

## **Bajuni: people, society, geography, history, language<sup>1</sup>**

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### **1. Introduction**

For at least five centuries the Bajuni<sup>2</sup> thrived, living a fairly peaceful subsistence existence, fishing, trading, and farming, in a string of cross-border settlements, from Kismayuu<sup>3</sup> in southern Somalia down to the northern tip of Pate Island in Kenya, a distance of some 250 km. They did not live luxuriously,

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<sup>1</sup> The information for this overview has come from several sources, other than those published: Alessandra Vianello, Brian and Tiffy Allen, Mohamed Bakari Mohamed (elder of Chula village), Yusuf Omar Mwalim (elder of Chovae village), Said Ahmed Abdurahman (Brava), bajuni.com (= Mohamed). I am grateful to Alessandra Vianello and Sarah Rose for editorial assistance. Brian Allen held over 350 face to face interviews with anonymous Somali Bajuni refugee claimants. I myself listened to evidence from some anonymous 80 Somali Bajuni refugee claimants. Together, these two sets of refugee claimants came from: Kismayuu, Fumayu, Koyama, Chovae, Chula, Mdova, Ras Kiamboni. Some information from these sources is also used.

<sup>2</sup> Also known as T<sup>h</sup>ik<sup>h</sup>uu, Tiku, Gunya, and al-Jazira. Bajunis is their own preferred name.

Gunya is used by some Bajuni to refer to people among them who were originally slaves. In Brava, while not referring to slave origin, the term Gunya is slightly derogatory and one would not tell a person to their face that they are a m-Gunya. When Bravanese want to make a joke or laugh at Bajunis, they call them wa-Gunya. In Bravanese traditions the Gunya were sea-people who brought mangrove poles.

T<sup>h</sup>ik<sup>h</sup>uu is used by the people of Siu and Pate in Kenya to refer to the people of the big (*kuu*) land (*i*<sup>h</sup>*i*), the mainland, the Bajuni.

During Siad Barre's regime the term *al-jazira* was promoted to represent the islands and their inhabitants.

Since this overview is about Bajuni, all names and words cited are in their Bajuni form, with Swahili (Sw.) equivalents in brackets. I omit all prefixes, so Bajuni for the people *va-Bajuni* (Sw. *wa-Bajuni*) and the language *ki-Bajuni*

<sup>3</sup> The name *Kismayuu(u)* is of Bajuni origin. It is formed from *Kisima yuu*, 'northern/upper well', and can be pronounced as *Kismayúu* or *Kismáyu*. *Kismayo* and *Kismaayo* are alien versions.

but they lived well enough and formed a coherent and stable community. Men travelled widely, as traders north up to Kismayuu, Muqdisho and southern Arabia, across the Indian Ocean to the east, and south to Lamu, Malindi, Mombasa, Tanzania, Zanzibar, the Comoro Islands, and Madagascar. Some Bajunis were famous as sea captains the length of the East African coast. Fishermen spent several weeks each year in temporary fishing camps on other islands<sup>4</sup>. Women also travelled but less far, to nearby islands and towns to buy supplies, maybe occasionally to Muqdisho or Mombasa. Men took care of business, of making boats, making and mending nets, catching and selling fish. Women took care of the home, of cooking, of some agriculture and made some money by weaving baskets and collecting cowries for sale. Children took care of goats and boys went out on fishing boats. Both sexes knew songs, stories, and poetry: some songs were the province of women, others of men. They would know the names of clans. Somalis, Bajunis, and other East African ethnicities divide the ‘tribe’ (Bajuni and Swahili *cabila*, Bajuni *uchand'u*) into smaller groupings known as clans (Bajuni *k'amasi*, Swahili and Bajuni *ukoo*). Bajuni clan names (see section 5) come from ancestors or places and clan affiliation used to play a role in allegiance, marriage, and inheritance.

Bajunis were few (see section 4), their mainland neighbours (recently Somali, formerly Oromo) were many<sup>5</sup>; 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 (Bajuni) 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.

This situation continued after independence (1960 in Somalia, 1963 in Kenya). It started to change in Somalia in 1974, when the government started to move Bajunis off the islands, and it changed radically 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<sup>6</sup>. 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, telling them they had no right to be there (although they had been there longer than the intruders). 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 Kismayuu and never returning: of whole communities being moved to forced labour camps in Kismayuu: 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 Somalia in the near future. At the time of writing, no one can be sure how many Bajuni remain in Somalia but an informed guesstimate would be at most a few hundred (cf section 4, paragraph 4, below).

There has also been orthographic cleansing. Since Bajunis were illiterate, their place names and their language were rendered by others, in the orthographic conventions of the others. In southern Somalia, Italian conventions were used, and reproduced by non-Italians who came later: so the Bajuni

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<sup>4</sup> The island of Ngumi, for instance, has been deserted for centuries but was and is used for fishing camps, and for drying fish.

<sup>5</sup> The present population of Somalia is undetermined: estimates range between 8 and 10 million.

<sup>6</sup> The term is borrowed from the Northern Ireland situation.

village Kiamboni<sup>7</sup> 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<sup>8</sup>, and this policy of replacing Bajuni versions by those of others is followed by bodies such as the National Geographic and the British Admiralty. In Kenya, Bajuni names have long been replaced by Swahili ones, often misspelled, since they were originally 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 has only been 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. The best documentation is in the mind of elderly Bajunis but as they die out, the chance of documenting their knowledge recedes.

General. The best single written source on Bajunis culture is Grottanelli (1955a). 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 Bajunis area.

Archaeology: Chittick (1976) and especially Wilson (various), who himself worked in northern Kenya in the late 1970s and early 1980s 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 1880's: 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.

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<sup>7</sup> *Ki-ambo-ni* has a good Bajuni meaning, 'at the hamlet'. See *kiambo* in the word list, and discussion in Prins.

<sup>8</sup> Interestingly, I have heard of attempts by ethnic Somalis, wishing to deny a Bajuni connection, to explain Kiamboni as a Boni village, the Boni being a local hunting group, whose domain was the forest and bush.

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 in FitzGerald and those listed at the end under British Admiralty and Great Britain War Office<sup>9</sup>. If these are combined with the reports of early travelers, a reasonably - though not completely - comprehensive picture of the Bajuni area emerges<sup>10</sup>. 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<sup>11</sup>, British War Office, British War Office and Air Ministry, Grottanelli 1955, Wilson 1984: 74, 76).

I am also in regular contact with two other individuals who specialise in language matters in this geographical area. One is Daniel J. Van Lehman, Co Director, National Somali Bantu Project, Portland State University, Portland, Oregon, USA, who was formerly a field UNCHR officer in N.E. Province, Kenya, referred to below as “the first source”. He gave me valuable advice on the historical use of Swahili in southern Somalia<sup>12</sup>. The other, referred to below as “the second source”, works in the UK, has personally interviewed over 300 refugees claiming to be Somali Bajunis for some three hours each, and has thus a total of over 900 hours of experience. He lived for 20 years in East Africa and has published four books in Swahili (his name can be provided, if requested). Both sources are in constant touch with Bajuni expatriate communities in their respective countries and their claims can be verified

Readers will note that sources on the www are largely absent. It is possible on the web to find reports by commissions, 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<sup>13</sup>**

The Bajuni domain, at least since the 14/15<sup>th</sup> century, is associated with the string of coral islands that runs from Kismayuu, 16 kms south of the mouth of the Juba<sup>14</sup>, down to Kiwayuu Island in northern Kenya,

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<sup>9</sup> There are also Italian, and maybe German and French, government maps, here ignored.

<sup>10</sup> Google Earth has the whole coast seen from a satellite. The pro is the physical detail, the cons are the lack of labels for places, the inability to get enough magnification, and the fact that on the day the satellite flew over the islands, clouds obscured some areas, especially most of Chula Island. I also found it hard to distinguish the exact number of buildings in each village, building from house, and inhabited from uninhabited/abandoned/ruined house.

<sup>11</sup> British Admiralty map 3362 (1997) combines the two earlier maps in the Bibliography. From a Bajuni point of view, it is retrograde, as it omits some earlier detail and Somaliises all names.

<sup>12</sup> In this sentence, ‘historical use of Swahili’ excludes Bajuni, Bravanese, and “Somali Bantu”.

<sup>13</sup> Many of the statements made here are modifications of material in Grottanelli and Prins, which therefore see.

just north of Pate Island, a distance of some 150 miles = 250 kms. There is also a narrow and discontinuous string of mainland settlements opposite the islands, starting with Kismayuu, and FitzGerald's (1898: 502) map shows Bajuni coastal settlements in the south ending at Dodori Creek, opposite Pate Island. Distances in kms: Kismayuu 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<sup>15</sup>", other names being the Bajuni Islands, the 500 islands, and the Dundas group<sup>16</sup>. 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 *m(u)cho*, 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<sup>17</sup>. Today there are no settlements along the 35 miles stretch of mainland coast between Buri Kavvo and Ras Kiamboni and on 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, Chovae 6.5, Chula 5, Ngumi 4.5. Prins (1967: 28) says:

"The islands are all low coral formations, withered by the sea and the breeze, and 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".

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<sup>14</sup> The Bajuni term for the Juba is *Mucho wa Gobweni*, 'river of Gobwe'. Gobweni derives from Somali Goobweyn, a village 12 kms north of Kisimayu. The word consists of Goob = an open area, cleared of trees/bush + weyn = large, big. Probably the locality marks the mouth of the Juba. In old travellers' writings the river is called Ganane (especially in its upper course). The town of Lugh was called Lugh Ganane. Thanks to A. Vianello for this information. .

<sup>15</sup> Although the general word for 'island' is *ki-dhiva* (Sw. *ki-siwa*), a second, older word for 'island' appears in place names. So beside the well-known *Kilwa* in southern Tanzania, there is also, for example *Kiwa-yuu* in northern Kenya. Sacleux (1939: 421) says *Kiwa/Kilwa* refers to a small coral island. *Kiwa/Kilwa* consist of prefix *ki-* and stem *-lwa*, the latter going back to Proto-Bantu (Guthrie (1971: 126).

<sup>16</sup> Medieval travelers mention the "Fire Islands", off the East African coast, which might also be another earlier designation.

