large shared core. Stylistically, stone houses and mosques are built in much the same way along the coast. In most places, digging through the uppermost buildings shows a continuity of style and content until sterile sand is reached at the bottom. In most places, no ethnic group other than the present inhabitants claims responsibility for the buildings or settlements.

7. History of the Bajuni

7a The later period It is convenient to divide the history of the Bajuni into a recent and an early period. The recent period is defined mainly by archaeology and partly by local oral traditions, some of which were recorded by early travelers. On Lamu and Pate Islands in northern Kenya, the early period stretches back to the 9th century, maybe even a little earlier.

As we have just seen, the recent Bajuni period seems to start in the 14th or 15th century. Is that an illusion? North of Kismayu are non-Bajuni sites at Muqdishu, Gezira, Marika, Munghia, and Brava which go back archaeologically to the 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th centuries (Wilson 1992: 91). Likewise, to the south are the non-Bajuni sites at Shanga, Manda, and Lamu Island, equally early. Why are Bajuni sites significantly later? There is no reason to think that Bajuni language or culture are any younger than those of their Swahili siblings. Two reasons offer themselves for these later Bajuni dates. One is that the areas to the north and south really were primary areas, while the Bajuni sites were secondary, settled later from the primary sites. The other is that these Bajuni dates are illusory, just the result of imperfect and incomplete archaeology – if we could excavate these areas better, we would find earlier dates.

While neither explanation can be upheld over the other at present, I as linguist favor the second. Positing that the Bajuni sites are later and secondary, settled from north and/or south implies that Bajuni is a linguistic offshoot of the language varieties to the north (Bravanese) or the south (Amu, Pate, Siu). However, as I show below, this is not the case. Bravanese, Bajuni, and Amu/Siu/Pate are coordinate, not super- or subordinate, varieties. This suggests the communities speaking them ought to be of roughly equal antiquity. So I expect that at some point in the future, significantly earlier sites will be discovered in at least the Bajuni areas of Somalia, with early dates comparable to those to the north and south.

Of the six centuries between AD1400 (or maybe a little earlier) and the present, the last two were a period of decline in Bajuni fortunes, while the previous four were the high point. The decline during the 20th century is obvious to all but is not restricted to the years since 1991. Bajunis have been filtering south, from Somalia into Kenya, for a long time, because they felt safer there, further removed from aggression from mainlanders. As far as we can tell, the Bajuni population in Kenya in the 20th century was always greater than that in Somalia, even though Somalia was regarded as “the homeland”, so at some point historically the population distribution was probably the opposite. While the main pressure in the 20th century was from ethnic Somalis, the main threat in previous centuries was from Orma (Galla), who were driven out and south by Somalis toward the end of the 19th century. While early European travelers spoke of Bajuni “plantations” worked by “slaves” (=Boni) on the Kenya coast, further north many of the mainland agricultural areas in southern Somalia had had to be abandoned because they were constantly overrun by hostile Orma (who had themselves been displaced south by Somali incursions further north). European travelers (e.g. FitzGerald 1898: 465) also tell of Bajuni inland villages for some distance south and north of Buri Kavo which had been destroyed by Orma and abandoned.

The centuries from roughly AD1400 to AD1800 were a period of relative power and opulence for coastal Bajunis, power and opulence that are hard to imagine in view of the current shrunken state of Bajuni settlements. Evidence for this claim comes from various sources. Taken separately, they don't amount to much, but together they form a clear picture.

First is the general statement from 19th century Europeans that there had been fairly extensive agricultural areas on the mainland, along the three rivers and in areas opposite the islands. These were important because, although Bajunis will always say “Bajunis fish”, when asked about their work and their diet, there is or was a plant component. The islands themselves, being coral rocks, are not suitable for agriculture, and depended on the mainland for this second leg of their food (and water). That these or some of these “plantations” were described as being worked by “slaves” also implies a power now gone.

Second is the evidence from archaeology. Section 6 describes several sites with remains from

these centuries with large pillar tombs, several mosques (i.e. sites big enough to have several communities), and masonry houses, not just mud-and-thatch houses. All are signs of size, power and opulence. There are or were until recently traces of many large tombs and buildings on the islands and the mainland of Somalia and northern Kenya. There is even a suggestion that at least one settlement, Shungwaya, had buildings with more than one storey: the well known Bajuni poem, the *Utendi wa Shungwaya*, has this line:

Chu-ka-enge numba na ma-dari-ye
 we-and-look at houses and plural-storeys-their
 ‘Lets go (back) and look at the two-level houses’

Such buildings once flourished at several places along the northern Kenya coast but are now only found in Lamu. Assuming this is not just Bajuni boasting, it would indicate considerable wealth. This Shungwaya, incidentally, is probably the coastal Shungwaya = Buri Kavo. (see section 7b, below).

