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**PRESERVATION OF THE SLAVE SITES ON WEST AFRICA'S COAST:  
AN ANALYSIS OF HOW THE ATROCITIES OF THE TRANS-ATLANTIC  
SLAVE TRADE ARE REMEMBERED**

by  
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Written under the direction of

Katharine Woodhouse-Beyer, PHD, RPA

and approved by

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## **ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS**

Preservation of the Slave Sites on West Africa's Coast:

An Analysis of how the Atrocities of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade are Remembered

by

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Thesis Director:

Katharine Woodhouse-Beyer, PHD, RPA

This thesis will explore the history and cultural heritage of the structures and sites along the West African coast, occupied by Europeans during the trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. It may appear overly ambitious to study the entire West African coast, but this will present a brief history of the development of the site, their structures and the slave trade. I will focus on efforts made by international organizations and African nations to preserve the structures as well as their efforts to create memorial museums. This research is based upon secondary research, such as scholarly books, articles, reports by archaeologists who have worked on the sites, and data collected from organizations such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). These structures and sites are material evidence of the slave trade and the early African-European encounter. Using four sites as case studies: Bunce Island, Sierra Leone; Savi, Benin; Goree Island, Senegal; and St. George Elmina, Ghana, I will discuss the existing practice of preserving the sites as memorial museums. The preservation of these sites are increasingly necessary due to the influx of tourists of African descent travel to West

Africa in an attempt to find their “roots.” Some sites have received more attention and visitation than others. Slavery and the slave trade dominate the narratives of the sites, which raise questions of authenticity because most of the information is provided through oral tradition. Adequate historical and archaeological research in the area of the sites must be made to prove their legitimacy as slave structures.

## **Acknowledgements**

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I am mostly thankful for my mother, Edwina Kerr-Johnson, and fiancé, Brian A. Cunningham, who both provided me with the encouragement and confidence I needed to push through every hurdle I faced as a graduate student.

Finally, I would like to thank Ian Ragsdale for so graciously editing my thesis.

My thesis topic is a subject very dear to me. It is dedicated to the thousands of men, women, and children affected by the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and whose stories have been left untold.

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## Introduction

The thesis research will review efforts made to preserve the structures and sites related to African slavery along the West African coast. Christopher DeCorse,<sup>1</sup> Kenneth Kelly,<sup>2</sup> Ibrahim Thiaw,<sup>3</sup> and Joseph Opala<sup>4</sup> conducted archaeological research in the continent on areas that enslaved Africans were brought during the trans-Atlantic slave trade in the fifteenth to nineteenth centuries. The atrocities of the slave trade created an African Diaspora around the globe. The scattering of Africans outside of the continent caused many to break away from their ancestral cultures. However, as African nations gained their independence in the mid to late twentieth century they have embraced the slave structures as their cultural heritage. Some of the structures have been restored and have memorial museums to pay homage to the millions of Africans who died or were shipped to different corners of the world as slaves. Many people of African descent, interested in the history of slavery, travel to the continent to tour the structures that their ancestors may have been enslaved. In *Culture on Tour: Ethnographies of Travel*, Edward Bruner focuses on this recent wave of African-Americans and other groups from the diaspora visit to their “motherland.”<sup>5</sup> The structures’ history has opened up a dialogue about their significance and how they should be preserved.

Is there an organization in place that decides how the sites and structures where Africans were forced from their homeland and placed in bondage during the fifteenth to

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<sup>1</sup> DeCorse, Christopher R. "West Africa During the Atlantic Slave Trade: Archaeological Perspectives." New York: Leicester University Press 2001

<sup>2</sup> Kelly, Kenneth G. "The Archaeology of African-European Interaction: Investigating the Social Roles of Trade, Traders, and the Use of Space in the Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Hueda Kingdom, Republic of Benin." *World Archaeology*, Vol. 28, No. 3, Culture Contact and Colonialism, Feb. 1997

<sup>3</sup> Thiaw, Ibrahim. "Digging on Contested Grounds: Archaeology and the Commemoration of Slavery on Gorée Island, Senegal." *New Perspectives in Global Public Archaeology*, pp. 127-138. 2011

<sup>4</sup> Opala, Joseph A. "The Gullah: Rice Slavery and the Sierra Leone-American Connection." United States Informational Services. 1987

<sup>5</sup> Bruner, Edward M. "Culture on Tour: Ethnographies of Travel." University of Chicago Press. 2005

nineteenth centuries are preserved? The only organization that currently focuses on preserving the cultural heritage of the continent is the International Council of African Museums (AFRICOM), a non-governmental organization (NGO) of museums and museum professionals across Africa established in 1999. AFRICOM today is an International NGO registered by the Government of Kenya. AFRICOM seeks to contribute to the development of African societies by encouraging the role of museums as generators of culture, and promotes the preservation of the continent's heritage. It is also an international committee part of the International Council of Museums (ICOM). In 2010, UNESCO and AFRICOM signed a new partnership agreement, which aims to reinforce the communications and networking among museum professionals in Africa.<sup>6</sup> However, there are not any specific guidelines within the organization that address the preservation of the slave structures and sites as memorial museums.

In this analysis, the Elmina Slave Castle, Ghana; the Maison des Esclaves (House of Slaves), Senegal; Bunce Island's Slave Castle, Sierra Leone and the Savi Palace Complex, Benin will be the case studies to examine efforts made to preserve the slave structures along West Africa's coast. The Elmina Slave Castle was the first European structure built along the West African coast and is also the most visited site by tourists out of the four case studies. The site now possesses a museum, which exhibits the history of the Castle. Most visitors to the site are interested in the slave trade. The second case study will be on the Maison des Esclaves, which brings to light the debate on the issue of the site's credibility: scholars question its authenticity as a slave site. In *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census*, Philip Curtin statistics suggest that fewer slaves were transported

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<sup>6</sup> Awinda, Francois. "UNESCO partners with AFRICOM to reinforce the Professional Museum Networks in Africa." <http://www.africom.museum/whats-on/wo-UNESCO.html>

from Africa than previously estimated.<sup>7</sup> The third case study on Bunce Island's Slave Castle focuses on the United States' connection to slavery and Bunce Island's Slave Castle. Savi's Palace Complex will be the final case study, which highlights a once active slave trading port in West Africa. The Palace Complex has had the least tourist attraction because the physical structure suffered from erosion throughout time, and destruction caused by military forces. These four case studies are a part of my personal quest to identify and research all of the slave sites on the West African coast. The preservation of these structures help preserve the history of slavery. The physical structures confirm that the slave trade existed if ever denied.

#### *Slave Structures on the West African Coast*

The Portuguese were the first Europeans to arrive in Africa; they entered the coast in the late fifteenth century. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries Portugal rose as a world power during Europe's "Age of Discovery" when Europeans began to explore the world in search for new trade and alternative trade routes. The Portuguese built an empire, which included land they conquered in Africa. The initial attraction of the Portuguese to Africa was to acquire gold, ivory and pepper. Portuguese King John I's son Prince Henry discovered a route to and from West Africa. They exchanged manufactured European goods like cloth, brass and copper bangles and domestic equipment to trade with the Africans.<sup>8</sup> Their interest in trade goods increased so much that the Portuguese traders established a fort where they stored goods for shipment to their colonies. However, the development of agriculture and the creation of plantations for local industries in the New

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<sup>7</sup> Curtin, Philip D. "The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census." The University of Wisconsin Press. 1969

<sup>8</sup> Hilling, David. "The Evolution of the Major Ports of West Africa." The Geographical Journal, Vol. 135, No. 3 (Sep., 1969), 365

World during the sixteenth century heightened the demand for laborers. Trade in slaves began to overshadow gold as the principal export along the west coast of Africa.

This gave rise to the trans-Atlantic slave trade, when Europeans enslaved Africans and shipped them across the Atlantic Ocean to their colonies in New World. The Africans were forced to work on plantations, in mines, and as domestic servants. The slave trade was the largest forced migration in world history.<sup>9</sup> For four centuries millions of Africans were captured and enslaved. Over 40,000 voyages brought slaves across the ocean.

(Figure 1)<sup>10</sup> The institution of slavery proved to be profitable because the labor was free and they were able to accumulate wealth without paying the workers.<sup>11</sup> The final destination for just over one million Africans between 1441 and 1770 was in Portuguese colonies, mainly Brazil.<sup>12</sup> The substantial profits that could be obtained from the slave trade lured ships of traders from other European nations to compete with the Portuguese during the sixteenth century.<sup>13</sup> During the eighteenth century England transported a staggering 2.5 million slaves to North America and the Caribbean (Figure 2).

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<sup>9</sup> Richardson, David. "Involuntary migration in the early modern world, 1500–1800." *The Cambridge World History of Slavery: Volume 3, AD 1420–AD 1804*. July 2011, 563

<sup>10</sup> Diène, Doudou. "From Chains to Bonds: The Slave Trade Revisited." United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization/Berghahn Books. 2001, 37

<sup>11</sup> Cohn, Raymond L. "Deaths of Slaves in the Middle Passage." *The Journal of Economic History*, 1985, 686

<sup>12</sup> Sweet, James H. "Recreating Africa." Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina. 2003, 22

<sup>13</sup> Lawrence, Arnold W. "Trade Castles and Forts of West Africa." Stanford University Press. 1964, 33

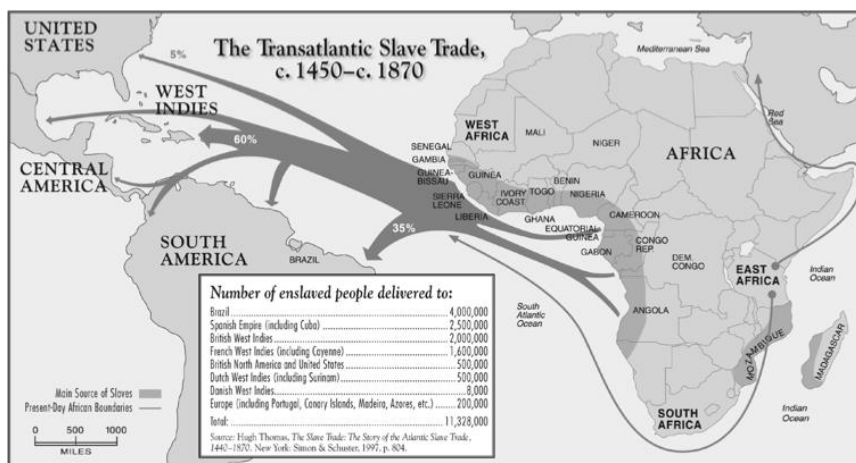


Figure 1. Map showing the slave trade<sup>14</sup>

Number of enslaved people delivered to:	
Brazil	4,000,000
Spanish Empire (including Cuba)	2,500,000
British West Indies	2,000,000
French West Indies (including Cayenne)	1,600,000
British North America and United States	500,000
Dutch West Indies (including Surinam)	500,000
Danish West Indies	8,000
Europe (including Portugal, Canary Islands, Madeira, Azores, etc.)	200,000
<b>Total:</b>	<b>11,328,000</b>

Source: Hugh Thomas, *The Slave Trade: The Story of the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1440–1870*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997, p. 804.

