



Professor Felix Chami describing Stone Age artefacts from Kiwangwa, Bagamoyo in 1995 to Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, the Father of the Tanzanian nation and supporter of liberation struggles in Africa.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

FELIX A. CHAMI

After decades of reading a monotonous history of Zanzibar settlements, that they were founded by Persians and other immigrants from the Middle East in the Islamic period, this is the first work that champions the pre-Islamic history of the islands of Zanzibar, which we now know date back to c.30,000 years ago. This early beginning is the time of the Middle Stone Age and Late Stone Age transition (see Phillipson 2005; Skinner *et al.* 2003: 1364). Abdurahman Juma's PhD thesis (2004) dealt with Unguja Ukuu settlement, which had previously been thought to be of the Islamic period, but he demonstrated its pre-Islamic period dating back to c.fourth and fifth centuries AD.

While this volume is a publication resulting mainly from archaeological investigations, it also uses historical documents and other forms of data in the final discussion (chapter 16); notably, it contains several chapters by researchers and specialists. The current work benefits from research conducted in the cave of Kuumbi in Zanzibar, which has provided the oldest material remains and a variety of cultural data. The findings from this cave, coupled with those from other smaller caves in Unguja, Mafia and the Comoros, are used to supplement what is already known from other parts of the Swahili coast, to author a new history.

Zanzibar is the focus of the book, but we will also examine other parts of the Indian Ocean. The reports from the Comoros, specifically the largest island Ngazidja, expand the understanding that was first developed in Zanzibar and in the rest of Tanzanian Swahili coast. Zanzibar will be discussed in detail here, while the Comoros is dealt with in chapter 8.

The Zanzibar archipelago is made up of Unguja (the main island, informally referred to as "Zanzibar") and Pemba. Semi-autonomous, Zanzibar is part of the republic of Tanzania; together, the two islands have a population of less than one million (2002 census estimated 981,754 people). Unguja measures 86 kilometres long and 39 kilometres at its widest point, with an area of 1,660 sq kilometres. Pemba is 60 kilometres long and 22.25 kilometres wide, with an area of 1,537 square kilometres. The islands are less than 60 kilometres from the Tanzanian mainland, Zanzibar being only 30 kilometres away at the shortest point. The islands are between about latitude 5°N and 6.5°S, and longitude

39°E and 40°W.

Zanzibar, a British Protectorate from 1884 to 1964 joined mainland Tanganyika (a German Colony between 1888 and 1918 and later British between 1918 and 1962) in 1964. The union created modern Tanzania; the word itself a result of the joining of the first three letters of Tanganyika and the first three letters of Zanzibar, plus other common letters in each name (*i* and *a*), hence *Tan-zan-ia*.

The meaning of the name Zanzibar is also known. The Swahili coast – that area of land from southern Somalia to northern Mozambique, was known as *Zingion* from about the sixth century AD.¹ It came to be known by the same name by Arab travellers from the 9th to the 15th centuries. The Arab and Chinese travellers of that period recognised this territory as belonging to black people and hence some modern scholars came to use this identification to erroneously interpret the concept 'Zanj' as blackness, foolishness and slavery (for conspectus see Tomacheva 1986, Wheatley 1975; Chami 2002a:6-7). This is typical of the colonial ideological view of Africans (see Chami 2006).

Before the 10th century AD the word 'Zanj' (Zenj/Zinj) was pronounced in that way without adding any qualifier². This in fact became a tradition until about 1200 AD. The word 'Zanj' is pronounced in *Kiswahili* language as 'Zanchi'. For the Swahili people, who are Bantu speakers, the concept meant the western Indian Ocean seaboard – or *nchi ya Za* – and hence *Zanchi*. 'Za' meant the large mass of water today known as Indian Ocean, while *nchi* (or *nji*) means land or territory (see Chami 2002a). The Arabs after 1200 AD must have added the Arabic word *bar* to 'Zanj' to qualify it as a territory or a landscape. For Bantu speakers, or for those who knew the meaning of the word, the addition was superfluous. It would be similar today for a person to say he is going to the *land of England*.

Probably the first use of *Zanjibar* for the coast of East Africa appears in the 10th century in the writings of Ibn Hawqal, who documented the visitation of "white people" to the "land of Zangbar" for trade (see Freeman-Grenville 1962:18). In the 12th century, Al-Idrisi also used the word for the coast of East Africa. The Chinese must have been the first, if not influenced by Arabs of the 13th century, to refer to "Zanguebar (Ts'ong-pa)" as an island. And it is probably from here that the confusion started, which would lead to the island of Unguja being identified as Zanzibar by Marco Polo in the end of the 13th century and then by Vasco da Gama's scribe in the 15th century. According to the latter:

"during the following night we lay to, and in the morning (28 January) we came close to a large island called Jamgiber [Zanzibar], which is peopled by Moors (*merely meaning Muslims*)³, and is quite ten leagues from the mainland." (Freeman-Grenville 1962:58).

¹ See Cosmas Indicopleustus in Freeman-Grenville (1962).

² See for instance the map of Idrisi of 1155 with *Ard az-Zanj* and *Bahr az-Zanj*. (Trimingham 1975)

It was noted earlier that this work aims to examine the *longue durée* of the islands of Zanzibar, beginning from the time probably before 30,000 years ago. I should put the upper limit of this history at about 1500 AD. After this date, there is a more detailed history of Zanzibar by Portuguese scribes and Omani Arabs, and in various European documents. The period after 1500 AD has also been researched more by historians, particularly by Abdul Sheriff (1987, 1992) and Sheriff and Jafferji (2001).

This volume comprises seventeen chapters. After the introduction in Chapter 1, the second chapter provides a synthesis of literature review on the tectonic (rising and falling/downing of landscapes) and eustatic (rising and falling of sea level) forces. This information is important because it helps the readers to understand how the Swahili coast and its islands were formed. This baseline information will allow readers to follow discussions on the formation of limestone caves, land bridges and volcanic islands, and hence the settlements of ancient populations responsible for deposition of cultural and animal remains dating back to c.30,000 years ago. The environment and climates (including winds and currents) of the Swahili coast have been discussed in many other books and only some information will be provided in chapter 2.

Chapter 3 provides a historical background to the research reported in this volume on Zanzibar, and sheds some light on the issues which the researchers in this work are addressing. Research on the history of Zanzibar did not begin with this work, but dates to the colonial period. While there is a rich knowledge of Zanzibar since then, there remained questions, and this volume presents the results of recent research.

Chapter 4 is the field report of three consecutive seasons of excavations in Kuumbi Cave. This is followed by chapter 5, which reports on the field work conducted in Mwanampambe Cave, south of Kuumbi, both in Unguja. Chapter 6 provides a chronology of the sites, which has great implications to the archaeology of the entire Indian Ocean region. Chapter 7 is a report of the reconnaissance survey conducted by Juma Kombo, under the supervision of Felix Chami. The focus of this research was on the Early Iron Working (EIW) period, of which little was known on Zanzibar islands. Chapter 8 is a report of a brief reconnaissance survey conducted by Ibouroi Ali Tabibou, Felix Chami and Chantal Radimilahy, assisted by a number of other colleagues. The results reported here are preliminary. Chapter 9 is a report on the recently concluded research in the southern part of Ngazidja Island, the largest island of the Comoros Archipelago. There are finds of pottery and stone artefacts, suggesting occupation on the islands as far back as the Stone Age. These are more definite than those discussed in chapter 8.

Chapter 10 is authored by Emanuel Kessy, a specialist in stone artefact technology. As it will have been shown in chapters 4 and 5, stone artefacts are now being recovered from archaeological excavations of limestone caves. Kessy's work is the second analysis of stone tools from limestone caves from the Swahili coast, following similar work by Kjel Knutsson (see Chami 2004a; Knutsson 2007). Chapter 11 is a report of the examination of human skeletal remains from Kuumbi Cave by Edmund Bukenya. It was during the third phase of the excavations in the Kuumbi Cave that human bones from a cairn burial

were discovered. The bones also clearly seem to have been of pre-Islamic burial tradition, as discussed in chapter 4, and indeed dating back to Stone Age. There is no doubt that this report is also preliminary one, and the results require further detailed analyses.

