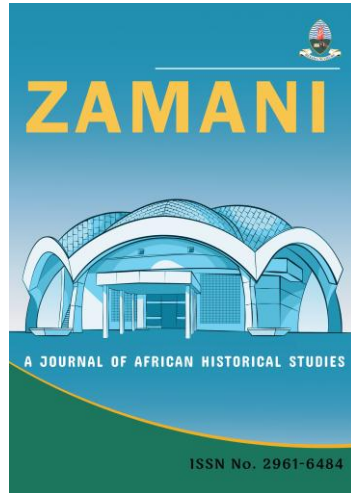


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A Society for Professional Archaeologists in Tanzania: A Call for Action

RICHARD BIGAMBO

Abstract

This essay discusses the need for an Archaeological Association of Tanzania and provides its general structure. It argues that the proposed association is essential for promoting the country's development, heritage preservation and conservation, and promotion of archaeological studies. In addition to providing resources and support for research, training, and education, it would facilitate collaboration and networking, help protect and preserve Tanzania's cultural heritage, and increase public awareness and education about archaeology in Tanzania. The essay also discusses the development of archaeology in Tanzania and the history and contributions of archaeological associations worldwide. This structure for the proposed association would enable the association to effectively promote archaeology throughout the country through public awareness and education.

Keywords: Archaeological society, heritage management, archaeological research, Tanzania.

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Introduction

In his 2019 publication, Emanuel T Kessy argues that “archaeology in Tanzania has come of age” and that archaeologists in the country have significantly advanced research both nationally and globally.¹ Kessy's statement is based on the fact that the overall number of specialists trained in archaeology, cultural heritage management or the related disciplines has significantly increased alongside the number of universities offering archaeology as a course and a degree program in Tanzania. The discipline's recognition and involvement in addressing contemporary challenges—for

¹ Emanuel T Kessy, "The History of Cultural Heritage Research and Teaching in Tanzania," *Tanzania Zamani* 10, no. 2 (2019): 65-112.

example, as a part of the Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment—has evidently improved.² Although formal teaching of archaeology began in 1985 in Tanzania at the University of Dar es Salaam, no professional association has existed. Therefore, this essay attempts to navigate a way forward by proposing the need to develop an association for professional archaeologists in Tanzania and the benefits it would bring.

A professional association is conceived as an organisation of practitioners who judge one another as professionally competent and banded together to perform numerous functions.³ Associations facilitate meetings and exchange views to further professional objectives. Worldwide, professional associations are common. Some examples the Society for the History of Technology (SHOT) and the Society for American Archaeology (SAA). This is also the case in Tanzania, where several professional associations cater to different professions. These include, for instance, the Historical Association of Tanzania (HAT)⁴ for historians, the Tanganyika Law Society (TLS)⁵ for lawyers, the Economic Society of Tanzania (EST) for economists and the Engineers Registration Board (ERB)⁶ for engineers, to mention a few. These associations are essential in different ways, including controlling members' integrity and professional conduct, providing opportunities for training and career development, and providing opportunities for members to exchange knowledge and skills through seminars, workshops and conferences.⁷

In cognisance of the importance of professional associations in furthering academic and professional pursuits, archaeologists working in

² Elgidius B Ichumbaki, "Training and Collaboration in African Archaeology," *African Archaeological Review* 40 (2023): 785-788; Richard Bigambo, "Archaeological Heritage Management in Tanzania," in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Anthropology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

³Robert K Merton "The Functions of Professional Association," *The American Journal of Nursing* 58, no. 1 (1958): 50-54.

⁴ See Abdul Sheriff, "The Need for Reviving the Historical Association of Tanzania," *Tanzania Zamani* 10, no. 1 (2017): 114-129; Egnald Pius Mihanjo, "Reviving the Historical Association of Tanzania: Strategies and Mechanics," *Tanzania Zamani* 10, no. 1 (2017): 127-131; Isaria N Kimambo, "Historical Association of Tanzania," *Tanzania Zamani* 9, no. 2 (2017): 218-247.

⁵ United Republic of Tanzania, hereafter URT, *The Tanganyika Law Society Act 1961*.