Figure 2. Number of enslaved Africans shipped to the New World.<sup>15</sup>

The Europeans built forts along the West African coast to designate a place for themselves in the slave-trading region. The building materials for the forts were brought from Europe to Africa by boat. Conflicts between the Dutch, British, Spaniards, French, Germans, Danish, Belgians, and Swedish along the coast began as a result of rivalry for control of the trade in West Africa. The forts were concentrated most densely along the

<sup>14</sup> Thomas, Hugh. "The Slave Trade: The Story of the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1440-1870." New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997, 804

<sup>15</sup> Thomas. "The Slave Trade." 1997, 804

coast to protect and expand trade.<sup>16</sup> Between the fifteenth and nineteenth centuries over eighty castles and forts were built along Ghana's gold coast alone. A great number of forts were built along the West African coast. "For almost four centuries fort and port were synonymous in West Africa."<sup>17</sup> Along the coast Europeans found tribal states, which typically included a small coastal town that provided land and labor to construct the forts.<sup>18</sup> The forts were not evenly distributed along the coast. The lack of forts along the 700 miles on the coast between Sherbro and Assinie is due to the lack of potential trade. The scarcity of the population in that area and lack of sizable coastal indentation limited the trade potential. There were few trading forts inland because there were large and powerful African empires of great extent formed.<sup>19</sup> There was also less chance of escape if attacked inland as opposed to the coast where boats are accessible.

The trans-Atlantic slave trade led to the devastation and depopulation of Africa throughout the sixteenth to late nineteenth centuries, but contributed to the development and wealth of Europe and other parts of the world.<sup>20</sup> Many European nations took advantage of the natural and human resources of West Africa (Figure 3). The forts are tangible proof that slavery existed and gives insight to past life in Africa relating to slavery. The forts' evidence are more than remains of buildings and structures; they also reveal the tools used to control and dominate the Africans. There are neck, wrist and ankle shackles, and also the branding iron used to sear a mark into the skin of a newly captured African at the forts.<sup>21</sup> The storerooms originally used for goods were used to store African people. The Europeans built dungeons for men, women, and children where

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<sup>16</sup> Lawrence, "Trade Castles and Forts of West Africa," 25

<sup>17</sup> Hilling, "The Evolution of the Major Ports of West Africa," 365

<sup>18</sup> Lawrence, "Trade Castles and Forts of West Africa," 27

<sup>19</sup> Wood, "An Archaeological Appraisal of Early European Settlement in the Senegambia," 60

<sup>20</sup> Adi, Hakim. "Africa and the Transatlantic Slave Trade." British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) News. 2/17/11

<sup>21</sup> Hecht, Randy B. "Ghana's Monument to Sorrow and Survival." Smithsonian.com. 05/18/2011

they slept, ate, and relieved themselves in the same place.<sup>22</sup> The slave forts are the most enduring physical structure of the European expansion on the West African coast that provided their countries and colonies with slaves.<sup>23</sup> West Africa and its people were an integral part of the drastic transformations that shaped the world during the fifteenth to twentieth centuries.<sup>24</sup> It is impossible to speak of the slave trade as a single event that occurred long ago since it created an African diaspora in all over the world. The European slave forts are numerous and hold significant history of European trade that affected African culture and daily life. Some forts are in ruins and some have not been identified.

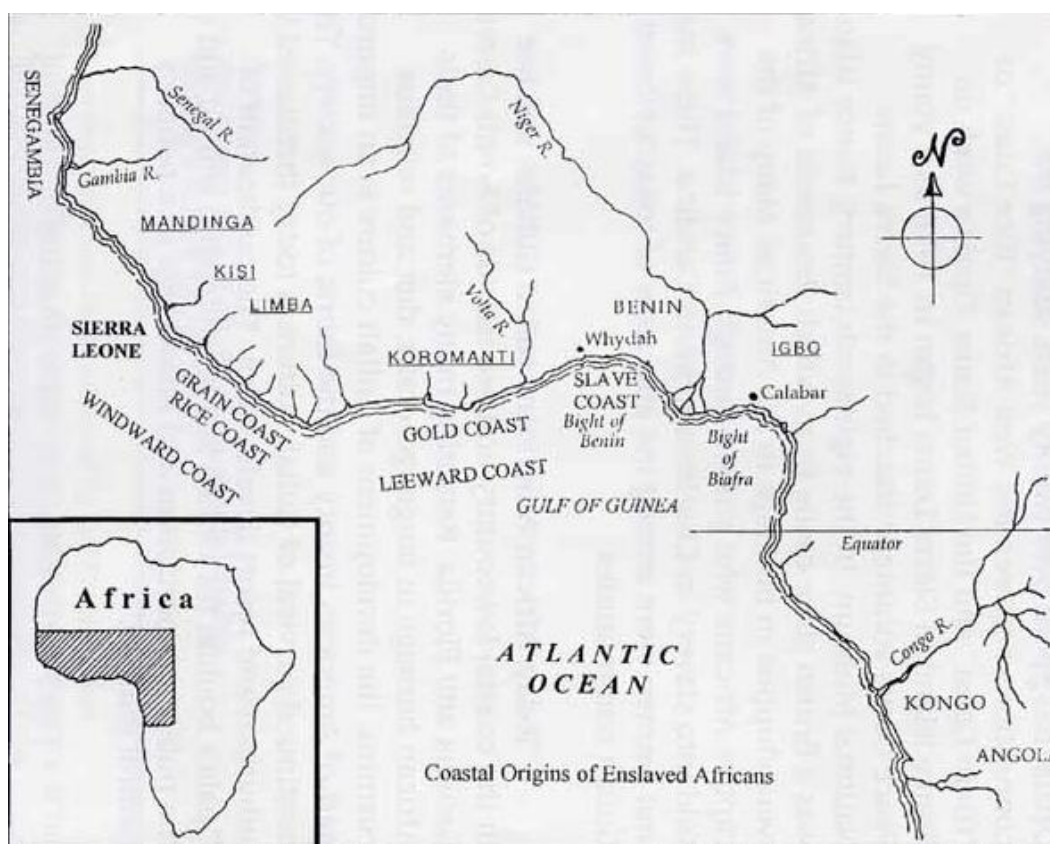


Figure 3. Map of West Africa shows where Europeans built their slave forts.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Samuels, Allison. "Slave Quarters." *The Daily Beast*. 05/21/2009

<sup>23</sup> DeCorse, "West Africa During the Atlantic Slave Trade," 8

<sup>24</sup> DeCorse, "West Africa During the Atlantic Slave Trade," 1

<sup>25</sup> Opala. "The Gullah," 1987

### **Case Study One: Elmina Slave Castle, Ghana**

The UNESCO World Heritage Site (WHS) at Elmina Castle in Ghana is perhaps the best-known former slave fort along the Atlantic coast. It is a popular destination and place of pilgrimage for African-American tourists, and visitors from all over the world who are a part of the African Diaspora<sup>26</sup>. It serves as a Memorial Museum to remember the millions of Africans that were forced from their homeland. The 500-year-old Portuguese castle tells a gloomy story of shackled slaves waiting to be shipped out.<sup>27</sup> It is a striking white limestone fortress on an oceanfront. Ghana's former minister of tourism, Jake Otanka Obetsebi-Lampitey, wants those descendants of the African Diaspora to consider Ghana their home not just as tourists but also as potential investors in the country. He says it should be, "treated with respect as holy grounds, just like Mecca," and not just be regarded as tourist attractions. "Taking Israel as its model, Ghana hopes to persuade the descendants of enslaved Africans to think of Africa as their 'homeland,' to visit, invest, send their children to be educated here and even retire here."<sup>28</sup> The castle was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1979 with ten other forts and castles along the coast of West Africa. There are some forty forts and castles along the Ghanaian coast but some have been made into government buildings that are off-limits to the general public.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Richards, Sandra L. "What Is to Be Remembered?: Tourism to Ghana's Slave Castle-Dungeons." *Theatre Journal*, Vol. 57, No. 4, Black Performance 2005, 618

<sup>27</sup> Quist-Arcton, Ofeibea. "African Slave Descendants Trace History in Ghana." NPR: National Public Radio. 2006

<sup>28</sup> Polgreen, Lydia. "Ghana Wants Once-Enslaved Diaspora." *The New York Times*. 12/27/2005

<sup>29</sup> Graham, Judith. "The Slave Fortresses of Ghana." *The New York Times*. 11/25/1990





Figure 4. Elmina Castle, entrance (photo: Osei-Tutu)<sup>30</sup>



Figure 5. Elmina Castle, interior courtyard (photo: Osei-Tutu)<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Osei-Tutu, Brempong. "Contested Monuments: African-Americans and the Commoditization of Ghana's Slave Castles." *African Re-Genesis: Confronting Social Issues in the Diaspora*. Left Coast Press. 2006, 11