Chapter 12, by Gabriel Mbasia and Remmy Assey, is an analysis of the animal bones collected from the last field work at Kuumbi and Mwanampambe caves. Bones of previous excavations are reported in chapter 4, following identification by Paul Watene and Jilani Ngala from the National Museums of Kenya (NMK). Bones from other caves have been reported earlier (see Chami 2001a; 2004a). Chapter 13, by Ruth Tibesasa, is on the flotation work she conducted of soils collected from different layers of excavations in Kuumbi Cave. This can be considered more of an exercise to teach how flotations are done, as the materials collected are yet to be confirmed by specialists.

Chapter 13 is Felix Chami's attempt to synthesise past and present knowledge of Zanzibar and the western Indian Ocean seaboard. A long cultural history, beginning from the Middle Stone Age, is articulated.

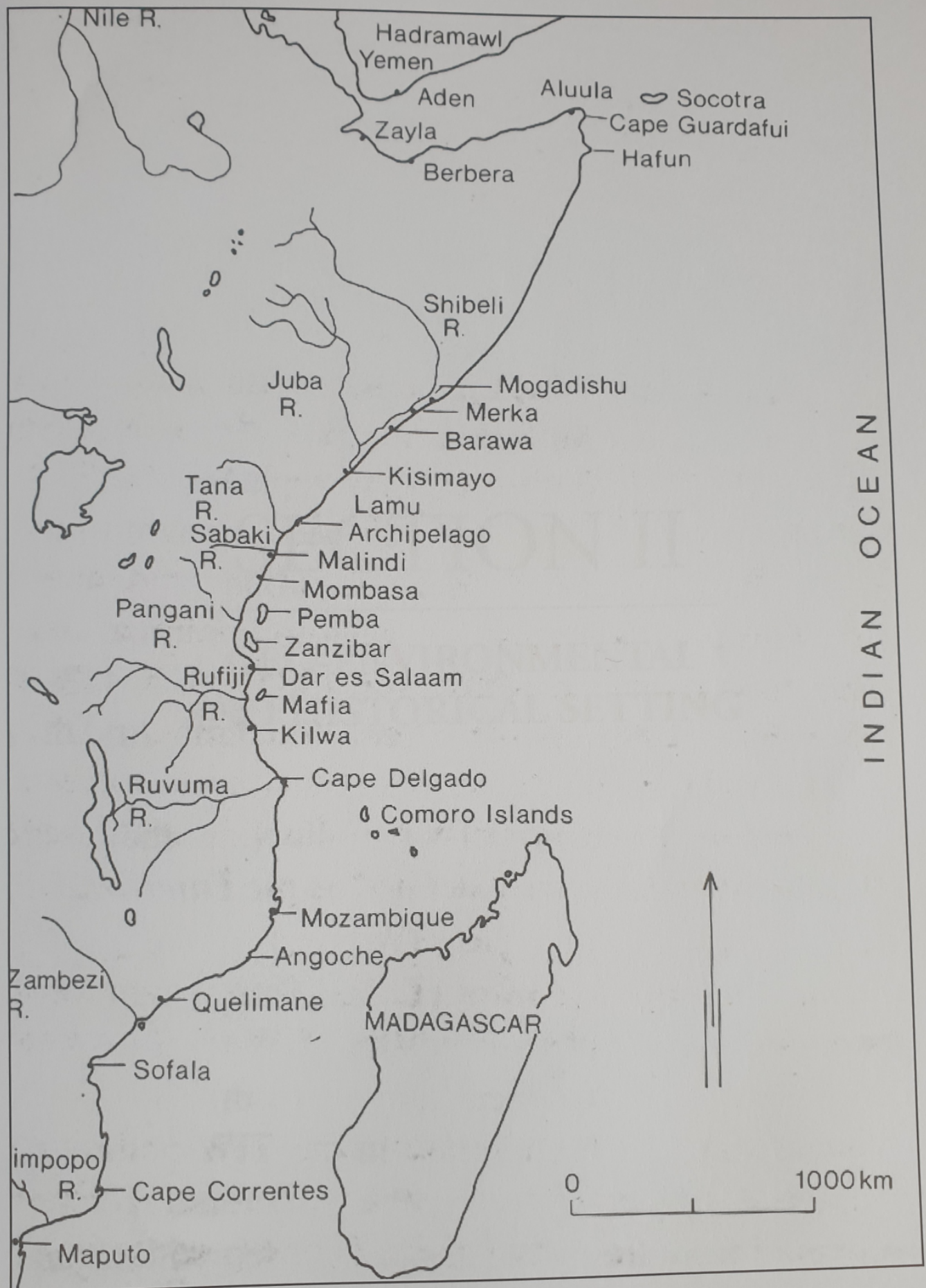


Fig. 1:1 Western Indian Ocean seaboard, showing Zanzibar and the Comoros islands.

Chapter 16

THE *LONGUE DURÉE* OF ZANZIBAR AND WESTERN INDIAN OCEAN SEABOARD

FELIX A. CHAMI

Research in Kuumbi and other limestone caves has provided important data for re-writing the history of the western Indian Ocean seaboard. Preliminary results of the research has been reported elsewhere (Chami 2006; Sinclair, Juma and Chami 2006; Chami 2007). Kuumbi and Mwanampambe Caves excavations were mainly earmarked to test results and hypotheses already advanced by this author and colleagues following results of excavations in the Machaga Cave in the Pete area of southern Zanzibar (see Chami 2001; Chami and Kwekason 2003), and those from caves on Mafia Island (Chami 2004). This volume is dominated by research reports and analyses of results of materials collected from Kuumbi and Mwanampambe caves, and from the general area of South Zanzibar where the caves are located. Earlier results had shown that the human occupation had started from 3000 BC, but now we know Zanzibar had been settled from about 30,000 BC.

This chapter will discuss this new history, as indicated by excavated cultural materials, related findings, and existing historical data. In each cultural period dealt with, I shall also discuss possible trade/exchange networks indicated by recovered materials. This chapter complements most of what has been presented in the author's other works (Chami 1994; 1998; Chami 2002b; 2006 and 2008b), but focuses on the islands and the western Indian Ocean seaboard.

30,000 TO 10,000 BC

This Stone Age period occurred on Zanzibar Island and probably elsewhere on the western Indian Ocean seaboard. The stone artefacts of this time period are better recognised as of Upper Palaeolithic. Artefacts of Upper Palaeolithic have been dated to between c.250,000 to c.10,000 years ago (Phillipson 2005; also see Renfrew and Bahn 1991, Masao 1992; Willoughby 2007). As noted earlier the oldest date for the Stone Age horizon in Kuumbi is that of about c. 30,000 BC. The artefacts illustrated in Fig. 4:17, and also discussed in Sinclair, Juma and Chami (2006:102-103) and Knutsson (2007), suggest some crude

heavy-duty stone artefacts, bifacially worked hand axes, picks and chopping tools also associated with flakes.

In some cases it is well recognised that the transition from the Upper Palaeolithic to Late Stone Age is not clear; attributes of both could have coexisted, or elements of the former were carried forward into the later. According to Phillipson (2005:92), the major characteristic of this age of the stone artefacts period is "small radially flaked plano-convex cores" or radial cores. There are also found parallel-sided flakes, or blades, most of them having been removed from the cores. This is the period that Masao (1992:104) debates, demonstrating how it evolved from Levalloisian culture of late Upper Palaeolithic to Stillbay in the Later Stone Age, with Mehlman (1977:117) proposing a transition of the two cultures at 22,000 to 21,000 BP.

