

A) IDENTIFICATION

<u>Nomination</u>	:	Ilha de Moçambique
<u>Location</u>	:	Province of Nampula
<u>State party</u>	:	Mozambique
<u>Date</u>	:	1 October 1990

B) ICOMOS RECOMMENDATION

That this cultural property be included on the World Heritage List on the basis of Criteria IV and VI.

C) BACKGROUND

Inhabited by a Bantu tribe, the territory of Mozambique was occupied circa 900 by Arabs who set up trading posts.

In their search for a maritime route to India to avoid Muslim forces, the Portuguese decided to go around the continent of Africa. John II (1481-1495) sent Bartolomeu Dias to explore the African coast. Sailing beyond the coast of the Congolese kingdom, the great navigator rounded the extreme southern tip of Africa, unaware of the feat he had accomplished. It was not until his return that he discovered the "Cape of Storms," which John II renamed Cape of Good Hope.

Manuel I (1495-1521) ordered Vasco da Gama to continue the search for a maritime route. Leaving Lisbon in July 1497, he reached the Island of Moçambique (Moçambique) on 2 March 1498, where he was well received by the sultan and the people who thought the Portuguese were Muslims. During his second voyage, he occupied the territories of present-day Mozambique and returned to Lisbon in 1503 laden with gold.

Some years later, the Island of Moçambique had become one of Portugal's principal ports and trading posts on the sea route to India. The first fortress, St. Gabriel, was built in 1507. At the end of the 17th century, after enjoying strong economic expansion, the

town with its fortifications, along with the smaller island of St. Laurent (which is included in the proposal), went into a period of decline. In the second half of the 18th century, the economy was revived by the slave trade.

In 1898 the capital of Mozambique (the Portuguese colony) was transferred to Laurenço Marques (Maputo), considerably slowing down the economy of the town on the island of Moçambique. The town had developed unequally over nearly 400 years. Less than half of it was built of stone, a bit more than one-fourth in macuti, with the remainder being the various fortifications.

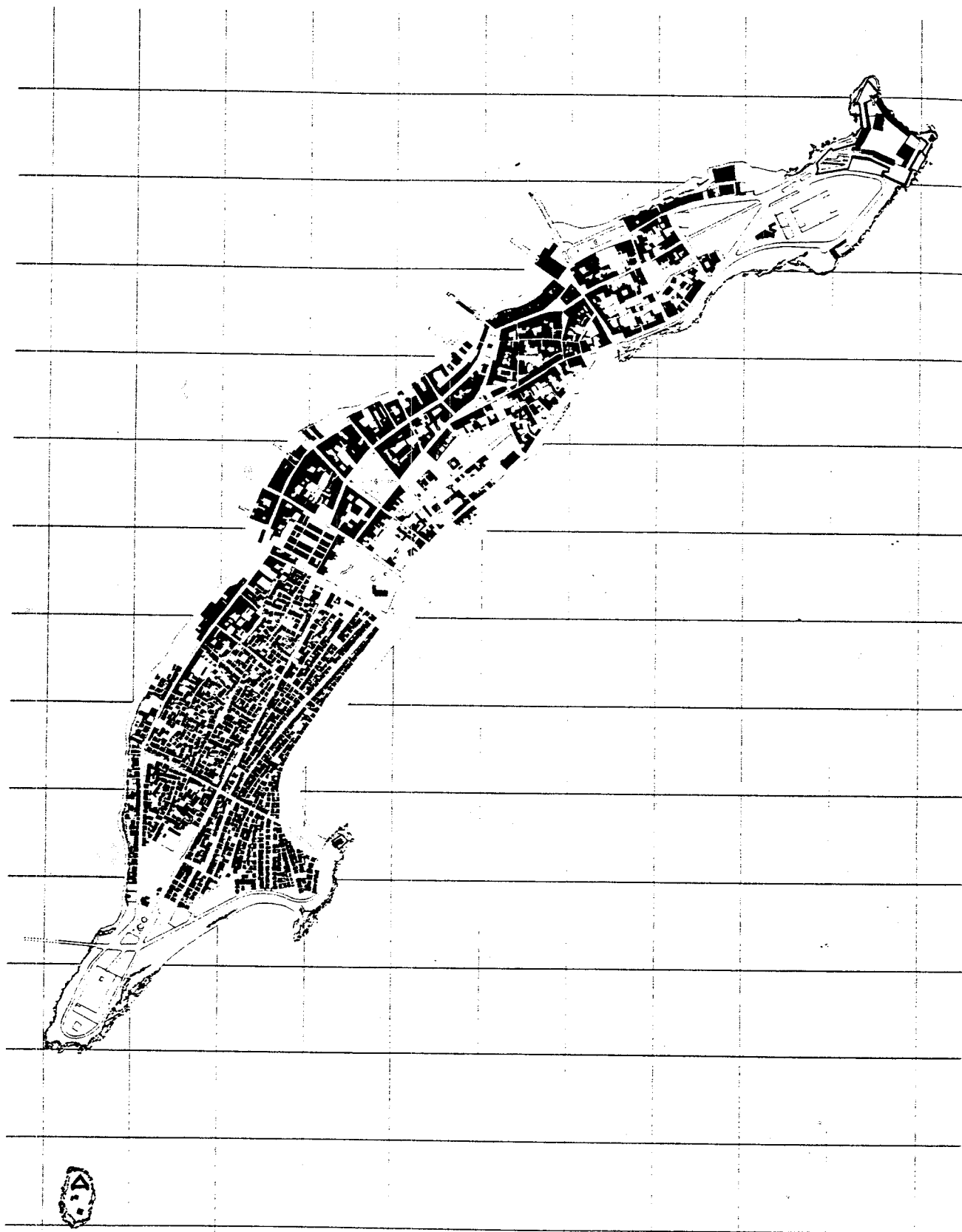
The incredible architectural unity of the island derives from the uninterrupted use of the same building techniques with the same materials and the same decorative principles. The island's patrimony also includes its oldest extant fortress (St. Sebastian, 1558-1620), other defensive buildings and numerous religious buildings (including many from the 16th century).

The island has been classed on the national level and for about ten years has benefited from restoration work and studies by international specialists (UNESCO sent experts there in 1981). However, while the present state of conservation is not fully satisfactory, a restoration and management program is in progress.

- **Criterion IV.** The town and the fortifications on the Island of Moçambique, and the smaller island of St. Laurent, are an outstanding example of an architecture in which local traditions, Portuguese influences and, to a somewhat lesser extent, Indian and Arab influences are all interwoven.

- **Criterion VI.** The Island of Moçambique bears important witness to the establishment and development of the Portuguese maritime routes between Western Europe and the Indian sub-continent and thence all of Asia.

ICOMOS, May 1991



Ilha de Moçambique : plan de l'île / map of the island