

## 12 Chiefs with the Same Face: A Formal Analysis of the Maji Maji War Heroes' Statues

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### **Abstract**

This research addresses artistic ineptitude in historical preservation through public art. Its main objective is to argue for exceptional artistry and proper regulation of public art created for national historical preservation and promotion. Besides, this study investigates procedures followed before the creation and installation of public artwork(s) intended to preserve and promote national history in Tanzania. During the study, interviews, questionnaires, and observation methods were used to collect data. Meanwhile, the Formalism Theory informed data analysis and presentation. The findings show that all the 12 Busts installed at the Maji Maji Memorial Museum in the Songea district were ineptly designed and created. In fact, they were neither vetted by experts nor regulated before and after installation at the site. This oversight has resulted in substandard artworks, which constitute a travesty to the projection of the Maji Maji war heroes' history while undermining the value of these busts in preserving and promoting the visual history of early anti-colonial struggles in the East African country. Moreover, these apparent artistic flaws have reduced the busts' aesthetics value, thus generating low government, public interest, comprehension, and appreciation of the visual arts in facilitating effective conservation and promotion of national history and heritage. Thus, there is an urgent need for policy-makers to consider viable and plausible artistic approaches to national history and cultural heritage conservation and promotion projects nationally and internationally in addition to enhancing local and international audiences for wider benefits.

### **Keywords**

Art, Lawrence Mtazama Gama, Maji Maji, Mashujaa, Songea, Wangoni  
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### Introduction

This study evaluates the craftsmanship that is expected to influence audiences' comprehension of themes and appreciation of visual and conceptual aesthetics in public artworks created for national historical preservation and promotion in Tanzania. Specifically, the study analysed the artistry of the 12 commemorative sculptures or dedicatory statues designed and installed at the Maji Maji Memorial Museum, popularly known as the Heroes Square in Songea district, Ruvuma region. These statues were created as heroic monuments to honour and commemorate the brave actions of the *Wangoni* Paramount Chief and his sub-chiefs, among Tanzania's heroes who took armaments to resist German colonization in the south-eastern parts of the then Tanganyika (Mapunda 2006; Minogape 2006). The analysis of the statues is partitioned into five segments, which together connect to narrate an extensive account of sculpture as a public art practice in Tanzania.

The background covers the Art in Historic Preservation sub-titled, Sculptural Art and Historic Preservation, and the Maji Maji Memorial Museum subtitles. The problem statement exposes the Artistic Deficiencies pertaining to the description of the Maji Maji War Heroes' Busts in a bid to argue for the proper regulation of public artworks aimed to preserve and promote national history in addition to offering a visual representation of these heroes as cultural objects and personalities involved in the event (s) commemorated. Moreover, the study specifically seeks to reinvigorate the significance of the Maji Maji war heroes' contribution to the early anti-colonial movements in Tanzania. In this regard, it advocates for the creation and preservation of their proper artistic representations (statues), and calling for the extension of the Founders of the Nation (Honouring Procedures) Act of 2004's jurisdiction in the accreditation and approval of artistic representations of artworks created to commemorate historical figures beyond former national leaders, the former Presidents Julius Kambarage Nyerere and Abeid Amani Karume as stipulated in the act.

Finally, this research intended to answer the following questions: How do the Maji Maji war heroes' statues installed at the Maji Maji Memorial Museum qualify as artistic replicas of the actual historic heroes they are

supposed to represent? How qualified were respective commissioned sculptors to create and install these busts or statues? What factors hindered the evaluation of the artistry of the statues for over four decades despite the apparent artistic and pictorial flaws displayed on the statues? After the description of methodology and data Analysis, the paper presents the research findings interpretation, discussion, and conclusion.

### **Art in Historic Preservation**

Stephen Soetan and Oluwasewan Osadola, in their paper entitled “*Historic Preservation: Prospects and Challenges*” the role of art in historic preservation thusly:

Historic preservation means safeguarding the existence and appearance of historical elements of a community. In a precise manner, it is the preservation of the history of a community of people. It aims at preserving and recovering a community’s cultural heritage through its art and history. A prerequisite for the preservation of heritage is the value attached to it. Since it can be said that efforts will not be expanded on articles of no value, whatever needs to be preserved must be of value to the community (Soetan & Osadola, 2018, p. 53)

Indeed, art and historic preservation are interdependent in their manifestation whenever employed for heritage preservation purposes. The current study is largely concerned about heritage conservation and protection. Art has always been facilitated the preservation and commemoration of historical events and personalities.

For centuries, communities around the globe have employed common art forms such as drawings, murals, paintings, portraits, and sculptures as effective media for recording, conserving, and transmitting knowledge on the past events. In this regard, Suh (2013) asserts that cultural and social historians have always used artworks as historical evidence. Evidence comes from Felix Masao, a prominent Tanzanian archaeologist, whose comprehensive research analysed 40,000 year-old series of rock paintings at Kondoa Irangi shelters to decipher and describe the ancient culture of the hunters, gatherers, and early farmers’ societies who still populate present-day central Tanzania (Masao 2003). Besides its power to restore and

reconstruct history, art gives history a tangible form and makes it visible in its original form. Furthermore, Beaumont (2019) confirms art's indisputable ability to enhance audience imagination as he assesses artworks – as visual aids – supplementing biblical narratives, which would otherwise be impossible to decode and comprehend without visual aids. This brief introduction confirms that art and history are inseparable in the public space.