The stone assemblage collected from Kuumbi and Mwanampambe Caves reported in this work has artefacts which seem to have been struck from platforms. There are also a number of flakes which have parallel sides, some of them retouched. Indeed it seems that the artefacts are dominated by flakes, suggesting that the manufacturing activities took place elsewhere (see chapter 6, this volume). Despite this understanding, it has not been possible to affiliate artefacts collected from the caves to any tradition/culture known elsewhere (see chapter 6, this volume). As noted above, however, the beginning of large size artefacts found in the lower levels of Kuumbi (particularly in trench 6) and Mwanampambe, dates back to more than 30,000 years ago.

The geo-environmental conditions discussed in chapter 2 clearly suggest that the period between 50,000 and 10,000 years ago provided better conditions for sailing and crossing of bridges, created at that time, to oceanic islands, as there was a drastic fall in sea levels. As discussed earlier, continents like America and Australia and some of the Pacific Islands were colonised by humans at this time period. It was noted that this period must also have provided easy access to islands of the western Indian Ocean seaboard.

Scholars working in the region of eastern and southern Africa for this time period do seem to have recognised drastic climatic changes which affected the people of the Middle Stone Age (see Phillipson 2005: 94; Deacons 1999: 23). However, no scholar ever thought of colonisation of the islands of the Indian Ocean by humans at this time due to falling of the sea levels at the same time period. Willoughby (2007) notes that in North Africa there was a lack of human occupation after the Aterian ends at 30,000 years ago, until 18,000 BP. At this end, Later Stone Age sites are observed. She attributes this to the expanding desert during the Last Glacial Maximum when climate was much cooler and drier and hence the population concentrating in the few shrunken forests. This climatic period and its effect on the entire African continent is also noted by Phillipson (2005:94). He puts the beginning of it at 60,000 years ago and the end of it at 18,000 years ago. "Coastal regions saw major changes in sea level, which dropped during glacial periods, exposing extensive coastal plains in some areas..."

It is apparent that the climatic conditions described here are the ones that caused the

lowering of the sea level due to large quantities of water being attached to the earth poles and on the high lands. The opening up of the continent from forests would also have necessitated wide migrations, or even long distant routes of communication. According to Phillipson (2005:95), "far more human skeletons have been recovered from sites of the last 20,000 years than are available for earlier periods."

It is agreed therefore, that the cooler and drier climate change occurred in the Later Upper Palaeolithic, or at the transitional period to Late Stone Age. It was noted that it was due to this change, humans managed to occupy Zanzibar island and other islands of the western Indian Ocean, for which evidence is yet to be collected. In the present work, it has been shown that the island of Zanzibar was occupied at 30,000 BC or before. More research is needed on Pemba Island to be able to say whether similar colonisation occurred or not. For Mafia Island, it is obvious that the island was known, despite the lack of evidence. The island must have been bridged to the main continent at the time of Last Glacial Maximum, as it is in a similar situation as Zanzibar. Stone Age artefacts are known there, but not of the Upper Palaeolithic.

The main question is whether the Comoros Islands and Madagascar were known by people of this time period. It seems that the lowering of the sea level would have reduced the distance between the Comoros islands and the continent, and also that between the Comoros islands and Madagascar. Despite the reduction of distances, vast masses of water still needed to be crossed if one had to settle in the Comoros or Madagascar (see water depths in Ngusaru 2002:13). Human curiosity, created by the opening of new lands, and new experiences created by sailing at this time, can lead us to hypothesise that the islands of the Comoros and Madagascar were known by people of the Upper Palaeolithic. As shown in chapters 9 and 14 (this volume) large stone artefacts, probably of this period, are now known from Mwali Island, but confirmation and dating still need to be done.

It should be added here that stories of ancient sea level rises, sometimes referred to as floods, with devastating effects have been passed on through generations in many parts of the world. All these have been described as myths¹⁰ the best examples being the Biblical story of Noah and the Mesopotamian Gilgamesh. Africa south of Sahara is reported to have no such stories. However, among the people of Ngazija Island a person who showed us a cave at Male beach on southern Ngazija Island (see Chapter 9, this book) narrated a story about ancient times, when the three islands of Ngazidja, Mwali and Nzwani were so close to one another that it was possible to walk or even sail to each other in a very short distance. The story continues that settlements were then in the modern deep water close to the three islands. When submergence occurred, people moved to their present locations.

As most such stories have been labelled as myths there have been very few attempts to relate to possible pre-modern event kept passing through generations for a very long time. It is obviously too unconvincing that such a story could have survived more than 12,000 years assuming that the Comoros story would have dated back to the time when sea level rose to the modern levels.

¹⁰ See Encyclopedia of World mythology

It should be noted at this juncture that there was, and still is, hesitation by archaeologists working in Africa to report about a class of artefact found, but not expected to occur, in a particular location. Scholars have commonly held convictions and theories on what to find in particular places. Cultural boundaries were created in Africa for particular ethnicities, and only related material cultures were expected to be found in a particular, bounded, region (Chami 2006). In other words, archaeologists working in Africa have traditionally bounded prehistoric cultures according to technologies and ethnicity.

For the coast and islands of the western Indian Ocean seaboard no pre-Islamic cultural materials were expected, particularly of African origin. Some scholars reported having seen evidence for pre-Islamic cultures (see Ingrams 1967), including ancient coins (for conspectus see Chami 2006), but all denied or ignored the link. Those who accepted pre-Islamic cultural materials attributed a non-African origin, because black Africans were not expected to have occupied the area before Islam. Since 1990, the author's work has disproved this assumption, and we are now able to show that Upper Palaeolithic populations had indeed settled on the islands of the western Indian Ocean.

It must be mentioned here that Stone Age artefacts are now also known from Madagascar. Dr Chantal Radimilahy and her team, which included the author, worked in the area of St Augustin Bay and Onilahy river valley, where modified stones – large in size like those of Kuumbi Cave – were found but are yet to be reported. Some scholars who observed them in fact discouraged their publication. Recently, Dr Radimilahy (pers. comm.) and her American colleagues found Stone Age sites, the dates of which are yet to be published. More recently, Tabibou Ibourou, Chantal Radimilahy and the author surveyed the island of Mwali, where we found similar Stone Age materials, yet to be confirmed as artefacts (see chapter 8, this volume).

It is quite encouraging that we can now strongly hypothesise that Upper Palaeolithic people had sailed to deep oceanic islands, and some scholars do not doubt this at all. All large islands around Australia and the Pacific had been settled by 30,000 BC. Bernarik (2008) has demonstrated how seafaring evolved from the Upper Palaeolithic to reach a peak in the years between 33,000 and 27,000 BP. The Indian Ocean islands were probably known in the same time period, but the physical type of people settling on the islands of the western Indian Ocean seaboard at this time period would require some discussion. The question then is Who were the people of Upper Palaeolithic settling in Zanzibar and elsewhere, from about 30,000 BC?

It is common knowledge today that people of the Upper Palaeolithic were already modern humans, or *Homo sapiens sapiens*. It is noted in chapter 11 (this volume), however, that one of the human skull remains found in Kuumbi Cave shows signs of heavily built mandible, teeth and also well worn-out teeth. This observation has been used to suggest that the individual was a hunter-gather, eating harder materials including nuts and bones, and who used his teeth for other heavy duty functions. This type of human could have been in Zanzibar from the beginning, in about 30,000 BC. Probably the same type of people continued, unchanged, until 12,000 years ago, before the beginning of the domestication

economy in some parts of the world. The same people must have dominated settlements on the African continent, as shown above.