<sup>31</sup> Osei-Tutu. "Contested Monuments," 11

### *History of the Elmina Slave Castle*

The Portuguese arrived in what is now known as Ghana in 1471. The gold ornaments worn by the coastal people astonished the Portuguese and they named the area The Mine (Elmina), later called the Gold Coast and now present-day Ghana.<sup>32</sup> Their interest in Africa increased so much that they built a fortified settlement called São Jorge da Mina (St. George of the Mine) Castle, also known simply as Elmina in the center of the gold coast trading region in 1482. (Figure 4 & 5) Stone and other supplies were brought from Europe to build the structure. The original structure was a small rectangular fortress. The castle is on a cliff above the Atlantic Ocean. It is on the end of a rocky peninsula, which created natural protection against competitors. It also has four great watchtowers with view of the surrounding sea; six 12-foot-long Dutch cannons are aimed at the town. Inside, there is large stone courtyard and an inner facade, made of limestone and bricks imported from Europe. The Europeans modified the castle over the centuries by adding rooms and additional building. It now covers ten times the surface area of the original structure.<sup>33</sup>

Elmina was a trading factory created to discourage and protect Portuguese trade from European competitors. The fort had residential quarters, offices, storerooms, a central courtyard, and workshops for repairing ships.<sup>34</sup> The storerooms were converted to dungeons by the end of the fifteenth century for slaves. The Elmina Castle is the oldest European monument in sub-Saharan Africa and the blue print for many European factories/forts/trading posts later built along the West African coast.<sup>35</sup> The buildings'

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<sup>32</sup> Lawrence, "Trade Castles and Forts of West Africa," 30

<sup>33</sup> Graham, Judith. "The Slave Fortresses of Ghana." *The New York Times*. 11/25/1990

<sup>34</sup> , "Trade Castles and Forts of West Africa," 25

<sup>35</sup> Newitt, Malyn. "The Portuguese in West Africa, 1415-1808: A Documentary History." Cambridge University Press. 2010, 9

layout remained similar to Elmina with slight architectural modification as building techniques improved.<sup>36</sup>

The Portuguese secured their position on the gold coast for almost a century. The Dutch captured Elmina from the Portuguese in 1637 and drove them from the Gold Coast permanently in 1642.<sup>37</sup> The Dutch converted the Portuguese church located inside of the castle into a slave auction market in 1637. The Europeans would choose the most suitable human specimens for labor.<sup>38</sup> Possession of the fort then went back and forth from the Dutch to the British African Company from 1750 but eventually the British gained possession of Elmina and of all the Dutch coastal forts by the end of the nineteenth century making them the dominant European power on the Gold Coast.<sup>39</sup>

#### *Exhibiting the Slave Trade in Elmina Castle*

In 1993, following three years of planning, the United States government's Agency for International Development (USAID) launched a major regional tourism development initiative in Ghana called the Central Region Natural Resources Conservation and Historic Preservation Project. With support from the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) USAID initiated research and rehabilitation of Elmina castle and other European structures. USAID spent approximately \$10 million funding the restoration project. It was a joint effort to restore the castle by major national and international donors and agencies. USAID, UNDP, the Ghana Museums and Monuments Board (GMMB), the Smithsonian Institute, and the Midwest Universities Consortium for International Activities (MUCIA) all assisted in the restoring the sites. A Ghana Heritage

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<sup>36</sup> Lawrence, "Trade Castles and Forts of West Africa," 25

<sup>37</sup> Zook, George Frederick. "Early Dutch and English Trade to West Africa." *The Journal of Negro History*, 137

<sup>38</sup> Bruner, "Culture on Tour," 106

<sup>39</sup> DeCorse, "West Africa During the Atlantic Slave Trade," 3

Conservation Trust (GHCT) and attraction site fee sharing were created to sustain the structures for tourist attractions.<sup>40</sup>

The museum within the castle was established in 1996. Exhibits include the history of the castle, photographs representing the castle throughout the centuries, gold weights, artifacts, and slave dungeons, which are the primary interests of tourists who visit the site. People of African descent's primary interest are the experiences of slaves during the slave trade so guides focus on the dungeons. In 2000, Elmina castle recorded over 100,000 tourists. Domestic tourists represented approximately 70% of visitors to the castle that year and 30% were international tourists.<sup>41</sup> According to a study from Georgia State University, around 10,000 tourists visit a year and the number has grown since US President Barack Obama's visit in July 2010.<sup>42</sup> They come to experience one of the very sites from which their ancestors may have begun their agonizing journey to the New World.<sup>43</sup> Visitors are allowed to observe the site and walk the path where enslaved Africans' began the torturous journey to the New World.

Guides have a specific approach to the tour of the castle. Tourists are taken through the infamous "Door of No Return," where slaves were taken directly into slave ships, never to set foot in their homelands again. While leading people throughout the castle, the tour guides give information about the lives of the Africans in bondage. Guides describe how food was handed through the iron gates of the dungeons on a long paddle. There was no toilet, no fresh air, and no room to lie down. The only air or light came through the doorways or a few small holes at either end of the ceiling. Women were

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<sup>40</sup> Bowditch, Nathaniel H. "Ghana Tourism Revenue Sharing Action Plan." United States Agency for International Development (USAID). November 2000

<sup>41</sup> Holsey, Bayo. "Routes of Remembrance: Refashioning the Slave Trade in Ghana." University of Chicago Press. 2008, 178

<sup>42</sup> Molnar, Phil. "Elmina Castle a Site of Pilgrimage for African-Americans." CNN. 01/06/2010

<sup>43</sup> Bruner, "Culture on Tour: Ethnographies of Travel," 114

chosen as bedmates for the merchants. Those who rebelled were sent to the condemned cell, a small black room with one hole in the wall, where they were starved to death.<sup>44</sup> In the middle of the courtyard stands a cast-iron ball and chain that was also used for slaves who disobeyed. They were shackled to it and left to die in the burning sun. Visitors are given a chance to get locked into a cell to experience what it might have felt like to be held there.<sup>45</sup>

### *The Struggle over Meaning at Elmina Castle*

Most Ghanaians want the European slave-related structures restored with better lighting and heating, as well as cleaned to be attractive to tourists. They are interested in the entire history of the castle without focusing on a particular time in history.<sup>46</sup> African Americans and others of African descent do not want the castle to be “whitewashed,” but remain preserved as is with remnants of the stench and shackles, a reminder of the inhumane conditions slaves endured.<sup>47</sup> The Save Elmina Association (SEA), founded in 1990 by a group of Dutch nationals living in Ghana, want to preserve Elmina’s Dutch heritage. Many Dutch businesses that operate in Ghana contribute to SEA as part of the Ghana-Netherlands Business Club. J. V. L. Phillips, a trustee of the SEA, believes the European presence is unproblematic and positive. He suggests that the castle will receive a facelift to reveal the great fortress that stood. It is a contrast to the African descendants’ idea of bringing to light the history of the slave trade and the experience of the slaves within the castle’s walls.<sup>48</sup> Phillips’ narrative would focus on the original use of the

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<sup>44</sup> Graham, “The Slave Fortresses of Ghana.”

<sup>45</sup> Samuels, Allison. “Slave Quarters.” *The Daily Beast*. 05/21/2009

<sup>46</sup> Bruner, “Culture on Tour: Ethnographies of Travel,” 104

<sup>47</sup> Bruner, “Culture on Tour: Ethnographies of Travel,” 103

<sup>48</sup> Holsey, Bayo. “Routes of Remembrance: Refashioning the Slave Trade in Ghana.” University of Chicago Press. 2008, 117

building. The tourists who visit the castle are Americans, Dutch, British, Germans, and Portuguese.<sup>49</sup> There are different interests and interpretations of the structures from multiple groups.<sup>50</sup> The historical castle's trans-Atlantic slave trade linkage attracts tourists from all over the world, which has assisted in the economic development for people in Elmina who live near to the site.<sup>51</sup>

### *Archaeological Research of Elmina Castle*

Interest and preservation of Elmina Slave Castle in the past focused on European lives and activities on the site. Historic archaeological examinations of the sites reveal artifacts and human remains that show evidence that there were slaves present. The historical documents associated with the site do not disclose much information about the slaves. The documentary evidence emphasis is on the European presence and European concerns.<sup>52</sup> The African governments are working to incorporate the history of the enslaved to make the archaeological interpretations of the sites more inclusive. The horrors within the forts that slaves experienced first hand are infrequently mentioned in academic writings about the forts.<sup>53</sup> Arnold. W. Lawrence's research for *Trade Castles and Forts of West Africa* focused on European outposts in West Africa, which provided comprehensive descriptions and details of the forts and castles emphasizing on the buildings history and Europeans that occupied them, but he leaves out accounts of African settlements and societies.