<sup>17</sup> FitzGerald describes extensive Bajuni fields of millet and other plants on the mainland opposite Pate Island in the 1890's, and said there were even more extensive adjacent areas, once cleared of forest, but then abandoned. He describes the slaves as Kamba, Taita, and others. He says Boni were employed to guard them and to keep the fields clear of birds and animals.

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, Chovae, 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 a connecting causeway was built in the 1960s. Examination of the oral traditions and the archaeological record suggests Ngumi was abandoned at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> 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 centered on fish, it did depend to some extent on the availability of crops from the mainland. The 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> 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<sup>18</sup>, 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<sup>19</sup>. Today or at various points during the 20<sup>th</sup> century the water in the wells at Koyama, Ngumi, Chovae, 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. Pumpkin (squash?), 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<sup>20</sup>. They use hooks and lines, weirs,

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<sup>18</sup> Mainland populations also: FitzGerald (1898) walked through a string of mainland Bajuni villages in northern Kenya and estimated the populations at 100 – 200 each. See footnote 2.

<sup>19</sup> Islanders adapted to these sparse conditions. In Lamu in the 1970s a hydrologist told me that local people used five gallons of water a day per person for everything, whereas Europeans, with their wasteful ways (flush toilets, showers, baths, swimming pools) averaged 150 gallons a day.

<sup>20</sup> Grottanelli (p190ff) describes three main types of Ba boats: *mtumbwi*, *dau*, *mashua*. In the past *mtepe* also a Ba type at least up to the 1920's, but no more. *Ngalawa* and *jahazi* seen but not Bajuni types. "All *mitepe* fly three flags on the masthead, white pennant is the flag of Ali of Shungwaya,.. below the white

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 Chovae into the 20<sup>th</sup> 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 Kismayuu is Brava, whose people speak Mwiini/Bravanese, a Swahili dialect. Inland are the people now curiously<sup>21</sup> referred to as the Somali Bantu, along the Juba and further north. There may have been even others earlier, because Mukdishu has an area called *Shanga-ni*<sup>22</sup> ('sand, beach'), rather clearly general Swahili/Bantu in shape: between Muqdishu and Brava is Merca, whose original Bantu 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 settlements, the island, a/the village on the island, and sometimes even a settlement on the coast opposite have the same name, thus Fuma is used in referring to the island, the village, and the (now abandoned) settlement opposite. Most have or had two or even three villages: so Chula in the late 19<sup>th</sup> 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, Chovae (434 people), Kismayuu<sup>23</sup> (334), Chula (301), and Koyama (172), reported in Grottanelli (1955: 25). Grottanelli, based on his own observation in 1953, 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 being brackish, 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. So throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Bajuni individuals and families trickled down into Kenya, long before the civil war of the 1990s. The size of the

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flag is flown an enormously long streamer, known as utakataka. Under the streamer is the red flag of the Sultans of Shungwaya, in ancient times the capital of the Persian settlements of the Azanian coast.”

<sup>21</sup> Curious because it excludes Bravanese and Bajunis, who do speak Bantu, and includes many people along the inland rivers who do not speak Bantu.

<sup>22</sup> I have recently suggested that *Shanga* derives from the city of *Shanghai*, in China. No. *Shanga* is a good Bajuni and Swahili word that goes back to Proto-Bantu, several millennia ago. There are of course other *shanga* along the coast, notably the ruined settlement in the Lamu Archipelago.

<sup>23</sup> Kismayuu was originally a Bajuni town. It has long had a Swahili component and proximity to an ethnic Somali presence. The first settlement was on Kismayuu Island, joined to the mainland in the 1960s.

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 quite 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”, helped by the Kenyan Red Cross and the UNHCR. 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: Chovae, 2 villages, some 100 buildings: Istambuli, 50 buildings: Chula, one village on Chula, plus Mdova off the southern tip, Chula village with 100+ buildings is visible on the satellite photo, while Mdova is small, so we might guesstimate 150 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 some 700 buildings, but what does ‘building’ mean? Are they 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  $4 \times 700 = 2800$ , say, 3000<sup>24</sup>.

What of Kiamboni, Kismayuu, (and Buri Kavo)? Kiamboni (see below) grew during the 20<sup>th</sup> 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 20<sup>th</sup> century was much smaller (see below) and many of the buildings seen on the satellite photo look new, so some/many of the habitants may not be 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 20<sup>th</sup> century, but cite other sources with different estimates.

**Kismayuu** There is a dearth of hard factual information about Kismayuu. 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, since a search of web sites and other sources showed no comprehensive history of Kismayuu over the

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<sup>24</sup> At the end of the century, when Bajunis fled from Somalia, various international commissions and bodies, including the UN, were suddenly talking of up to 10,000 and even more. The Italian administration, Grottanelli, and Cassanelli were working in more peaceful times and had no reason to massage the figure, so I am more inclined to accept their numbers.

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 1960s. The name is of Bajuni origin (see fn. 3). 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 19<sup>th</sup> century and continuing through much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As the result of economic and political events in the later 20<sup>th</sup> century, the population mushroomed, and most of the newcomers are not Bajunis. The village/town was once divided into wards/quarters (Swahili *mitaa*, Bajuni *michaa*): *Majengo*<sup>25</sup> (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 Kismayuu to Jilib was built: *Siinay* dates from the 1980s: *Buulo Obligo* is now called *Waamo*. The main areas of the town/city recognized today are *Farjano*, *Faanoole*, *Shaqaalaha*, *Siinay*, and *Calanleey*.

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

Linguistically, while its traditional core was Bajuni, since at least the 19<sup>th</sup> century it has had a Swahili component, of a Kenyan coastal type: contact since the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century with the Bantu *Mushunguli*<sup>26</sup> along the *Juba River* just to the north, who spoke a form of Swahili and most of whom spoke *Zigua*: longstanding proximity to a local Somali presence: and a recent and massive influx of outside Somalis from further north.

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<sup>25</sup> Curiously, *Majengo* and *Sokoni* are Swahili, not Bajuni, shapes, which may result from the colonial period, when the British imported many Swahilis from further south (A. Vianello, p.c.).

<sup>26</sup> Grottanelli (p. 201) refers to the *Mushunguli* = *Gosha* as "slaves". Not clear if he is reporting a Bajuni or a Somali attitude. *Gosha* is a Somali geographical term, which means "thick forest, unhealthy land" (Somali pastoralists avoided it because of the tsetse fly). The term *Wa-gosha* as a general indicator of its inhabitants started to be used at the turn of the 20th century. Formerly they were generally indicated as *Wa-toro* 'fugitives' (A. Vianello, p.c.)

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

**Fuma**<sup>27</sup> Fuma appears in five shapes: i) Fuma, ii) Fuma Yúu/Iyúu (full form) = Fumáyu (shorter 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: perhaps 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. It is 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 potatoes, maize, peppers, coconuts, 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 Kismayuu 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 Ndangwe (“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/Iyúu* and *Tini*, seen in the pairing here, also occurs often in other settlements below: *yu/iyúuu* 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, renamed Kulmis.

**Koyama Island** has 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). 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. About equidistant between the two is a very small village, away from the coast a bit but on the lee side, with about 12 buildings, which I have seen referred to as Ihembe, Hembeni, Wembeni, and Ihenge. (also Koyama wa Kachi?). The Koyama used to farm here and until recently there were no permanent buildings.

In contrast to other island villages, Gedeni and Koyamani have no wards.

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

Refugees talk of two mosques (Koyamani = Koyama = Msikichi Nuur, and Gedeni mosque called Msikichi Kadhira). There is a *madrasa* in the “main mosque” (*nsikichi kuu*). A market called

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<sup>27</sup> Some of this information about Fuma was supplied to A. Vianello by Adiyo Aweso, who was one of Grottanelli’s informants and whose picture appears in the 1955 book.

Shamsi (also Chula). I assume the “main mosque” and the market are in Koyamani. They also talk of graves “of white people”, ruins, a pillar tomb, and a large “Portuguese” *geredha*. Cultivation of sweet potatoes, cassava, maize, papaya, mangoes, coconuts, *mikoko* (used for building boats) and *mtali* trees and keeping of hens, goats, sheep, cattle, camels is reported.

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<sup>28</sup>. Elliott mentions Nofali (mainly) and (also) Garre.

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

**Chovae Island**<sup>29</sup> Two villages: Chovae village on the midwest side (70 buildings), a little inland from the coast, and in the far SW is Dhukuwa, also called Igome la Yuu (30+ buildings). There are two mosques on the island (Nsikichi wa Pwani (on the west coast, in the village), Nsikichi wa Iyu (to the east and slightly further north)). Some sources also referred to Nsikichi wa Nuuru. Sheikh Mahmud and Sheikh Sulemani were mentioned. Elliott says “Brackish water in wells at Chovae, water brought from the east of island”. Chovae consists of small groups of houses (*michaa*) called Iburini (see also Chula and Mdova, below), Michi a kachi, Firadoni, Omo<sup>30</sup>, Kisiu, Kadoe. Said to be/have been a small school on the island, beside the *madrasa*. It is said to take several (four?) hours to walk the length of the island. Two “shores”, Pwani Ngadi (should it be Ngadhi?) (larger, where boats could land, part concrete), and Pwani wa Kisiu.

Going round the island, starting with the village on the leese, and then going clockwise are, in order (a question mark means I can’t read the spelling or doubt it): Pwani a Ngazi, Pwani a Sheny?, Bandari Kikochai (?). Mayapa Manoni, Bandari a Nkule, Igome la Sach?, Kwa Bora, Kwa Mongo, Nlima wa Bulibuli, Kitanga cha Irei, Kwa Asha, Kwa Vovo (?). Kilango cha Mware, Kwaheri (islet off the NE tip), Kichundruni, Kwa Bivanderemu, Panga Sera, Mongo wa Firadoni, Mongoni, Kigome cha Tepe, Kwa Barake, Kisiu cha Upandre, Kigome Kachi, Kiwa cha Mbe (?). Ipanga la Ngamia, Murpombo (?) Mdogo, Murpombo Nkulu, Bandari la Iyuu, Kitanga cha Bashiri, Iburini la Ngavo, Kipilipili cha Kae, Kipilipili cha Vatonyi, Kipilipilini, Usini, Pwani a Kisiu. Down the middle of the island, from north to south, are: (north of the village) Chumvi Uvandrani, Wa Iyuu, Mashimo a Vongo, and (south of the village) Dhiunwani (?) Dthingi, Dhisima dha Mtanga (shallow wells), Kisima cha Ng’ombeNgome (?), a well), Kisima cha Dhukuva (a well), Vana va Kisaba.