There are indications in Kuumbi Cave, however, that the same people had already developed a cultural behaviour with modern symbols that are common today. Controversy exists in archaeology about exactly when this aspect of culture began (see Masao 2004). Dates of several hundred thousands of years have been provided for early human use of ochre, more than 50,000 for the use of ostrich egg shell beads, and more than 20,000 for art (see Masao 2004:154-155; also Phillipson 2005:120-112). Humans were physically and symbolically advanced by 20,000 years ago. Many sites with evidence of modern cultural behaviour are known to the extent that, according to Phillipson (2005:95), "...it is sometimes possible to make very tentative attempts at recognizing the ancestors of some of Africa's recent population".

This mounting post-30,000 BC evidence is only now being uncovered from the coast of eastern Africa. The humans from Kuumbi Cave who date before 12,000 years ago seems to have developed customs. The four humans skeletons excavated from the Kuumbi Cave were found under a pile of stones or a stone cairn (see chapter 4, Fig. 4:6 and 4:11, this volume), a cultural aspect regarded by archaeologists to mean respect for the dead or a belief in the afterlife. Another important symbolic aspect observed for the Kuumbi burial site is the find of shell beads in association with the skeletons, suggesting that they were worn as jewellery before death and buried with the individual (see chapter 4, Fig. 4:14).

Phillipson (2005) and Deacons in (1999) have reported of burials in southern Africa dating from about 10,000 years ago with customs including burial of multiple individuals and materials of personal adornment. Similar burials in the Rift Valley of East Africa dating back to 3,000 years ago saw the deceased piled with ochre before stones were added (see Leakey 1966).

We can also hypothesise that the placement of the burial at the western side of the entrance to the cave, where sun rays first touch the cave in the morning, symbolises a belief in a sun god. The rays stay in this place for several hours in the morning and then move to the eastern side of the cave entrance before they disappears in the afternoon. Ancient travellers reported that the people of the coast of East Africa believed in a sun god, and even their island(s) was referred to as the "Island of the Sun" (for conspectus see Chami 2008c).

It was correct reasoning by Ingrams (1967:41-43) when he wrote that the original inhabitants of Zanzibar, dating them back to 15,000 BC, had adopted symbolic behaviour of different types, and he discussed more than what we can observe from Kuumbi Cave today (see chapter 3). With data from anthropological research, collected from Zanzibar in the first part of the 20th century or before, Ingrams argued that the people were of "Heliolithic culture," probably meaning that they also had microlithic-geometric technologies, megalithic stones and cairn burials. Like Ingrams, Huntingford (1963) and Cole (1963) wrote of such people in the Rift Valley of Kenya and Tanzania, identifying

them as Hamites with a megalithic culture. Among cultural aspects attributed to these people were building of canoes for sailing and fishing, burial systems and faith for gods or spirits. Other aspects included circumcision, mummification and artificial deformation of heads.

It should be noted here that Hamites, thought to have migrated from northern Africa, were considered to have been pastoralist and superior people compared to the "Negroid" people, sometimes identified as Nilot, Bantu and Koisan. The "Negroid" groups were regarded as either agricultural and hunter-gatherers (see Sanders 1969). The limitation of the use of particular terms, like Hamite, Nilot, Bantu etc., for the understanding of the people of different ethnic groups in ancient times has been discussed elsewhere (Chami 2006). In historic writings, the African continent was made up by either black or brownish people who were sometimes found in the same family or ethnic group – and if not, the interaction of different groups was fluid, at least when they neighboured each other. This was actually the situation that prevailed in Africa in the 19th century, at the time of European infiltration in Africa. Women captured during inter-ethnic hostilities were often integrated into the captors' societies. There was no system of 'apartheid' introduced by colonial scholars or their colonising masters. Egyptian records are a good example of this assertion, as they always indicate black and 'brownish' people working together, and records suggest that there were four black people for one 'brownish' person (see Casson 1966:81).

It should also be reiterated here that there are no people who are genetically pastoral or agricultural, despite claims in colonial scholarship (Sanders 1969). Different modes of production were adopted in the past, as they are today, according to prevailing circumstances. Ethnic superiority, today termed as racism, was invented by European scholarship in the 19th century and applied to Africa and the rest of the world to separated/bound and divide the people (see Bernal 1987; Chami 2006). This was not the case in ancient times and historic Egyptian and Greek records do not suggest racism. Herodotus, whom scholars are now trying to remove from history for having demonstrated a high capacity among African people in ancient times (see Bolliger *et al.* 2005:18-19): he identified the people of Egypt and the rest of Africa as 'Ethiopian', which then meant black (Fig. 16:1) and not – as erroneously known today, – inhabitants of the modern Ethiopian state (for conspectus see Chami 2006).

The most important point at this juncture is the realisation that if Ingrams' ideas had been taken seriously by scholars in the early part of the 20th century, we would now know more about the ancient culture of the East African coast. Subsequent research abandoned the idea of ancient settlements on the coast of East Africa and focused on the dogma that first settlements would have been founded by Arab/Persian Muslims after the 9th century AD, or by other non-African visitors from South-East Asia.

To close this section, it is worth noting that material cultures of the people of the Upper Palaeolithic or early Later Stone Age have also been recorded on the coast near Zanzibar Island, suggesting land use by the same people on the both sides of the ocean. It

was therefore a continuous landscape due to the bridge, discussed earlier. The Kiwangwa site in the Bagamoyo area was excavated in 1994 and yielded stone artefacts derived from those of Upper Palaeolithic. The site was dated to about 11,000 years ago (Chami 1996). The associated potsherds remain controversial as to whether they are of that period or of a later time period. Pottery of a similar time period have been found in the Turkana region, and no controversy has arisen (see Barthelme 1985). More findings south of this area of Unguja-Bagamoyo have been discussed elsewhere (see Chapter 10, this work).

10,000 TO 4,000 BC

This period, or part of it, has been recognized as Mesolithic (Phillipson 2005). It should be noted here that this period, or in some parts of it, in African archaeology is regarded as the time when the climate was very wet. There were lakes in Sahara Desert and the lakes and rivers of today were full of water. Lake Turkana at one time, at the beginning of this period, is recorded to have had water 80 metres above the modern levels and had an outlet river joining the Nile (see Phillipson 2005:157). Periods of climatic fluctuations are also known to have occurred in some parts of Africa during this time period (see Muzzolini 1993:234), however, it is generally regarded that the whole period would have been wetter and hence labelled as 'aqualithic' (see Sutton 1977; Muzzolini 1993:232).

Where settlements of this period have been found, particularly in the Sahara, the Sudan part of the Nile Valley, and in parts of the Rift Valley in Kenya and Uganda, the population responsible for this culture has been controversially termed 'Nilo-Saharan'. This population is considered to have settled near the lakes and rivers and other watered landscapes exploiting fresh water resources. Due to this factor, it is also thought that permanent settlements, pottery making and the use of bone harpoons and geometric tools may have begun or become more developed at this time and, slightly later, domestication of animals and plants. In some literature the early part of this period, 9000 to 6000 BC is identified with the concept 'Mesolithic' and the later part of it, 6000 to 4000-3000 BC as 'Neolithic'. The debate over the correct use of these terms has been published in Sinclair *et al.* (1993:1-9).

An important observation to be noted here is that the region south of Sahel and, particularly, south of the Kenya-Uganda Rift Valley zones, including Tanzania south of Eyasi and Kilimanjaro, were considered not to have acquired those cultural and technological developments termed above as Mesolithic and Neolithic. Indeed, aspects of permanent settlements and pottery making were assumed to have taken place only in the BC/AD changeover or in the last two millennia AD (for conspectus see Chami 2006). It could be argued that this bias was caused by researchers' failure to find sites of Mesolithic and Neolithic in many parts of sub-Saharan Africa. However, with the racial theory discussed above, established in Europe in 19th century, it had already been reasoned that Africa south of Sahara was populated by people who could not have innovated, and hence remained hunter-gatherers until innovations were spread there by immigrants from the north, the so-called Hamites discussed above. Sites of that time period, therefore, were

not expected in most of sub-Saharan Africa, and where they were found the tendency was to ignore their existence (see Chami and Wafula 1999; Chami 2006; see also Phillipson 2005:209).