Christopher DeCorse's archaeological research on Elmina is one of the few

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<sup>49</sup> Bruner, "Culture on Tour: Ethnographies of Travel." 2005, 110

<sup>50</sup> Bruner, Edward M. "Tourism in Ghana: The Representation of Slavery and the Return of the Black Diaspora." *American Anthropologists* Vol. 98, No. 2. June 1996, 295

<sup>51</sup> Bruner, "Culture on Tour: Ethnographies of Travel." 2005, 110

<sup>52</sup> DeCorse, "West Africa During the Atlantic Slave Trade," 9

<sup>53</sup> DeCorse, "West Africa During the Atlantic Slave Trade," 8

studies that have focused on African settlements associated with the European trading posts. He reveals the results of his almost twenty years of research at Elmina in his book *An Archaeology of Elmina: Africans and Europeans on the Gold Coast, 1400-1900*. Through historical documents, oral tradition, and archaeological evidence he shows the rise of Elmina as a trading center on the Gold Coast, and discusses daily life in the African settlements surrounding the fort, and imported material (ceramics, glass bottles, tobacco pipes, weapons, etc) that changed cultural life at Elmina. He focuses on the African occupants that were impacted by the slave trade during European contact.<sup>54</sup>

The cultural heritage of Ghana during the devastating period of the trans-Atlantic Slave Trade remains poorly investigated. The tangible historical evidence of slavery provided by material records is unstudied and basic regional chronological syntheses are often lacking and also have a European-focus.<sup>55</sup> The preservation of Elmina originally did not include excavation and archaeological data. During restoration, information on the construction of the building was researched but the objects that were cleared from the structure were not. The history of Elmina Castle was originally shaped by the supporting historical documents and oral history.<sup>56</sup>

Many European structures in West Africa are restored to serve as government offices, prisons, schools, and museums.<sup>57</sup> The Elmina Castle also once housed a school and numerous government functions until UNESCO nominated it as a World Heritage Site in 1979.<sup>58</sup> The Central Region Development Commission in Ghana directed the

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<sup>54</sup> DeCorse, Christopher R. "An Archaeology of Elmina: Africans and Europeans on the Gold Coast, 1400-1900." Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press. 2001

<sup>55</sup> DeCorse, "West Africa During the Atlantic Slave Trade," 1

<sup>56</sup> Wood, W. R. "An Archaeological Appraisal of Early European Settlement in the Senegambia." *Journal of African History*, Vol. 8, No. 1. 1967, 39

<sup>57</sup> DeCorse, "West Africa During the Atlantic Slave Trade," 9

<sup>58</sup> Bruner, "Culture on Tour: Ethnographies of Travel." 2005, 110

restoration of Elmina Castle where a limited amount of excavation was done.<sup>59</sup> Although the Ghana Museums and Monuments Board has intervened to preserve Elmina, the amount of sites destroyed because of the illicit trading of antiquities remains staggering. “The potential of the legislation [National Liberation Council Decree (NLCD) 387 of 1969, also known as Act 387 of 1969]<sup>60</sup> that established GMMB and empowered it to manage and preserve the country’s archaeological past has not been realized. The lack of political action, limited relevant public education, insufficient funding, and the poverty of the majority of the Ghanaian populace have allowed for the widespread destruction of both sites and historic building.”<sup>61</sup> The Majority of West African countries have limited legislations that protect archaeological sites. Since historical European documents do not provide information about Africans and their life-ways,<sup>62</sup> the preservation of archaeological evidence relating to the changes that occurred in African societies during the slave trade is crucial.

### *Conclusion*

A thriving tourism industry of foreign visitors has sprouted within the Elmina Castle; Ghana’s tourism industry has had a steady growth since the mid-twentieth century.<sup>63</sup> After gold and cocoa, tourism is Ghana’s third largest foreign exchange earner.<sup>64</sup> Since the mid-twentieth century there has been many conservation and tourism

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<sup>59</sup> Hyland, A. “Monuments Conservation Practice in Ghana: Issues of Policy and Management.” *Journal of Architectural Conservation*. 2:45-62. 1995

<sup>60</sup> Myles, Kwame. “Cultural Resource Management in Sub-Saharan Africa: Nigeria, Togo and Ghana.” In H. Cleere (ed.), *Archaeological Heritage Management in the Modern World*, pp. 118-127. London: Unwin Hyman. 1989, 125

<sup>61</sup> Kankpeyeng, Benjamin W. and Christopher R. DeCorse. “Ghana’s Vanishing Past: Development, Antiquities, and the Destruction of the Archaeological Record.” *African Archaeological Review* 21 (2): 89-128. 2004, 89

<sup>62</sup> DeCorse, “West Africa During the Atlantic Slave Trade,” 9

<sup>63</sup> Bowditch, “Ghana Tourism Revenue Sharing Action Plan,” 4

<sup>64</sup> National Tourism development Plan, Ministry of Tourism, 1996



development plans throughout West Africa's slave structures, such as the rehabilitation of the historic Cape Coast Castle (also built by Europeans and housed slaves) as a memorial museum.<sup>65</sup> The most popular site is the St. George Elmina Castle in Ghana.<sup>66</sup> Ghana is one of the most promising African nations where tourists feel comfortable traveling to. It offers pristine beaches, the rain forest, and local cultures and rituals, but the star feature is the historic castle of Elmina and Cape Coast Castle.<sup>67</sup> Through the preservation of the sites African Americans tourists have embraced Africans as family. At the same time that tourism has thrived in Ghana, so have other elements of Ghanaian culture, such as the revival of Ghanaian culture through dancing and drumming, since many tourists are interested in their traditional culture.<sup>68</sup> Therefore, the study of the slave trade should continue to be the focus of Elmina Castle because it has allowed Ghanaians and those in the African diaspora to learn more about their interconnected history.

### **Case Study Two: Goree Island's Maison des Esclaves (House of Slaves), Senegal**

Many museums dedicated to the slave trade are located along the West African coast in structures that were once used to bound and restrain Africans. The persuasion for creating a memorial to highlight the experience of African slaves during the slave trade is the desire to remember and educate the public about the history of slavery. Goree Island's Maison des Esclaves is one of the first such sites, which functions as an interpretive center and a memorial. Goree Island is a small island off the coast of present-day Dakar, Senegal. There are no cars or roads on the island. Preserved faded European buildings

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<sup>65</sup> Bruner, "Tourism in Ghana," 290

<sup>66</sup> Samuels, Allison. "Slave Quarters."

<sup>67</sup> Bruner, "Culture on Tour: Ethnographies of Travel." 2005, 102

<sup>68</sup> Bruner, "Culture on Tour: Ethnographies of Travel." 2005, 119

reveal Goree Island's European colonial history.<sup>69</sup> After Senegal's independence in the 1960s, Senegalese, Africans, and others associated with the African Diaspora entered the debate about Goree's role in the Atlantic slave trade. In 1962, the Maison des Esclaves Memorial Museum opened and was embraced as a heritage site that engages public discourse.<sup>70</sup> An emphasis on the trauma and displacement of Africans brought to the New World has been the narrative chosen for the site.

### *History of Goree Island's Maison des Esclaves*

In 1450, the first recorded European explorers from Portugal arrived in Senegal. It was the start of five centuries of pillage of the country's wealth and its people. At first the Europeans came for gold and other precious metals but quickly a more lucrative trade in human lives began. In the mid-eighteenth century the trading posts on Senegal's coast was the site of constant warring between the British and French. Goree Island was an ideal place for Europeans seeking to control the trade along the coast. It has a good harbor and protective cliffs. The island changed hand many times between the Portuguese, Dutch, and English before the French secured possession in 1764. By the eighteenth century as a result of a long-term association with the Europeans, *signares* (free African and Afro-European women) intermarried with European men. These families were very wealthy, owning both property and slaves.

Maison des Esclaves was built in the early 1780s under French rule. (Figure 6 & 7)<sup>71</sup> Records indicate that the original owners were a mixed-race family (*signares*) of a French navy surgeon named Nicolas Pepin. It is believed that the family occupied the

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<sup>69</sup> Barnett, Errol. "Senegal's Scenic Island Exposes Horror of Slave Trade." CNN 2/21/2012

<sup>70</sup> Thiaw, "Digging on Contested Grounds." 2011, 127

<sup>71</sup> Sharp, Robin. "Senegal: A State of Change: An Oxfam Country Profile," London: Oxfam. 1994, 8

upper floor with large rooms and balconies, while the ground floor was the site for kitchens, pantries, and cells for transit slaves.<sup>72</sup> For forty years, since the museum's inception, Boubacar Joseph Ndiaye was curator of Maison des Esclaves and oversaw the memorial on Gorée Island until his death in 2009. "He was the main architect of the defense of the memory of the Atlantic slave trade, the man most fervent and unrelenting against any revisionism," said Hamady Bocoum, director of Cultural Heritage at Senegal's Culture Ministry.<sup>73</sup>



Figure 6. Maison des Esclaves, exterior (photo: Senegal Tourist Office, New York)<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Brooks, G. "The Signares of Saint Louis and Gorée: Women Entrepreneurs in Eighteenth-Century Sénégal." In *Women in Africa* (ed. N. J. Hafkin and Edna G. Bay). Stanford: Stanford University Press. 1976, 38

<sup>73</sup> France-Presse, Agence. "B.J. Ndiaye, Curator of Landmark in Slave Trade, Dies at 86." *The New York Times*. 2/18/2009.

<sup>74</sup> Ring, Trucy., Robert M. Salkin and Sharon La Boda. "International Dictionary of Historic Places: Middle East and Africa." Volume 4. Middle East and Africa. Taylor and Francis. 1996, 305



Figure 7. Maison des Esclaves, interior (photo: Senegal Tourist Office, New York)<sup>75</sup>

### *The Preservation of Maison des Esclaves*

"The island used to host around 28 slave houses. Today most have disappeared and turned into private houses," notes Eloi Coly, current chief curator of Maison des Esclaves. "This one was chosen by the Senegalese state to keep the memory and remind all the people about the fragility of the liberties. It's a place of memory and reconciliation." Coly believes that the small dark rooms underneath the staircases were used as punishment rooms, and that the damp little rooms kept young girls and children separately from men for sale or the pleasure of the traders.<sup>76</sup> According to Mr. Ndiaye, slaves were led to the "Door of No Return," leaving Africa forever. It is located at the back of the house facing the Atlantic Ocean; the door leads to a wharf made of palm wood, where a ship would be waiting to take the Africans across the ocean, never to

<sup>75</sup> Ring. "International Dictionary of Historic Places." 1996, 305

<sup>76</sup> Barnett, Errol. "Senegal's Scenic Island Exposes Horror of Slave Trade." CNN 2/21/2012

return to their homes. Slaves that had fallen ill or died were also thrown into the ocean, Coly said.<sup>77</sup>

The safeguarding of the Maison des Esclaves has been placed under Senegal's Law No. 71.12 of 1971, which established the regulations for historical monuments and excavation finds.<sup>78</sup> The island was inscribed a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1978 and Maison des Esclaves was restored in 1990 with the support of the Senegalese government. The development of international tourism, the inscription of the island on the UNESCO World Heritage List, popular narratives, and tourists shape the history of Gorée Island.<sup>79</sup> The UNESCO website states "The Island of Gorée testifies to an unprecedented human experience in the history of humanity. It is a memorial to the African diaspora. It continues to serve as a reminder of human exploitation and as a sanctuary for reconciliation."<sup>80</sup> The country's tourism department reports that Senegal hosts more than 200,000 people that travel to the island off the coast of Dakar each year to step inside the dark, dungeon - like holding rooms at Maison des Esclaves to hear details of how twenty million slaves were chained and mistreated.<sup>81</sup>

### *Controversy Surrounding Maison des Esclaves*

Profound differences of opinions over the impact of slavery and its consequences in Gorée Island persist. Scholars question the authenticity of the Maison des Esclaves as significant to the history of the Atlantic slave trade. It is one of coastal West Africa's most controversial sites and the focus of the debate by the publications of Philip Curtin's

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<sup>77</sup> Barnett, Errol. "Senegal's Scenic Island Exposes Horror of Slave Trade."

