



AFRICA

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONSERVATION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE IN AFRICA ARE CHALLENGING. POLITICAL INSTABILITY AND THE LACK OF STRONG TOURISM ECONOMIES MAKE CONSERVATION OF IMPORTANT ANCIENT SITES LIKE DJENNÉ IN MALI AND GEBEL BARKAL IN SUDAN DIFFICULT. THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF KENYA, DIRECTED BY GHF ADVISORY BOARD MEMBER DR. GEORGE ABUNGU, HAS BEEN LEADING EFFORTS IN KENYA AND ACROSS AFRICA TO RESTORE ANCIENT SITES AND ESTABLISH THE AFRICA 2009 PROGRAMME TO INCREASE INVESTMENT IN TRAINING AND CONSERVATION FOR THE FEW REMAINING SITES.

THE GHF-SUPPORTED NATIVE SWAHILI SITE AT GEDE NATIONAL MONUMENT NEAR MALINDI IN KENYA AND GREAT ZIMBABWE NATIONAL MONUMENT, THE EARLIEST AND LARGEST STONE-WALLED SETTLEMENT IN AFRICA, DEMONSTRATE EARLY CENTRALIZED CONTROL AND COMPLEX SOCIETIES WITH DEVELOPED AGRICULTURE AND TRADE. THE RICH PRE-COLONIAL HISTORY OF AFRICA CAN BE ALSO SEEN IN KILWA KISIWANI, TANZANIA WHERE THE PALACE OF HUSUNI KUBWA EMBODIES A COMPLEX ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL SYSTEM WHICH EXTENDED ACROSS EAST AFRICA. CONSERVATION WORK IN THE REGION IS VITAL TO RETAIN THE LAST VESTIGES OF PRE-COLONIAL CULTURES AND CIVILIZATIONS.

34° 5' N, 5° 33' W



VOLUBILIS Morocco
300 BC – AD 1800
Roman, Arab

34° 5' N, 5° 0' W



FEZ Morocco
AD 800 – Present
Idrisid, Almoravid, Almohad, Marinid, Saadian, Alaouite, Cherifian, Spanish, French

33° 50' N, 5° 30' W



MEKNES Morocco
AD 900 – Present
Almoravid, Almohad, Marinid

13° 54' N, 4° 33' W



DJENNÉ Mali
300 BC – AD 1600
Ghana, Mali, Songhai

37° 10' N, 9° 10' E



DOUGGA Tunisia
500 BC – AD 600
Numidian, Roman, Byzantine

35° 42' N, 10° 1' E



KAIROUAN Tunisia
AD 670 – 1057
Aghlabid, Fatimid, Zirid

35° 13' N, 10° 46' E



EL DJEM Tunisia
AD 230 – 238
Roman Empire

18° 32' N, 31° 49' E



GEBEL BARKAL Sudan
1450 BC – AD 100
Napatan, Meroitic, Egyptian, Nubian

14° 10' N, 38° 45' E



AKSUM Ethiopia
AD 10 – 1300
Sabeen

12° 39' N, 37° 29' E



FASIL GHEBBI Ethiopia
AD 1640 – 1800
Ethiopian

3° 19' S, 40° 3' E



GEDE Kenya
AD 1100 – 1700
Swahili, Arab

6° 10' S, 39° 12' E



STONE TOWN OF ZANZIBAR Tanzania
AD 1000 – 1900
Swahili, Portuguese, Gujarati, Omani

20° 16' S, 30° 54' E



GREAT ZIMBABWE Zimbabwe
AD 1200 – 1600
Bantu



**AKSUM** Ethiopia

AD 10 – 1300
Sabeian

The powerful Kingdom of Aksum dominated the trade route between Rome and India from its strategic location near the Red Sea, controlling the flow of gold, ivory, animal skins and grain in the region. This fascinating city is believed to have been the birthplace of the Queen of Sheba, and the resting place of the Ark of the Covenant. Aksum also played a leading role in the conversion of Ethiopia to Christianity in AD 330. The city's expansive ruins are dominated by massive stone obelisks and stelae, which were constructed by King Ezana in the 4th century AD. Initially, more than 100 monuments were erected at the site, one of which stood 98 feet tall and weighed 517 tons. Most of the obelisks have been destroyed or removed from the site, and new construction in close proximity to the ancient monuments is hindering preservation efforts in the area.