⁶ URT, *The Engineers Registration Act 1997*.

⁷ Kessy, "The History of Cultural Heritage Research".

Tanzania have subscribed membership to various associations in the continent—for example the Society of Africanist Archaeologists, the Pan-African Archaeological Association, and the Association of Southern Africa Professional Archaeologists—or the world for example the World Archaeological Congress. Nonetheless, this does not preclude the association of archaeologists in Tanzania. Most importantly, most of such associations' codes of conduct and charters are usually too general and require customisation to cater for particular needs. Similarly, the lack of a professional association has been mentioned by different scholars as detrimental to the overall growth and development of Archaeology as a discipline in the country.⁸

A Brief History of Archaeology in Tanzania

Like in many former colonies, Archaeology in Tanzania began as a part of colonial developments. Because it was during the colonial period when early archaeological expeditions took place in the country. One of the large expeditions was that of Tendaguru—in the Lindi Region—between 1909 and 1913, which unearthed over 220 tons of dinosaur remains.⁹ Of course, by early 1900, there were numerous reports of colonial officers collecting and reporting about the presence of various archaeological materials in the country. These included the reports by FB Bagshawe in 1908 about rock shelters in the west of Lake Eyasi and that of TAM Nash in 1929 about rock shelters in the Kondoa District.¹⁰ In addition to reports, government officers undertook archaeological explorations, including the uncovering of various remains at Olduvai Gorge by the German entomologist, Wilhelm Kattwinkel, in 1911 and the excavation of the burial mound in Ngorongoro by Dr Arning

⁸See Asmeret G Mehari, Peter R Schmidt and BBB Mapunda, "Knowledge about Archaeological Field Schools in Africa: The Tanzanian Experience," *Azania: Archaeological Research in Africa*, 49, no. 2 (2014): 184-202.

⁹ Ina Heumann, Holger Stoecker, and Mareike Vennen, "Kutoka Tendaguru Hadi Berlin: Historia ya Msafara wa Uchimbaji na Nyaraka Zake," in *Vipande vya Dinosaria: Historia ya Msafara wa Kiapaleontolojia kwenda Tendaguru 1906-2018*, edited by Ingo Heumann, H Stoecker, and M Vennen, (Dar es Salaam: Mkuki na Nyota, 2021): 4-26.

¹⁰ Francis J Bagshawe, "Rock Paintings of the Kangeju Bushmen, Tanganyika Territory," *Man* 23 (1923), 146-147; Emmanuel J Bwasiri and Benjamin W Smith "The Rock Art of Kondoa District, Tanzania," *Azania: Archaeological Research in Africa* 50, no. 4 (2015): 437-459.

in 1915.¹¹ The first scientific expedition of the Olduvai Gorge site was by the geologists Hans Wreck and Louis B Leakey in 1932.¹²

The colonial period also saw the enactment of laws and institutions to oversee the overall management of archaeological resources in the country. Accordingly, the Monument Preservation Ordinance, later replaced by the Antiquities Act, was established in 1937. Similarly, the British colonial government established the King George V Memorial Museum, which later became the National Museum of Tanzania, and the Antiquities Division in 1937 and 1958, respectively, to manage archaeological resources in the country.¹³

In the early years of independence, archaeological practices continued under the patronage of foreigners due to a lack of Tanzanian professional archaeologists. Nevertheless, the period saw increased archaeological training, and in 1968, the Antiquities Division, the primary institution for managing archaeological activities, was headed for the first time by a Tanzanian, Amin A Mturi. In addition to training, the early years of independence witnessed major institutional transformations. Subsequently, the King George V Memorial Museum was renamed the National Museum of Tanzania, and the Monument Preservation Ordinance of 1937 was repealed and replaced by the Antiquities Act No. 10 of 1964.¹⁴ Notwithstanding noticeable transformations, the lack of specialised institutions in training archaeologists provided institutions in Canada, Europe and North America with avenues for research, teaching and training, and Tanzanian archaeologists frequented foreign institutions in pursuit of knowledge and mentorship.