<sup>78</sup> <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0004/000459/045955eb.pdf>

<sup>79</sup> Thiaw, "Digging on Contested Grounds." 2011, 129

<sup>80</sup> <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/26>

<sup>81</sup> Murphy, John. "Senegal Slave House's Past Questioned." The Baltimore Sun. 7/27/2004

(1969) census on the Atlantic Slave Trade. In *The Atlantic Slave Trade: a Census*, Curtin argued that the popular estimates of fifteen to twenty million slaves departing from Gorée Island are fallacious. According to Curtin, Gorée Island was never a key departure point for slaves; rather, it functioned as a commercial center. Most Africans sold into slavery in the Senegal region would have departed from thriving slave depots at the mouths of the Senegal River to the north and the Gambia River to the south, he notes. Curtin examined published literature on the slave trade as a point of reference and came up with a total estimate of 9.566 million African slaves exported during the trans-Atlantic slave trade, which is significantly less than the fifteen to twenty million estimation from the past.<sup>82</sup>

#### *Archaeology on Gorée Island*

Ibrahim Thiaw's 2001, *Gorée Archaeological Project*, examines the history of Gorée Island by conducting archaeological field surveys to find evidence relating to slavery. The National Geographic Society funded the first phase of the project and the South-South Exchange Program funded the second phase for Research on the History of Development. Thiaw shows that the main labor force on the island were slaves, which contradicts Curtin's study on the impact of the slave trade in Gorée.<sup>83</sup> European merchants owned indigenous slaves to assist them with domestic tasks on the island but they were primarily interested in transit slaves who were generally confined within the forts waiting for the next shipment.<sup>84</sup> Thiaw examines pre-European settlements, early contacts with Europeans, and the expedited incorporation of Gorée into the market

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<sup>82</sup> Curtin, "The Atlantic Slave Trade," 127

<sup>83</sup> Thiaw, Ibrahim. "Slaves Without Shackles: An Archaeology of Everyday Life On Goree Island (Senegal). Workshop on Archaeological and Historical Dimensions of Slavery in East and West Africa in Comparative Perspective, London BIE and UCL, March 24-26, 2007, 12

<sup>84</sup> Thiaw, Ibrahim. "Slaves Without Shackles." 2007, 18

economy of the Atlantic world. This research includes the history of all who occupied the island.<sup>85</sup> Because of Gorée Island's popularity as a tourist destination, it is difficult to systematically survey sites like the Maison des Esclaves. Fieldwork was concentrated on abandoned houses and unoccupied public space that were similar in structure. There were twenty-one sites tested in total numbered G1 to G21.<sup>86</sup> The archaeological data recovered provided information on changing patterns of settlements, materials, everyday life and cultural interaction on the island.<sup>87</sup> The material evidence shows that imports, such as textiles, bricks, nails and various kinds of metal artifacts, alcoholic beverages, beads, gunflints, and ceramics<sup>88</sup> increased on the island by the eighteenth century, which coincides with the rise of the trans-Atlantic slave trade on the island and elsewhere on the West African Coast.<sup>89</sup> The growth of the island's population in the eighteenth century impacted the archaeological deposits, which often showed disturbance due to building construction to accommodate the growth of the island's population.<sup>90</sup>

### *Conclusion*

Archival and documentary sources for statistical evaluation cannot tell the true impact of the trans-Atlantic slave trade on African groups and societies in and around Gorée Island. The statistical evaluation to a certain extent gives the number of slaves exiting from the island but not the number that remained.<sup>91</sup> The socio-cultural, economic,

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<sup>85</sup> Thiaw, "Digging on Contested Grounds." 2011, 131

<sup>86</sup> Thiaw, Ibrahim. "Slaves Without Shackles." 2007, 29

<sup>87</sup> Thiaw, Ibrahim. "Slaves Without Shackles." 2007, 2

<sup>88</sup> Thiaw, Ibrahim. "Slaves Without Shackles." 2007, 5

<sup>89</sup> Brooks, George E. *Eurafricans in Western Africa: Commerce, Social Status, Gender and Religious Observance from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century*. Athens: Ohio University Press. 2003

<sup>90</sup> Thiaw, Ibrahim. "Slaves Without Shackles." 2007, 7

<sup>91</sup> Thiaw, "The Goree Archaeology Project (GAP): Preliminary Results." 2003

psychological, and political effects caused by slave deportation are just as significant.

“Censuses on the Atlantic slave trade are too often controversial as their evidence is generally scant and dispersed. However, censuses on populations residing on Gorée at a specific time offer better estimates thanks to the small size of the island.”<sup>92</sup> A series of censuses are available on Gorée from the mid-eighteenth century onwards, which colonial authorities most likely collected for administrative purposes.

Even if Curtin's numbers are correct, Gorée retains its symbolic and emotional importance. In August 1995, Curtin called the slave house a "sham" on the H-Slavery online forum.<sup>93</sup> Curtin said that, "The 'house of slaves' has become an emotional shrine to the slave trade, rather than a serious museum." Some historians responded angrily. One said, "It is like those who deny Nazi death camps," another said, "It isn't possible to comprehend the significance of Gorée or African-Americans if one considers it only a matter of numbers," and other said, "The Maison des Esclaves on Gorée has a potent symbolic effect." The slave trade was not an event that occurred at one time or place, but was instead a process that evolved over hundreds of years and along thousands of miles of coastline.”<sup>94</sup> Africans and those a part of the African Diaspora can pay homage to their ancestors at the Maison des Esclaves since it was a part of European exploitation of West Africa. Regardless of the number, slaves did pass through and the Museum provides a focal point to express their grief.

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<sup>92</sup> Thiaw, Ibrahim. "Slaves Without Shackles." 2007, 9

<sup>93</sup> Araujo, Ana Lucia. "Public Memory of Slavery: Victims and Perpetrators in the South Atlantic." Cambria Press. 2010, 60

<sup>94</sup> Walton, Andy. "Tiny Island Weathers Storm of Controversy." CNN. 5/26/1998



### Case Study Three: Bunce Island's Slave Castle, Sierra Leone

While thousands of tourists are now visiting Elmina Castle in Ghana and Maison des Esclaves in Senegal, Bunce Island has much more evidence that links it directly to North America than these other historical sites. It is a place of singular importance to both African and American history. Bunce Island is located in the Sierra Leone River about twenty miles above modern Freetown, Sierra Leone. It is a small island, only one-third of a mile long, and uninhabited today, although once an economically - strategic point during the Atlantic slave trade.<sup>95</sup> American historian, and director of the US branch of the Bunce Island Coalition, Joseph Opala, stated that, "It's the most important historic site in Africa for the United States. About twenty-five percent of the tens of thousands of slaves who went through Bunce Island were shipped to what is now the United States with the majority of them going to Savannah, Georgia and Charleston, South Carolina." Slaves from other slave castles along West Africa's Atlantic coast were sold to buyers in South America and the Caribbean.<sup>96</sup> The restoration of the site may increase the site's popularity as a tourist destination.

#### *History of Bunce Island's Slave Castle*

By the eighteenth century, English merchants had replaced Portuguese traders dominating the slave trade. The "trade castle" is situated near the mouth of the Sierra Leone River. (Figure 8)<sup>97</sup> It was built in 1726 and was extended as late as 1805 and was named after, Captain John Bence, a wealthy London based merchant and one of the

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<sup>95</sup> Opala,. "The Gullah," 1987

<sup>96</sup> McClanahan, Paige. "West African Slave-Trade 'Castle' Being Reborn in Jungle." The Christian Science Monitor: MSNBC. 8/5/2011

<sup>97</sup> Shaw, Rosalind. "Memories of the Slave Trade: Ritual and the Historical Imagination in Sierra Leone." University of Chicago Press. 2002, 29

original investor. In the mid-eighteenth century between 4,000 and 6,000 slaves were exported from Sierra Leone annually.<sup>98</sup> With their expertise in rice cultivation, slaves from the “Rice Coast” of West Africa were a higher price.<sup>99</sup> Richard Oswald in, 1747, and several associates bought Bance (also Bunce or Bence) Island in the Sierra Leone River, one of the most active slave trading posts on the West African coast. His ships could then carry slaves from Bance Island to plantations in the Americas and return to England with cargoes of sugar and tobacco. He was part of a group of Scottish merchants based in London. Many of the slaves Oswald traded were shipped to the southern colonies of British North America. One of his most important business associates there was the South Carolina planter and slave owner Henry Laurens.<sup>100</sup> The records of slave ship voyages of slave trader, prominent businessman, and politician Henry Laurens document the ships’ arrivals at Ashley Ferry. Three ships carrying captured Africans from Bunce Island arrived in the Carolina Colony between May 1760 and September 1761 at Ashley Ferry Town about seven miles up the Ashley River. Ashley Ferry today is near Drayton on the Ashley, a quiet subdivision off South Carolina 61 near Bees Ferry Road. Prominent businessman and politician Henry Laurens documented the ships’ arrivals at Ashley Ferry. He was the Charleston agent for the British owners of Bunce Island. The people were captured for their rice-growing region skills. “One statistic reveals that of the 869 people on the three vessels, 131 of them died during the Atlantic crossing.” The vessels came from Sierra Leone, and an iconic slave ad dated April 26, 1760 says that 250 “fine healthy Negroes” were brought from Bunce Island along the

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<sup>98</sup> Rodney, Walter. “A History of the Upper Guinea Coast, 1545-1800.” American Council of Learned Societies. 2008, 250-251

<sup>99</sup> Opala, Joseph A. “The Gullah.” 1987, 1-6

<sup>100</sup> Pocock, Nigel and Victoria Cook. “The Business of Enslavement.” BBC. 2/17/2011

Rice Coast.<sup>101</sup> For nearly 140 years, Africans were forcibly made to leave Bunce Island and majority were forced to work on rice plantations in North America.