**FASIL GHEBBI** Ethiopia

AD 1640 – 1800
Ethiopian

In the early 17th century Emperor Fasilides (AD 1632 – 1665) settled in Gondar, founding the fortress-city of Fasil Ghebbi. Fasilides established his residence in the city, building the first and most famous of the city's superb castles. His heirs continued the tradition, improving upon building techniques and architectural style. The result is one of the finest collections of Ethiopian architecture in the country. The city, now virtually deserted, is rich in history and magnificent monuments. Most of the buildings, however, have been looted over the years and many suffered damage during the Ethiopian-Italian war of 1936-41.

GEDE Kenya

AD 1100 – 1700
Swahili, Arab

The archaeological remains at the coastal town of Gede suggest the existence of a highly developed and wealthy African civilization. Structures discovered at this Swahili and Arab settlement include a palace, pillar tombs, a Great Mosque and several smaller mosques, as well as private residences. In the 1920s and 1930s the site was declared a protected monument and work began on preservation. Currently Gede is under the care of the National Museums of Kenya. More excavation is needed to fully understand this time period. Conservation efforts are also necessary as many walls are crumbling, while encroaching forest increasingly threatens the structures.





DJENNÉ Mali

300 BC – AD 1600
Ghana, Mali, Songhai

Located 220 miles southwest of Timbuktu, on the flood plains of the Niger and Bani Rivers, Djenné became Mali's primary trading center during the 16th century, operating a naval fleet and controlling the supply of gold and salt in the region. The city is dominated by the breathtaking 13th century Great Mosque, which was formerly the spiritual center for the dissemination of Islam. The world's largest adobe structure, the mosque was constructed entirely from rectangular mud bricks, varying in thickness between 16 and 24 inches, held together with mud mortar. Roof vents are covered with ceramic caps removed at night to assist in cooling the interior of the structure. The Great Mosque is restored on a yearly basis by the residents of Djenné, whose ritualistic practice includes covering the structure in a layer of mud to guard against sun, wind and water erosion. Plans to construct an upstream dam at Djenné threaten to displace the 20,000 residents, leaving the Great Mosque vulnerable to the elements.

FEZ Morocco

AD 800 – Present
Idrisid, Almoravid, Almohad, Marinid,
Saadian, Alaouite, Cherifian, Spanish,
French

Founded in the 9th century AD, Fez Ancient City is the oldest and largest medieval city in the world. Established as the capital of Morocco in the 13th century AD, the city thrived as a strong political and cultural force until 1912, when the French named Rabat the new capital. Its religious status is exemplified by the spectacular Kairouyne Mosque, which has served as the center of Moroccan Islamic teachings for over 1000 years. Complete with a tanners' quarter, narrow winding alley ways, and stalls filled with pottery and locally produced goods, modern day Fez retains much of the flavor of the ancient city.



MEKNES Morocco

AD 900 – Present
Almoravid, Almohad, Marinid, Alaouite

The city of Meknes has a long and varied past, which accounts for the city's wonderfully harmonious fusing of different architectural styles. It was in the 17th century under the reign of Sultan Maulay Ismaïl (1672–1727) that Meknes became a royal city and capital of the Alaouite empire. The Sultan's vision and determination transformed the already impressive city into a glamorous and enchanting imperial capital, rivaling Versailles in its splendor. Present day Meknes is still an inhabited city, but the historical monuments are suffering from the effects of weathering, erosion and modern pollution.



VOLUBILIS Morocco

300 BC – AD 1800
Roman, Arab

Established in the 3rd century BC, Volubilis prospered as the administrative center of Morocco, and as the primary exporter of grain and oil in the region. Volubilis is renowned as one of the few Roman cities that continued to flourish until the late 18th century, long after the decline of the Roman Empire. Occupying an area of 100 acres, the city is home to the spectacular Triumphal Arch, the massive stone columned Forum, the impressive Basilica, with its 33-foot-high walls, and numerous mosaics of exceptional quality. After sustaining serious damage during a 1755 earthquake, the remaining structures at Volubilis have been subject to severe erosion, underscoring the importance of preservation efforts at the site.