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

People grew maize, coconuts, *mikunadhi* (a small fruit) and kept hens, ducks, goats, sheep. Women collected *vibenza* on the beach.

<sup>28</sup> Lewis (1969: 43): “The limits of (Somali) pasture land are indicated by tribal marks cut in the bark of trees”.

<sup>29</sup> Sources for Chovae were several, the main one being Yusuf Omar Mwalim.

<sup>30</sup> Omo was originally a slave area, so named after their hair style ‘prow, crest’.

Opposite Chovae on the mainland is Chovae 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 Chovae, 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 agricultural areas for Chovae.

**Chula Island**<sup>31</sup> (also pronounced **Tula**). In the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, up to 1991 at least, Chula is said to have had the largest island population, although in 1926 it had only “301” inhabitants.

There is one village today, Chula, on the west/leeside of the island, with four *michaa* (‘quarters’): (Firado-ni, in the west), Hinari-ni (north), Fuli-ni (east, also referred to as Kifulii, Kifili-ni, and Ku-fuli-ni) and Iburi-ni (south). Around the island are a number of places with names. Going north along the leeside, from Chula village, in order, are Kiwadhani, Mbara Kule, Kitakundu (mentioned in 1926 by Elliott, who wrongly said it was south of Chula), Uso wa Fumo, Mfirado, and Kipuyu (on the northern tip), described as anchorages. Then going from north to south along the windward side are Mwongo wa Firado, Igome la Ove, Mwongo wa Sichechu, Mwongo Kidoda, Mwongo Saadi, and Mwongo Mkuu, described as beaches and harbours. Finally, starting at the southern tip, and going north along the lee side to Chula village are Ntanga wa Nde, Kigome cha Imbe, Uso wa Omar Wella, Mbara Hasani, Usini, and Ngweni Ngweni (also anchorages). Going from north to south inland, down the middle of the island are Dhithima dha Firado (several wells, a tower nearby), Maniferi, Kipemba, Iburi Ikuu, Nlima Senya, and Igome la Ng’ombe. A recent source estimated it was approximately 90 minutes’ walk from the north to south of the island. The village is divided by a creek: at low tide people can walk across, but at high tide they have to wade across or walk round, so some minutes’ walk. 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 the village, with over 100 buildings visible, perhaps a few in the south obscured by cloud. The main source said that “Up to 1975, before being evacuated, Chula village had four *michaa*”, which I find a puzzling claim as it still has four *michaa*. Some refugees refer to Fulini and Firadoni as villages.

At the edge of Firadoni is a mosque, Sharif Said Qullatten (also called the Friday Mosque, the Jamuye Mosque, and the Nsikichi Nkuu), in ruins but currently being rebuilt. There is a second mosque in Fulini, the Said Uthman Mosque. There are ruins of an old Geredha, said to be “Portuguese”, near the Msikiti Mkuu. Market (*suku*), fish auction. *madrassa*, no secular school. Much fresh water is brought from Mdova, because Chula water is brackish. There are jahazi racing competitions. People grew maize, cassava, millet, coconut trees (very old), and kept goats, sheep, and cattle.

**M(u)dova Island and village** Some 25 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*<sup>32</sup>. The wells in Chula are salty today and fresh water has to be

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<sup>31</sup> Sources for Chula were several, the main one being Mohammed Bakari Mohamed, born 1944. He was also one of the elders who gave testimony in 2000 to the Joint British-Danish-Dutch commission.

<sup>32</sup> One source claimed Mdoa has three wards: Mnara-ni, Mungala, Iburini, while another source said Mdoa has no wards and that these three are in Chundwa, on Pate Island.

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<sup>f</sup>aa Islands. They were not visible on the satellite image, due to cloud. Darakasi and Chand<sup>f</sup>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 t̄ini* ‘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 madrasa, 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 20<sup>th</sup> 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 or was 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. No contemporary description is available of these. Many of the mainland villages were abandoned during the shifta troubles of the 1960's. From north to south, the mainland villages are/were: 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/were very small (see the description by Fitz Gerald (1898), who talks of 100 - 200 people each), who walked through them. Some, and others now defunct, may have been larger in the past.

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

## 5. Clans

As other ethnic groupings in Somalia and East Africa, 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, also 1980, 1991): more recently there is *bajuni.com*. Grottanelli had his information from a sheikh or sheikhs in Kismayuu, Nurse interviewed Mzee Bwana Boramusa, then living in Kiunga but born in Somalia (?). Prins and *Bajuni.com* do not mention their sources. 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<sup>33</sup> (descendants of al-Khadhrajii<sup>34</sup>), al-Khadherajii (as preceding), Nofáli (descendants of Nofali wa 'Abd-i-Shamis<sup>35</sup> wa..."), said to be more recent Arabian origin". *Bajuni.com* has five, partly overlapping, partly different from those in Grottanelli: al-Ausii, al-Khadhrajii, al-Nofali, Banu Stambuli, al-Nadhiri.

From these 4 the other 18 are said to "descend": Chandraa, Chovae, Chund<sup>f</sup>a, Firado<sup>36</sup>, Kachwa, Kisimayu, Kudai, Ndipingoni, Ngumi, Shiradhi, Shungwaya, Simambaya = Shimambaya = Simambae,

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<sup>33</sup> Certain clan and place names are often shortened: Ausii to Ausi (also non-shortened Ausia), Khadhrajii to Khadhraji (also non-shortened Khadharjia, Kismayuu to Kismayu, Fumayuu to Fumayu, etc. Shortened or not, stress is always penultimate.

<sup>34</sup> "From Medina" (Grottanelli). Lewis says these 4 clans are also present to the north, among the Benadiri.

<sup>35</sup> The market in Chula is called Shams(i).

<sup>36</sup> In Mwiini, the language of Brava, m-Firado is glossed as someone with one Bajuni and one Somali parent (Kisseberth and Abasheikh: 115). However, enquiries by A. Vianello with three elderly Bravanese produced a different story: the Firado are part of the Dafaradhi, one of the five Tunni subclans, and were originally Bajunis who asked to join the Dafaradhi. The Firado in Brava deny their Bajuni origins and claim other origins, e.g. Garre. The upshot of his is that there

Tawayu, Umbuyi, Kiunga, Rasini, Veko, 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 (= Chandaa?), Uero, Umbuyi, Upembo, Utanuni, Uwani, Vekou, Vumwe (same as Omwe?), Zitindini, “to which should be added Il Barawi and Il Famaui”, a total of 32.

Nurse: 18<sup>37</sup> clans (“*kamasi*<sup>38</sup> *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 agreement.

*Kumi dha miuli*: Kiwayuu, Koyama, Omwe, Pingoni, Shungwaya, Simambaye, Taka, Veko, Vekwa, Vumwe. Bajuni.com has Angove, Chandaa, Chismayu, Chithindani, Gede<sup>39</sup>, Koyama, Ngumi, Omwe, Veko, Dhipingoni. Many of these are Bantu (or at least, not Somali terms) 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 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<sup>f</sup>aa/Tendaa, Chithindani, Chovae, Chula, Chund<sup>f</sup>a, Daile (= Dili?), Dili, al-Famaui, Firado, Garre/Gare, Gede, Ha(r)tikawa, Kachwa, Kava(= Yava?), (Na)Kilio. Kismayuu(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, Veko, Vekwaa, Vumbu, Yava, Dhipingoni, Dhitindini, 52 (?).

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are some Firado who are descendants of a father of the Garre and a Bajuni mother, similar to what Kisseberth and Abasheikh say.

This is clearly a tangled story, with Firado from the islands claiming mainland origins, while Bravanese/Tunni regard at least some Firado as having Bajuni origin. See also footnote 2.

<sup>37</sup> This use of numbers to refer to clan groupings is quite common in Somalia (Lewis 2002: 34) and extends down into traditional clans among the Swahili of northern Kenya (e.g. the nine of Siu, the seven of Pate, etc)

<sup>38</sup> The Tunni are divided into 5 ‘sections’ (*gamaas*: Tosco 1997: 1): the names do not correspond at all to the 18 Bajuni clans. The Bajuni word *k<sup>h</sup>amasi* is taken from the Tunni term.

<sup>39</sup> There is an obvious connection between the Gede and Gede-ni village on Koyama. To linguists there is also an obvious connection between Gede and the Geledi a “chiefly tribe of the Sab family” (Lewis), thus akin to the Tunni, who mainly live today near Muqdishu. See also Cassanelli (1993). Loss of [l] (and vowel shortening) is a phonetic characteristic of Bajuni, and final [e] and [i] are often interchanged.

Some of these also found further south, in clan lists from Siu, Pate, Amu, and further afield<sup>40</sup>.

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 (overlap as in Ferado = Firado = Faradho, Shungwaya = Birkao?, Omwe/Vumwe/Vumbe, Chand<sup>f</sup>aa = Tendaa, etc). Only four appear in all four lists (Firado, Pingoni (various spellings), (W)omwe, Veko). Ten occur in three of the four lists (Amshiri, Avutila, Chand<sup>f</sup>aa, (Na-)Kilio, Kismayuu, Koyama, Ngumi, Rasmali/Rasmili, Shungwaya, Simambaye). Ten occur in two lists (al-Ausii<sup>41</sup>, 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<sup>42</sup>, Kachwa, Kismayuu, 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, Chovae, Chula, Rasini (there are two Rasini, one in Somalia, one in Kenya), Kudai, Chand<sup>f</sup>aa, Birkao (some equate Birkao/Buri Gavo with Shungwaya but see below), Veko (Elliott mentions Veko, at the foot of Veko Hill, just south of Buri Kav<sup>o</sup><sup>43</sup>), Kiunga, Omwe, Simambaya, Uwani, Vumwe<sup>44</sup>, Vumbu<sup>45</sup> (?), Kiwayuu, Chund<sup>f</sup>a (= Chundwa?), Dhipingoni. Most but not all are in Somalia. The following would also seem to be locations but not known today: Umbuyi, Vekwaa<sup>46</sup>, 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 Kav<sup>o</sup>, and from Kiunga to Pate Island and near Dadori 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<sup>f</sup>aa, 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).