Third are references in earlier European sources, mainly Portuguese. Grottanelli (1955: 75) says Shungwaya was “still” (sic) important from 15th to 16th century, appeared in Portuguese maps as Jungaia, Xungaia in 16th to 17th centuries, and also appears on several older European maps (English, Dutch). In 1686 a Portuguese expedition went first to Brava, then Chula and Shungwaya, so they thought the two places worth visiting for trade. They bombarded Ngumi at about the same time, which coincides nicely with the end of its settlement, as outlined archaeologically. Prins (1967: 92) says the two early “kingdoms” in Somalia were Shungwaya and Ngumi, although the basis for this claim is not clear to me. At this time Shungwaya was allied with Fadha, and so in a military struggle with Pate. Perhaps the most striking reference is in Organ (nd), who cites a letter from the Portuguese Viceroy of India, dated 6 January 1598, to one of his commanders in East Africa, “in no circumstances have you to permit the erection of stone walls there at Patta (Pate), not even then, if they say that the reason is to defend themselves against the Vanagunes (= Gunya, Bajuni)”. Grottanelli (1955: 79) says Stigand (1913: 168) quotes the Pate Chronicle that in the first half of the 17th century Bajunis came from the mainland in the north. In 1678 (Strandes 1971: 202) refers to over 1000 Bajunis allied with the Portuguese for their attack on Pate, and at the end of that century (1971: 218) to “many” Bajunis being brought by the Arabs to help with their assault on Mombasa. In the early 18th century (1728) the Portuguese hired 500 Bajuni troops, and two years later 4000 Bajunis, in their unsuccessful defence of Mombasa (Strandes 1971, 246, 256). So from the late 16th century to the early 18th century, at least, there were many Bajunis and the men were a fighting force. We have no records of this kind before the late 16th century but it is probable that their numbers and prowess long anteceded that period.

This brings us to the fourth source, local recorded literature, mainly Bajuni. The Bajunis have a very rich literature, some of it dealing with their origins and history. Particular to the Bajuni is the *vave*, a form of poem/song, sung at bush-burning time, just before planting, once a year. *Vaves* are long, a single one can last all night, up to 10 or 12 hours. The content is socio-political-religious, expressed artistically, and the full significance is really accessible only to a Bajuni. Most historical references are therefore coded and not straightforward, and of course carry no dates. One of the best known *vaves* is the *Vave kwa Mgunya* ‘The Vave for the Bajunis’. Near the beginning is a passage which mirrors some of the events just sketched. It starts by describing sailing down from the north and then:

‘.....
 Na m-Shela na chunyayeni
 Chumwase kubika mafungu

‘.....
 And let’s attack/strike the people of Shela
 Let’s prevent them from sharing out

Na muAmu na chunyayeni
Chumwase dari na dhiungu
mPate endre akapate na chunyayeni
Pola Mola ashushe kivingu
.....’

And let’s attack/strike the people of Lamu
Let’s stop them building mansions and tall buildings
Let’s attack/strike the people of Pate.. (obscure)
Let the Lord bring down a cloud
.....’

This is about striking Pate, also Lamu and Shela (just along the beach from Lamu Town) and notably makes no reference to attacking Siu or Fadha, so reflects in ancient verse the late 17th century struggle mentioned above between Bajunis, Faza, (and (Siu) against Pate (and apparently Lamu and Shela).

7b The early period Before delving into the early period, we should ask what kind of history we are talking about, and what kind of history we are not.

This essay does not investigate socio-religious history. That is, while not denying that Islam came from southern Arabia and Bajunis continue to emphasise the link with that area, and while not denying also the cultural connection between East African coastal communities and southern Arabia, that is not the focus here.

Likewise, I do not wish to deny the absorption of immigrants from adjacent Somalia or southern Arabia into Bajuni society. I am quite prepared to acknowledge that the ancestors of the Shiradhi may have come from the Middle East (Persia, Arabia) and that the ancestors of the al-Kindi, al-Ausii, al-Khadherajii, and Nofáli came later from Yemen or Hijaz, Certainly, the ancestors of Firado, Kachwa, Kismayu, Tawayu, Avutila, Kilio, Rasmili, Daile, Amshiri, Hartikawa, Dili, Garre, Abugado/Abimali, and maybe others, originated in Somalia, from Tunni or Garre forefathers, and were absorbed into Bajuni society. Again, that is not the focus here.

The focus here is African- and language based. Bajuni is a dialect of Swahili, which in turn is a Bantu language, an African language grouping. The earliest Bajuni ancestors spoke Bajuni – so where did these Bajuni-speakers appear, where did they come from, and when? Whereas for the later period, most of the evidence came from was archaeology and oral tradition, here the evidence is mostly linguistic, with some rather confusing input from oral tradition. Most of the evidence was set out in detail 20 years ago and is not repeated here. Some of the linguistic evidence is clear enough for non-linguists, but some is not and readers will need to read the background.