### **Sculptural Art and Historic Preservation**

Perhaps sculpture is a dominant artistic medium that for centuries has facilitated the recording, preserving and promotion of historical events in different communities. According to Upcott (1899), historical sculptures discovered in ancient Greece were made during the Hellenic times, in the fifth century before Christ, whereas statues, possibly made for a similar purpose, made between r.247 and 210 BC were discovered in a tomb in 1974 at Lintong county in Shaanxi region of China (Nickel 2013). These famous tomb sculptures of the First Emperor of China, Qin Shi Huangdi, consist of thousands of terracotta freestanding warrior statues in a parade matching posture. Apart from this evidence from Europe and Asia, the Nok terracotta heads, and several other sculptural materials dated ca 1500 – 900 BCE were discovered and unearthed at Pangwari in 1928 by Colonel Dent Young, a co-owner of a mining company in a village within the Kaduna region of Nigeria (Fagg 1990). Such evidence illustrates the distribution of sculpture art making and its various uses, the historic preservation function particularly, all over the world before our common era. Indeed, these discoveries have helped to raise the profile of sculpture in their indisputable role as a historical preservation medium has increased massively.

Senie and Webster (1989) also confirm immense uses of sculpture for political propaganda and historical preservation aims in the US and Europe from the 1800s to the early 1980s whereas monumental statues of outstanding 1<sup>st</sup> African President; of Tanzania, Mwalimu Julius Kambarage Nyerere installed in 2005 in Dodoma, the capital city of Tanzania (Makukula 2019); Nelson Mandela of South in Pretoria (Matj 2013; Milano, 2015), and Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana at the new AU building in Addis Ababa (Lentz 2017), was intended to preserve and commemorate historical accounts of these presidents in the struggles for African independence in

their respective countries specifically and Africa generally. Upcott (1899) contended that the diversity of materials and techniques for making sculpture is, perhaps, the main factor behind its dominant use. Regarding the purpose for which sculptures are produced, they can be made with a wide range of materials and techniques. The chief media for sculpture since time immemorial have been wood, stone, marble, bronze, paper, plastic, and even wax. The sculpture is the only art form whose material helps to trace its time of production as well as the influences behind its choice or nature of stylistic characteristics (Upcott 1899).

In Tanzania, the oldest statues purposely created for historical preservation were three bronze statues of the pioneers of German colonialism in East Africa: Otto von Bismarck, Carl Peters, and Hermann von Wissmann, which were installed in different locations of Dar es Salaam in the early 1900s (Hodd 2002). These statues were commissioned by the DOAG and dedicated to the “victors” of the successful annexation and creation of Germany’s biggest colony campaign in Africa after ‘annihilating’ natives’ resistance (Kirey 2021). However, in 1916 all three statues were uprooted with von Wissmann’s statue replaced by a bronze figure of an Askari, carrying a rifle standing on the same plinth (Hodd 2002). The British colonial office commissioned similar statues that were built in the 1920s to commemorate the role of African soldiers in WWI epitomising the visual authority of the new colonial ruler. These developments followed Germany’s defeat during the WWI in East Africa, which gave Britain mandate to govern Tanganyika as a protectorate (Illife 1979). There is no evidence to corroborate other sculptures made and installed in colonial Tanganyika, presently Tanzania, for historic preservation or commemoration of any event in the public spaces apart from the previously mentioned three. According to Mwenesi (1998) British colonialism, which officially began in 1919, discouraged art training in schools and colleges, hence little sculpture and other art production activities. Things changed following Tanganyika’s independence in 1961, according to Makukula (2019) who presents overwhelming evidence to attest to booming art training and production from that period. Public institutions and the ruling party, Tanganyika African National Union, which later transformed into the *Chama cha Mapinduzi* or Revolutionary Party (TANU/CCM) commissioned numerous monuments and statue projects that were

installed in public spaces in different parts of Tanzania to commemorate socio-cultural, political and economic successes of the independent African government achieved since 1967 to the mid-1990s. Shreds of evidence attesting to sculptural productions for historic preservation in independent Tanzania's public spaces include those of the former Presidents: Julius Nyerere and Aman Abeid Karume located in different public and CCM compounds and spaces or parks in several districts of on Mainland Tanzania, Zanzibar and Pemba islands (Makukula 2019).

A countrywide sculpture project for historical preservation in public space was implemented in the 1980s. Through several regional commissioners (RCs), CCM, which superseded TANU in 1977, commissioned the creation of life-size sculptures to commemorate the victims of the Kagera war as fallen heroes. At present, the monuments preserve historical victories of the CCM government under President Nyerere's leadership as well as the unity of Tanzanians during the Kagera War against Idd Amin's Uganda from 1978 to 1979. The project was given an official Kiswahili title, *Kazi Mliyotutuma Tumeimaliza*, or "Mission Accomplished". The locals in Tanzania call the statues 'Mnara wa Mashujaa', or the 'Heroes Monument' (ibid.). Pioneering Tanzanian sculptors were Abbas Kihago and Hashim Nakanoga who both were Makerere's art school trainees in the 1960s (Miller 1975). Kihago was the sculptor behind several historical and commemorative projects in Tanzania including the 12 commemorative statues in the ongoing review, including the *Mnara wa Mashujaa* project in several regions of Tanzania mainland, while Hashim Nakanoga is remembered as the chief sculpture instructor at the then Department of Art in the University of Dar es Salaam (Makukula 2019). Since its independence, Tanzania has developed capacity in sculpture production through training offered by local and international experts at the University of Dar es Salaam, Butimba Teachers' Training College, the then Bagamoyo College of Art (presently, the TaSUBa), and the Bagamoyo Sculpture Schools (Enock 2011).