Other genuine reasons may also have contributed to sites not being found in sub-Saharan Africa for the period 10,000 to 4000 BC. In Zanzibar, for instance, the three caves excavated so far do not clearly show settlements of this period. Trench 6 (see chapter 4, this volume) and the results of Carbon-14 dates from different trenches in all excavated caves in fact show a clear cultural hiatus between 10,000 and 4000 BC. Future research may well demonstrate the existence of a culture in this time period in Zanzibar, but for now there is a missing link. Rather than concluding that there were no people of that cultural period in Zanzibar, it is better to look for possible explanations. What happened to the population residing in and around the caves of Zanzibar after 10,000 BC?

One explanation can be derived from the knowledge we have about the sea level changes. The sea level, which had fallen to more than 140 metres below present day one, had by 10,000 BC risen up to slightly above the present level. If this was also accompanied by tectonic forces, which are common on the coast of East Africa, humans could have fled the island before the bridge was closed. Indeed humans on islands all over the world would have been taken by surprise and, like the Comorian story of sea level changes (reminiscent of Noah's deluge in the Bible), the islands would have been abandoned for safer mainland and hilly landscapes. This explanation explains why it was not only the caves that were abandoned, but also the entire island of Unguja. Large animals would have left too, but not *in toto*, as we still find their bones in the post 4000 BC period. This means the 'Mesolithic/Aqualithic' and the early phase of Neolithic would not have populations in Zanzibar and possibly in other islands possible to vacate then.

Another different, but possible, explanation could be the abandonment of the caves, and not of the entire island, due to too much water during the 'Mesolithic/Aqualithic' periods. With a wetter climatic period, the limestone caves would have filled with water or would have had continuous water drops due to leaching. If some populations survived on the island during the post 10,000 BC sea level rise, Kuumbi Cave could have had water all the way to its mouth and it would have been impossible for humans to reside there. This means that archaeological investigations should demonstrate a culturally sterile layer between 10,000 and 4000 BC in the cave.

This was very clearly observed in Trench 6 (see Fig. 6:1), where a date below the sterile layer dates to about c.19,000 BC and the one immediately above it is c.3,300 BC. There is a similar scenario in Trench 8, layers 9 and 10, where stones and a few shells were recovered with no artefacts. The date below these two layers, 185-190 centimetres, is of c.17,000 BC and that from these two sterile layers, at 160-165 centimetres, is also of c.17,000 (see Table 6:3). The date at 120 centimetres, 30 centimetres above the two sterile layers, is of c.4,000 BC. From this evidence, it means that settlements of this time period – if at all people remained in Zanzibar – would have been located outside the caves, and this could be demonstrated by excavations outside the caves which is yet to be conducted.

In the same reasoning volcanic stone artefacts which appear in contexts dating after 4000 BC near the entrance of the cave, where it is more elevated, were not collected from the trenches in the inner parts of the cave, where it is lower in depth (see Chapter 10). This suggests that by 4000 BC the cave was still full of water and it was possible to reside on the sheltered space at the entrance either by those who would possibly have remained in Zanzibar in the Mesolithic period or those possibly arriving in the Neolithic period.

It should be noted that settlements of this time period have not really been found on the coast of East Africa. As noted above, the wet environmental conditions could have been responsible for the failure to preserve materials of this time period, as material would have decayed rapidly. Compounded with the effects of animals on bones and plant remains, only very good sites like caves or rock shelters on elevated landscapes will provide information on the culture of this period. 'Mesolithic/Aqualithic' traditions are therefore yet to be demonstrated for the western Indian Ocean seaboard.

4000 TO 0 BC

This period is formally known for its Neolithic

culture in many parts of Africa, including those in Sahara and the Nile Valley, as well as for the beginning of domestication and metallurgy for the whole of Africa. The debate that the large part of sub-Saharan Africa had not adopted agriculture until the BC/AD changeover has been admonished elsewhere as a racist perspective (Chami 2006). The same was said of metals not being known in sub-Saharan Africa before the BC/AD changeover. Heavy smelting may not have begun in the earlier periods of the metal age, but mining and the use of metals must have started from the time of Egyptian trade networks. Suffice to argue that the period in question is known for permanent settlements and for domestication mode of production.

It was shown earlier that the period about 4000 BC is already of Neolithic tradition, when a variety of domestication economies had already developed in many parts of the world. Eastern Africa, including the Indian Ocean settlements, were not left behind. Evidence presented in different papers in this work clearly suggests that nearly all types of

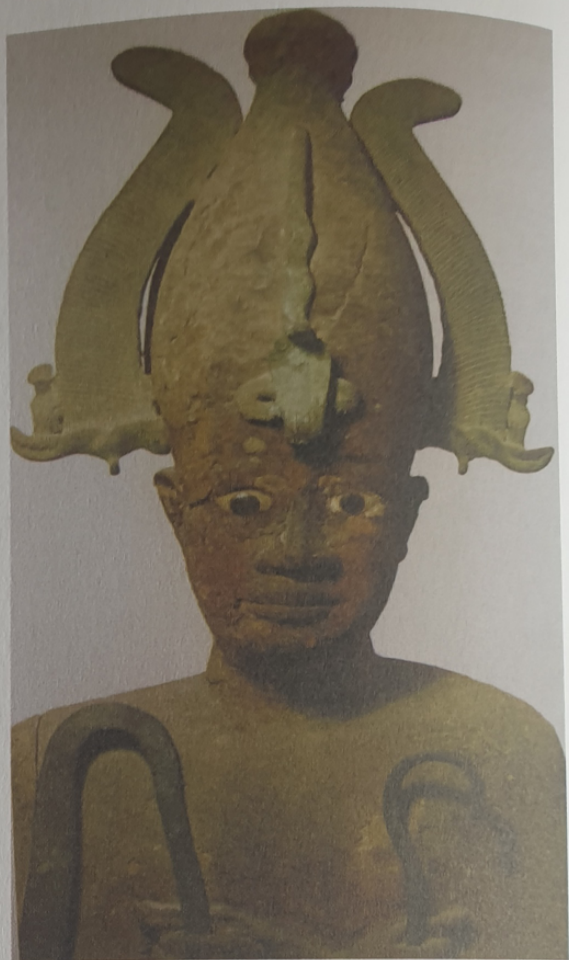


Fig. 16:1. Osiris. The first known deified human and the founder of Egyptian cultural system and hence lived at the beginning of Neolithic in Africa.

known domesticated animals existed on Zanzibar Island by at least 3000 BC. As noted in chapter 3, doubts about early domesticates in Zanzibar Island were raised, but can now be dismissed after the analyses presented in chapters 4 and 12 (this volume). Cattle, goat/sheep, dog, possibly donkey, cat and chicken had been domesticated at least after 4000 BC. Why is it doubted that sub-Saharan Africa had domesticated by 1000 BC and even by the beginning of Islamic period? The answer is provided in this volume and elsewhere (Chami 2006).

The domestication of nearly all animals known today is now ascertained to have started from about 12,000 to 8000 years ago in different parts of the world. Rodrigue (2008) has cogently demonstrated that all these animals were found spread across the African and Asian continents by 4000 BC. For example, donkey was in the Somalia region by 5000 BC: therefore, why not in Zanzibar by 4000 BC? There is nothing strange that East Africans had adopted similar economic practices. Egyptians reported that they had been in contact with 'Punt', now thought to have extended to Eastern Africa (see Kitchen 2004; Chami 2006) before 3000 BC. G. Elliot Smith (1928, 1933) used records from archaeology and different parts of the world to show how such a civilization emerged and spread to the rest of the world. His work was rated hyper-diffusionism (see Harris 1968), in defence of other peoples' capacity to invent and innovate. Smith's work had aspects of reality and has therefore recently been defended (see Jairazbhoy 1974; Chami 2007).