Swahili, and its coastal dialects, including Bajuni, are members of a linguistic grouping known as Sabaki, whose other members are Comorian (spoken in the Comoro Islands), Pokomo (Lower Tana River, NE Kenya), Elwana, (above Pokomo, on the Tana), and Miji Kenda (SE coast of Kenya). Comorian and Elwana are ignored in what follows as they are not central to the story. The community and communities speaking the language ancestral to today’s Sabaki, and its emerging offspring, were located in the area bounded by the Tana River in the south, the Indian Ocean, and the Webi Shebelle in the north, in the general period from AD500 to 800. At a later point in this early period, ancestral Pokomo and Miji Kenda lived inland, along and near the Webe Shebelle, while the community ancestral to today’s northern Swahili lived on the coast, as early as AD800, in the general area of the Lamu Archipelago in northern Kenya. “Northern Swahili”, linguistically, refers to the communities speaking the Swahili dialects from Brava down to just south of Mombasa. In general, southern Swahili dialects are more conservative phonologically, while the northern dialects have innovated, so it is easier to arrange them as branches on the genealogical tree. The Swahili communities now at Mombasa and maybe Malindi and Mambrui were the first to move out, as Mombasa shows signs of having been settled in the 11th (?) century. They were followed by the ancestors of the Bravanese (and maybe of people formerly at Munghia, Merka, Gezira, and Mkudisho), who moved north by ca AD1100. Finally, the

ancestors of the Bajunis spread along the coast, in the 250 km line from Dondo and adjacent settlements on the Kenya coast, north as far as Kismayu.

This picture differs in one respect from that sketched some 20 years ago, because of the appearance of the people currently called the “Somali Bantu”, who had not emerged clearly into the published world at that point. “Somali Bantu” refers to two historically different populations. Along the Juba today are descendants of 19th century escaped slaves, brought from Tanzania in the 19th century and not relevant to this story. To their north along the Webe Shebelle and in the area between the two rivers is a much larger and older population, whose numbers are variously estimated at between 50,000 and 4 million. They are the Bantu farmers who stayed behind when Shungwaya was evacuated in the 17th century, when the Orma invaded from the north. They no longer speak any Bantu language, having adopted or formed local forms of Somali (Maay, Maha).

While the outline just sketched may seem plausible, it is not the whole story and would seem particularly incomplete to a Bajuni reader. Above, in section 5, it was shown that there are three kinds of clan name: those reflecting an origin in Yemen/southern Arabia, those reflecting a southern Somali origin, and those reflecting local place names. We can take at least some of the latter to reflect the original Bajuni-speaking inhabitants, those who came up from the south in the 14th century or earlier, and first settled the major islands and places on the mainland (Kwayuu, Simambaya, Omwe, Kiunga, Veku, Chand^{aa}, Rasini, Chula, Chovai, Ngumi, Koyama, maybe others). The Arabian and southern Somali names reflect those who came later and settled among the Bajuni speakers. Names, genealogies, and places of origin can easily be changed to reflect new social identities and more prestigious origins. So not all clans with Arabic or southern Somali names necessarily came from southern Arabia or further north in Somalia. The classic case of this is the Shirazi, perceived as very prestigious, not just among the Bajuni but also elsewhere on the coast, but not necessarily denoting an ancestor from the Persian city.

Even this modification does not correspond to Bajuni perceptions of their origins. Foremost among Bajuni representations in song and verse of their origin is Shungwaya: “We came from Shungwaya”. Although the versions available do not agree in all details, they do agree on broad issues. In my opinion, the three sources mentioned in footnote and the *Vave kwa Mgunya*, partly cited above, differ in their reliability. The *Utendi wa Shungwaya* and the *Vave kwa Mgunya* are ancient verse and in fixed form. Singers and reciters may have modified bits of content and replaced forgotten and maybe replaced other bits over the centuries, but they are formalised accounts, written not so long after the events. So even though opaque in places, they represent a better account than the versions of Bajuni history by the two modern elders, who are much further removed from the events and contain 20th century interpretations, with heavy reliance on the older songs/verse. This summarises the general parts common to all the sources arranged chronologically:

(Before Shungwaya, all sources mention Mecca, some mention Sham, Arafat, Jedda, Bakshush).

“We came/came down to Shungwaya. (‘We’ is the 18 clans (the 10 *miuli*, the 8 *bana*)), we came on foot, even with pack animals, we passed by dry areas, we avoided the mud, we crossed rivers, at Shungwaya we carved our signs (on trees), at Shungwaya there were tall buildings, the Pokomo and Giryama (= Miji Kenda), (also others in some accounts) were also at Shungwaya, We came down from Shungwaya, also on foot, and moved along the shore to Koyama (fine buildings, *majumba*, there), to Bushi, crossed the river to Buri Kavo, to Shungwaya, and others places, and settled down on the shore. Later the Orma attacked and we fled south, but later returned (by boat)”.

Reading these songs and this verse repeatedly leads to the impression that there are two Shungwaya, one in the interior and north of Koyama, and one on the coast, synonymous with Buri Kavo.