### **Historical Context of the Maji Maji War Heroes Statues in Songea**

The Maji Maji Memorial Museum (MMM) or the "*Uwanja wa Mashujaa*" or the Heroes' Square among locals is located at Mahenge Street, in the Urban ward of Songea municipality and recently became an extension of the National Museum of Tanzania (URT 2009). This mini-museum was

purposely established to honour and commemorate the contribution of the Wangoni warriors who participated in the Maji Maji war against the German colonialists from 1905 to 1907 (Mapunda 2006). In the aftermath of the war, hundreds of Wangoni aristocrats were brutally hanged (Illife 1979). The victims were 67 leaders including the *iNkosi Mputa* Gwazerapasi Gama (the last of the Njelu Ngoni Paramount Chief) and his 11 sub-chiefs who were hanged and buried in two unmarked mass graves, which were grossly neglected and forgotten for several decades. Fig. 1 shows actual images of most of the Maji Maji war heroes in a group photograph that was taken in 1902 (Rushohora & Kurmann 2018):



**Fig. 1. Translation in English: Leaders of the Songea-Bezirk:**  
1. Masundo, a Jumbe of Uramboni. 2. Sanangura, a Jumbe of Songea  
3. Msango, a Jumbe of Mpambalyoto. 4. Mputa, a Jumbe of Mgazini  
5. Mpambalyoto. 6. Songea. 7. Sultan Chabruma (small leader)  
8. Zimanimoto 9. Mputa. 10. Zamchaya. 11. Mtepa, a Jumbe of Matola  
12. Matola, son of Mharuli. 13. Magodi. 14. Njoroza. 15. Masese  
16. Ninyizea [most names on this list were wrongly recorded]  
(Source: Missions-Blätter, Nr. 3, VI. Jg. 1902, p.74)

During struggles for independence, when addressing the UN 4<sup>th</sup> Committee on 20<sup>th</sup> December 1956, President Nyerere acknowledged the Maji Maji war heroes to be the early founders of the nation who resisted foreign and colonial rule, hence the need to honour them. President Nyerere's wishes were realized by the late Dr. Lawrence Mtazama Gama, the then Ruvuma Region CCM Party Secretary, also a descendant of several of the

commemorated Indunas. Dr. Gama with the help of Bi. Zaituni Fadhili Seleman Pilly, the former Member of Parliament for Songea Urban, and Martin Haule the former Ruvuma Regional Commissioner pioneered and supervised the construction of the Mausoleum alongside the Museum (Gwassa 1969).

As government leaders, they solicited the expertise of the Ruvuma region Works department and secured funds to hire a freelance sculptor who designed and created the busts. Abbas Kihago, a former art student at the Makerere Art School in Uganda, who was then based in Arusha region, was the sculptor tasked with creating and installing all the 12 cement plaster statues at the MMM from the mid-1979 to early 1980s (Telephone Interviews with the current Wangoni Paramount Chief, Nkosi Emmanuel Zulu Gama, and Mr. Abdallah Salum Limbuya – a former Songea District’s Land Officer, on 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> November 2021). The construction of the Museum started in 1977 and was completed in 1980. It was officially launched by Mwalimu Nyerere on 6<sup>th</sup> July 1980 as a major event during the celebrations of the National Peasants’ Day, which was nationally held in Ruvuma region (Bawazir 1980; Mapunda 2006). Upon completion of its construction, the Maji Maji Memorial Museum’s compound comprised the Gallery, Offices, and Graveyard, two monuments, and 12 busts (see names and images of the Nkosi and his sub-chiefs in figs. 2 to 13) of the Maji Maji war heroes who also symbolically represented their aristocratic colleagues and all groups of people who participated in the Maji Maji war (Minogape 2006).

Apart from the historical preservation significance, the Maji Maji Memorial Museum is an essential socio-cultural hub for the people of Ruvuma region. Mapunda (2006) asserts that Museum serves as a sacred place for the Wangoni, the largest polity among the natives of Songea district, who treat it a shrine for their ritual and spiritual activities. After all, all prominent Wangoni ancestors are buried in this area. Mapunda (2006) and Minogape (2006) confirm that in the aftermath of the Maji Maji war, on 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> February 1906, the Wangoni paramount chief Mputa Gwazerapasi Gama, and his 11 assistants, popularly known as *iNdunas*, alongside 67 other important Wangoni participants in the Maji Maji rebellion were brutally hanged and buried by German colonialists in two mass graves, which are

conserved within the Museum compound. Thus, the museum is also the Maji Maji War Memorial Mausoleum. According to Komba (1961), the Wangoni engage their departed ancestors as “spiritual messengers” or intermediaries who connect them with their God in worship rituals.

Thus, a gravesite or mausoleum of the departed Wangoni is customarily a religious shrine to their living relations (Ebner 1998). The current Wangoni paramount chief and relations of the Wangoni buried within the mausoleum still conduct their ancestral worship ritual such as the “*Kuteta Mahoka*” in Kingoni language (ancestor propitiation) within the Museum’s compound on the 27<sup>th</sup> of February annually (Mapunda 2006). In recognition of the cultural significance of the Museum to the native of Ruvuma region, the national Museum management accommodates the Elder’s Council for Traditions and Customs in some managerial activities of the Maji Maji Memorial Museum (Mapunda 2006; Minogape 2006).