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<sup>40</sup> Fadha, Siu, Pate, Lamu, Mombasa clans are in Prins, Siu clans also in Topan and Eastman.

<sup>41</sup> The low incidence of the “southern Arabian” clans should not be considered important because Prins and Nurse did not enquire about them.

<sup>42</sup> Kachwa, Kilio, Kismayuu, Daile, Kudai, and maybe others are said to be of Garre origin. Firado are specifically a Tunni clan (Grottanelli 1955: 220). Firado and Kachwa traditionally didn't eat anything from the sea (turtle meat (*khasa*) or fish (ibid: 126)). Neither do “noble Somalis”, says Lewis (1969: 75).

<sup>43</sup> Veko is also known as Shungwaya Ndogo, ‘little Shungwaya’. The Veko are said to have once lived at Chondo, “the other Buri Kav<sup>o</sup>”, now dispersed,

<sup>44</sup> The Vumbu are said to have lived on the Juba, but now dispersed south and north (Brava).

<sup>45</sup> The Womwe = Vumwe are said today to live at Mambore (Kenya)

<sup>46</sup> The Vekwaa are said to have once lived at Mdova.

How are these 50 or so to be squared with an original 18, plus the “4” from southern Arabia? Those who came from the inland Shungwaya (see 7b, below) and from southern Arabia brought their names with them and settled in the islands and mainland coast among those already living there. The newcomers either expelled or intermarried with the original inhabitants. Since the newcomers had prestige, some of the original inhabitants took on their clan names. Other original groups were referred to by their place names. As groups later moved from place to place, they took their earlier clan or place names with them. So a (m-)Kiwayuu or a (m-)Kismayuu is a descendant of someone from Kiwayuu or Kismayuu: of course they in turn might or might not be the descendant of one of the 18 or 4. In this way 18+ 4 grew into over 50.

Little has been recorded of clan names on the Kenya coast, a task which would surely reap rewards.

I do not believe in 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 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 Chovae, and into Firadoni, in the north of Chula, and the former villagers moved out. Ngumi was abandoned, after being bombarded, 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 1950s about the original areas of at least some clans.

Chand<sup>f</sup>aa: originally on Chand<sup>f</sup>aa Island, dispersed to Buri Kavø, Kismayuu, and Chula.

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

Firado: went to Chovae and Kismayuu. It is noteworthy that there are place names in central Chovae and northern Chula containing the name Firado, suggesting this was their original settlement area.

Kachwa: went to Koyama and Chula.

Kismayuu: originally of Kismayuu 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 Kavø and nearby Ndoa (mainland)

Tawayu: various, eventually Mombasa

Umbuyi: Kiunga, Rasini, Chundwa.

Veko: originally Chondo, “the other Buri Kavø”, then dispersed.

Vekwaa: Ndoa, on mainland, near Buri Kavo.

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

(W)omwe: Omwe, Mambore.

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

Kismayuu: Kismayuu, Chand<sup>f</sup>aa, Firado, Kachwa. Recent refugees have also mentioned: Nofali, al-Ausi, Shiradhi, al-Khazeraji, Shungwaya, Veko. Tikuu is also mentioned although unclear whether it referred to a clan or all Bajunis. A young source claimed Tikuu and Shiradhi were identical. Kismayuu was a magnet in recent years for islanders. Young people in Kismayuu today often know little of Bajuni clans.

Fuma: recent refugees have mentioned al-Ausii, al-Khazerajia, Firado, Ngumi, Chand<sup>f</sup>aa.

Koyama: Kachwa, Ngumi, Nofali, Kismayuu. Recent refugees have also mentioned: al-Ausi, al-Khaziraji, Firado, Tikuu, Chand<sup>f</sup>aa, Veko. It would be more accurate to distinguish these by village (Koyamani versus Gedeni). 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 are 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 (?). It would be useful to have maps of Koyama and Ngumi to confirm possible names.

Chovae: Chovae, Firado. Refugees have mentioned Chandaa (pronounced Chanda), Khadherajia, Nofali, Grottanelli (p.204) recounts that Firado (“< Sham”) found a local fisherman/fishermen of the Chovae clan living there, when they arrived, and that also Nofali and Kismayuu came later.

Chula: Chand<sup>f</sup>aa, Chula, Kachwa, Womwe. Refugees also mentioned al-Ausi/Ausii, al-Hadheraji, Veko, al-Nofali, Firado, Munghumi = Ngumi, 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 17<sup>th</sup> century.

M(u)dova Island. Refugees mentioned Kachwa.

Buri Kavo: Chand<sup>f</sup>aa, Shungwaya. Fitzgerald mentions a Kachwa headman, Grottanelli mentions a Chand<sup>f</sup>aa headman. Others have mentioned refugees from Shee in the interior, Koyama, Fuma.

Kudai: Refugees mentioned Shungwaya, Mdova, Kachwa.

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

Kiunga: Umbuyi.

Rasini: Umbuyi.

Chundwa: Umbuyi.

Mambore/Omwe: Omwe.

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 of northern Kenya 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), from north to south.

**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 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> 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’, uninhabited in 2009, and a little further are the ruins at **Kandali** (also called **Gondal** on the maps), 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, lead to the general conclusion that the main occupation of Koyama Island would not seem to predate the 16<sup>th</sup> 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 15<sup>th</sup> century”.

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

On **Chovae**, while there are some ruins (cemetery, tombstones) near the present village of **Chovae** on the landward side, “the main area of old settlement is at the southern end of the island” at **Dhukuwa/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 Chovae does not seem to predate the 16<sup>th</sup> century”.

On the south bank of Chovae 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 14<sup>th</sup> or early 15<sup>th</sup> century” (1992: 105). At the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> 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 9<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> 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 m 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<sup>47</sup>. Chittick’s ceramic collection suggests a “15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> 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, because all other sites have mosques, and because Bajuni sites,

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<sup>47</sup> It collapsed between 1952 and 1968.

current or historical, have a mosque as their spiritual centre. Chittick found no sherds predating the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

Buri Kavo is regarded by most 20<sup>th</sup> century observers as the site of the legendary (coastal) Shungwaya. Notable exceptions to this opinion are the archaeologist Chittick, who failed to find traces<sup>48</sup>, and the Italian Cerulli. Grottanelli (1955: 385-7<sup>49</sup>) reports on the coins found at Buri Kavo in 1913 by Capt. Haywood, reported in the Numismatic Chronicle in 1932, near a “walled-in fortress” (probably Buri Kavo 1), no houses nearby. This is a large trove, consisting of coins from the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries AD (Ptolemy, Alexandria, Constantine, Rome, Nero, etc).

South of Buri Kavo, 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: Veko, Shamkuu, Mnarani, Mbarabala, Miandi, and Odo. 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 14<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> 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 (16<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> century?) and Pate Island (Atu 16<sup>th</sup> century?), Fadha = Faza = Rasini (16<sup>th</sup> century on), Chundwa (17<sup>th</sup> 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 14<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> century, are: Old Kismayuu, (Koyama (16<sup>th</sup> century?)), Ngumi, Chovae, Chula, Buri Kavo, 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<sup>50</sup>. In Kenya, on the

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<sup>48</sup> What would a “trace of Shungwaya” look like?

<sup>49</sup> On pages 389 to 392, he lists the 43 pieces he brought back from Rasini, Chula, Ngumi, Chovae, Koyamani, Bur Kavo, and Koyama.

<sup>50</sup> There are several reasons to think these large early sites in Somali were Bajuni: i) no other group or groups claim to have lived there, ii) Bajunis live there today or did until recently, until chased away, iii) the places figure in Bajuni traditions. Many places, large and small, are also the names of Bajuni clans, that is, they claim their ancestors came from there (Chand’aa, Firado(ni), Veko, Gede(ni), Ngumi).

other hand, there are equally early sites such as Siu and Pate, and much earlier ones such as Shanga<sup>51</sup>, Manda, and Lamu Ginnars. These sites are not now nor as far as we know 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 town of 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 size criteria differ a little from one publication to the next. Large sites (over 2.5 or 3 hectares) are Ghedeni, Ngumi, Chula, Buri Kavvo 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, Chovae, Bagdadi, Simba Hill (inland from Chula), Veko, 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. Somalia is not well served archaeologically compared to Kenya. The only work by an archaeologist in Somalia was by Chittick (1969) 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 of origin.

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<sup>52</sup>, 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 9<sup>th</sup> 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.

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<sup>51</sup> As a result of recent Chinese involvement in the Lamu area, I have seen it suggested that Shanga has to do with Shanghai. Not so. The name Shanga and similar forms occur at several places along the East African coast and derive from a common Bantu and Swahili word 'sand'.

<sup>52</sup> For sketches and pictures of both types, see Grottanelli 1955: 160ff. Stone houses are hardly seen anymore today.

## 7. History

**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 9<sup>th</sup> century, maybe even a little earlier.

As we have just seen, for the Bajunis, the recent period appears to start in the 14<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> century. Is that an illusion? North of Kismayu are non-Bajuni sites at Muqdishu, Gezira, Marika, Munghia, and Brava<sup>53</sup> which go back archaeologically to the 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> 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 Swahili language varieties to the north (Bravanese) or the south (Amu, Pate, Siu). However, as I will 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 would 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. The hypothesis of early dates is supported by the Mediterranean coins at Buri Kavo and the Sassanian-Islamic ware on Chula (see above).

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

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<sup>53</sup> A tombstone at Brava dates to 498 Hijra = 1104-05 CE. The name on the tombstone included an Islamic name (then the Swahili/Bravanese name Chande). This is from Cerulli (1957: 37), who says: “I was unable to go personally to Brava to carry out direct research on the remains of the Arab medieval antiquities that undoubtedly exist there. A Bravanese told me that in the Jami mosque of Brava there exists an inscription dated to the IXth century Hijra (1398-1495 AD), and, on my request, he sent me the copy of another (I believe funerary) inscription, which reads thus:

Hajj Shanid ? (Here Cerulli was unable to transliterate correctly the name, which is Chande, written as is usual for Swahili/Chimiini with Arabic letters shin-alef-nun-dal), son of Abu Bakr, son of Umar, son of Uthman, son of Hasan, son of Ali, son of Abu Bakr; and he passed into that (?) tomb in the year 498, the month being Rabi’ al Akhir.”