This dicotomy is reflected in interpretations in the second half of the 20th century, there being some interpreters (local and western) who interpret Shungwaya as a coastal (Buri Kavo) place, and others who think it refers to an inland location. It could well be both. Miji Kenda (especially) and Pokomo versions of their time in Somali talk of an original, earlier residence further north, and then of having been displaced south by Orma incursions to a second place on the Juba, or south of the Juba on the coast (Spear 1978). That corresponds well to Bajuni descriptions. This being the case, the name Shungwaya was carried south by the ancestors of some Bajunis and to the coast from its original inland place in the north. In this interpretation, ‘Shungwaya’ would be as the Arab and southern Somali clan names, reflecting later but important accretions to the original Bajuni-speaking population. I think the ancestors of some of the current Bajuni population came from the inland Shungwaya but I do not think they were Bajuni-speaking, they are later but important (Cushitic-speaking) arrivals.

There are several reasons to think that there were no Bajuni speakers at the first, inland, Shungwaya. First, many of the clan names (especially the *nane dha bana*) are southern Somali, presumably named after their founding fathers. Second, while Pokomo and Miji Kenda are linguistically similar and related, Bajuni is much less similar and more distant linguistically. That would be best explained by saying that the Shungwaya Bantu ancestors spoke Pokomo or Miji Kenda and some shifted language to Bajuni when they came down to the coast. Third, if Bajunis today are asked about their identity and their work, all without exception say “We are fishermen”, who travel about by boat. But those who came from the first Shungwaya can hardly have been fishermen, because Shungwaya was inland, and they say they travelled down to the coast on foot, not by boat, and even on pack animals (donkeys, camels?). They must have shifted to ocean fishing and dhows when they settled on the coast.

No interpreter has yet explained satisfactorily why (the original, northern) Shungwaya was so important in the minds of Miji Kenda, Pokomo, Elwana, Bajuni, and Aweera. It might be noted in passing that the coastal Shungwaya is remarkably poorly documented in writing. Where other towns such as Brava, Pate, Lamu, and Kilwa have long local written oral traditions/histories, coastal Shungwaya has no such history and little convincing archaeological evidence for a large early site. In his coastal overview, Prins (1967: 92) can find little to say about Shungwaya = Buri Kavo. Why not?

Bajuni oral traditions and clan names list their Shungwaya ancestors (southern Somali, Bantu), together with their Arab ancestors, but no apparent ancestor who spoke Bajuni. The only oblique reference I find to anyone possibly like that is an anecdote in Grottanelli of a conversation with a Bajuni on one of the islands who told him a local story that when the (Cushitic) Firado first arrived, they found a lone fisherman on the shore. He quickly faded from the conversation. Elsewhere along the coast there are other such stories but significantly different. At Kilwa, Lamu, and Pate, for example, when Arab immigrants arrived, they intermarried or negotiated agreements with the ruling family, producing a new or a modified ruling family, often with a Sultan. The Bajuni had no such ruling family and no central government, a common theme in oral tradition and even in current talk: “We have no government, we are weak, we are pushed around by governments, we are just fishermen, but it is our land”. Instead of entering into a relationship with the local power holders, the Arabs found a lone fisherman, who faded from the conversation, from Bajuni traditions, from history. He may be The Bajuni.

There is a final shortcoming in what precedes. It concerns the role of those referred to as southern Somalis, and others. This is of considerable importance in Bajuni history, as most of the *Nane dha Bana* clans from “Shungwaya”, and a few others, a dozen or more in total, have southern Somali names. If we could identify the community/communities from which they came, it would enlarge our knowledge of early Bajuni history. That identification is easier said than done. The main methodology is linguistic. Standard Somali is based on northern forms of Somali. The communities speaking these northern forms migrated into southern Somalia only in recent centuries. Before their arrival the

communities in the south spoke southern varieties of Somali. Some of these southern communities are well known – the Tunni and Garre for example, who today live from Brava through Marika to beyond Mukdisho and beyond, along the coast and inland. They are mostly sedentary, urban or semi-urban and have interacted for a long time with the coastal people. Others have only very recently come to the light of publication – the Maay and Maha along and between the Juba and Shebelle Rivers. Yet others are felt by many Somalis not to form part of the Somali nation, the Boni = Aweera for instance, who are hunter-gatherers and live today behind the coast in northern Kenya and southern Somalia.

The current locations of the southern Somali communities are not necessarily where they lived earlier. Lewis (1969: 15ff), for example, states that the Tunni once lived on the Juba, then moved south and settled between Kismayuu and Lamu in the tenth or eleventh centuries AD, and “later” moved north again, across the Juba, to settle near Brava, where they live today. It is also possible that some southern Somali communities in the area have since ceased to exist.

