10 years ago, Momuld not have been he most peaceful s to live in.

tuguese were struggtain control as the of Oman battled for er the East African

ous siege of Fort Jesus 98 lasted almost three th the Portuguese tin the Fort while under

there are historical ts from this period that ed a fairly clear picture recent discoveries in n years have opened questions and begun iome of the missing of this turbulent but period in history.

th disit most resiamiliar ary few n first e the

unnels that trail under beneath our feet.

Special Report by

Dipesh Pabari

there has been a interest in the tunnels dia which revitalised iosity especially when ewspaper article that they were built by the

## Big Mystery Of Tunnel Under Mombasa Islan

## DESPERATE PORTUGUESE MAY HAVE DUG ONE AND HALE KILOMET

Portuguese in the First World

Until this point, I thought I knew my history quite well and was sure that there was no Portuguese presence in Mombasa in that period.

Fortunately, I was right as this was a misnomer in the article.

A quick discussion with welcoming staff from the National Museums has

helped provide some answers and wet my appetite for more.

The story uncovered so far does begin during the Omani siege of Fort Jesus.

When resident archaeologist, Hans Martin began investigating the tunnel, it made him realise that this might have been one possibility as to how the Portuguese were able to survive the siege for so long.

The Omanis had surrounded the fort blocking critical food and ammunition supplies from entering.

"Nobody is asking the question as to how the Portuguese got food and ammunition supplies into the Fort during this period.

"They must have brought some in through small boats but I don't think that would have been enough," suggests Hans.

The Portuguese must have been very determined or desperate to dig through one and half kilometres of solid coral rock which connects the well at Fort Jesus to Fort St. Joseph in Rasarani, although Mr. Martin

does suspect that they could have been assisted by natural formations:

"When you go down to the ocean front along Fort Jesus up to Mombasa hospital at low tide you will notice that there are several caves."

"I think the Portugue some caves and co them."

Nevertheless, this simple engineering fer Adding to the intrigu CONCLUDED PAGE

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## Tunnels Beneath Island Mystery

FROM FRONT PAGE

series of other tunnels that run in several different directions.

One has its source at the old Manor Hotel where one section goes westwards towards Little Theatre Club to the Likoni channel:

another goes north in the direction of Mwembe Tayari, while the other goes eastwards to Fort Jesus and St. Joseph.

However, the Museum's archaeological team are quite certain that the other tunnels are much more recent and can be credited to British fears of invasion either during the First or Second World War.

REALLYEXCIT

There is still a lot of to be done once Museum can consol and gazette all the under one title.

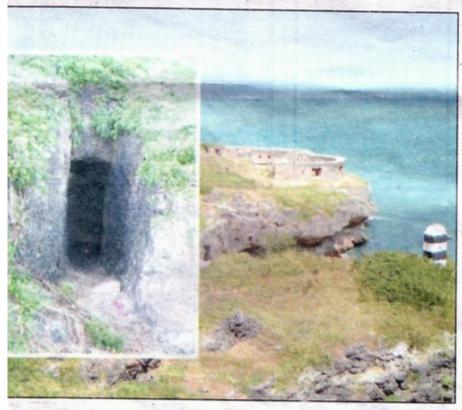
"Somebody really n to get into the tunnel demystify what t purpose was," says Katana, the Prine Curator.

Plans for excavation restoration are unde with Mombasa hostin Africa 2009 in Augus Heritage Manageme

"It is really exciting cause this has be discussion for somet

"Right now most or speculation.

"We know a little a the one from Fort Jes Rasarani but we don't anything about the oth



archaeologist Hans Martin took this photograph of the tunnel entrance leading the coral cliffs near Fort Saint Joseph on the Mombasa Island sea front.