¹¹ Audax ZP Mabulla, "Reflections on the Archaeology Teaching Programme, University of Dar es Salaam." In *Salvaging Tanzania's Cultural Heritage* edited by Bertram BB Mapunda and Paul Msemwa (Dar es Salaam: Dar es Salaam University Press, 2005), 25-35.

¹² Philip V Tobias, "Encore Olduvai," *Science* 299 (2003): 1193-1194.

¹³ For a general discussion, see Fidelis T Masao, *Museology and Museum Studies: A Handbook of the Theory and Practice of Museums* (Dar Es Salaam: Dar es Salaam University Press, 2010); Nganyirwa J Karoma, "The Deterioration and Destruction of Archaeological and Historical Sites in Tanzania," in *Plundering Africa's Past* edited by Peter R Schmidt and Roderick J McIntosh, 191-200 (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1996).

¹⁴ Thomas J Biginagwa, "Development of Cultural Heritage Registration in Post-colonial Tanzania." *Tanzania Zamani* XII, no. 1 (2020): 123-160.

After years of discussions and lobbying, it was in 1985 that the Archaeology Unit was established in the Department of History of the University of Dar es Salaam.¹⁵ The Unit became part of the History Department until 2013, when it became a fully-fledged department, the Department of Archaeology and Heritage Studies. So far, the department offers three bachelor degree programmes, two master's degree programmes and two PhD degree programmes in archaeology and heritage studies. Additionally, the department enrolls students from both within and outside the country.¹⁶ Since 2005, archaeology teaching was introduced in other institutions within Tanzania, including the constituent colleges of the University of Dar es Salaam—the Dar es Salam University College of Education and Mkwawa University College of Education—that offer basic archaeological teaching to Bachelor of Education students with History as their teaching subject. In 2020, the University of Dodoma started enrolling students in the newly established degree program, the Bachelor of Arts in Archaeology and Cultural Anthropology. The latter programme was introduced after teaching archaeology as part of BA History and BA Tourism and Cultural Heritage since 2005.

Archaeology and Professional Associations: A Global Perspective

Professional associations for archaeologists have a long history, dating back to the late nineteenth century. Nevertheless, the earliest known professional association for archaeologists is the Society of Antiquaries of London, established in 1707. The society was instrumental in developing archaeology as a discipline in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries because it championed the application of scientific methods. Other European professional associations included the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, formed in 1780, the German Archaeological Institute in 1829 and *La Société Préhistorique Française*, founded in 1872.

The first professional archaeological society in the United States of America, the Archaeological Institute of America (AIA), was founded in 1879. The AIA is one of the oldest and most respected professional

¹⁵ Bertram BB Mapunda, "The Role of Archaeology in Development: The Case of Tanzania", *Transafrican Journal of History* 20 (1991), 19-34, here at 26-7.

¹⁶ Kessy, "The History of Cultural Heritage Research", 101; Bigambo, "Archaeological Heritage Management in Tanzania."

organisations in archaeology, and it continues to play an essential role in promoting the study of Archaeology and the preservation of archaeological sites. It has also members beyond the United States, including Canada and Europe.¹⁷ Other associations include the Society of Professional Archaeologists (SOPA), The Society for Historical Archaeology (SHA) and the Society for American Archaeology (SAA), to mention a few.

In Africa, there are also several professional archaeological associations, including the South African Archaeological Society, one of the prominent archaeological societies in the continent. It was established in 1945 to promote public awareness of Archaeology and its findings in Southern Africa and facilitate interaction between professional archaeologists and people. Another association is the Association of Southern African Professional Archaeologists (ASAPA) established in 2004 to establish, maintain and promote Archaeology among SADC member states. There is also the Eastern African Association for Palaeoanthropology and Palaeontology (EAAPP), established in 2005 to strengthen pre-historic research in eastern Africa by uniting archaeologists, paleoanthropologists and palaeontologists and other relevant scholars in pre-historic studies.¹⁸ For the past 20 years, the EAAPP has organised regular conferences (every two years since 2005) that serve as a platform for connecting researchers, policymakers, museum professionals, and students in eastern Africa. The platform has been instrumental in exchanging ideas and discussing research results and problems associated with pre-historic research in the designated areas.