So the position taken here is that during the second millennium AD, and possibly earlier, the area from the Tana River in the south, north along the coast of the Indian Ocean, at least as far as Brava, and including the inland interriverine area between the Webi Shebelle and the Juba River was home to various southern Somali communities. Readers will note that the northern part of this area is isomorphic with the first, inland, Shungwaya, mentioned as few paragraphs above as the putative homeland for Bajuni, Pokomo, Miji Kenda, and others, in the first millennium AD.

The simplest way of identifying contact with outsiders is via loanwords. English today has thousands of words of French origin: we know these first entered English after AD1066, when the Norman French invaded England, and continued for many following centuries, even though French military domination had ceased. Swahili today has thousands of words of Arabic origin: these did not originate from military invasion but from prolonged religious and cultural domination over many centuries. Likewise, the Lexicon at the end of this monograph, contains many dozens, even hundreds, of words of Somali origin, undoubtedly pointing to earlier contact with Somali communities.

How to identify the particular Somali source? There is a standard linguistic methodology for this. One characteristic of related dialects, varieties, and languages is that they show regular and systematic phonetic correspondences. Using Bajuni and Swahili as an example, we find these (there are dozens of others at the end of the Lexicon, below):

Bajuni	Swahili
ch (e.g. <i>michi</i> ‘trees’)	t (<i>miti</i>)
si (e.g. <i>simbo</i> ‘stick(s)’)	fi (<i>fimbo</i>)

Many examples of these can be found in the Lexicon. If we found many words in a third, neighbouring language with *ch* and *si* where Swahili has *t* and *fi*, we would know those words had been taken from Bajuni, not Swahili. Conversely, if we found many words in the third language with *t* and *fi*, we would know Swahili was the source. Unfortunately, while such phonetic correspondences are well documented for Bajuni (see end of Lexicon for over 30), they are not well documented for southern Somali varieties. What we would like is a table of the type:

Garre	Tunni	Maay	Maha	Boni	etc
a ₁	a ₂	a ₃	a ₄	a ₅	
b ₁	b ₂	b ₃	b ₄	b ₅	

To draw a table like this depends on the availability of sufficient vocabulary for all these and other Somali varieties: that does not exist in the available literature. For a few of the words of Somali origin in the Lexicon, most Somali varieties, northern and southern, the shape is the same (e.g. *gura* ‘move abode, migrate’). For most (e.g. *abawa*, *abaya*) the shape varies from one dialect to another, and the source is clearly not northern Somali. If we had a table such as that sketched, we could place the Bajuni words against the correspondences in the table and the southern Somali source or sources would become clear or at least clearer. Since we don’t have this knowledge, this identification of the southern Somali source community or communities is work for another day.

Two statements can be made with some confidence. One is that it is not Northern Somali who were in touch with the Bajuni settlements in the middle of the second millennium A.D. The other is that it is also not the Boni, despite their current and recent proximity to Bajuni communities: the lexical and phonetic material in Heine (1978: 41-2, 51-78: 1982) suggests this quite strongly (e.g. Somali *guur* ‘migrate, move abode’, *daar* ‘touch’, Bajuni and ND *gur-a*, *dar-a*, versus Boni *kuur*, *taar*, etc). That leaves “Southern Somali, Jabarti, Benadiri”. I looked carefully at the vocabulary and the phonology in Tosco’s (1997) short grammar of Tunni. Despite what Colucci and Lewis says about Tunni being as far south as Lamu in the late first millennium AD. I see no particular reason to think that Tunni is (or is not) the source of the Somalia material in Bajuni or the other northern Swahili dialects.

Although we cannot yet identify the source community/communities, we can hazard a well informed guess at the location of at least these southern Somali communities. We find a set of loanwords from southern Somali in all the northern Swahili dialects, that is, Lamu, Pate, Siu, Bajuni, and Bravanese (to keep the picture clear and simple, Malindi and Mombasa are ignored): a second set in in Bajuni alone: and a third set in Bravanese alone. It is axiomatic in historical linguistics that innovations (e.g. loanwords) shared by a set of language communities are most simply explained by positing that they were not absorbed separately into those communities at different times and places, but were absorbed just once in one place, by the single ancestor of these communities, whence they were inherited into today’s speech communities. So the loanwords from southern Somali shared by all the Northern Swahili communities these loanwords in Bajuni were absorbed once while the Northern Swahili communities were still living in one place, that is, in the general area of the Lamu Archipelago, as early as the second half of the first millennium AD, as set out above. The additional loanwords in Bravanese alone are easy to explain: they come from one (Tunni?) or more southern Somali communities after the Bravanese had moved north and settled at Brava. The loanwords in Bajuni are harder to explain. Bajuni is spoken along a littoral of some 250 kms. The loanwords are shared by all Bajuni communities and so were not absorbed separately into the communities at Old Kismayu, Ngumi, Chula, Kiunga. Fadha, etc, but were taken just once into the single ancestral community. Where and when was that located? Two scenarios suggest themselves. One occurred in far northeastern Kenya and maybe bits of adjacent far southern Somali: while still in the ancestral homeland of the Northern Swahili communities, in the Lamu Archipelago, the ancestral Bajuni community established itself on the northern fringe of the old homeland, remained in contact for some time with the same southern Somali community, absorbed more vocabulary, eventually splitting up and moving north along the coast as far as Kismayu. The second scenario would have the ancestral Bajuni community separating from the ancestral Northern Swahili community, moving up north, settling (say, at Kismayuu?), being in contact with a southern Somali community, absorbing loan material, and then dispersing and spreading south. At present I find it impossible to choose between these two scenarios. Two southern Somali sources might even have been involved: one in or near the Lamu Archipelago, and a second consisting of southern Somali émigrés coming south from the original inland Shungwaya.