**GEBEL BARKAL** Sudan

1450 BC – AD 100
Egyptian, Nubian

Situated on the Nile River near the town of Karima, Gebel Barkal, formerly known as Napata, was first established in the 15th century BC by the Egyptian pharaoh Thutmose III. The city reached the height of its prosperity in the 8th century BC under the reign of the Nubian Empire, becoming the political capital of Upper Egypt, a primary river crossing, and an integral trade and religious center. The archaeological site of Gebel Barkal consists of a small 300-foot high mountain surrounded by ancient temples, royal palaces, monuments, and numerous pyramids. Water, wind and sand erosion, combined with unregulated tourism and lack of funding for preservation efforts, have resulted in landslides and severe degradation of the soft sandstone ruins at the site.

STONE TOWN OF ZANZIBAR

Tanzania

AD 1000 – 1900

Swahili, Portuguese, Gujarati, Omani

The Stone Town of Zanzibar was inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2000. This Swahili coastal trading town exemplifies the cultural fusion of African, Asian, and European styles created by centuries of mercantile exchange. Although settlement in the area existed long before construction of the Stone Town, the majority of the heritage buildings that remain today were built during the 1800s. The diversity of cultures that coexisted in the area produced a unique hybridization of architectural traditions. Zanzibar is also symbolically important as a pivotal location in the practice and opposition of East African slave trade. The area faces increased pressure by modern development, population growth and expanding tourism to the area. However, a comprehensive conservation planning effort in conjunction with local authorities has made good progress towards preserving the integrity of the Stone Town.





DOUGGA (THUGGA) Tunisia

500 BC – AD 600
Numidian, Roman, Byzantine

Constructed on an elevated plateau, 1800 feet above sea level, the Numidian capital of Dougga reached the peak of its prosperity in the 2nd century AD under Roman rule. The town's unique ruins, covering an area of almost 2 square miles, were partially excavated into underlying rock to guard against the summer heat. They include magnificent Roman temples, baths, theatres, mausoleums and exquisite tile floor mosaics. Harsh climatic conditions continue to impede efforts to preserve the historic monuments and mosaics at Dougga.



EL DJEM Tunisia

AD 230 – 238
Roman Empire

The spectacular Amphitheatre of El Djem is the third largest amphitheatre in the world, after Rome's Colosseum and the ruined amphitheatre of Capua. Construction of the amphitheatre likely began around AD 230 and was completed in AD 238. A number of beautifully crafted mosaics depict the action that went on in the arena before 35,000 spectators. Sandstone used in construction had to be quarried over 20 miles away and hauled to the site. Over the course of centuries, the amphitheatre has suffered from many types of erosion. The most severe damage to the building was inflicted in the 17th century when a large hole was blasted into the wall in order to drive out the Arabs sheltered there. The amphitheatre has also, unfortunately, served as a seemingly inexhaustible source of building materials for nearby towns.

**KAIROUAN** Tunisia

AD 670 - 1057
Aghlabid, Fatimid, Zirid

Kairouan was founded in AD 670 by the Arab leader Uqbah ibn Nafi. Legend tells of a warrior's horse stumbling across a golden goblet buried in the sand. A spring miraculously appeared when the goblet was dug up, fed by water from the source of Mecca's sacred well. Word of the miracle spread, drawing early North African Islamic people and eventually establishing Kairouan as the fourth holiest city in Islam. Restoration efforts over the last three decades have begun to return the city to its former splendor. Work still needs to be done, including general upkeep and maintenance of the site, rehabilitation of public squares, street facades, and private residences.

GREAT ZIMBABWE Zimbabwe

AD 1200 – 1600
Bantu

The ruins of Great Zimbabwe are found in sub-Saharan Africa. According to legend, Great Zimbabwe was the capital of the Queen of Sheba's empire. Archaeological evidence indicates that the medieval city was inhabited from approximately the 11th to the 15th or 16th centuries, most likely by a Bantu-speaking civilization of the Shona people, although the identity of the original inhabitants is still hotly debated. More recent archaeological study has recognized the settlement as a medieval African city with a dynamic social, economic and political culture completely African in origin. The Great Zimbabwe National Monument was inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Monument in 1986.