In Asia, several archaeological associations exist, including the Japanese Archaeological Association (JAA), the Indian Archaeological Society (IAS) and the Korean Archaeological Society. The Japanese Archaeological Association (JAA) was established in 1948 to promote archaeology and fulfil societal responsibilities of archaeologists in Japan. Since its establishment, the association has conducted various

¹⁷ See in <https://www.archaeological.org/about/history/> accessed on September 4, 2024; Timothy Darvill, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Archaeology* 3rd Edn. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021).

¹⁸ Emma Mbua, Zeresenay Alemseged, and René Bobe, "A New Association for East Africa Palaeoanthropology and Palaeontology," *Evolutionary Anthropology* 17 (2008): 123-124.

archaeological research in the country and professional meetings, conferences, symposiums, and publications, such as the Japanese Journal of Archaeology. The IAS was established in 1967 as a non-governmental and non-profit association for archaeologists in India. So far, IAS has been responsible for various archaeological and historical research, conferences and publications such as the prestigious *Puratattva* and the *Indian Ocean Archaeology Journal*. The Korean Archaeological Society is a professional and scholarly association of archaeologists in South Korea. The association has significantly contributed to South Korea's archaeology, including research, conferences and publications especially the *Journal of the Korean Archaeological Society*. While the above discussion does not include all archaeological professional associations in the world, such associations exist worldwide and have continued to play an essential role in archaeology and related disciplines.

Potential Factors for an association of archaeologists in Tanzania

Since 1985, the development of archaeology in Tanzania has been impressive marked by sizeable number of archaeologists, students, publications and teaching institutes. All these calls for the formation of archaeological associations regulate the practice and relations among the practitioners. However, it is essential to establish the current situation in Tanzania and the existing challenges that a professional association for archaeologists in the country might address. Five key areas will benefit from a professional association for archaeologists: policy advocacy, knowledge sharing, public outreach and awareness, legal and ethical guidelines, and international collaborations.

Policy Advocacy

Policy advocacy is crucial in many sectors as it refers to how various efforts by multiple players—individuals or organizations, influence how particular laws, regulations or guidelines—are developed and shaped. Policy advocacy is also crucial to archaeology, as is with many other disciplines and sectors. Archaeology in Tanzania is regulated by three Acts, that is, the Antiquities Act, National Museum Act and Environmental Management Act; two policies, that is Cultural Policy of 1999 and Cultural Heritage Policy of 2008; and three regulations, that is the Antiquities Rules, 1980 (Protected Objects

and Monuments); the Antiquities Rules, 1991 (Conduct of Excavation and Access to Monuments); and the Antiquities Rules, 2020 (Management and Control of Monuments, Conservation Areas, Sites and Protected Objects). Despite their existence, various parties have issued various calls to amend, repeal and replace some of these laws.¹⁹ However, the calls have yet to be heard by the responsible authorities.

Thus, an association will allow such calls to be directed to responsible authorities collaboratively. It will serve as an essential instrument in negotiating and drafting policies and submit them to the responsible authorities for further action. The absence of an association has challenged individual archaeologists to campaign for such changes. Similarly, policy negotiations as individuals or particular institutions are slightly different and complex compared to those that include multiple institutions and members that act and present their ideas in unison. A good example can be derived from TLS, a professional association for lawyers in Tanzania Mainland, which has been one of the most active professional associations in the country and has contributed significantly to the improvement of various laws and regulations.²⁰ This is also the case for the HAT, where the Association has played a critical role in steering different historical discussions in Tanzania.

Knowledge sharing and public outreach and awareness

Archaeologically, Tanzania is among the countries supporting various research by local and foreign researchers.²¹ Consequently, the country has many researchers who conduct yearly archaeological research within its borders. However, one of the country's challenges stems from insufficient

¹⁹ Richard Bigambo, "Challenges and Solutions in the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Tanzania," *South African Archaeological Bulletin* 76, no. 215 (2021): 135-139; Donatius Kamamba, "Cultural Heritage Legislation in Tanzania," in *Legal Frameworks for the Protection of Immovable Cultural Heritage in Africa* edited by W Ndoro and G Pwiti (Rome: ICCROM, 2005), 13-17.