Domesticated cattle identified as *Bos taurus* is reported from Kuumbi Cave (see chapters 4 and 12). While DNA analysis may be needed to confirm the comparative analysis, the finding of cattle bones in a context dating from about c.4000 BC is a milestone for the purpose of the present study. The spread of cattle to Africa has been discussed by Epstein (1971) and Clutton-Brock (1993). It is suggested that *Bos taurus*, a humpless cattle, was the first to spread from North Africa to the south in c.6000 BP and it has been argued that these were domesticated in the north of East Africa late in the third millennium BC and reached the Tanzania/Kenya border by 1000 BC.

As noted earlier, it was popularly viewed that cattle only spread from the northern Tanzania region, through an alleged hunter-gatherer region, to southern Africa by the alleged Bantu immigrants. Bantu speakers were then thought to have spread to East Africa from West Africa in about the BC/AD changeover and they reached South Africa in about AD 300-500 (see Soper 1971; Phillipson 2005; Clutton-Brock 1993:67). The *Bos indicus*, humped cattle, is thought to have arrived from India about the same time, and was interbred with *Bos taurus* to form the modern Bantu speakers' cattle, known as *sanga*.

The find in Zanzibar of *Bos taurus* type of cattle is therefore most significant as it provides evidence against the late spread of cattle to Eastern Africa. It can also be used to question the presence of Bantu speakers in the region only in the first few centuries AD. We now know that cattle must have been on the coast of Tanzania, or at least Zanzibar, in about the beginning of the forth millennium BC. The 6000 BP date established for the initial spread of cattle from the Sahara to sub-Saharan Africa must be revised to argue that cattle was already in eastern Africa and probably beyond to southern Africa by 6000

BP. Robertshaw (1993) considers peoples' movement as the agent for the spread of these technologies. The author has argued against the extreme view of population movement as an agent of cultural spread (Chami 1999), and has called for trade and other forms of contact as another possible agent of cultural spread. For instance, Egyptians were known to have brought back cattle from Punt in the second millennium BC. This kind of exchange or interaction among people of different origins should not be confused with migration.

It would seem that ovicaprids (meaning sheep/goat) appeared alongside cattle. Two bones identified as of sheep/goat size: one was collected from the depth of 175-80 centimetres and another one from 135-140 centimetres from Trench 6, Kuumbi Cave. These therefore indicate the same beginning date as for cattle on Zanzibar Island. The history of caprines begins in the northern half of Africa from earlier than the fifth millennium BC, and their spread to the southern half of Africa was alleged to have been like that of cattle. Sites in Kenya are recorded to have caprine bones by the first millennium BC (see Clutton-Brock 1993). A similar find in Nampula in northern Mozambique was reported, but ignored (Adamowicz, pers. com.; Sinclair *et al* 1993). No find of goat that dates earlier than AD 300 has been accepted for the large zone of Eastern and Southern Africa (Clutton-Brock 1993), although it is well known that goat and sheep had been in southwest Africa before 2,000 years ago (see Reid *et al.* 1998:92). The Kuumbi find suggests again that this alleged late arrival of caprines in the southern half of Africa may not be true.

The appearance of chicken and dog have been discussed elsewhere in detail (see Chami 2001a, 2004 a respectively). Kuumbi provides more evidence for the domestication of chicken from about the same time period, the third to fourth millennium BC. Chicken bones are found in the depth of 160-165 centimetres from Trench 6, which has the shown dates. It should be noted here that in Machaga Cave on Zanzibar, the lowest depth with a chicken-sized bone was dated at the beginning of the third millennium BC.

The detailed spread of chicken to Africa has been discussed by Macdonald (1992, 1993). Chicken was first domesticated in Asia, and India provides a date of the sixth millennium BC. In Africa it is thought to have spread from the north, beginning probably only at 332-30 BC, when it is common to find chicken in Egypt. Chicken was alleged to have appeared in West Africa and the rest of sub-Saharan Africa after the first half of the first millennium AD (Clutton-Brock 1993: 62).

This alleged late arrival of chicken in sub-Saharan Africa was challenged by the report of chicken-sized bones at Machaga cave (Chami 2001a). The response was quick and harsh: the author's findings were refuted and the excavation methods questioned (Sutton 2002). This volume now shows that it is not only at Machaga Cave where remains of chicken-sized bones were found, but also at Kuumbi Cave, which has similar dates or even older than those reported earlier. It is therefore prudent to agree that contact existed between South-East Asia and Africa in the third millennium BC if we are in support of the origin of chicken in South-East Asia. This ancient trade between the two continents, either by land or by sea, has been discussed below and elsewhere (see Lejju *et al.* 2005; Chami 2006, 2007).

Other domesticated animal remains found at Kuumbi include dog, cat and donkey. For the first two, see the author's discussion elsewhere (Chami 2001a; 2006). It is known that domestication of horses occurred in Egypt from the fifth millennium BC. As noted above, wild donkey also existed in the larger part of Africa from about 5000 BC. The equine remains at Kuumbi, the group to which donkey belongs, require confirmation by DNA analysis, as it is otherwise difficult to differentiate donkey from horse or zebra (see chapter 12).

It will be shown later that bones of some similar domesticated animals were collected by Juma (2004:130-132) from an open site of Unguja Ukuu from the lowest layer identified as Period 1a. In this layer, dated to within the first five centuries AD, the find of cattle, goat, chicken, cat and dog clearly suggests that domestication had been carried forward from the time of the Neolithic. Recent denial of the finds from Unguja Ukuu and now those from the limestone cave (Sinclair 2007) should not deter serious scholars. It should be noted that Prof. Sinclair supervised the work leading to the results from Unguja Ukuu, and subsequently allowed their publication; he in fact supervised one of the excavations of the Kuumbi Cave and was invited to be the first author of a preliminary report where he reported domesticates from the Neolithic layers (Sinclair *et al.* 2006).

Excavations in Kuumbi are yet to produce incontrovertible materials for plant domestication. As seen in chapter 13 (this volume), a pod like a coconut was collected from Trench 8, at the depth of 115 to 120 centimetres. This is again the depth dated to 3949 BC. If domestication began at that time and if indeed – as data shows – chicken arrived from Asia at the same time, it is not strange at all that coconut should have arrived on the island at the same time. I have discussed elsewhere (Chami 2006:131-132) arguments by Harries (1978) of possible coconut arrival in East Africa before the BC/AD changeover due to the fact that a traditional variant found in East Africa is the oldest type found in South-East Asia. More possible plant domestication, some from Asia, has been discussed elsewhere (Chami 2006)

Did the domestication practise extended to the south as far as Madagascar and the Comoros? It should be remembered that in chapter 9 (this volume) bones of cattle, sheep and chicken were collected from the lower levels of the Male Cave trenches associated with stone artefacts and an ancient bead. The material chronology in the cave without a doubt suggests a date of Neolithic or at least ancient time for the bones. While the results of laboratory dating indicate that they are modern, it is obvious that the dated samples were anomalous for it is certain that the bones are ancient. There was also pottery from a depth of 20 centimetres, 20 centimetres above some bones, which was clearly of the first three centuries in the second millennium AD. It was also noted that volcanic stones artefacts collected from Kuumbi Cave in Zanzibar in the Neolithic context should probably have arrived from Comoros. As discussed in Chapter 4 and 9 this problem must await further research for clarification. However, it is strongly hypothesised here that the Neolithic people had spread agriculture and domestication to the Comoros and probably beyond, and the volcanic stone artefacts from Unguja Island found in the Neolithic context and

indeed those excavated from Ngazija are of the same time period.