Besides its historical and socio-cultural significance, the MMM adds to Ruvuma’s region’s economic potential with its historical and cultural tourism attractions or endowments. During the current study, the researcher realised that Ruvuma has many historical tourist sites yet to be opened for use, a constraint that might be attributable to several historical and political factors as observed by Lwoga (2013). Minogape (2006) affirms that despite its meagre infrastructure and neglected historical and cultural attractions, the Maji Maji Memorial Museum in Songea provides and promises a potential tourism destination nationally and internationally. This view is shared by Mapunda (2006) whose study found the Museum to be a tourist destination that attracts visitors from Ruvuma and other regions of Tanzania as well as foreigners.

During data collection at MMM in Songea District, the Museum Conservator shared statistics of tourists and other visitors for three consecutive years as Table 1 illustrates:

**Table 1. Number of Visitors to Museum in Three Consecutive Years**

<b>Year</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>
<b>No. of Visitors</b>	7676	1168	10,531

Source: Maji Maji Memorial Museum Administration (2022)

Table 1 shows a small number of visitors to MMM in 2019 with a drastic drop evident in 2020. This inconsistency is probably due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the travel restrictions as well as banned gatherings that were adopted in an attempt to contain the pandemic. However, the year 2021 shows an increase of visitors that was associated with decreased Covid-19 pandemic risks that were followed by a revival of regular activities at the Maji Maji Memorial Museum, including open visits

### **Creative Deficiencies in the Maji Maji War Heroes' Statues**

In March 2007, the Ministry of Public Service assembled a committee comprising eight members including a Professor of art from the University of Dar es Salaam, three representatives from the Ministry of Constitution and Law, the National Archives Department, the National Arts Council, and four members of families of the former presidents, Mwalimu Nyerere of the United Republic of Tanzania and Abeid Amani Karume of Zanzibar to inspect, evaluate and comment on the artistic-quality as well as general aesthetics of artworks created and installed in public spaces such as parks, open spaces, and within public office's buildings all over the country to commemorate these former presidents as founders of the Tanzania nation. These inspections were part of initiatives aimed to enforce the Founders of the Nation (Honouring Procedures) Act No. 18 of 2004, a law intended to regulate craftsmanship on the artistic representations of the former Presidents, Mwalimu Nyerere and Sheikh Amani Abeid Karume as founders of the United Republic of Tanzania in the public space.

Upon completion of its evaluation of more than 20 monumental sculptures made on Nyerere and Karume as subjects in the regions sampled on Mainland Tanzania and the Zanzibar archipelago, the committee recommended that all mediocre statues created as representations of founders of the nation be demolished since their poor artistry displayed dishonoured the subjects depicted. In response to the committee's recommendations, local government authorities in Mwanza, Shinyanga, Mara, and Ruvuma regions as well as in Zanzibar and Pemba, demolished of all the mediocre representations of the nation's founding fathers within

their jurisdiction by the end of 2009, although not all met such fate (Makukula 2019).

During the demolition of the freestanding statue of Mwalimu Nyerere at the Maji Maji Memorial Museum in Songea District, 12 cement busts created and installed to commemorate the Maji Maji war heroes in 1980 were left intact despite exhibiting similar flaws such as poor artistry, disproportionality, and dissimilitude to the actual subjects as in the case of founding fathers. It has been a decade since Nyerere's statue at Museum was demolished for its aesthetical mediocrity and poor craftsmanship but the substandard Maji Maji war heroes still stand despite incessant disapproval of the audiences and the current Wangoni Paramount Chief's bashing of the busts' poor craftsmanship (iNkosi Emmanuel Zulu Gama's speech during the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Maji Maji War Commemoration Ceremonies in Songea on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2007).

Until the present study, there is neither a formal critique nor complaint against the busts' poor artistry that has been presented to the museum's administration and other related authorities (Baltazar Nyamusya—the MMM—Conservator, Personal Interview February 2022). The present study was, therefore, conducted to evaluate the shoddy craftsmanship and aesthetic quality of Maji Maji war heroes busts at the MMM to answer the question why they were not demolished or improved from their present contestable state, which reduces their significance as well as the primary objective of their creation. Unfortunately, in March 2007, when a special committee was established to oversee the enforcement of the Founders of the Nation (Honouring Procedures) Act of 2004, assessed the artistic flaws of the controversial life-size statue of former President Julius Nyerere alone, leaving the 12 busts intact on their daises despite visible technical flaws. Upon the completion of its review, the committee found the Nyerere's statue unqualified as an artistic replica of the Founder of the Nation, thus order its immediate demolition, which was effected thereafter.

### **Methodology and Data analysis**

This study employed Roger Fry's Formalism Theory of Art to guide the research in its methodology, data collection, analysis, presentation, and discussion. The theory provided magnifying glasses in analysing the form

and style of the 12 Maji Maji war heroes' statues in the present research's quest to unveil factors behind poor artistry and facial dissimilitude on the statues. Fry's theory was deemed suitable for the current research as its essence is to evaluate an artwork's aesthetics based on an artist's successes in the proper application of principles of design such as balance, proportionality, focus, and emphasis of elements of art like colour, shapes, textures, and line on a composition to produce a compelling artwork. The current research was in particularly focused on the statues' form analysis.