The month of Rabi’ Al-Akhir of 498 Hijra corresponds to the period 21 December 1104 - 18 January 1105 AD. If this date has been read correctly by my informant, this would be the most ancient inscription ever found in Somalia. The reading is not impossible because from the Xth to the XIIIth centuries AD the major Arab colonies on the Somali coast were being established.” (I am indebted to S. Vianello for this.

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 20<sup>th</sup> 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 20<sup>th</sup> 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 19<sup>th</sup> century. While early European travelers spoke of Bajuni plantations worked by “slaves” 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<sup>54</sup>. 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 19<sup>th</sup> 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 that had large pillar tombs, several mosques (i.e. sites big enough to have several communities), and masonry houses, not just mud-and-thatch houses. These are all 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” important from 15<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> century, appeared in Portuguese maps as Jungaia, Xungaia in 16<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, and also appears on several older European maps (English, Dutch)<sup>55</sup>. In

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<sup>54</sup> There was still some vestigial money to be made in the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as Prins describes Indian merchants coming to the islands to trade. Indian merchants come where trading is worthwhile.

<sup>55</sup> I have not seen any of these maps.

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 17<sup>th</sup> 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 18<sup>th</sup> 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 16<sup>th</sup> century to the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, at least, there were many Bajunis and the men were a fighting force. We have no records of this kind before the late 16<sup>th</sup> 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<sup>56</sup>. 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:

<p>‘ .....</p> <p>Na m-Shela na chunyayeni Chumwase kubika mafungu Na muAmu na chunyayeni Chumwase dari na dhiungu mPate endre akapate na chunyayeni Pola Mola ashushe kivingu .....’</p>	<p>‘ .....</p> <p>And let’s attack/strike the people of Shela Let’s prevent them from sharing out<sup>57</sup> 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 .....’</p>
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<sup>56</sup> I would like to make clear that while I understand some of the language of the *vave*, there are parts I do not understand – in that I am not alone, because elderly Bajunis disagreed among themselves about many interpretations. Once past the archaic language barrier, the content is only properly accessible to those Bajunis who are familiar with their history and culture. Such individuals are disappearing.

<sup>57</sup> Ali Famau interpreted this differently, “.....from making knots (in ropes)”, ropes being important for climbing coconut trees to get palm wine..

This is about striking Pate, also Lamu and Shela (just along the shore from Lamu Town) and notably makes no reference to attacking Siu or Fadha, so reflects in ancient verse the late 17<sup>th</sup> 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 certainly 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 admit 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-Khadherajji, and Nofáli came later from Yemen or Hijaz. Certainly, the ancestors of Firado, Kachwa, Kismayuu, 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<sup>58</sup>.

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 AD800. At a later point in this early period, the Pokomo and Miji Kenda<sup>59</sup> 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, the southern Swahili dialects are more conservative phonologically, while the northern dialects have innovated, so it is easier

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<sup>58</sup> For general background, see Nurse & Spear 1985: 33 – 98, Nurse & Hinnebusch 1993: 490 – 6. For detailed linguistic evidence Nurse & Hinnebusch 299 – 301, 485 – 90, 501 – 11, 513 – 7.

<sup>59</sup> A term such as “the Pokomo and the Miji Kenda”, or “the Bajuni”, in this kind of context. and MK” is a form of shorthand. Not all today's Pokomo and Miji Kenda would be able to trace their ancestry to this area, just as not all today's Americans can trace their roots to ancestors who stepped off the Mayflower. What it means is that some of today's Pokomo and Miji Kenda are the descendants of these people in the north,

to arrange them as branches on the genealogical tree. The Swahili communities now at Mombasa and maybe Malindi and Mambui were the first to move out, as Mombasa shows signs of having been settled in the 11<sup>th</sup> (?) 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 AD 1100<sup>60</sup>. 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 Kismayuu.

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 River today are descendants of 19<sup>th</sup> century escaped slaves, who had been brought from Tanzania, Mozambique, and Malawa in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and are not relevant to this story. But to their north along the Shebelle River 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<sup>61</sup>. They are the descendants of Bantu farmers<sup>62</sup> who stayed behind when Shungwaya was evacuated in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, when the Orma invaded from the north<sup>63</sup>. They no longer speak any Bantu language, having adopted or formed local varieties of southern 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 14<sup>th</sup> century or earlier, and first settled the major islands and places on the mainland (Kiwayuu, Simambaya, Omwe, Kiunga, Veko, Chand'aa, Rasini, Chula, Chovae, Ngumi, Koyama, maybe others)<sup>64</sup>. 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

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<sup>60</sup> There is some linguistic evidence suggesting that the Bravanese on the coast might have been in touch with Pokomo and Miji Kenda farmers just inland, on the Webe Shebelle, and that Bravanese might even have been pidginised by this contact (see Nurse 1991b, Nurse & Hinnebusch 1993: 485-7). Brent Henderson is currently producing a grammar of Bravanese.

<sup>61</sup> Is this science or politics?

<sup>62</sup> Also on the Shebelle there were villages with a population composed mainly or exclusively of B. freed/escaped slaves (for example, Havaai near Brava). Since the Bimal, settled inland from Marika (Mei had slaves cultivating their lands, it is probable that most riverine villages of that area were also populated slaves/former slaves (A. Vianello, p.c).

<sup>63</sup> Lewis (1969: 28) says “probably by the end of the of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the Rahanwein pushed the Galla (= Orma) out of the area between the two rivers.. the Galla eventually withdrew to the right bank of the Juba. This increased the pressure on the Zanj, whose traditional capital, Shungwaya was at this time in the Juba region”.

<sup>64</sup> It should be noted that other place names are clearly not of Bantu origin (e.g. Bur Kavoo/ Birkao, Kudai, Istambuli, Mambore, Rubu, etc), suggesting that Bajunis settled in non-Bajuni villages, or vice versa.

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<sup>65</sup>.

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<sup>66</sup>: “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 64 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 20<sup>th</sup> 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 Giriyama (= Miji Kenda<sup>67</sup>), (also others, such as the Orma/Galla and Boni, 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 Kavvo, 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<sup>68</sup>, and one on the coast, synonymous with Buri Kavvo. This dicotomy is reflected in interpretations in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there being some interpreters (local and western) who interpret Shungwaya as a coastal (Buri Kavvo) 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 Somalia 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)<sup>69</sup>. That corresponds well to Bajuni descriptions. This being the case, the name

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<sup>65</sup> See Nurse and Spear 1985: 74-5.

<sup>66</sup> This is based on the *Utendi wa Shungwaya* (Nurse 1994: 53 - 5), a version of Bajuni history by Ali Famau (Nurse 1994: 63 - 70), and another by Mzee Bwana Boramussa (Nurse 1994: 71-9).

<sup>67</sup> The Giriyama are the largest Miji Kenda community so were traditionally used as synonymous with the whole group.

<sup>68</sup> All accounts of early movements start with Shungwaya north of Koyama, and all early movements are north to south.

<sup>69</sup> A few place names support the notion of southward migration by the Pokomo. For instance, opposite Pate Island, are Pokomo-ni Creek and River, said to be so names because the Pokomo settled there on their way south from the Juba 300 years before (Fitz Gerald 1898: 401-3).

Shungwaya was carried south by the ancestors of some Bajunis and to the coast from its original inland place in the north<sup>70</sup>. 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 (Somali-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 father. Second, while Pokomo and Miji Kenda are linguistically similar and related, Bajuni is 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, we live on the islands, and we travel by boat”. But those who came from the first Shungwaya can hardly have been fishermen living on islands, 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, islands, 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 are 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 incomers found a lone fisherman, who faded from the conversation, from Bajuni traditions, from history. He and his folk 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.

At this point a sketch of Somali history is needed as background. This linguistically-based sketch follows Heine (1978, 1979, 1982). Somali and its linguistic relatives are referred to as the SAM languages. Heine (1978: 45) assumes that the ancestral community, the Proto-SAM, lived in “the plains to the south of the Ethiopian Highlands east of Lake Turkana”, in “north-central Kenya, perhaps in the

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<sup>70</sup> Other place names occur twice or more along the coast (Rasini, Tungi, Pemba, etc).

plains surrounding the Marsabit Plateau” and that “The hypothetical Proto-SAM community dates back roughly to the beginning of the Christian era”. During the early centuries A.D, they started to spread southeast, splitting into the Western SAM, the Rendille, and the Eastern SAM. The latter spread down the Tana River to the Indian Ocean, near the Lamu Archipelago and the area to its north, in what is today far northeastern Kenya and southern Somalia. They then turned north into what is today the Republic of Somalia. At an early point – the late first millennium A.D? – the ancestors of the Boni split off and moved into the forest behind the coast<sup>71</sup>. Next to split off were the ancestors of the Jabarti, who first lived along the lower Juba and then expanded into the fertile area between the Juba and Shebelle Rivers. While the “Somali proper = Northern Somali” continued to expand north until they had occupied the entire space up to the Horn of Africa, some stayed behind in the south. In the second millennium those who had moved north reversed direction and moved slowly back south again. Somali itself is a dialect continuum, conventionally divided into Northern Somali (language of Isaaq, Darod, and Hawiye, and the basis for Standard Somali), Southern Somali<sup>72</sup> (Rahanwein, and Tunni, Dabarre, Karre/Garre, Jiddu), and the Benadiri, living in the coastal towns.