The finding of tools, of shell, bone or stone, coupled with many shells and bones of large and small size wild animals, clearly suggests that apart from domestication a hunting and fishing or partial hunting/fishing economy was practiced (chapter 12). As already discussed for Machaga Cave, north-west of Kuumbi, the ancient animals were large, similar to those found today in the Serengeti. The post-Neolithic animals are smaller, dominated by dik-dik and rock hyrax. It would seem that in ancient Zanzibar there was a diversity of large animals, including large land snails which diminished over time due to hunting and gathering. Whether other factors prevailed, such as drastic climate change that did not allow the continued survival of large animals, may need to be explored in the future. It is known that there was a very dry period between AD 600 and about AD 900 (Chami 2003) and this caused water shortages; many animals could have died in the larger region. Hippopotamus disappeared at the same period from Madagascar (MacPhee and Burney 1991).

It is worthwhile to note that the people who occupied the caves from the Neolithic period consumed domesticated animals as food, as mentioned above. It is also possible that food from domesticated plants may have been consumed. The amount of bones of wild animals and shells (both marine and terrestrial) also represent possible different type of diets of these people. This means the inhabitants practiced agricultural activities, as well as hunting, gathering and fishing.

It should be stressed here that domesticating communities, which must also have had other food production activities like hunting and fishing, also involved themselves in long distance sailing, either for trade or in the search for resources. To confirm the picture that there were contacts, which contradict the boundaries set for the spread of Neolithic tradition in sub-Saharan Africa, Kuumbi Cave has artefacts of volcanic stones (see Fig. 10:2, this volume) which could only have been obtained from foreign landscapes such as the Comoros. The lowest level from which they were collected is Trench 8, at a depth of 125 centimetres. A charcoal sample collected from a depth of 120 centimetres dates to 3949 BC, or about 4000 BC. This suggests that the artefacts were in the site either before 4000 BC or after this time. This finding is also suggesting that if the people of the Upper Palaeolithic had not sailed to the Comoros by then, it is certain that they had done so at the beginning of the Neolithic (see Chapter 14). Glass beads also occurred from the Neolithic layer, which could date back to the second millennium BC (Fig. 4:13).

Were the people on Zanzibar, and possibly others in the south, the ones with whom the Egyptians were trading during the beginning of the second millennium BC? Egyptians came to trade in the land of Punt, also called *Pwani*, similar to the modern day Swahili *Pwani*, meaning 'coast'. Without recovering actual and incontrovertible Egyptian material remains of that time in Zanzibar, or elsewhere on the islands of East Africa, it will remain hypothetical that they traded in this region. However, it is said that a shipwrecked Egyptian sailor and his crew were in the Indian Ocean with very large ships; when he capsized, he drifted to an island, whose King boasted having a variety of tropical animals, products

from which were demanded by Egyptians. The archaeological remains of these animals are today found on Zanzibar Island. (chapter 12, this volume). These include giraffe, leopard and ape (see chapter 12, this volume). The story also tells of another Egyptian ship which came to save the wreck, and which had engaged in trade with some islands in the south (for conspectus see Chami 2006).

More evidence of trade, or at least contact with other parts of the world, is discussed elsewhere (Chami 2006). It includes banana remains found in Uganda dating back to 3000 BC, and in Cameroon dating back to 800 BC. If banana, like chicken and coconut discussed earlier, all originated from South-East Asia, then it is certain that people of the Neolithic had been in contact with people of the larger region of the Indian Ocean and beyond. Other crops and animals are yet to be found archaeologically, but exist in modern agriculture could have also arrived or gone to Asia from Africa (for conspectus see Chami 2006).

The find in Kuumbi Cave of an Indian bead (Fig. 4:13, this volume) in the context that dates to the last millennium BC is another clear indication of international trade. This bead joins several others found in Machaga and Ukunju caves (Mafia Island) and identified as Indian. These include carnelian bead and red, blue and green glass beads, all dating to the first millennium BC. The ancient Indian trade wind beads, 'Mutisalah' beads according to Dubin (1987:340), seem to have arrived in East Africa several centuries before the BC/AD changeover. This type of bead was widespread in South- and Far East Asia from about 300 BC or earlier (See Dubin 1987). There is no doubt that this same bead was traded in East Africa during the same time period.

More beads seem to have arrived from the Mediterranean region from either the Greek or Phoenician territories. These include eyed beads and mosaic beads recovered from Ukunju cave, and their identification has been discussed elsewhere (Chami 2004b); these types of beads were also in East Africa in the first millennium BC. The other glass bead recovered from Kuumbi Cave seem to be of silver in glass (fig. 4:13, this volume), also suggesting Mediterranean origin, of the BC period. Other goods to support trade with the rest of the ancient world at this BC period, found in the Ukunju Cave, include marl clay pottery from the Nile Valley and several pot sherds identified as Indian, all dating back to the first part of the first millennium BC (for conspectus see Chami 2004b and 2006).

All these emerging trade good remains, like the animal domesticates, coupled with ancient coins and other finds ignored in the past (see Chami 2006), clearly suggest that there was a market in East Africa where the communities from the rest of the ancient world came to trade, or the Africans themselves sailed abroad for trade. The evidence for this can be found in Euhemerus report of the 3rd century BC (see Chami 2006). In fact the Egyptian, Greek and early Roman literature mentions trade with Eastern Africa, involving items such as animal products (horn, skins), metal and spices such as cinnamon and cassia. Some spices originated from South-East Asia, suggesting a meeting point in East Africa. Trading emporiums in this region of East Africa are also mentioned, and people from as far as Oceania and India are reported to have come to this region.

In about 300 BC the societies in this region had a capital on an island and agriculturalists and pastoralists were known to exist. Some of the crops recorded include rice, coconut and possibly cotton (see Chami 2006). The life of people was described as communal, with production of cloth and a belief in a Sun god and astronomy.

East Africa acquired different names at different periods including *Punt/Pwani* in the Egyptian time, *Paanchea* in the Hellenistic period, and later on, as it is to be shown below, *Azania* and *Zanj* in the Roman and Islamic periods respectively. The data and records which are now available for the period 4000 BC to BC/AD changeover is yet to be appreciated (see Chami 2006).

0 to AD 600

This is a period identified elsewhere as Early Iron Working (EIW), dating between 0 to AD 600 on the Swahili coast, but older by about 400 years in the deep interior of Africa (see Schmidt 1997; Chami 2006). It is the period when iron smelting is attested, but this does not mean that people did not know about iron and other metals before this time. The heavy activity of iron smelting is clearly associated with trade with Arabia and the Roman world, suggesting a heavy demand of bloom in exchange for finished goods, including metals themselves (Chami 1999a). It should be noted that the EIW period is divided into three phases: Limbo (>0 to AD 200), Kwale (AD 200 to 400) and Mwangia (AD 400 to 600). These phases are clearly evidenced by chronological variants of pottery tradition of bevelled and fluted ware with bands of decorations, as already discussed elsewhere (Soper 1971; Chami 2006, also see Chapter 7, this volume). Doubts about the three phases of the Early Iron Working tradition (see Horton and Middleton 2000:38) are only due to the fact that those doubting have not recently carried out research on coast of East Africa to see these sites and work at them. It is also partly due to the denial attitude, as discussed earlier.

Despite the hitherto absence of evidence for agricultural activities during this period, historical records indicate that people were settled and tilling the land for crops ranging from cereals, banana, coconut and yams, which are today commonly found along the Swahili coast. The Roman period document, *Periplus*, reported that people were settled in communities with independent kings, and that they were cultivators. The main trading town of this region of the Swahili coast is also reported to have been called 'Rhapta', now thought to have been located at the Rufiji Delta. A large site has now been found close to the northern banks of the delta rivers at the latitude and distance suggested by Ptolemy. Research awaits confirmation if it is Rhapta. A map in Ptolemy's *Geographia* placed it at latitudes 7.5° to 8° south.