This historical picture is simplified, partly because we lack the lexical sources to fill it out, partly because I wanted to keep the broad outline clear, partly because many readers may not be linguistically sophisticated and would have trouble following the technical arguments. One part of the jigsaw puzzle item deliberately omitted is the role of the Dahalo. They occupy a very small area near the foot of the Tana River today and speak what is often called a Southern Cushitic language (with some Khoisan additions). They live or until recently lived by hunting, they are a remnant group, few in number. They are at the end of a history that lasted millennia, and once lived over a much wider area, up the Tana into central Kenya and into southern Somalia, at least. At the start of the 20th century, they were described, at least in northern Kenya, as “slaves” of the Bajuni (early colonial terminology, exact reference unclear). Dahalo and Aweera are at the bottom of the social ladder. No self-respecting Bajuni or coastal Swahili would want to acknowledge any ancestral link or origin with them. But the linguistic evidence suggests that Dahalo, besides the southern Somali communities, has influenced all the communities speaking northern Swahili dialects, besides other Bantu communities in eastern Kenya. The borrowed lexical material points to Dahalo or southern Somali, the phonological changes point to southern Somali.

8a Bajuni attitudes All this history has resulted in certain attitudes among Bajunis. One was mentioned just above: “we have no government, we are weak, we are pushed around by national governments and others, we are mere fishermen, but this is our land”. Indeed, they are right, as they have lived along these southern shores far longer than the northern Somali, who have now intruded (might is right). These attitudes presumably grew as Bajuni power declined in recent centuries, faced with the growing power of mainland peoples, first Orma, then Somalis originating in the north. Grottanelli (1955: 200) points out that Bajunis don’t feel part of the Somalia nation, nor do they have a single word for it. The word *iti* (Swahili *nchi*) ‘country’ refers to *ubajunini* ‘Bajuniland’, not to bigger entities. Born in an era when there were no central governments, only raw power, it now characterizes attitudes in both Somalia and Kenya towards the central governments. Bajunis feel marginal and marginalized.

One aspect of this is linguistic defiance. For centuries, ethnic Somalis lived on the mainland and did not venture onto the islands, and most Bajunis were born, lived, and died on their islands. The mainland was mainly Somali-speaking and the Bajuni Islands of Somalia were monolingually Bajuni. A few adult Bajuni males spoke some Swahili and/or Somali as a result of fishing or trading activities. Most islanders were resolutely monolingual – adult Bajunis did and do not care for Somalis or Somali, did not and do speak Somali, did not and do want to speak it, and strongly discouraged their children from speaking it. Relations between Bajunis and ethnic Somalis were frosty, to say the least. This traditional Bajuni aversion to Somalis and their language was based on long memories of dimly remembered events in the past (see Nurse 1982, 1991a, 1994). When Somalia imploded in 1991, ethnic Somalis flooded on to the island, bringing chaos, violence, and death with them. The events since 1991 have only strengthened the age-old aversion to the invaders and their language.

8b The future of the Bajuni language (ki-Bajuni) in Somalia The current decline of *ki-Bajuni* in southern Somalia has much to do with the refugee camps. In 1992, when the Bajuni community in southern Somalia was under immediate threat from ethnic Somali invading the islands and other settlements, the UN arranged transportation south to refugee camps on the SE Kenya coast, north of Mombasa, including (Kwa) Jomvu. The majority of Somali Bajunis took advantage of the transportation and the camps. Most stayed six years until 1998, when the camps were closed at the request of the Kenya government. Told it was safe to return – it was in fact not – most returned.

In theory the camps were tightly sealed. All UNHCR refugee camps had strict rules on paper governing refugee exit from, and local Kenyan entrance to, the camps. The practice was different – all

camps were fairly porous in terms of opportunity by inhabitants to move and/or reside outside these locations. How porous depended on the camp. Much evidence, direct and circumstantial, points to porosity, not tight sealing.