This linguistic sketch suggests that Bajunis might have been in touch with Boni, Jabarti or their offspring, Southern Somali, or Benadiri. If we could identify the community/communities who were in touch with early Bajunis, 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 back down into southern Somalia only in recent centuries<sup>73</sup>. Before their arrival the communities in the south spoke the language varieties just outlined. 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 any 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<sup>74</sup>. The current locations of southern Somali communities are not necessarily where they lived earlier. Colucci (1924), also mentioned in Lewis (1969: 15ff), for example, mentions a Tunni tradition that they once lived on the Juba, far inland from the coast, with some groups then moving south and settled at the mouth of the Juba, just north of Kismayu, in the tenth or eleventh centuries AD (?), and “later” moved north again, across the Juba, to settle near Brava, where

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<sup>71</sup> The maps in Heine 1982: 13-26 show the Boni as being mainly in northeastern Kenya. However, the accounts of refugees from the Bajuni Islands in southern Somali, further north, tell of Boni today on the mainland opposite. Dundas (1893) describes Boni settlements well over 100 miles up the Juba River. So Boni lived farther north than Heine’s maps suggest.

<sup>72</sup> Up to this point ‘southern Somali’ (when lower case) has been a geographical term, now it may also be linguistic (when upper case).

<sup>73</sup> The differences between northern and southern Somalis are not just linguistic, but also cultural. Northern Somali, who are or were herders, tend to look down on those who are not, that is, the southerners who live as farmers or hunters.

<sup>74</sup> In NE Kenya, there is a Boni National Reserve.

they live today. It is also possible that some southern Somali communities in the area (“Jabarti”) 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 and Lamu Archipelago in the south, north along the coast of the Indian Ocean, at least as far as Brava<sup>75</sup>, and including the inland interriverine area between the Shebelle and the Juba 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 a 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<sup>76</sup>.

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):

<b>Bajuni</b>	<b>Swahili</b>
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 and Swahili (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:

<b>Garre</b>	<b>Tunni</b>	<b>Maay</b>	<b>Maha</b>	<b>Boni</b>	<b>etc</b>
a <sub>1</sub>	a <sub>2</sub>	a <sub>3</sub>	a <sub>4</sub>	a <sub>5</sub>	
b <sub>1</sub>	b <sub>2</sub>	b <sub>3</sub>	b <sub>4</sub>	b <sub>5</sub>	

To draw a table like this depends on the availability of sufficient vocabulary for all these and other Somali varieties: despite the sketch above, there is no detailed and reliable statement of the phonetic differences between Northern Somali, Southern Somali, Jabarti, and Benadiri. For a few of the words of

<sup>75</sup> Probably also farther north but that is not the focus here.

<sup>76</sup> It is impossible to list them all. Starting alphabetically are: *abawa, abaya, adee, avahadi, avu, avuru, bario, barobaro, bodo, damari, dara, doko, gura*, etc.

Somali origin in the Lexicon, most Somali varieties, northern and southern, the shape is the same (e.g. *guur* ‘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 year.

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 exact source community/communities among these, we can hazard a well informed guess at their location. We find a set of loanwords in all 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 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. Thus the loanwords shared by all the Northern Swahili communities were absorbed just once, while the ancestral Northern Swahili communities were still living in one place, that is, most likely 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 Kismayuu, 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 Somalia: 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 Kismayuu. 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<sup>77</sup>.

The historical picture just drawn is simplified for several reasons: we lack the lexical sources to fill it out: I wanted to keep the broad outline clear: and many readers may not be linguistically trained and would have difficulty following the technical arguments. One part of the jigsaw puzzle deliberately omitted is the role of the Dahalo. They live in a very small area near the foot of the Tana River today and speak what is often called a Southern Cushitic<sup>78</sup> language (with some Khoisan<sup>79</sup> add-ons). 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; they once lived over a much wider area, up the Tana into central Kenya and into southern Somalia, at least. Dahalo and Boni 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<sup>80</sup> 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 in the northern dialects points to Dahalo or southern Somali, the phonological changes point to southern Somali.

**7c 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 governments, we are mere fishermen, but this is our land. Indeed, they are right, as they have lived along these southern shores 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<sup>81</sup>, then Somalis originating in the north. Grottanelli (1955: 200) points out that Bajunis don't feel part of the Somali 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 Bajuni attitudes in both Somalia and Kenya towards the central governments. When there is or was a central government, Bajunis are/were not, or are/were scarcely, represented in it, and when there is no central government, as now in Somalia, the results are plain to see. Bajunis feel marginal and marginalized. Most Bajunis, especially in Somalia, knew little about life on the mainland or about national institutions since independence.

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<sup>77</sup> Even on the islands Bajunis continued to be influenced by incoming southern Somalis. Elliott was told on Koyama that when the (southern Somali) Gede crossed over to the (Gedeni) village in the northeast of the island, the older (Bantu) population moved further south. On Chula he was told that the same thing had happened – the newly arrived (southern Somali) Firado displaced the earlier inhabitants.

<sup>78</sup> In contrast to Somali and Boni, which are Eastern Cushitic languages.

<sup>79</sup> "Bushmen".

<sup>80</sup> The linguistic evidence is lexical and phonological. It is presented in Nurse 1985, and in Nurse and Hinnebusch 1993: 299-301, 485-9, and chapter 6 and 7.

<sup>81</sup> Resentment toward Orma/Galla is less burning today, because Orma are no longer a threat, but it can be seen in older Bajuni songs.

One aspect of this is linguistic defiance<sup>82</sup>. 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 not and do not care for Somalis or Somalia, did not and do not speak Somali, did not and do not want to speak it, and strongly discouraged their children from speaking it<sup>83</sup>. 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 islands, bringing chaos, violence, and death with them. The events since 1991 have only strengthened the age-old aversion to the invaders and their language<sup>84</sup>.

## 8 Bajunis, Bajuni, Somalia, Somali

Bajunis in Somali are Somali nationals (so “Somalis”) but not ethnically or linguistically Somali.

For several centuries before the 1980’s, from at least AD1600, maybe longer, there was a balance between the domains of Somali and Bajuni in southeast Somalia, with Swahili apparently only appearing on the scene in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (see below). Ethnic Somalis lived on the mainland and rarely ventured 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, trading, or administrative 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. While the islands were linguistically conservative, the mainland settlements, especially Kismayuu, were more mixed linguistically.

This impression of language use was initially based on what I was told thirty years ago by elderly Bajunis, both from northern Kenya and southern Somalia. It is confirmed by the second source mentioned above, in section 2. Our opinion runs counter to what the British-Danish-Dutch fact-finding commission (2000) was told by a set of Bajuni elders, who said that ‘many’ Bajunis could speak ‘some’ Somali. The words ‘many’ and ‘some’ here are unquantifiable. The second source and I are strongly inclined to pay little heed to the testimony of these elders to this commission<sup>85</sup>.

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<sup>82</sup> Defiance takes other forms. I have an abiding image of Mzee Bwana Boramusa, sitting by his house near Kiunga, then in his 70’s or 80’s, hardly able to move because of elephantiasis, telling me in the late 1970s: “*Ukinipa bunduki, nawedha vasomali mia*” ‘If you give me a gun, I can beat/am as good as 100 Somalis’.

<sup>83</sup> ‘Somali’ here refers to those ethnic Somalis who started to arrive in numbers in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. It does not refer to those southern Somali who infiltrated Bajuni communities for centuries.

<sup>84</sup> Somewhat similar to the feelings of Poles, Russians, and many others towards Germans at the end of WW2.

<sup>85</sup> Our opinion is shared by other specialists, e.g. see Prof. Lewis (LSE), giving testimony to an Immigration Appeal Tribunal in 2003 ([www.asylumlaw.org/doc...-somalia.minoritygroups.pdf](http://www.asylumlaw.org/doc...-somalia.minoritygroups.pdf),

This traditional Bajuni aversion to Somalis and their language was based on long memories of dimly remembered events in the past (see Nurse 1982, 1991, 1994). When Somalia imploded in 1991, ethnic Somalis flooded on to the island, bringing chaos, violence, and death with them (see section 3.3. third paragraph, below). The events since 1991 have only strengthened the age old aversion to the invaders and their language<sup>86</sup>.

Outsiders are likely to share the general assumption that if a person comes from a specific country, they should speak its national language, and cannot be from that country if they cannot speak the national language. That would be a false general assumption for Bajunis from Somalia. As pointed out in 3.3, there are today many younger Somali Bajunis who speak neither Somali nor Bajuni, or if they do, they do not speak it as their grandparents did.

## **9 Bajuni and Swahili, language change**

This long-standing balance between Bajuni and Somali ignores the - more recent and more limited - role of Swahili. Most ethnic Somalis in southern Somalia are and were unlikely to be familiar with Swahili, yet from what we know of East African coastal history and from recent communication with the first source mentioned above, it seems that Swahili has been present as a minority language along the mainland coast, particularly in Kismayuu and Kiamboni, from the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. First, up to 1890's the Sultan of Zanzibar controlled a ten-mile wide coastal strip from south of Zanzibar to Mombasa and Lamu in Kenya, and then up to Kismayuu and Muqdisho. His administrators and traders would have spoken Swahili there. Second, from Kiamboni to the nearest village in Kenya is seven miles, as the crow flies, that is, under two hours by foot. Fitzgerald followed the path visible on the satellite picture: it is also possible to walk along the beach at low tide: and a trip by dhow with the right wind would be less than two hours. So contact with northern Kenya was and is easy. It is therefore not surprising that among Bajunis from further north, Bajunis from Kiamboni had the reputation of speaking a more Swahilised Bajuni, and more Swahili, than island Bajunis, because of this proximity to Kenya. Third, Bajuni traders and fishermen sailed down the Kenya coast, to Lamu, Malindi, and Mombasa, and still do. Fourth, from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Kenyans working for the British colonial government operated across southern Somalia. Finally, from what we know of the Mushunguli living along the Juba, starting near Kismayuu and upriver, they also spoke Swahili and managed to maintain contact with their

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section 12). He disputed the accuracy of the view expressed in the Fact-Finding Mission report (2000) that all or most Bajuni spoke Somali. He considered that the Bajunis who would speak Somali would be those who had the most interaction with Somalis, in particular those in local political or business roles or elders or leaders of local communities. He could have included young urban Bajunis who grew up in Kismayuu in the last 20 years.

Prof. Lewis lived and worked in Somalia for 50 years, specialises in Somali affairs, speaks fluent Somali, and is regarded as one of the UK's foremost Somali specialists.

It is repeatedly confirmed by the British Home Office COI reports, which over the last few years have all included this sentence: "It was highlighted in the JFFMR 2004 (pp. 37-38) that the island-based populations tended not to be able to speak Somali due to their social isolation from the mainland." Most Bajunis live or lived on the islands.