Figure 8. Bunce Island, drawing c.1749 photo: The National Archives (UK)<sup>102</sup>



Figure 9. Bunce Island, remains of the main building (photo: Matthew Oldfield)<sup>103</sup>

<sup>101</sup> Frazier, Herb. "The Bance Island, the Ferry and the Dispatch." Charleston Mercury. 9/08/2011

<sup>102</sup> <http://www.yale.edu/glc/priscilla/images/094.jpg>

*The Restoration of Bunce Island's Slave Castle*

The Bunce Island Coalition (US) was formed in 2007 to raise funds for the restoration and preservation of Bunce Island through a publicity campaign to educate Americans on the historical importance of Bunce Island to their own country. The coalition is led by former U.S. Ambassador Thomas Hull as Chairman of the Board, and historian Joseph Opala as Director. Bunce Island Coalition (SL) was formed in 2010 as an affiliation to the US coalition with the goal of Sierra Leoneans working hand-in-hand with the US group to preserve Bunce Island.<sup>104</sup> Bunce Island was added to the World Monuments Fund's (WMF) list of the world's 100 most endangered monuments in 2008. WMF's website states that, "As a result of the country's civil war and the depressed state of its economy, all of Sierra Leone's monuments are in poor condition. The conservation and future development of these sites is integral to the long-term survival of Sierra Leone's cultural memory." It continues saying, "The Bunce Island Coalition intends to use the Old Fourah Bay College building as a museum of the island's slave trade. The College building is in a state of ruin and is still occupied by squatters."<sup>105</sup> Old Fourah Bay College it is the oldest university in West Africa that is now in ruins. Scholars from all over Africa would travel to Sierra Leone to further their education. The slave castle was abandoned in the 1840s, and many stonewalls have collapsed.<sup>106</sup> It has become an overgrown jungle that gets about a handful of tourists every year (Figure 9). The ruins of the slave castle that once dominated the island's 1.5 acres is now covered by vines and eroded by the thirteen feet of rain that fall every year in Sierra Leone. Rusting signs are the only indication of Bunce's grisly place in history.<sup>107</sup> On October 27, 2010 the Bunce

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<sup>103</sup> <http://matthewoldfield.photoshelter.com/image/I000071xSq67ANYQ>

<sup>104</sup> "Sierra Leone: U.S. \$5 Million Bunce Island Project to be Launched." AllAfrica.com 11/2/2010

<sup>105</sup> <http://www.wmf.org/project/freetown-historic-monuments>

<sup>106</sup> "Sierra Leone: U.S. \$5 Million Bunce Island Project to be Launched." 2010

<sup>107</sup> McClanahan, West African Slave-Trade 'Castle' Being Reborn in Jungle." 2011

Island Coalition launched the Bunce Island project with the arrival of a team of four American engineers and scientists who assessed the preservation issues on the island. They ran tests to determine the strength of Bunce Island's remaining walls. The engineers consulted with Sierra Leonean academics in a number of disciplines, as well as local architects, engineers, and construction companies, to determine what resources are available locally. The Coalition works closely with the Ministry of Tourism and Culture, with which it signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in 2010, and also works closely with the Monuments and Relics Commission, the National Tourist Board, and all other relevant government agencies and institutions.<sup>108</sup>

*Archaeology on Bunce Island's Slave Castle*

In 2011, with sponsorship from the Bunce Island Coalition, another team (i.e. this is not the same team from 2010) of world-renowned professional archaeologists headed by Dr. Christopher R. DeCorse completed a six-week excavation on the ruins of the British slave castle at Bunce Island. DeCorse said the Island was very unique in terms of its connection to the United States but there is an urgent need for Sierra Leone to train archaeologists to help preserve the site because there are currently none. He was also shocked at the present conditions of the ruins. Spikes and iron shackles were among other artifacts that were discovered by his team.<sup>109</sup> The team dug pits to expose the ancient roadway that extended from the castle's main gate to the old jetty where thousands of captives were put aboard the slave ships. Coordinator of the Bunce Island project, Joseph Opala, noted that, "The project will last for five years. Wealthy private donors from the

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<sup>108</sup> "Sierra Leone: U.S. \$5 Million Bunce Island Project to be Launched." 2010

<sup>109</sup> Tarawallie. Ibrahim "Sierra Leone: Excavation Concluded at Bunce Island." AllAfrica.com 6/23/2011

UK and US have pledged \$5 million for the preservation of the castle and construction of a museum." (ibid) The team also dug pits outside the ruins of the castle in order to identify areas to construct the jetty, visitors' centre, public toilets and other facilities that they intended to construct. Opala added that, "Members of the coalition believe that the preservation of the Island will create a new industry in Sierra Leone... African American heritage tourism." The coalition is made up of researchers that work together: Bunce Island Coalition USA, Sierra Leone and United Kingdom. (ibid)

### *Conclusion*

Bunce Island has a very strong connection to North America today because its cultural ties still remain. The Gullah people, a community of African-Americans along the South Carolina and Georgia coasts, use words from Sierra Leonean languages, and they give their children traditional Sierra Leonean names. Today, DNA tests provide evidence that link African-Americans to Sierra Leone. Africa Ancestry, Inc. provided DNA testing to more than 100,000 African-Americans and found that about twenty percent of the maternal lineages are of Sierra Leonean ancestry. Celebrated figures of the African-American community Poet Maya Angelou and politician Jesse Jackson are among the African-Americans who have discovered their Sierra Leonean roots through the testing.<sup>110</sup> Historian and archivist Jane Aldrich, along with Opala, is a part of a team of experts involved in a five-year, multinational effort to preserve the ruins of the slave post on Bunce Island and build a museum in Freetown. Aldrich is the deputy director of the Bunce Island Coalition.<sup>111</sup>

“Being able to specify the exact spot where people landed on an exact date as the

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<sup>110</sup> McClanahan, West African Slave-Trade ‘Castle’ Being Reborn in Jungle.” 2011

<sup>111</sup> Frazier, Herb. “The Bance Island, the Ferry and the Dispatch.” 2011

result of a particular business transaction between named parties helps us to fully register the experience of slavery,” said Simon Lewis, College of Charleston historian. “And that’s a good thing because it reminds us that we should register the horror of such things.”<sup>112</sup> The preservation of the Bunce Island ruins is important, because it is not only important in understanding Sierra Leonean history, but also American history. The members of the Bunce Island Coalition believe that the preservation of Bunce Island will create a new industry in Sierra Leone. African American heritage tourists are already traveling by the thousands every year to see the slave castles on the West African coast where guides tell them that their ancestors likely passed through. But those castles sent most of their captives to the West Indies. Since Bunce Island is the only major West African slave castle that sent a significant portion of its African captives to North America the site attains a unique significance for African Americans.<sup>113</sup>

#### **Case Study Four: Savi’s Palace Complex, Benin**

The three previous case studies have a physical structure as evidence that the site was once used to transport slaves. The physical remains of slavery at Savi are meager, with few buildings and visual traces left behind,<sup>114</sup> but the site was also once a significant part of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Due to the process of vegetal creep and erosion, most of the structures deteriorated. When the military forces of Dahomey people, conquered the Hueda Kingdom in 1727 they destroyed and depopulated Savi in the process.<sup>115</sup> With the slave structures that once existed in Savi now a heavily vegetated

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<sup>112</sup> Frazier, Herb. “The Bance Island, the Ferry and the Dispatch.” 2011

<sup>113</sup> “Sierra Leone: U.S. \$5 Million Bunce Island Project to be Launched.” AllAfrica.com 11/2/2010

<sup>114</sup> Haehnel, Birgit and Melanie Ulz. “Slavery in Art and Literature: Approaches to Trauma, Memory and Visuality.” Frank and Time. 2009, 223

<sup>115</sup> Kelly, “The Archaeology of African-European Interaction.” 1997, 355

site, experts turn to archaeological evidence to research the slave trade on the site. This research helps prove that Savi is just as important as Elmina, Maison des Esclaves, and the castle ruins on Bunce Island.

Archaeologist Kenneth Kelly has been conducting archaeological research at Savi, a town on the coast of Benin, in West Africa since 1991. Before Kelly's research, little documented information before Kelly's research had been found relating to the details of the town of Savi. This archaeological evidence offers new insight and information on the material conditions of slavery that sometimes complement written documents and can assist in the interpretations of past behaviors and activities. After identifying the location of the town and its boundaries Kelly surveyed the area to find locations that would yield information about the lifeways and layout of the town.<sup>116</sup> They cleared a heavily vegetated site that resulted in the identification of large scale, linear remains. Further removal of the mounds revealed a complex of long structures, arranged in a series of rectilinear courtyards, typical features of forts built in West Africa. These investigations have the potential to reveal new evidence about the impact of the slave trade in Savi and draw curious tourists to the site.