The study adopted a descriptive approach to generate data from a purposively selected sample of four interviews and 32 questionnaires respondents were employed. Meanwhile, participatory observation and technical analysis of the 12 statues were carried out during primary data collection. Besides, a review of several documents was conducted to gather information on the Maji Maji Memorial Mausoleum in Songea district and collect background information about the 12 Maji Maji uprising heroes' profiles and photographic materials as well as the sculptor portfolio. Thematic analysis by Braun and Clarke (2006) was adopted to help in the analysis of data collected through interviews and questionnaires. Data collected through observation was subjected to a comparative analysis of facial and bodily features on statues to those on actual photographs of the Maji Maji war heroes. Data analysed from both methods interpretation into themes for critical discussions.

### **Findings and Discussion**

The findings from the present inquiry on the standard of artistry on 12 commemorative Maji Maji war heroes' sculptures have been summarised and organised into themes for discussion. In all, four issues were prevalent in all collected information through interviews, questionnaires, documentary analysis, and observations. The issues which are here coined as themes were; Technical Inabilities of the Sculptor that were realized and revealed by respondents due to poor quality of the statues or busts outlook; Financial and Technological Constraints which were discovered from the analysis of materials used and procedures followed during the creation of the statues; Art Illiteracy and the Public Art in Tanzania as a factor that might have inspired negative or positive response of the general audience on the quality of artworks in the public space and the Absence of Public Art Regulatory Scheme or guideline that was seen as a mechanism that would have helped in the regulation of artworks produced for historic

preservation and installed in the public spaces. Critical discussion on these themes is conducted in the following subsections:

### **Technical Inabilities of the Sculptor**

A sculptor's technical abilities to capture and replicate precise anatomical proportions, racial concept or origin of the model, and facial features' similitude between the actual human subject and his artistic replica, in this context the similitude of the Maji Maji war heroes to their busts or statues, are used determine his artistic prowess or craftsmanship on accomplished creative work. This view was accordingly adopted in the analysis of the previously mentioned statues, in which findings showed that the sculptor failed to create a resemblance between actual human subjects as seen in photographs (fig. 2 to 13) to their artistic representations or statues, also displayed beside the aforementioned figures. The sculptors' technical flaws are vivid in the form and style aspects. All respondents who gave their views on the statues' general outlook through face-to-face interviews with the researcher and those who returned questionnaires criticized the statues as unrealistic and not even closely resembling the Maji Maji war heroes, they are supposed to represent. These views were supplemented with results of observations analysis conducted by the researcher whose findings also confirmed the respondents' opinions on the statues. A comparative analysis of separate photographs of all 12 Maji Maji war heroes each put opposite to their corresponding statue's image as shown in figures 2 - 13 expose these aforesaid disparities. Both, the researcher and respondents' criticisms emphasized at sculptor's inability to leave a poor 'craftsmanship impression' on all 12 Maji Maji war heroes' busts.

The sculptors' technical flaws are evidenced in the disproportionate bodily parts such as the heads, shoulders, and the general sizes of most of the busts. Critical analysis of selected figures attests to this problem. For example, in figures 2. Nduna Mpambalyoto Soko, 4. Nduna Songea bin Luwafu Mbano, 6. NKosi Mputa Gwazerapasi Gama, 7. Nduna Mtekateka MuyaMuya Tawete, and Fig. 10. Nduna Njoroza Mbano bin Songea, the sculptor fails to create and maintain the ratio of body parts' proportions in the statues. According to Fry (1925), average adults have a shoulder width of a few under three heads whereas children's shoulders measure two heads or less than that.

For the busts under review, the heads are bigger and there is no way their ratios can be compared to the shoulders. The solid form of a statue is best appreciated in its complete three-dimensional proportions that can be related to real-life subjects or models with only a few exaggerations adopted on general statue's measurements to enhance its display purposes. This analysis found anatomical flaws and disproportionate body mass of the statues to have also impacted the proportions and positions of the facial features such as the eyes, ears, nose, mouth, chin, and the cheeks on all 12 statues. Specific examples to explain this anomaly can be made in fig. 4. Nduna Songea bin Luwafu Mbano, and fig. 5. Nduna Zimanimoto Gama, whose photographs show their body sizes as slender with average-sized oval-shaped heads, joined with typical necks to wide shoulders, while their opposite replicas in statues depict fat and big-spherical shaped heads with elongated necks connected to narrow shoulders. These figural distortions render the 12 statues in the analysis with unrealistic characteristics that estrange them as representations of the Maji Maji war heroes as evident in figures 2 - 13:



**Fig.2. Nduna Mpambalyoto Soko**

(Source: Fr Häfliger, Songea, Jan./Febr. 1906; Field Data 2021)



**Fig.3. Nduna Mputa Mkuzo Gama**  
(Source: Missions-Blätter, Nr. 3, VI. Jg. 1902; Field Data 2021)



**Fig.4. Nduna Songea bin Luwafu Mbano**  
(Source: Fülleborn 1906; Field Data 2021)



**Fig.5. Nduna Zimanimoto Gama**

(Source: Missions-Blätter, Nr. 3, VI. Jg. 1902; Field Data 2021)



**Fig.6. NKosi Mputa Gwazerapasi Gama**

(Source: Fr Häfliger, Songea, Jan./Febr. 1906; Field Data 2021)