<sup>86</sup> Somewhat similar to the feelings of Poles, Russians, and many others towards Germans at the end of WW2.

kinfolk back in coastal Tanzania, despite a separation of a century and a half<sup>87</sup>. There is evidence that people speaking Swahili (and Somali dialects) at Kisimayu could not understand them (see letter of Italian missionary, dated 27 April 1906, saying that the people of Jilib spoke “a very difficult dialect”: A. Vianello p.c.). Having myself listened to contemporary Mushunguli speaking their Swahili, I would agree.

What kind of Swahili did all these people speak? We may never know exactly but consideration of the various pieces just presented – cross border contact with northern Kenya for those at Ras Kiamboni, officials and traders based in Zanzibar and Mombasa up to Kismayuu, Bajuni men sailing south along the coast to Kenya, colonial officers in southern Somalia, Mushunguli contact with their Zigua kinfolk near the coast of northeast Tanzania – it was probably a form of coastal Swahili, particularly Kenya coastal Swahili.

This balance between Bajuni, Somali, and Swahili changed in 1991, when the President, Siad Barre, was overthrown. Interethnic tensions and violence (ethnic Somali versus ethnic Somali, ethnic Somali versus non-ethnic Somali) increased. Initially, Somalis flooded onto the islands (and, it goes without saying, into the mainland settlements too), bringing mayhem, violence, destruction and burning of property, robbery, beatings, rape, murder. Later, mainland Somalis from broken homes or Somali minorities, were resettled on the islands. A Somali-speaking presence was established on the islands, for the first time in history, and remains today. Not only ethnic Somalis moved onto the islands – others from the mainland who felt at risk or were felt by the UN to be at risk were also moved to the islands.

Unable to defend themselves – they traditionally had no weapons and had no access or knowledge of guns - Bajunis were terrified and thousands fled (sailed) south into Kenya, to stay with relatives in Malindi or Mombasa, or to refugee camps near Mombasa (Kwa Jomvu, St. Anne’s)<sup>88</sup>. or near the border in northeast Kenya and southeast Somalia (Liboi, Dadaab, Dagahaley, Garissa, etc, some were even settled in Kakuma, in northwest Kenya). In these refugee camps, forms of Swahili were the lingua franca. The refugee camps held other refugees from Somalia. Bajunis in the camps might have spoken Bajuni to each other but they would have had to be careful because the other refugees were mainly Somalis, who did not like Bajunis or the use of their language, whether in Somalia or in Kenyan camps. When talking to the other refugees, the Bajunis did not use Bajuni, but Kenyan Swahili or ‘common denominator Swahili’. Not surprisingly, most Bajunis did not like the camps. Incidentally, the camps were porous (a major reason the Kenya government decided to close them<sup>89</sup>) and refugees in Kenya were allowed to live and work outside camps if they had the right documents, and any doing so would use Kenyan Swahili as their main language of communication. Those who managed to stay with relatives in Kenya coastal towns would have been exposed to Swahili daily.

In 1998 the UN closed the Jomvu camp and told the refugees it was safe to return. The joint report (2000) says that while some Bajunis went to a new camp at Kakuma in northwestern Kenya, many decided to return to Somalia (a mistake, as it turned out, as the danger had not gone away), carrying Swahili with them. During the 1990’s UN workers entered southern Somalia, most from the

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<sup>87</sup> Dundas (1893: 214) reports Swahili being “spoken throughout the whole Gusha (= Gosha = Mushunguli) district in 1891.

<sup>88</sup> A very few were settled in the camps near the border in northeast Kenya and southeast Somalia (Liboi, Dadaab, Dagahaley, etc) or at Kakuma, in northwest Kenya.

<sup>89</sup> Outsiders, including tourists, also walked into the camps, which the Kenya government wanted to stop.

south, many speaking Swahili. The combined result was a Swahili presence, in areas such as the islands, where before only a few older males had spoken Swahili.

Linguistically, any viable homogenous Bajuni language community crumbled in these circumstances. There were few older people to offer a language model, there was no stable set of circumstances for transmission of the ancestral language from one generation to the next, families had been broken up, people were too busy just surviving to be concerned about their children learning the language properly, and for young Bajunis in Somalia there was little incentive to speak Bajuni - if you feel your community has no future, why bother acquire its language? Then when Bajunis moved back from the camps in Kenya, many – especially younger ones - would no longer be speaking good Bajuni, but Bajuni mixed with camp/urban Swahili. When they returned, they would mix with those who had stayed.

In sum, up to twenty years ago, we can be sure that at least the islands were almost 100% monolingual Bajuni-speaking, although male traders and fishermen who travelled to Kismayuu and Kenya would have had some exposure to Swahili. The language situation on the islands has changed dramatically in the last 20 years or so, since The Troubles began. From listening to many refugee cases, it was clear to me that the Bajuni spoken by young Bajunis (born from the 1980s onward) from the islands was not that of their grandparents or even parents: they speak poor Bajuni and lots of Swahili. Those were my thoughts as I communicated in 2009 with the second source mentioned above, a man who has over 900 hours of experience interviewing Bajunis. He confirms that today there is 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 on the islands. At the other end of the scale are individuals who speak only Swahili, and no Bajuni: mainly young and living in Kismayuu. In between are individuals who speak a Bajuni-coloured Swahili, Swahili with some Bajuni, mainly vocabulary and common phonetic features, added. The Bajuni component varies from person to person, generation to generation, and place to place. He also confirms that 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. So some younger Somali Bajunis can be characterised as semi-speakers, and they add a sixth variety of Swahili to the five mentioned in the first paragraph of this section.

The situation has gone from the mid-nineteenth century where the community was more or less completely monolingual in Bajuni, with a very minor Swahili presence, to a situation 150 years later, where Swahili is rapidly taking over and few (any?) fluent Bajuni monolinguals are left in Somalia. Bajuni in Somalia is rapidly becoming an old people's language and will be soon replaced by silence, when Bajuni will no longer be spoken in Somalia. Young Bajunis from Somalia today speak the kind of Swahili widely spoken in East Africa, especially along the adjacent coast of Kenya. That didn't used to be the case but in recent years Swahili has rolled up the coast and across the border into southern Somalia. It should be clarified that we have no direct knowledge of recent or current language use in the Bajuni areas of Somalia. That is, no professional linguist has been on the ground to observe the situation. The foregoing is based on many secondary reports from those who have interviewed expatriate Bajunis and asked them about the language situation, and observed their language abilities.

On the Kenya side of the border the problem is different. Generations of Bajuni children have been attending government schools since the 1960's and in these schools Standard Swahili or something like it is used, so ability to use traditional Bajuni has been severely eroded. In 1980 I was able to give Swahili exercises, sentences, or texts to Bajunis then in school, and they would take them home and

translate into Bajuni, either on their own or with the help of their parents. This would be harder or impossible now. Further, 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. Bajuni.com thinks Bajuni will also be gone from Kenya within the next generation.

### **Alternative, mainly colonial, names, for some localities**

Kismayuu Bay: Refuge Bay.

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

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, R.N, was active along the coast in the later 19<sup>th</sup> century.

## List of Bajuni places from north to south

INLAND	COAST	ISLANDS/ISLES
(River Juba)		(underlined = now or once habited, not exhaustive)
	<u>Kisimayu(u)</u>	Kimoni Island Mear Tomb Island <u>Kisimayuu Island</u> (island until 1961) K(h)andal Juu (Elliott 1925) Fawacho Islet = “Fawatu Island” Mtanga wa papa
	<u>Ras Mchoni</u> K(h)andali	Ngai (also Ngai below) Yambalangodhi (Yambalingodhi/Jambalangodhi) Furu Ilisi Buli (“also once called Tulia”, Elliott 1925)
	<u>Fuma T<sup>h</sup>ini</u>	<u>Fuma Island</u> <u>Fumayuu = Fuma Mkubwa</u> Fuma Nyangwe/Ndangwe = ? Kiwasa (= Kiwasi ?) Kiamwe
	<u>Koyama T<sup>h</sup>ini</u>	Kalibia, Galima, Galimagala, Kanda-yuu, Chawai, Marareni, Barakovu mentioned as islets N of Koyama, order to each other and to those above unclear.  <u>Koyama Island</u> (3 villages, 5 names: <u>G(h)edeni</u> (NW, <u>Koyama</u> (= Gedeni?), <u>Koyama Yuu</u> , <u>Hembe/etc</u> , <u>Koyamani</u> (S of Gedeni in dunes)

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

	Ngumi T <sup>h</sup> ini	<u>Ngumi Island</u> (deserted today, once inhabited)  Shepape, Sheepepe, Shapape, Kwa, (Kwe, Gua) Yamba, Ambuu, Thenina, Bulbuni  <u>Chovae Island Chovae village</u> , consisting of Iburini (Michikachi, Firadoni, Omo, Kisiu, Kadore. In the south is <u>Dhukuwa<sup>90</sup>/Igome la Yuu</u>
<u>Stambuli</u> (it and Mucho wa Yamani are mentioned as agricultural areas for Chovae)		
Yamani	Chovae Creek = Shamba Mouth Splits into	
Lac Badana and Mucho wa Yamani		Bavadi Dhipanga Dhine ('four little swords')
Sitarani	Bagdadi	Pangazi Mbavazi Kuivi Kuvumbe (kwa Kuvumbi, Kivumbi) Kiwa cha Moga Kuyumbi) Ngai ?? also above Burihaua Yund <sup>r</sup> uyund <sup>r</sup> u = Tegadi = Indu Schie Tangwe  <u>Chula = Tula Island</u> ( <u>Chula village</u> , consisting of <u>Fuli-ni</u> (east), <u>Firado-ni</u> (west), <u>Hinara-ni</u> (north), Iburi-ni (south)). <u>Mdova</u> Island, separate, off the southern end, with village of the same name.
	Rasini Kwa Bunu	
Mucho wa Anole = Lak Salaam		

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<sup>90</sup> Possibly meaning, 'where walking is difficult'.