### *History of Savi*

Savi gained notoriety in the seventeenth and eighteenth century as the capital of the Kingdom of Hueda (also spelled Whydah). The site and the community were a part of the trans-Atlantic Slave Trade providing African captives. In the seventeenth century, the Hueda persuaded a unique trading strategy, allowing Europeans from principal trading nations to establish permanent posts in order to secure access to a constant supply of

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<sup>116</sup> Kelly. "The Archaeology of African-European Interaction," 356



slaves. Of these nations, the Dutch, English, French, and Portuguese had trading establishments in the center of Savi, adjacent to the Hueda palace in the late seventeenth century.<sup>117</sup> The Hueda, unlike other groups along the coast region, were not passive participants in the trading venture. With their understanding of the potential of trade to increase their power in the region, they guarded their political and economical autonomy. European establishments were encouraged at the pleasure of the Savi elite and were permitted on terms dictated by the rulers.<sup>118</sup> An excerpt from a Dutch letter dated February 4, 1715, states; “when it was pointed out that if the King of Fida [Hueda] decided to exercise his right to revoke his permission to any nation to trade in his country or to search other ships, the Royal African Company could not prevent him from doing so, as the English live, just as we do, in his land only by his tolerance.”<sup>119</sup>

The Hueda impeded disputes between various European nations by outlawing inter-European conflict anywhere within sight of their territory. The Europeans’ forts were strategically located near to the palace so that the king and his agents could oversee the European activities. European imported stone was used to build both African and European structures to prevent differences in the construction. The Hueda king would sometimes force Europeans to construct their lodges in the local vernacular tradition with the use of mud bricks. Europeans could not visually distinguish and distance themselves from the Hueda or one another by creating European-style buildings. Europeans located elsewhere along the coast placed their forts directly on the shore to overlook the African towns, like Elmina Castle, Bunce Island Castle, and Maison des Esclaves.<sup>120</sup> But the

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<sup>117</sup> Kelly, "The Archaeology of African-European Interaction." 1997, 355

<sup>118</sup> Kelly, "The Archaeology of African-European Interaction." 1997, 357

<sup>119</sup> Van Dantzig, A. "The Dutch and the Guinea Coast, 1674-1742: A Collection of Documents from the General State Archive at the Hague." Accra: Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences. 1978, 180

<sup>120</sup> Van Dantzig, A. "Forts and Castles of Ghana." Accra: Sedco. 1980

European forts in Savi were poorly placed in a potentially hostile country. The Hueda established these restrictions so that European traders were unable to exert military power over them and they could monitor and control European activities.<sup>121</sup>

*Savi's Structure: The Missing Component*

Ghana's Elmina castle was built using limestone and bricks, imported from Europe,<sup>122</sup> allowing the structure to survive for centuries; the structure that Kenneth excavated were built with mud bricks that disintegrated with time and weather, not withstanding the test of time. According to most scholars, Hueda was one of the most active slave trading ports in West Africa, providing an estimate of two million slaves.<sup>123</sup> The UNESCO Slave Route Project (SRP) was launched in 1994 in Whydah. It is a route from the center of the town to the beach where it ends at "the Door of No Return." (ibid) All along the Slave Route, there are different sculptures representing aspects of the slave trade, created by contemporary Beninese artists. One sculpture "Mermaid," is a longhaired woman with a fishtail turned towards the hinterland, apparently inviting people to listen to her call for departure for an unknown land.<sup>124</sup> The final sculpture on the route is erected on the beach where slaves were loaded on a ship entitled "The Door of No Return," it is a two-sided door that attempt to depict the mental state of the enslaved Africans when they were leaving the continent. The first side faces the sea showing figures looking in the direction of a boat waiting to carry them away, while the other side shows them facing the village.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Kelly, "The Archaeology of African-European Interaction." 1997, 356

<sup>122</sup> Graham. "The Slave Fortresses of Ghana." 11/25/1990

<sup>123</sup> Haehnel and Ulz. "Slavery in Art and Literature." 2009, 223

<sup>124</sup> Haehnel and Ulz. "Slavery in Art and Literature." 2009, 233

<sup>125</sup> Haehnel and Ulz. "Slavery in Art and Literature." 2009, 235

Vestiges of the slave trade may increase Benin's attraction as a tourist destination. A ship bearing the inscription "Whydah" was discovered off the coast of Boston in 1982 by underwater explorer Barry Clifford. Clifford and his team have recovered more than 100,000 artifacts from the wreckage. In 2007 an exhibition "Real Pirates: The Untold Story of the Whydah from Slave Ship to Pirate Ship," organized by National Geographic and the Aurora-based Arts and Exhibitions International at the Cincinnati Museum Center, displayed the ship and its artifact.<sup>126</sup> The ship was a slave vessel before it was taken over by pirates in 1717. If this ship was turned over to Benin, it could serve as their tangible linkage to the trans-Atlantic slave trade,<sup>127</sup> compelling tourists interested in the history of slavery to visit the region to see the remains.



Figure 10. Sample excavation unit (photo: Neil L. Norman)<sup>128</sup>

<sup>126</sup> Cornwell, Lisa. "Pirates, the Reality: Loot From the Whydah." The Washington Post. 7/3/2007

<sup>127</sup> Diène, "From Chains to Bonds." 2001, 449

<sup>128</sup> Norman, Neil L. A Preliminary Report on Survey, Ethnohistory, and Excavation in the Savi Townscape and Hinterland. The African Diaspora Archaeology Network. June 2007

*Archaeology on Savi's Palace Complex*

Kelly's excavations within the Savi palace compound at Savi, which was also centrally located in the town and was encircled by a system of ditches, recovered elite materials such as European and Chinese ceramic, firearms, and fine glassware.<sup>129</sup> Portions of several mounds were excavated within the confines of the ditch system, which enclose over 16 acres. (Figure 10) Architectural details of elite construction, furnishing, and organization from the late seventeenth century were retained. A storage room was discovered and excavated with its contents intact indicating the range and variety of foreign materials used and controlled by the elite.<sup>130</sup> Imported items were not only available to the elite. The excavation recovered tobacco pipes and glass beads that were widely distributed throughout the site in elite and commoner districts. This shows that some imported goods were accessible to the majority of the population.

Imports symbolized a privileged association with traders, which translated directly into power and wealth.<sup>131</sup> The social divisions within the confines of the ditch system besides architecture are materialized in family size, number of wives and children, slaveholdings extent, clothing, display items, and access to European technology.<sup>132</sup> The most striking example of imports that established symbolic power is seen in the extensive use of imported European bricks for floors within the rooms in the palace complex. Nine excavated rooms were exclusively floored using bricks from Holland and other European nations. The destruction caused by the Dahomey in 1727 sealed these brick floored rooms at the time of their last use, allowing the recovery of artifacts in their context of use at that particular time. The floors were intact with deposits of roof fall directly on top of

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<sup>129</sup> Kelly, "The Archaeology of African-European Interaction." 1997, 354

<sup>130</sup> Kelly, "The Archaeology of African-European Interaction." 1997, 356

<sup>131</sup> Kelly, "The Archaeology of African-European Interaction." 1997, 363

<sup>132</sup> Kelly, "The Archaeology of African-European Interaction." 1997, 360

them indicating that the deposits were undisturbed. The excavation of the rooms revealed small amounts of artifacts, mostly limited to fragments of fine housewares. This suggests that the brick-floored rooms may have been used as public spaces or audiences and/or most of the valuable items were removed before the destruction of the buildings, an interpretation consistent with the historical accounts.<sup>133</sup> Imported brick flooring was much more of a costly floor option than the traditional hard packed swept earth floor so persons of influence must have used it.<sup>134</sup> Kelly does not disclose whether artifacts are in storage or on display but he clearly states that the objects fit in the framework of European/African trade in Savi.<sup>135</sup>

#### *Savi Palace Complex Ignored*

The complex identified in the central area of Savi indicates an amazing site that once thrived although is now mostly neglected in dense bushes and nearby agricultural fields. European historical documents of visitors to Savi do not mention the Palace Complex. Traders were surely present in the town of Savi around 1670 until it was destroyed in 1727. As stated above, the trading lodges were adjacent to the Savi palace compound. European visitors of Savi probably saw the ditch system, but chose not to comment on it because they were probably seen as insignificant according to European preconceptions.<sup>136</sup> The Hueda king legitimized his status through physical and spatial communication. He demonstrated vigilance over the Europeans traders by compelling them to be housed beneath the palace walls located in the center of Savi. The Europeans had technologies, such as firearms and cannons, but they still were dependent on African

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<sup>133</sup> Kelly, "The Archaeology of African-European Interaction." 1997, 365

<sup>134</sup> Kelly, "The Archaeology of African-European Interaction." 1997, 363

<sup>135</sup> Kelly, "The Archaeology of African-European Interaction." 1997, 366

<sup>136</sup> Kelly, "The Archaeology of African-European Interaction." 1997, 360

benevolence to maintain their position. The king had to have been extremely powerful to dominate the Europeans. However, European traders' presence gave privileged access to the wealth opportunities provided by the slave trade. The Europeans provided the resources and trade and without them the Hueda Kingdom would potentially collapse.<sup>137</sup>

### *Conclusion*

The vestiges of the slave trade in Savi as represented by scant ruins and architectural remnants continue to attract tourists to Benin to learn more about the former kingdoms. We will learn more about this important region if more archaeological research continues. The artifacts and activities identified during excavation attest to the interactions between Europeans and Africans. The more discoveries made, the more questions will be answered. The absence of a structure does not take away from the evidence found that link Savi to the slave trade, but a physical structure will allow the site to get as many foot traffic as neighboring Ghana and Senegal. A reconstruction of the building should be made to mirror the original structure to evoke a deeper feeling of the slave trade. A sign can point to the fact that it is not an authentic slave structure. This may attract more visitors to the site and increase its popularity allowing the Savi to thrive as a slave site.

### **The European Slave Structures and their Stakeholders**

The four case studies discussed, Elmina Castle, Maison des Esclaves, Bunce Island's Castle, and Savi's Palace Complex show the different states of research and characteristic

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<sup>137</sup> Kelly, "The Archaeology of African-European Interaction." 1997, 362

of each site within the larger category of African slave structures. The practice of studying the European structures along West Africa through their cultural objects and connection to the slave trade from the fifteenth to nineteenth centuries is at its early stages by national as well as international scholars. Archaeologists have collected remains on the site to examine how the structures played a part in the slave trade. The West African governments have come to recognize the academic and educational benefits of having a memorial museums dedicated to slavery and speak about their gruesome past, which was once seen as shameful and a taboo to discuss. Similarly, for stakeholders of the two memorial museums discussed, the museums represent the traumatic events of slavery commemorated by the museum and are wrapped up in the structure of emotional attachments. For some, the memorials not only represent historic events but also come to symbolize ancestors lost in during the events. At the memorial museums on the actual site where slaves were bounded there is recognition that there is an emotional connection to these sites that persists even though there is no guarantee that their ancestors left from that particular location.