**Fig.7. Nduna Mtekateka Muya Muya Tawete**  
(Source: Fr Häfliger, Songea, Jan./Febr. 1906; Field Data 2021)



**Fig.8 Nduna Mtepa Gama**  
(Source: Missions-Blätter, Nr. 3, VI. Jg. 1902; Field Data 2021)



**Fig. 9 Nduna Magodi Mbano**

(Source: Missions-Blätter, Nr. 3, VI. Jg. 1902; Field Data 2021)



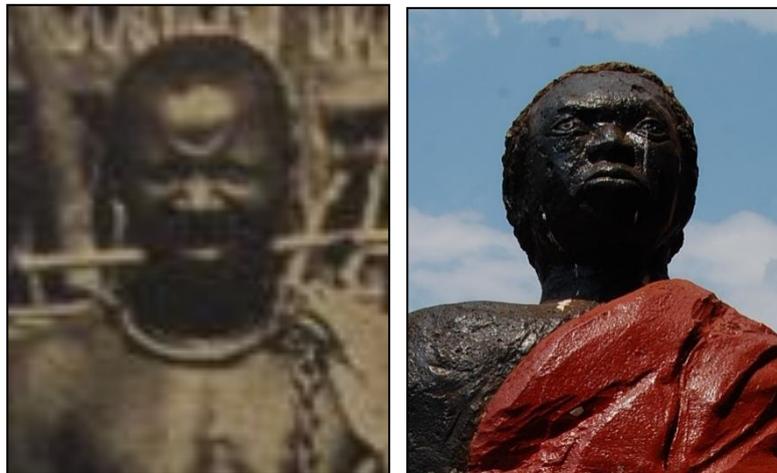
**Fig. 10 Nduna Njoroza Mbano bin Songea**

(Source: Missions-Blätter, Nr. 3, VI. Jg. 1902; Field Data 2021)



**Fig. 11 Tamatama Mbano bin Songea**

(Source: Fr Häfliger, Songea, Jan./Febr. 1906; Field Data 2021)



**Fig. 12 Majiha Kuhanga Komba**

(Source: Fr Häfliger, Songea, Jan./Febr. 1906; Field Data 2021)



**Fig. 13 Fulatera Gama**

(Source: Fr Häfliger, Songea, Jan./Febr. 1906; Field Data 2021)

However, in sculpture making, technical defects happen due to several factors. Besides the sculptor's inabilities, inappropriate choice of media or material for sculpture production may have profound technical and stylistic effects on the final artwork. When sculpting on stone, wood, metal, clay, ivory, cement plaster, or wax, the outlook or general impression of the final artwork is highly dependent on the type of material it is made in aesthetical, durability, and even political, socio-cultural, and economic aspects. The same sculpture made in wood or bronze is differently appreciable based on the aforementioned reasons. During the making of the Maji Maji war heroes' statues, the sculptor used cement plaster as his chief media. Cement plaster is made of a mortar containing Portland cement, sand, and water commonly used for coating walls in building construction. Unlike, gypsum plaster or clay which are ideal materials for smooth interior walls' finishing, are also useful in making realistic statues for their smooth textures enable sculptors to put fine details on statues easily. On the other hand, cement plaster contains sand grains that normally create a rough texture, which is difficult to integrate fine details in the sculpture for realistic impressions on the statues. Another disadvantage is that cement plaster takes longer to dry and cannot be easily scratched or chiselled when hardened. During data collection, all interview and questionnaire responses faulted the sculptor's techniques or style as manifested by the flaws visible in statues' attire, the turban worn by some chiefs in the statues and togas.

The unrealistic rigid folds on the toga-like garments all statues were clad in looked ‘mechanical and fake’. Nonetheless, observations of the statues show that the sculptor did not involve casting technique during the creation of the busts. Instead, he directly embarked on making chicken wire reinforcements that also provided him with heads and shoulders’ skeletons on which he applied cement plasters and sculpted the faces as well as other body parts on the same frame at the same time. This crude technique the sculptor deployed to create the 12 busts at the MMM is only suitable for making abstract, non-representational statues that do not compel the sculptor to achieve facial likeness and precise bodily proportions for realistic and representational artworks for historic preservation.

#### **Financial and Technological Constraints**

During data collection activities at the MMM site in the Songea district, it was observed that a big part of the mausoleum section and the general museum’s buildings were constructed of locally manufactured red-murram-soil bricks for walls with red soil’s mortar. Only a few interior walls were finished with cement plaster whereas some cement plaster was used to cover the red-soils mortar lines on all outer walls as decoration but also protection from rainwater. Apparently, there was little budget provided for building the mausoleum and the museum building. A shortage of construction funds was confirmed by Kanjoronga Tubisame who participated in the building of the museum’s building as a mason (Telephone Interview with Kanjoronga Tubisame Mbawala, May 2022). It was also noted in the *Parliamentary Hansard* records that Bi. Zaituni Fadhili, as a Special Seat Representative for the Ruvuma region, received some funds from the central government to help in the construction but proved insufficient for the task (Hansard).

All the 12 statues analysed in this research at the MMM were also made on cement plaster due to insufficient funds to buy bronze and pay for its rigorous casting procedures outside Tanzania. Nevertheless, cement plaster is cheap; it is also prone to destruction due to weather ravages such as high temperatures and heavy rains, and winds when exposed outside. Bronze is an ideal medium for sculpture making, preferred by sculptors for its durability in open space, flexibility in making, as well as its rich complexion, and propensity to accommodate fine details. Until the 1970s, bronze casting art was done only in Uganda in the entire East African region (Miller, 1975). Besides financial constraints, Abbas Kihago and the co-

ordinators of MMM construction were unable to produce bronze statues in Uganda in 1979 or 1980 because of the Tanzania-Uganda war, which had just ended between the two countries, except South Africa, Nigeria or Europe which meant more expenses that were already a recurring problem of the project. Due to weak structures on both the buildings and the statues, regular maintenance is conducted annually to keep the mausoleum and the museum afloat.