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<sup>r</sup>aa

Kiembo cha Bur Kav  
Puluni  
Ndoa  
Shea

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

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

Buri Manga/Manza

Veko (also called Shungwaya Ndogo)  
Ras Ishaka la Sia (14 miles march north of Gome la Hekwa)  
Shondwe (= Tangwe?)  
Ras Waravole/Garavole  
Ras Mnarani (FitzGerald walked inland to Shamkuu from Mnarani)

Shamkuu, Shemkuu  
She Mkuu?

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

Ashuweji, 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

Faza

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Moved out of above

Kismayuu.

“Founded” ???? in 1872 by Sultan of Zanzibar.

Markets in Majengo (large), Fanole, and Farjana (both smaller). ?Also Alale market/Sukwani)/fish market, two hospitals (one large, one small), three cinemas (Ayan, Juba...), madrasas, at least one primary school, one mosque is called Msikiti wa Musa. one mosque called the Bajuni mosque (same?). Police station, army base. at least one hotel (Iftin, now closed). There are boat racing competitions in November.

Chula – this might need to be put into the above again, in some form:

Chula village has two wards: Fuli-ni (also Ku-fulii, middle), Firado-ni (higher = north?), one source mentions a third (*Msikiti Mkuu*, lower). One source refers to Firadoni as a *kiambo*. Both have a mosque and a madrasa. Maybe Fulini also had a school. 2 mosques (Friday....and...?). 2 mosques also called Sharif Badawi/Juma (Fulini, also called Msikiti Mkuu) and Sharif Athumani/Osman (Firadoni). Third guy says one is called just the mosque while the other is called the Somali mosque. There is an old Geredha, said to be “Portuguese”, near the Msikiti Mkuu. Market (*suku*) and fish auction. Madrasa, no secular school, Much fresh water brought from Mdova. Jahazi racing competitions.

Somalis came to Chula and “beat” people. Chula these days described as *ndarandara* ‘a mess, chaos’.

Chula. In an email message, after he had specifically asked about his, Brian Allen said of Chula:

“Most Bajuni I have interviewed from Chula say two Mitaa or Vijiji: Firadoni and Fulini. A small number mention Narini as a third small village. Two have mentioned Mdoa as a village or Mtaa- meaning the small island near Chula where some people live and have to walk to Chula when tide is low to get water as their water is salty. Firadoni is the larger village not far from the larger Mosque Msikiti Jumaa. Get varying accounts of distance between them- Probably half hour walk. Firadoni towards central south and Fulini or Filini to north(whatever that means)”.

Somalis came to Chula and “beat” people. Chula these days described as *ndarandara* ‘a mess, chaos’.

Mdova described as 20-30 minutes’ walk south of Chula. Only two sources so far

South of Buri Kavo, and north of Ishaka la Siia the satellite image shows a small settlement I was unable to identify

**Kiamboni**, village, and **Ras Kiamboni** (‘promontory at the village’) see ta60564, 06281).

From 7b

**Bajuni, those who came from Shungwaya included the *kumi dha miulu* (ten Bantu clan names) and the *nane dha bana* (eight southern Somali clan names, which implies intermixing with southern Somalis in Shungwaya, just as those Somali Bantu left behind today are mixed in language and culture.**

Prins: p92 The early mainland kingdoms were Shungwaya, Ngumi, Faza, Pate, Kitao, Luziwa, Shaka, Ungwana, Malindi, etc

Fadha clans in Prins:

CHECK Topan and Eastman

Prins

The “nine” of Siu are: Masherifu (also the Bida and Hatimi clans of Barawa are said to be Masherifu), Famau, Katwa, Mashanga (from Shanga), Banu Saadi (long-established Shihiri), Luwaili, Al-Hatimi (as in Barawa), Mafazii (from the ‘first’ Faza), Swahili.

The remnants of older Pate are the ‘seven’: Nabahani, Masherifu, Ozi (Al-Bauri), Hatimi (< Barawa), Abdi Salami, Mafazii, Swahili = Pate.

Also Wa-amu, Shela, Mombasa, Vumba

p79 Grottanelli says first reference to Bajunis is in Stigand Land of Zinj p168, first half of 17<sup>th</sup> century in Pate Chronicle coming from the terra forma in the north – don’t forget the Bajuni vave about we came from the north and bashed Siu, Pate, Amu etc  
mention of coast from Gobweni in the north to Kiunga

Lewis, I.M. 1969. *Peoples of the Horn of Africa*. London. IAI.

p15, Somali nation divided into Sab (Rahanwein, Tunni) and Somali (Ishaak, Hawiya, Darod. Rahanwein, Ishaak, Hawiya, Darod are called “Somali tribal-families”. Sab are south of Mogadishu, to the border with Kenya, mainly along the Juba. Hawiya are north of them. Darod are in Kenya, and north of the Hawiya in Somalia. Marehan are a subset of the Darod. Darod moved into Jubaland starting in 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Somali “noble, herding, Sab despised, mixed cultivation-herding.

Geledi are the “chiefly tribe of the Sab family”. There was maybe still is a Sultan of Geledi. Subset of Rahanwein, live today near Mogadishu. in lewis 2002 picture 12 has a

caption saying it shows a view of the town of geledi on the shebelle river in 1847. the geledi sultan was the most powerful Somali chief on the benadir coast in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Only reference I find to Garreh p31 is that they are a subset of Darod near the Webi.

General assumption in Lewis that Garre = Gerra, a subset of the “pre-Hawiya”. Four different sets, most scattered between Juba and Shebelle.

Tunni today live along the coast from Merca to Barawa to the Juba. At one time they lived on the Juba, but moved southwest in the 10<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> century and settled in Kismayuu and Lamu. “Later” they moved north across the Juba to settle at Brava.

p34 the Rahanwein are divided into the Eight and the Nine. This dividing into subsets/coalitions with numbers seems common among Somali groups.

The Asheraf are a priestly group (sheikhs, within the Tunni within the Rahanwein and live between the Juba and Shebelle.

p41 On the Juba are the WaGosha, Boni, and Gobawein. WaGosha also known as Oji and Dalgolet (‘people of the forest’) but call themselves Mahawai. They numbered 30,000 in 1922. “Gosha” has no ethnic connotation but means those who live in the bush (*gosha* in Somali).

Gosha refers to the area on both sides of the Lower Juba, and to the “Bantu” (Mushunguli) who live there, “people of the bush”

**p42 according to Cerulli the site of Shungwaya is on the Juba. Prins however (p.c.) identifies it with Port Durnford = Bur Gao**

p43 it seems likely that the Nofalle Arbs who inhabited the Bajuni islands and coast about 1660 had a considerable influence on the present day characteristics of the Bajuni. The Nofalle were routed by the Somali Gerrah who the Bajuni claim as ancestors. Parenti considers that the Bajuni most closely resemble Yemeni Arabs physically.

p43 “The limits of pasture land are indicated by tribal marks cut in the bark of trees”

p75 “Fish are not eaten by noble Somali, who despise fish-eaters. The coastal fish-eaters are known as Rer Manyo, a derogatory term without ethnic connotation.

Grottanelli p126 says Firado and Kachwea don’t eat fish or turtle meat  
Same page. Noble Somalis do not themselves hunt.

Lewis, I.M. 2002. *A Modern History of the Somali*. Oxford, James Currey Ltd, Btec Books, Hargeisa, Ohio UP, Athens Ohio.

the caption under picture 10 says Mogadishu's oldest mosque bears an inscription dated AD1238 and its earliest funeral inscription goes back to the 8<sup>th</sup> century.

p3. Shebelle and Juba Rivers both start in Ethiopian Highlands. Shebelle in most years disappears into the ground near the Juba and doesn't reach the sea. Juba enters the IO north of Kismayuu as a broad river. Navigable to beyond Bandera by vessels with shallow draft. Both rivers are lined in places by high forest, home to hippos and elephant.

According to Lewis (evidence?) the early Bantu (of the Shebelle and south, NOT the Mushunguli) were in place by the 10<sup>th</sup> century, maybe earlier.

p22 he says "the evidence of the Arab geographers and local inscriptions and documents indicate that by the first half of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, Arab and Persian colonizers had established themselves at Mogadishu, Merca, and Brava, some years prior to the foundation of Kilwa.

p28 "probably by the end of the of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the Rahanwein pushed the Galla out of the area between the two rivers.. the G eventually withdrew to the right bank of the Juba. This increased the pressure on the Zanj, whose traditional capital, Shungwaya was at this time "in the Juba region". (see just above p3,river navigable to beyond Bandera in by shallow boats)

Lewis 1955 said by Prins to be a good source on the Benadir as a cultural province.

Names of wards (mitaa) in each village? Names of mosques in each ward? Identify others

### Not Bajuni (north of Kismayuu)

Makaya island  
Assaley island  
Cadey island  
Mkudisho  
Marika  
Barawa  
Fagay

### Bajuni ?

Jumba 'big building'

### Bajuni

(couple of miles north of K is Dalxiiska, also the name of a hotel in K)

**Kismayuu** town, ‘northern/upper well’. also Kismayuu, Kismayo (Kismaayo is the Somali version)  
 Founded in 1872 by Sultan of Zanzibar. Originally an island, joined to mainland in 1961.  
 Markets in Majengo (large), Fanole, and Farjana (both smaller). ?Also Alale market/Sukwani)/fish market, two hospitals (one large, one small), three cinemas (Ayan, Juba...),  
 madrasas, at least one primary school, one mosque is called Msikiti wa Musa. one mosque called  
 the Bajuni mosque (same?). Police station, army base. at least one hotel (Iftin, now closed). There  
 are boat racing competitions in November.  
 Wards = mitaa?: Majengo, Farjano (Farchano), Alale, Fanole, Shakalaka/Shakalani. Not many  
 Bajuni names here (and Majengo is not a Bajuni form).

**Odo** no Bajunis left

somewhere other than Grottanelli I found :Shungwaya at “Lower Juba”. Gr thinks quite  
 unambiguously it = Bur Gao

“marine peasants” Lewis year? page?

Al-jazira a name given under Siad Barre (“islands”). Does it refers to islands or people of the islands?

Names of wards (mitaa) in each village? Names of mosques in each ward? Identify others

**Not clear**

Igome islet between Chovae and Ngumi

Status? Ras Kiavo south of Ras Kiamboni, Pemba, Ras Mitowani, Chodhi