### *Can West Africa Become a Model for Slavery Museums?*

Heritage tourism is used as a source for the construction and affirmation of identities and the communication of political messages. Also, as heritage tourism increases more people will want to be included in the story and have a say in how heritage of a particular area and/or people and/or time is shaped and told.<sup>138</sup> This affirmation of identity is seen in the Jewish community's connectedness and attachment to the tragic events of the Holocaust.

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<sup>138</sup> Richter, Linda K. "The Politics of Heritage Tourism Development: Emerging Issues for the New Millennium." *Heritage, Museums and Galleries: An Introductory Reader*. Routledge. 2005, 281

The Holocaust was the genocide of approximately six million European Jews during World War II (1939-1945) in Nazi Germany and outside of Germany in Nazi-occupied Europe. They were transported to concentration camps where they were starved, overworked, used as medical experiments, and, most commonly, systematically killed in gas chambers. Female prisoners were also routinely raped and degraded in the camps.<sup>139</sup>

The Holocaust memorial museums are visited by millions of Jews from all over the world interested in the site where many were lost. Jewish people commemorate family, friends, and fellow Jews who were killed by Nazis. Memorial museums within the Jewish Concentration Camps across Europe have been dedicated to the memory of the murders of Jews during World War II. These memorials are multifaceted, which include the obligation to remember, the need for states to explain their past actions, to educate about the history of the Holocaust events and sites, and the expression of guilt.<sup>140</sup> Jews have also recognized a need to remember, and found ways to do so through their own financial contributions and time. Steven Spielberg established the Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation in 1994 to “gather video testimonies from survivors and other witnesses of the slave trade.”<sup>141</sup> Since slavery ended in 1863 in the United States of America,<sup>142</sup> those who were enslaved have died. However, people who are the ancestors of slaves and slave owners can share their oral history and historical records to assist in the creation of a similar foundation.

This model may serve as an example for Slavery memorial museums to follow

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<sup>139</sup> Sinnreich Helene J. “The Rape of Jewish Women During the Holocaust.” *Sexual Violence Against Jewish Women During the Holocaust*. Brandeis University Press 2010, 109

<sup>140</sup> Young, James. “The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning.” New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993, 2.

<sup>141</sup> <http://dornsife.usc.edu/vhi/aboutus/>

<sup>142</sup> Price Hossell, Karen. V”The Emancipation Proclamation.” HeinmannLibrary.com. 2006, 26



since Africans experienced a similar genocide. Africans were targeted because of their race, while Jews were targeted because of their religion. Both communities were affected by the atrocities of the genocides. They were murdered physically, emotionally, and spiritually. However, Africans were held captive for centuries and separated from their families, cultures, and heritage for many generations. This changed their entire mindset, which created disconnect between people of African descent. The slave trade marks the beginning of the alienation and estrangement between people of African descent to their history and culture. Some of the less talked about/controversial subjects such as African communities like the Hueda Kingdom leaders who participated in supplying slaves to the Europeans. A robust interpretive program at the memorials would bring up the issues for dialogue and healing to those who rather forget the history that caused many to grieve.

Many African descendents have already gained an attachment to the slave sites. Traditional African cultural practices that were once expunged and discouraged from practicing may be revived through museum programs on the site.<sup>143</sup> The slave sites affirm Africa as the homeland for those who consider themselves as part of the African Diaspora. The African Union (AU) is a union consisting of 54 African states, which was established in July 2002. AU defines the African Diaspora as “Peoples of African origin living outside the continent, irrespective of their citizenship and nationality and who are willing to contribute to the development of the continent and the building of the African Union.”<sup>144</sup> This definition focuses on the need for a strengthened community between Africans and those from the Diaspora to build a better Africa. The slave structures have begun to break the barrier of disconnect between Africans and African descendants.

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<sup>143</sup> Ross, Will. “Slavery’s Long Effects on Africa.” BBC News. 3/29/2007

<sup>144</sup> “Meeting of Experts on the Definition of the African Diaspora.” African Union. 2005

## Recommendations

The slave sites researched for this project indicate that while work done on each slave site and structure has different cultural resource and interpretive experts working on the sites with assistance from the respective governments, there is not one central research organization in place that focuses on the preservation of the memorial sites in West Africa. Not having a prototype for the preservation of the slave sites for planners is an issue. Organizations like AFRICOM should be involved in every step of the process. Curatorial and management teams should be created for oversight of the slave sites that would dictate how the sites are excavated and how they will educate the community about the importance of the site. Implementing a set of preservation policies at the site to provide a framework for future memorial museums would create a standardized procedure to deal with conflicts that might occur between architects and archaeologists. Archaeologists should be allowed to salvage any potential artifacts before architects begin construction. One major policy should be to encourage extensive scholarly and historic research on the site before excavation is conducted to prove the sites authenticity as a slave sites. Therefore the following recommendations are posed:

3. *West Africa should establish an interdisciplinary historic preservation/cultural resource that focuses on the slave sites and structures.*

Having an organization that oversees all matters involving the slave sites is a critical way to ensure that they are well researched, both through analysis of historic documents and archaeological excavations. The artifacts recovered from such excavations should follow professional guidelines for curation and conservation. Much information in African

museums stem from the curators' collective memory of the site and its contents and historical background passed from one generation to the next.<sup>145</sup> The department should also have historical documents and archaeological evidence incorporated with oral traditions in preserving or restoring the sites. In addition to background and exploratory studies, the team should also consider the ways in which their work contributes to both museum and community dialogues about economic and social issues. Departments within the organization should also develop events, educational programs, and other activities that reflect the cultures in the surrounding area.

*2. West Africa should conduct extensive research on the slave trade to legitimize the structures as slave sites.*

The search for legitimacy in history and experience is incredibly important. People have denied the existence of the Holocaust<sup>146</sup> that happened less than seventy years ago and they will deny the existence of the trans-Atlantic slave trade that ended over a century ago. Some intellectuals have already denied the magnitude of the slave trade.<sup>147</sup> There is a need to articulate in more detail the horrors of the slave trade, which can only be done through extensive historical and archaeological research. These sites offer a space where dialogue can take place to challenge, inspire, and learn. However, they also are places of contestation that stimulate controversy.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> Newman, Andrew. "Social Exclusion Zone and The Feelgood Factor." *Heritage, Museums and Galleries: An Introductory Reader*. Routledge. 2005, 360

<sup>146</sup> "Anti-Semitism and Holocaust Denial in the Iranian Media" MEMRI Special Dispatch Series no 855, January 28, 2005. Retrieved 11/8/2005.

<sup>147</sup> Curtin, "The Atlantic Slave Trade," 127

<sup>148</sup> Corsane, George. "Issues in Heritage, Museums, and Galleries: A Brief Introduction." *Heritage, Museums and Galleries: An Introductory Reader*. Routledge. 2005, 10

3. *West Africa should incorporate local communities regarding the preservation of the slave sites and structures.*

Historically, museums throughout Africa were of little significance and benefit to the local people, as they aimed to be centers of excellence for the outside world. Therefore museums became irrelevant institutions for the local Africans. The voices of the local people are absent from the debate over the castles and forts restoration as museums. A sign at Elmina Castle restricts all people except tourists on the site.<sup>149</sup> As public facilities, museums should be involved with the surrounding communities' affairs and vice versa. The locals want a museum that can address their needs and interests, and interpret their history as they see it. Contemporary issues are poverty alleviation, environmental degradation, and conflict resolutions.<sup>150</sup> The museums should engage in issues outside the purview of the museums and embrace local discourse.

The slave structures create a concrete link to events that are unmatched by stories and documents. The recommendations discussed are intended to serve as the beginning of the creation of policies and guidelines for the preservation of the slave sites and structures in West Africa. It will take many years for West Africa's slave structures and museums to get recognition as a premier educational institution. However, the increasing attention given to the atrocities of the trans-Atlantic slave trade on coastal West Africa in recent years has encouraged countries (European and African) to acknowledge the slave trade with the opening of memorial museums. In August 2007, the International Slavery Museum opened in Liverpool, England and in May 2009 the Museum of Aquitaine in Bordeaux, France became the first French institution to open a permanent exhibition on

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<sup>149</sup> Bruner, "Culture on Tour:" 2005, 114

<sup>150</sup> Hoffman, Barbara T. "Art and Cultural Heritage: Law, Policy. And Practice." Cambridge Press. 2006, 388

the Atlantic slave trade and slavery. In Angola, the Museum of Slavery (Museu da Escravatura) reopened in 2007. It is the only institution in Central Africa that focuses on slavery. In the United States, the project of constructing the United States National Slavery Museum in Washington D.C. currently exists only on paper.<sup>151</sup> Many other European structures used for the slave trade along the coast of West Africa are waiting for restoration needed, and even emergency salvaging to save the site from further destruction.<sup>152</sup> This in itself will be a challenge, both financially as well as politically but the sites serve as a tangible history of slavery. West Africa's slave structures represent the horrors of slavery, the true nature of the African Diaspora, and the persistence of a people to survive.

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<sup>151</sup> Araujo, "Public Memory of Slavery." 2010, 141

<sup>152</sup> Diène, "From Chains to Bonds." 2001, 448

### **List of Abbreviations**

AFRICOM	International Council of African Museums
ARPA	Archaeological Resources Protection Act (US)
AU	African Union
GHCT	Ghana Heritage Conservation Trust
GMMB	Ghana Museums and Monuments Board
ICOM	International Council of Museums
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MUCIA	Midwest Universities Consortium for International Activities
NLCD	National Liberation Council Decree 387 of 1969
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
SEA	Save Elmina Association
SRP	Slave Route Project
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
USAID	United States government's Agency for International Development
WMF	World Monuments Fund
WHS	World Heritage Site

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### FIELD RESEARCH

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