

reasoning can be tautological – in hindsight these earlier massacres easily become part of the assumed genocidal process. Every genocide seems inevitable in retrospect.

Consequently, Mayerson seeks to build a forward-looking model that accounts for the non-linear progression of genocide, where episodes of escalation may be followed by retreat, then by further escalation. Yet her model only provides a general frame within which more specific indicators of genocidal escalation would need to be identified. It is also unclear how periods of escalation and massacre that do not result in genocide could be clearly distinguished from those that do precede genocide.

While there is no doubt that many cases of genocide (and non-genocide) involve periods of escalation and de-escalation, as recently noted by Straus, it is questionable whether the Holocaust or Cambodian genocide could be characterised in this manner (where there seems to have been relatively rapid escalation without historical antagonism). This illustrates well the dangers of model-construction. Models, of course, can be useful conceptual bases for analysis and discussion but they are never truly universally-applicable. *On the Path to Genocide* is a valuable contribution to comparative genocide studies particularly through its approach, which seeks to historicise our understanding of genocide by showing that genocide is more political and contingent than inevitable. Its predictive power unfortunately remains limited.

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EMPIRE BUILDING

Cracks in the Dome: Fractured Histories of Empire in the Zanzibar Museum, 1897–1964.

By Sarah Longair.

Farnham, Surrey, England: Ashgate Publishing, 2015. Pp. xvi + 321. \$134.95, hardback (ISBN 978-1-4724-3787-7).

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Key Words: East Africa, architecture, colonial administration, imperialism, museums and memorials, urban, Western images of Africa.

By analyzing the very specific subject of the colonial history of the Zanzibar, Sarah Longair tackles quintessential events, topics, and figureheads of British colonial history in Zanzibar; she succeeds well in her aim ‘to tell a history of colonial Zanzibar through the museum’ (260). A microcosm of the colonial predicament, the museum reveals how thin and fragmented the British administration of Zanzibar was. Only a restricted number of colonial officers were available to govern the islands. Staffing went from a handful during the maverick times of Hamerton, Kirk and Matthews in the early years, to just over a hundred in the seemingly well-organized administration in later years. But this perennially short-staffed administration was unable to meet its goals. In the case of the museum, chance visitors like Doctor Spurrier, Judge Gray, architect Sinclair, and amateur historian Ingrams contributed to the shape of the museum.

The author notes that the British were not the first colonial power in Zanzibar: they were preceded by the Omani Arabs, who ruled the islands of Zanzibar and Pemba from the early 1800s until they were removed from power by the British. Until the end of the nineteenth century, Zanzibar was the 'Island Metropolis', controlling the larger part of East Africa. 'When the flute plays in Zanzibar, they dance on the Lakes' was a famous saying in those days. But this situation changed drastically after the division of East Africa into colonies by the imperial powers, with their respective capitals of Nairobi, Kampala, and Dar es Salaam. Subsequently Zanzibar City went into decline.

Following this decline, orientalist nostalgia dominated thinking and policy on Zanzibar, including the formation of the museum. The museum began as a collection of spoils of war and imported valuables that reflected the culture of collection that was already present in Zanzibar in the nineteenth century. From the onset, this resulted into a split between 'historical' objects, invariably imported from Asia or Europe, and indigenous ethnographic objects from Africa.

At the same time, the museum would become an important centre of colonial civilizing zeal, focused on public health. The author takes us through the Museum's inventory, exposition, and management over time. However, it is a pity that the beautiful photographs of the museum's display in the 1920s cannot be traced back in a readable floor plan. The book tells a story of great ambition on the part of curators and their staff, which invariably met with little government support.

Central to the book is John Houston Sinclair, a trained architect who decided to become colonial officer, as he did not think himself able to equal Christopher Wren – which perhaps says something about his personal ambitions. Sinclair would eventually become Resident, the highest colonial officer of Zanzibar. Sinclair designed a large number of buildings that were erected in the early years of the British Protectorate, such as the Central Court, the Post Office, the Residency, schools, and other buildings.

Sinclair was responsible for the effective creation of the colonial stage set of Zanzibar. This was a true *heterotopia*: the making of an orientalist town silhouette befitting the perceived image of Zanzibar – of an Arabic city with sultans, princesses, palm trees, minarets, pointed arches, and cupolas. Zanzibar, at the time Sinclair arrived in 1895, was ruled by the Sultan. There were princesses, like the famous Seyyida Salme, and palm trees in abundance, but there were no minarets, pointed arches, or cupolas. This was due to the fact that the ruling Omani were followers of the Ibadi sect whose architecture was geometric and plain, avoiding ostentatious and decorative elements and evoking a 'puritanical plainness' that the orientalist champion Burton remarked as early as 1872.

One of the first interventions by the British colonial administration upon the declaration of the Protectorate was to 'beautify' the House of Wonders – the main ceremonial palace of the Sultan, which was made seat of British power in the later 1890s. The House of Wonders was a masterpiece of modern architecture, introduced by an Arab-African prince rather than by a European colonial power. That fact did not befit the image of the new masters of Zanzibar. They could thus not approve of the House of Wonders and their condescending judgment of this remarkable building has proved to be persistent. The British administration commanded modification of the House of Wonders by adding historicizing elements in a clock tower and other decorative applications in order to mark the landscape with British history and to orientalise the silhouette of the city.

In 1923, architect and urban planner Henry Vaughn Lanchester made a visit to Zanzibar to draft a masterplan for the future of the city. It is no coincidence that Lanchester's proposal for the redevelopment of Zanzibar's waterfront coincided with Sinclair's Residency and met the saracenic, or *Sinclairist* expectations. The Peace Memorial Museum was to be the pinnacle of the conversion of the plain Zanzibar skyline into a saracenic townscape.

The Hagia Sophia has been offered as one of the main references for the design of the Museum, but the comparison does not go beyond the fact that the building contains multiple domes. If Sinclair had indeed studied the Hagia Sophia in detail, the collapse of the building during construction might have been avoided. The problematic design of the museum, both in terms of functionality and structure, as well as in its ambiguous and unbalanced architectural appearance, proved to be the Sinclair's downfall resulting in his expedited departure from Zanzibar.

Longair's book is a model of academic thoroughness, with new and well-supported views on the British colonial period in Zanzibar, yet written in a language that is clear and crisp, avoiding inflated jargon or recondite terms. After reading this fine book I made a visit to the Peace Memorial Museum on a quiet Sunday. The freshly whitewashed museum buildings were shimmering in the blazing sun, and, to my surprise, teeming with visitors.

ANTONI SCHOLTENS FOLKERS
African Architecture Matters

PAROCHIAL NATIONALISM

Imagining a Nation: History and Memory in Making Zimbabwe.

By Ruramisai Charumbira.

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Key Words: Zimbabwe, gender, identity, migration, nationalism.

In his *Do Zimbabweans Exist?: Trajectories of Nationalism, National Identity Formation and Crisis in a Postcolonial State*, Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni argues that postcolonial Zimbabwean nationalism has failed to promote a true sense of nationhood among the country's population. Instead, it has fostered an undemocratic, violent, and inhumane dispensation driven by narrow parochial political interests.¹ Similarly, A. Mlambo argued that Zimbabweans are currently struggling with national identity issues, given the current ruling elites' penchant for defining some groups as outsiders and political opponents as unpatriotic 'sell-outs' and puppets of the West and others as the true patriots. The situation

1 S. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Do 'Zimbabweans' Exist? Trajectories of Nationalism, National Identity Formation and Crisis in a Postcolonial State* (Oxford, 2009).