²⁰ Amos O Enabule and Bright Bazuaye, "Setting the Law Straight: Tanganyika Law Society & anor v. Tanzania and Exhaustion of Domestic Remedies before the African Court," *Mizan Law Review* 8, no. 1 (2014): 237-251; Alexander Makulilo, "Tanganyika Law Society and the Legal Human Rights Centre v. Tanzania and rev. Christopher R Mtikila v. Tanzania (Afr. CT. H. R.)," *International Legal Materials* 52, no. 6 (2013): 1327-1362.

²¹ See Ichumbaki, "Training and Collaboration in African Archaeology," 786

ways to effectively communicate and distribute the results and knowledge generated by the ongoing archaeological research. Similarly, misconceptions are often associated with the discipline and the discoveries. A good example is the negative connotations related to the discussions about early hominids discoveries and their overall relationship with current humans. Consequently, the general public lacks awareness of the various archaeological research and discoveries made in the country.

In most cases, such research is published in academic journals or monographs that, apart from being hidden behind paywalls, are written in a manner that is inaccessible to non-academics. Thus, a professional association might serve as a platform for archaeologists to showcase archaeological discoveries to the general public through publications, newsletters, magazine articles, and television and radio programs designed, managed, owned or supervised by the association. Similarly, the association can establish a journal that is distributed freely or charged in a manner afforded by many. Furthermore, as discussed elsewhere²², the association can endeavour to improve how archaeological information is communicated at primary and secondary schools. As it is, the curriculum at this level does not include archaeology as a taught discipline; instead, archaeological information is communicated as part of the history subject. Thus, having an archaeology discipline at primary and secondary school levels can be used to improve how archaeological information is transmitted to different audiences. Together, these instruments will assist in making sure information relating to archaeological discoveries in the country is widely available and communicated in a manner that is accessible to many.

Legal and ethical guidelines

While there are general legal guidelines such as the Antiquities Act No. 22 of 1979 and Rules such as the Antiquities Rules, 2020, professional associations are also crucial in proposing legal and ethical guidelines. These can be those guiding the conduct of various archaeological activities, such as surveys and excavations, or those controlling multiple undertakings,

²² Audax ZP Mabulla, "Strategies for Popularising Cultural Heritage in Tanzania," In *Salvaging Tanzania's Cultural Heritage* edited by Bertram BB Mapunda and Paul Msemwa, 219-226 (Dar es Salaam: Dar es Salaam University Press, 2005).

such as who should be qualified to undertake Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment (CHIA)²³—the process of assessing the impacts of planned development on cultural heritage landscapes, sites, or customs—and how to excavate burial grounds associated with particular communities. Tanzania has yet to receive a significant backlash or conflict between archaeologists and local communities regarding archaeology's overall practice and data retrieval methodologies.

The authorities in Tanzania have already set an example by putting in place several field requirements, such as the requirement to have an Antiquities Division official when conducting excavations and that of having a local archaeologist as a part of foreign archaeological projects. A professional association for archaeologists can devise guidelines for its members on the overall conduct of archaeological research in the country or set restrictions and provisions for the conduct of the discipline in the country.

International Collaborations

The past two decades have seen an immense increase in foreign archaeologists collaborating with local ones. However, the organization of such collaborations has been questioned, especially regarding power relations between local and foreign archaeologists and their overall roles in designing and implementing such collaborations. To effectively implement collaborative research, the association can guide how such collaborations are implemented to avoid unwanted outcomes. Further, apart from harnessing links with other associations from other parts of the world, the association can serve as a 'tunnel' to pass on collaborations. This can be done by contacting associations from other parts of the world and initiating collaborations or linking individual archaeologists from countries interested in working in Tanzania.