Lack of updated photography technology in the project also emerged to be another sticking point linked to insufficient funding. According to Baltazar Nyamusya, the MMM Conservator, the only source of facial images for the 12 chiefs used by the sculptor to create the statues were photographs taken by Fr. Johannes Häfliger on 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> February 1906, a few moments before they were hanged, and several others taken four years before the Maji Maji war erupted in Songea and reproduced in several publications during German colonial times and in 1987 (Rushohora & Kurmann, 2018). The quality of most of these photographs was poor, particularly when it comes to facial features of the subjects (see edited photographs by the researcher in figs. 2 - 13). When Abbas Kihago created the busts in 1979 and 1980, there was no high photograph manipulation technologies such as digital cameras or Photoshop programs that could have helped to improve the quality of the old photographs. A comparative analysis conducted during observations in the field revealed that the sculptor also failed to capture clear facial details in his work due to the poor quality photograph, hence the resultant dissimilar facial impressions of the final artworks evident in the statues. When combined, these factors signal that, apart from sculptors' artistic inabilities, technological challenges also contributed to the poor artistry manifesting in the 12 Maji Maji war heroes' statues.

#### **Art Literacy and the Public Art in Tanzania**

According to the MMM conservator, Baltazar Nyamusya few local visitors to the museum had seldom questioned the authenticity of the statues' representation of the Maji Maji war heroes' actual facial identities despite of clearly visible poor craftsmanship on the statues. A similar sentiment emerged in the findings from 32 questionnaires filled out by cultural heritage studies students working at the MMM as curators, as part of their practical training. Besides, the present researcher found that over four decades, nobody ever officially inquired about the artistry and historic representative statues of the statues installed at MMM. All these findings

were analysed and added to the realisation that the public in the Songea district hardly appreciates the small amount of art available in the public spaces around them. This discovery was linked to a recent study that reported that the majority public in Tanzania is art illiterate (Makukula 2019). Since the mid-1980s, art was never among the regularly taught subjects in most public schools (Mwenesi 1998). Jean Pruitt, among a few nationwide promoters of Tanzanian arts and crafts, explains this situation well in her publication on her visual art promotion experiences in Tanzania thusly:

... Art is not a subject on the curriculum at the government schools, which is a great shame. Your average Tanzanian child doesn't have access to crayons or paints, art books, or museums. There is the Bagamoyo School of Art, where many recent artists have been trained, but it's still far easier to find a drama teacher than a fine art teacher... (Pruitt 2015, p. 15)

As Jean Pruitt puts it, it was hard to find fine art teachers in Tanzania. Recent research shows that it is difficult to find art-literate individuals in many remote areas of Tanzania such as Songea district. Lack of art education has had adverse effects on many aspects of art functions in Tanzania, particularly the use of art in historic preservation. According to the MMM's conservator, since the 1990s his office had been using black coral paint on statues as a way to decorate and conserve the bust unknowing that sculpture art is not painted after it is made but leaves its media's pigment to appear as its colour. This example attests to general art illiteracy among the museum's management and the general public who could not see any problems with the practice that has been constantly executed as a way of conserving the Maji Maji war heroes' representations.

However, the current study confirmed that though the public in Tanzania may be art illiterate, it was not blind to poor artistic productions. In the previous two decades, public and some private institutions commissioned several life-size and portrait sculptures projects to commemorate President Nyerere in public spaces, but the public was among bitter critics whose main argument opposed poor craftsmanship and dissimilitude of the statues to the great man they have adored and known very well in person and pictures (URT 2007). Recently, the public booed the installation of the newly crafted metal statue of the late President Nyerere statue at the Burigi-Chato national park based on what they perceived as poor artistry and dissimilarity to

President Nyerere (Editor, 2019). In this regard, the present study found that lack of art education has contributed to so much that went wrong with the Maji Maji war heroes' statues even before the project was designed.

### **Absence of Public Art Regulatory Scheme**

Lack of proper guidelines or procedures to follow before and after the creation of art for public display for various purposes is yet another challenge addressed in the present research. Guidelines or criteria necessary for assessment of the quality of artistic work or craftsmanship on finished or completed artworks (paintings or sculptures) ready for public display are not among the prerequisites for acceptance by the public art or monuments regulatory authority stipulated in the provisions of the Antiquities Act No. 10 of 1964 and its amended version, the Declaration of Monuments and Conservation Areas Act No. 22 of 1979. This Act remains serves as the only guideline for all monuments regulations activities in the country. The omission of standards for assessment is probably the reason for the absence of an art expertise committee to oversee creativity and artistry on commemorative monuments or statues created for many years in Tanzania. Besides, it is the main reason behind the unregulated creation of numerous substandard statues and other representative artworks of past leaders produced and displayed within and outside Tanzania.

