

Holocene Archaeology of Southern Coast Tanzania
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This thesis deals with the cultural processes that took place on the southern coast of Tanzania between the Holocene times and the first millennium AD. The work focuses on the problems of peopling of the coast and their early cultures, its temporal change and spread over the littoral and its immediate hinterlands. Based on interpretive approaches, extensive archaeological survey, and excavations on thirteen sites in Lindi and Mtwara regions, the study indicates that the southern woodlands and coastal Tanzania were widely populated long before the Holocene epoch. Two phases of human activities were identified for the last millennium BC in relation to the coastal settlements. The first is the pre-pottery stone-using phase with people widely spaced in small groups, likely the continuation of Pleistocene Middle Stone Age communities. The second phase is the pottery-making phase with settled village life from about 3,000 years ago. The earliest settled tradition on the East African coast, which had already been established at Kilwa in the 8th century BC, has been identified through its Pre- Ironworking Wares (PIW). This tradition which is described as Mnaida tradition is attested to have spread to a wider area of the coast before the Early Ironworking (EIW) agricultural revolution of the first centuries AD. EIW tradition of the southern coast is described for the first time. It seems to have flourished during the 4th century AD, the time corresponding to a similar development in the interior of southern Africa. Its resemblance to the Nkope-Gokomere EIW variants of Malawi-Zambia and Zimbabwe suggests an established axis of contact and high frequencies of interaction between the coast and the interior. The study also establish another settled coastal tradition described as "Proto-Swahili Ware" (PSW), which seems to have been confined to the southern coast of Tanzania and perhaps northern Mozambique. It flourished widely on the coast, especially between 11 and 13th century AD. The "Swahili Ware" tradition of the coast seems to have been derived from the former, rather than a new type spreading from the northern coast. The new data that includes pottery, lithic artefacts and charcoal for radiometric dating have been analysed and show the spatial and temporal organization of sites on the previously unexplored coast of southern Tanzania. The region seems to have been occupied for millennia by a local population, which had occasionally been moving around in response to the changing environment since Stone Ages. Finally, the Southern Coast of Tanzania is placed in its inter-regional context of early cultural development of eastern to southern Africa, an insight for further archaeological investigations on this previously ignored region.