²³Elgidius B Ichumbaki and Elinaza Mjema, "The Impact of Small-Scale Development Projects on Archaeological Heritage in Africa: The Tanzanian Experience," *Conservation and Management of Archaeological Sites* 20, no. 1 (2018): 18-34.

A Potential Layout for the Archaeological Society of Tanzania (AST)

For the case of this position essay on the archaeological society, the proposed association will be called the “Archaeological Society of Tanzanian” (AST). It should oversee the development of archaeology and the related disciplines heritage conservation science and management in Tanzania. The proposed association will serve as a platform for identification, discussion, and solutions to challenges. Like other associations, AST should have different categories of members such as ordinary members, professional members and honorary members. To avoid what Faulker calls ‘Bureaucratic Professional Tendency’ (BPT),²⁴ that is, creation of an association to establish an elite group that will be differentiated from others who will be deemed as unskilled or amateur, it is thought that AST should also include a membership category that will consist of those who do not have formal archaeological or cultural heritage training but have been part of the projects or are generally interested in the discipline’s subject matter. Similarly, this could also include traditional custodians who are the local community members who are responsible for taking care of different issues and sites considered important by a particular community, for instance the sacred forests.

As such, AST is expected to improve archaeological information and dissemination to archaeologists and non-archaeologists in the country. Currently, such information is housed within libraries or international databases that are inaccessible to most Tanzanians. Thus, the association should aspire to have a communication department to oversee regular outlets where archaeological information is communicated to the professional and general community in terms of journals or bulletins, periodicals or pamphlets. They can also be in the form of sections in popular newspapers where archaeologists regularly contribute information to inform the general public about archaeological research and discoveries.

Similarly, the association should serve as an avenue where professional codes of conduct and ethics are designed and lobbied for implementation. These guidelines are usually formulated by professional associations and are used to ensure practitioners adhere to standards and procedures. For instance, the Register of Professional Archaeologists

²⁴Neil Faulkner, "Archaeology from Below," *Public Archaeology* 1, no. 1 (2000): 21-33.

(ROPA) in the USA has set professional qualifications and standards for the archaeologists similar to those set for the lawyers by the American Bar Association or for the medical doctors by the American Medical Association.²⁵ Failure to adhere to such guidelines usually results in a loss of professional permit, which restricts a person from actively participating in the field and performing related tasks. Thus, the association should have its legal department where such matters are discussed and directed to the responsible authorities for further actions.

Lastly, the association should have a research and development department to serve as a driving force behind excellence, innovation, and expansion. Its initiatives should support the discipline's growth and sustainability by encouraging a culture of ongoing learning, development, and technological and trend adaptation. This department will be responsible for different aspects, including organizing seminars, workshops or training that are geared towards keeping the association members up to date with recent developments and advancement; engaging in regular research to support the development of policies, guidelines and regulations in the country; and facilitating collaborations and networking among members within and outside the association through regular seminars, roundtable meetings and conferences.

Thus, regarding organizational structure, the Association should be divided into three central bodies, an Executive Committee, a Board of Directors, and Standing Committees. The Executive Committee, comprising the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Public Relations Officer, will be responsible for daily operations and strategic direction. The Board of Directors, including the Executive Committee members and other elected/appointed leaders, will serve as the governing body, ensuring the Association fulfils its mission and goals. Lastly, Standing Committees will focus on specific areas of expertise. To address the challenges mentioned earlier, I propose five Standing Committees: Research and Publication, Legal and Policy Advocacy Committee, Education and Outreach, Heritage Management, and Membership and Ethics.

²⁵Robert J Sharer and Wendy Ashmore, *Archaeology: Discovering Our Past* (New York: McGraw Hill, 2003).

Conclusion

While the discipline has survived for several decades without a professional association in Tanzania, perhaps it is high time we changed that. Apart from controlling and monitoring the conduct of archaeologists working in the country, a professional association could also be essential in steering the overall development of the discipline. Therefore, this essay calls for professional archaeologists to consider forming a professional association. While this essay has highlighted a possible structure for the association, it does not seek to dictate how it should be implemented. Instead, it seeks and hopes to stir up discussions among archaeologists working in the country on the need for a professional association and how to go about forming one.

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