Le Gall and Mboro (2019) critically objected to the artistic representation of Kinjeketile Ngwale, a mythical traditional hero commemorated for his role in the Maji Maji war against German colonialism in the southern parts of Tanzania from 1905 to 1907. Le Gall and Mboro (2019) are critical of the artistry behind Kinjeketile's portrait commissioned by the Germans and executed by a self-taught Tanzania artist. According to him, the portrait shows similarities to marvel superhero characters in American comics. In fact, the portrait in discussion displays none of the anticipated Kinjeketile's likeness, in neither facial nor bodily features as told in traditional legends about him (Hussein, 1969). Although this substandard Kinjeketile portrait is on permanent exhibition at the National Museum in Berlin, no complaints against its organisers, the Humbolt Lab Tanzania, or the Museum itself by Tanzania, have emerged. This discrepancy persists due to lack of a legal guideline to regulate all artworks produced for historical preservation and heritage promotion.

Of all the substandard statues created for political and historical purposes since the 1960s, several statues commemorating late former presidents, “Mwalimu” Nyerere, and “Sheikh” Karume, caught the attention of the government, which prompted the enactment of a law deliberately aimed to introduce accepted artistic standards or norms to evaluate general craftsmanship and similitude aspects of actual models of statues or artworks before the statues are installed for public display. The Founders of the Nation (Honouring Procedures) Bill was realised by the Ministry of Public Service and passed as an act by the Parliament in 2004. Provision III: Preservations of Founders of the Nation’s Historical Heritage of the Act in Section 8, subsections (1) and (2), also in Section 10, subsections (1) and (2) stipulates legal procedures to be followed whenever artistic representations, such as photographs, paintings or statues are created or reproduced. For the smooth enactment of the law, the Ministry operates through a committee comprised of six members from historical and heritage-related fields and two family members, each representing one of the founders of the nation as stipulated in the law in part IV, Section 17(1). However, the Founders of the Nation (Honouring Procedures) Act recognizes only two persons as founders of the nation as stipulated in the law in Section 11(2), and leaves out numerous traditional leaders or chiefs, such as Mkwawa, Mirambo, Mputa Gama, Mangi Meli, and Mbeyela to mention a few, who are historically considered and acknowledged among early founders of our present nation (Gwassa 1969; Illife 1979)

During the present research’s fieldwork, it emerged that no vetting procedures were followed before the artists or sculptors who created the 12 statues were commissioned to do the work. Several reasons could help explain why such an important procedure was overlooked. First, when the Maji Maji war heroes’ statues creation project was underway, a similar sculpture project to commemorate the fallen heroes during the Tanzania-Uganda 1978-79 war was awaiting its implementation in Songea district. Unlike the Maji Maji war heroes’ statues project, the latter had already commissioned a sculptor to do the work. Thus, the coordinators of the Maji Maji war heroes’ statues project opted to use the same sculptors for their project unaware of the technical abilities’ criteria employed to select the sculptor (Baltazar Nyamusya, Conservator the MMM-Personal Interview, September 2021).

The co-ordinators could not easily doubt the sculptor's ability for his artistic reputation preceded him since he was the one responsible for the creation of several other commemorative sculptures or statues of the Kagera War heroes installed in Arusha, Kagera, Mwanza, Mtwara, and Pwani (Coast) region (Makukula 2019). The project co-ordinators had no guidelines to help them vet suitable artists before commissioning them and, instead, relied on the word-of-mouth and views of leaders, who were also unaware of the repercussions yet to manifest in the future. Besides, the absence of artistic advisors from the Songea district culture office was another serious problem. Throughout the processes, art experts for the quality of finished statues, in this case, the similitude aspects between the faces of commemorated heroes in statues to the images that were used as models by the sculptors. The coordinating team comprised of some politicians, masons as well as CCM part and local government officials. There was no artist in the team to provide his criticism or professional views on the outlook of the finished statues, which appear to be very different from the faces of the actual heroes' photographs seen in figures 2 - 13.

### **Conclusion**

Several technical incongruities in the artworks resulting from poor artistry and facial unlikeness are visible on the 12 statues installed to commemorate the Wangoni paramount Chief and his sub-chiefs for their heroism during the Maji Maji war at the Maji Maji Memorial Museum in the Songea district. As already discussed in the findings section, apart from the sculptor's inabilities the Maji Maji Memorial Museum's construction committee or co-ordinators, the public, and the ministry responsible for the regulation of monuments and national history and heritage promotion were partly accountable for the statues' formal and aesthetic challenges revealed that the present research's chief objective was to unveil the problems and call for immediate response to rescue or rectify the situation and not blame whoever was responsible for these discrepancies. After knowing the actual problem(s) behind the 12 Maji Maji war heroes' statues, it is high time for MMM management and other concerned authorities to consider suggestions or recommendations for immediate action, which could entail the demolition of the busts and commissioning for the creation of new ones meeting the required artistic standards such as form and style accomplishments on the final artworks as well as the statues' facial resemblance to the historic figures. Besides, the criticisms, the need to

consider sculpture art in its historical preservation of the Maji Maji war, more projects similar to this one could be carried out, for example, in Iringa, Tabora, and Mwanza regions where many historical events perish for lack of thoughts and proper media to conserve and promote it for national pride and economic benefits. However, government intervention needs to reformulate laws and regulations to oversee the use of arts in the national historical preservation and promotion. In addition, the Founders of the Nation (Honouring Procedures) Act of 2004 should be amended to recognise and extend its jurisdiction to other known national heroes. The Ministry of Arts, Culture and Sport should also ensure that its cultural officers, capable of analysing arts in various aspects, are evenly distributed in all the districts in the country to oversee the quality of artworks created for national interests meet objectives, and help in proper preservation and promotion of Tanzania's national culture.

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