While Swahili was a second language for most camp residents, workers, and guards at Kakuma in NW Kenya, surrounded by deserts and unfriendly Turkana tribesmen, the situation at Jomvu and other camps in SE Kenya, was different. Inmates and locals both spoke Swahili or a dialect (e.g. Bajuni) of Swahili. Outsiders came into the camps in SE Kenya, speaking the local coastal Swahili. Several refugees have referred to Kenyan teachers entering to teach, English, literacy, and numeracy (at least). Other Kenyan nationals also entered the refugee sites without problems, either in an authorized manner, e.g. as members of UNHCR's Implementing Partners, or in a more informal manner, e.g. to undertake casual work. Camps always had Kenyans and Somalis moving in and out. The Bravanese inmates, in particular, quickly adapted to Kenya and Swahili and opened small businesses in and outside of the camps. Small shops (dukas) lined the main streets in the camps filled with Kenyan goods (food, videos, lumber, etc). Many refugees had to sell portions of their rations outside the camps to get money for other essential items such as clothes. A few refugees managed to get work permits which allowed them out of the camps to work, others were registered in refugee camps, but effectively lived in Mombasa (and indeed collected their rations at the refugee camp on distribution days), while others effectively obtained work permits and were officially allowed to remain outside the camps. Once a Kenyan Bajuni businessman hired a bus from Mombasa and drove up into the Dadaab Refugee camp in NE Kenya to collect about 50 to 100 Somali Bajuni. The Kenyan Bajuni and the leader of the Somali Bajuni were relatives. These refugees then went off to Mombasa. None of them took their UNHCR issued tents with them, implying they would no longer need them.

The Kenya government did not like the porosity of the camps in SE Kenya and ordered them closed. Refugees were moved up to NE Kenya, much further from population centres. Apparently not far enough, because the Kenyan government then opened the huge camp at Kakuma, very far from any town and hard to escape from.

Whatever the exact situation of people entering and leaving, the camps were linguistically porous – language is carried in by outsiders and doesn't leave. I have heard refugees say they spoke Swahili in the SE camps and I have seen UK Home Office interviews where they said the same thing. In one recent such interview the interviewee – a male in his twenties - said: “When we were in the camp (Jomvu) and I was there when the other refugee kids in the camp used to play together and we used to communicate in the language...This is what I was talking with them what I am talking with you and this is the language we used to speak when we went back home to Somalia...There is no difference between Kenya and Somali Swahili”. As another young man on another Home Office interview recently said, it was “cool to talk (camp) Swahili so we continued when we returned” to Somalia. Whatever the exact details of the linguistic transformation in the camp(s), Bajunis spoke Bajuni before the camps but young Bajunis spoke their brand of Swahili after the camps.

Most Somali Bajunis fled to the camps in Kenya in 1991/2, taking their children with them. Children born in the 1980's were aged between two and twelve in 1992. The years in which languages are acquired easily and quickly start at birth and continue into the early teens, so this generation, then children, now in their twenties, were in the camp(s) during the critical period, and there acquired the form of Swahili they now speak. Children acquire what they hear around them, not necessarily what their parents speak. They are now the young Somali Bajunis who form the bulk of today's refugees. Rather than saying that for them Bajuni changed into Swahili, it is more appropriate to say that a language shift (language replacement) occurred, in which Bajuni was replaced by Swahili, with or without some Bajuni colouring. Since they were the majority of their age group in the islands when

they returned in 1998, they influenced the few children who had stayed. They are the future. The prevalent attitude among young people is that they prefer Swahili, an international language with prestige and utility, whereas Bajuni has neither so they no longer find it useful. There is today a huge range of Bajuni language ability among those claiming to be Somali Bajunis. At one end of the scale there is more or less full fluency in Bajuni: such individuals tend to be elderly and living outside Somalia. At the other end of the scale are individuals who speak only Swahili (or Somali), and no Bajuni: mainly young and living in Kismayuu. In between are individuals who speak Bajuni-coloured Swahili, Swahili with some Bajuni, mainly vocabulary and common phonetic features, added. If an ethnic Bajuni community continues in Somalia – itself doubtful – that is what it will speak.

9. Alternative, mainly colonial, names, for some localities

Kismayuu Bay: Refuge Bay.

Chula; also referred to by Prins (1961, 1967) as Tula, also by some refugees in early 2000's.

Burgao estuary: Port Durnford. Burgao also known as Birikao and Buri Kavo.

Hood Rocks, just south of Port Durnford.

Rozier Rocks, south of Ras Garavole.

Ras Shangwani = Sherwood Point.

Ras Gome la Hekwa = Fair Point or is it Sherwood?

Ras Kiamboni: Dick's Head.

Shakani Island = Rees Island.

Simambaya Island = Arlett Island.

Mlango wa Hindi = Port Arlett.

Little Head (just north of Kiwayuu).

Ndau = Boteler Island. There is an 1835 book by a Boteler, T. on a voyage of discovery to East Africa

The islands, the Bajuni Islands = the Dundas Islands. Captain Dundas, RN, was active along the coast in the later 19th century.

10. List of Bajuni places from north to south

INLAND

(River Juba)

COAST

Kisimayu(u)

Ras Mchoni

Gondal (= Kandali?)

ISLANDS/ISLES

(underlined = now or once habited, not exhaustive)

Kimoni Island

Mear Tomb Island

Kisimayuu Island (island until 1960s)

Gondal Juu (Elliott 1925)

Fawacho Islet = "Fawatu Island"

Mtanga wa papa

Ngai (also Ngai below)

Yambalangodhi (Yambalingodhi/Jambalangodhi)

Furu

Ilisi

Buli ("also once called Tulia", Elliott 1925)

Fuma T^hini

Fuma Island

Fumayuu = Fuma Mkubwa

Fuma Nyangwe/Ndangwe = ?

Kiwasa (= Kiwasi ?)

Kiwamwe (Kiamwe)

Kalibia, Galima, Galimagala, Kanda-yuu, Chawai, Marareni, Barakovu mentioned as islets N of Koyama, order to each other and to those above unclear)

Koyama T^hini

Koyama Island (3 villages, 5 names: Ghedeni/Gedeni (NW, Koyama (= Gedeni?), Koyama Yuu, Ihenge, Koyamani (S of Gedeni in dunes)

Grottanelli p. 127 mentions Osboda as the mainland farming area for Koyama (also for Ngumi??), opposite Ngumi

Ngumi T^hini

Ngumi Island (deserted today, once inhabited)

Shepape, Sheepepe, Shapape,

Kwa, (Kwe, Gua)

Yamba,

Umbu, Ambuu, Thenina, Bulbuni

Chovai Island Chovai village, also in the south there is Lukuva/Igome la Yuu

Stambuli (it and Mucho wa Yamani are mentioned as agricultural areas for Chovai)

Yamani

Chovai Creek = Shamba Mouth
Splits into

Lac Badana and
Mucho wa Yamani

Bavadi

Bangadini

Bagdadi

Stirikani

Pangazi

Mbavazi

Kuivi

Kuvumbe (kwa Kuvumbi, Kivumbi)

Kiwa cha Moga

Kuyumbi)

Ngai ?? also above
Burihuala
Tegadi = Indu
Schie
Yund^ruyund^ru
Tangwe

Chula = Tula Island (Chula in north: Elliott says there was a village. Kitakundu, ½ mile south of Chula village). Status of Fuli-ni, Firado-ni (higher, to the north), Hinara-ni, Iburi-ni.
Mdova separate, off the southern end.

Rasini
Kwa Bunu

Mucho wa Anole = Lak Salaam
mentioned by Grottanelli as
farming area for Chula

(Also in this coast are
Isolijuba, Kidifani, Yara)
Borali bin Bwana
Kudai (now Kulmisi)
Tosha

Vidal
Darakasi
Kodhaliwa
Hagi Bule
Chand^raa

Kiembo cha Bur Kavvo
Puluni
Ndoa
Shea

A creek which splits into
Mcho wa Kimoti and Kelyani
Mcho wa Hola =
Mcho wa Bushbushi

Buri Kavvo (Burgao, Burgavo, Burgabo, Birikao, etc)
Kinaua, a ridge just inland of Port Durnford
Ras Gaulani
Buri Huala
“Ras Aliosi”

Buri Manga/Manza

Veku (also called Shungwaya Ndogo)
Ras Ishaka la Sia (14 miles march north of Gome la Hekwa)
Shondwe (= Tangwe?)
Ras Waravole/Garavole

Shamkuu, Shemkuu
She Mkuu?

Ras Mnarani (FitzGerald walked inland to Shamkuu from Mnarani)

Ras “Mai Caci”

Ras “Cau”

Ras Mbarabala

Ras Shangwani

Ras Mafufusi

Ras Igome la Hekwa

Ras Miandi

Ras kwa Odo

Famau Wali Island

Kiamboni (not mentioned by FitzGerald 1898)

Ras Kiamboni

Border between Somalia and Kenya

Some of the names below are from different times and authors and may be synonyms.

Ishakani (‘in the bush’)

Ndeamui

Kiunga (in Swahili means ‘link’ or ‘outskirts, suburbs, adjacent area’)

Kiunga-mwini Island (mwini ‘at the town’)

Shakani Island

Mambore, Mwambore

Omwe

Simambaye = Shimambaya ([e])?

Simambaya Island

Mlango wa Hindi (= island, reef, what?)

Mwana Mtama

Shee Umuro

Uchi Juu

Shee Jafari

Rubu

(Mswakini – FitzGerald)

Sendeni

Uwani

Mvundeni, Mvinden

Ashuwei, Ashwee

Mataroni

Vumwe (island, mainland?) (same as Vumbe?)

Mkokoni

Mararui

Vumbe

Kiwayuu

Kiwayuu Island

Ndau Island

Itembe (FitzGerald)

Vaas (FitzGerald)

Dodori
Dondo

Kidhingichini
Mbwajumwali
Chundwa
Atu
Myabogi
Fadha

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