Archaeological sites of this period are now known in nearly all the islands south of Pemba (for conspectus see Chami 2006) and as demonstrated in Chapter 9 (this volume), we now have these sites on Ngazidja Island in the Comoros (see Figs. 9.2 - 9.3). Like their predecessors, the people of the EIW period sailed the Indian Ocean and beyond for trade and other necessities.

As discussed in chapter 7 (this volume), efforts made to find settlements of the EIW period in the southern part of Zanzibar District were relatively successful. The discussion is also based on what was known so far and up to the time of this research. Pottery of the EIW period was known from the site of Unguja Ukuu in Zanzibar (Juma 2004) and a few more had been found in Kajengwa, Makunduchi during my early research in Unguja. Despite the previous argument that Zanzibar had no population in the EIW period, it is now obvious from the discussion in chapter 7 that these communities existed, despite the lack of large sites with material concentration. The dates and pottery of that period are also very clear from the Mwanampambe and Kuumbi caves and it is certain that the distribution of this pottery from Unguja Ukuu down to the Makunduchi-Jambiani sites suggest settlements.

It is also evident from rich Neolithic material findings that communities continued to live on the islands, despite the change of culture to that of the EIW period. The author has argued for people and cultural continuity rather than for the arrival of immigrants, known as Bantu speakers, who were thought to have spread at that time period all over sub-Saharan Africa and eliminating the Stone Age people (see Philipson 1995/2005). The author has argued that the people now being identified as Bantu speakers, had in fact been in the region from the Stone Age, and what we see as cultural change is not necessary indicating the arrival of immigrants and colonisers, but a change in technologies and cultural traditions due to many factors including – of course – contact with new peoples, some of whom could have settled to join the indigenous communities. In all the available records from ancient travellers, they indicated that the Swahili region was settled by indigenous people who sometimes mingled with foreign traders; for the EIW period, it is indicated that people from Arabia had been coming to trade, learn the local language and even intermarry.

It should also be reiterated that ancient seafarers and traders arriving in Eastern Africa could not leave at their pleasure. As noted in chapter 2 (this volume) a stay of up to four months was normal, as they waited for the monsoon winds to return them northwards to their home lands. When trade was brisk, as we know it was for the time of EIW period and the Islamic-Swahili period, interaction between the local and traders was of a higher degree and the towns could have looked more cosmopolitan. Probably all trading towns, or emporia, in the world would have looked like this in the ancient time (Hodges 1988).

The factors of trade and contact with people from the deep interior, Arabs and Romans (see Chami 1999a; Abungu 1989) would definitely have caused a genetic and cultural mix that would have resulted in a new culture, as observed in archaeological records today. One thing that has not been discussed by archeologists, and it is worth mentioning here, is that the pottery of the Early Iron Working period has much in common with the pottery of the rest of the rim of the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea of the same time period. The main difference are forms, and the hand-made earthenware technology of East Africa. After studying this tradition for many years, and after studying the Indian wares of the same time period, one can observe the thickening of rims, bevels and flutes and even some

incised and dotted band decorations along the whole stretch. The author has no doubt at all that the possibility exists to find imported wares within the Early Iron Working period context and confuse it with a local pottery. This observation could also have applied for pre- and post-Early Iron Working periods.

This kind of observation, therefore, should not be used to argue for migration as the source of cultural change. The finds of many trade goods in archaeological records does not mean migration, but brisk trading activities, in which the locals were involved and from which they also benefited. The find of many Japanese vehicles in Dar es Salaam (over 80%) today does not mean that a Japanese colony exists in Dar es Salaam. As noted earlier, the migration theory in Africa implied colonisation and elimination of the indigenous people. Immigrants, in a large quantity, truly contribute to culture change, but that factor alone is inadequate to argue that culture change is caused by migration and that the locals are colonised or eliminated.

The theory that Bantu speakers migrated from West Africa to create a new culture in the EIW period along the East coast and the rest of Africa, cannot be sustained. Firstly, archaeology shows that there were people in the region before the Iron Working period who had already adopted agriculture and animal domestication and pottery making. These technological aspects were attributed to the alleged Bantu immigrants in the first centuries AD. People of before that the EIW period, had a special and chronological affinity with those of the EIW period. It is therefore parsimonious to argue for cultural and genetic continuity, implying that the Bantu speakers were already in the region by the period of EIW. Secondly, if there was any foreign population that appeared in the region and that influenced the Bantu speakers' culture, then it was not from the interior of Africa, but from Asia, Arabia and the Roman world. The influence was not only limited to the coast, but penetrated deep to the interior of Africa, as records show that the contacts were as a result of trade. The emporia appear to have been cosmopolitan, particularly during the trade season, and while foreigners may have claimed authority over the trading towns, this would not eliminate the existence of indigenous populations of the region or actually their *de facto* control (Hodges 1988) or benefits of the trade activities. In the Greek time period the documents suggested the local people were in control and they even expelled Iambulus for not being able to catch up with cultural traditions (see Chami 2006). When the Romans came to *Rhapta*, then the emporium of *Azania*, traders from Yemen (from Mouza) argued that:

Under the King the people of Mouza hold it (*Rhapta*) by payment of tribute, and send ships with captains and agents who are mostly Arabs, and the familiar through residence and intermarriage with the nature of the places and their language (Huntingford 1980: 31, author's italics).

There is no question that the beginning of the *Kiswahili* language can be traced to that historical depth, as towns like *Rhapta* created a convergence of ethnic groups of the Stone Age period to create a trading language (see Massamba 2007). The divergence of that language would have come to be re-consolidated again in the Islamic period with the

emergence of large towns like Kilwa.

Some scholars have also proposed that the indigenous population at *Rhapta* could have been Cushitic speakers (see Casson 1989:136; Horton 1990) or immigrants from elsewhere outside Africa (Juma 2004). This kind of thinking in the history of Eastern Africa is now discredited. It was noted in chapter 3 (this volume) that Ingrams (1967) championed the idea of "Negroid" Bantu speakers having occupied the islands from the Stone Age. Recently, Juma (2006) has echoed Ingram's position, suggesting that the people of Zanzibar, derogatively referred to as *Wahadimu* by the Arabs and other people of the Omani period in Zanzibar, are the original people and their ancestors can be traced back to the hunter-gatherer periods in the Stone Age. The language and non-Islamic traditions of these people are of Bantu speakers, as some of these traditions are currently being practised in the limestone caves, as reported in the book.

The *Periplus of the Erythrean Sea* reported an island known as *Menuthius* about one day's sail before reaching the capital of Azania, *Rhapta*. This is now located at Rufiji Delta. This island, which then had rivers and was low lying, had people whose economy was not very exposed except for fishing using basket-like traps. We know that this method of fishing is still being practiced in many parts of this region. *Menuthius* seems to have been Zanzibar (see Chami 2006). Animals are said not to have existed, apart from birds and crocodile. Is it possible that large animals had been hunted to the extent that they had diminished? Is it also possible that smaller animals existed, which were more difficult for the ancient travellers to observe? By the end of Neolithic period, large animals are rare in the archaeological record in the caves.

Zanzibar today still has small animals including dik-diks and monkeys, and archaeological works have uncovered a variety of types of other smaller sized animals, as well as larger ones such as baboons, pigs and leopards, which existed on the island until very recently. An ancient Greek visitor to an island off East Africa, which the author has suggested could have been Zanzibar (Chami 2006), termed it the 'Island of the Sun', 200 to 300 years earlier than the *Periplus*, and observed a variety of smaller animals. It therefore seems that the large animals had indeed disappeared by 300 BC, and this picture remained so up to modern times.

Zanzibar Island has been found to have pottery of the Early Iron Working period. The potsherds now collected and analysed appear to have a date ranging from the first to sixth centuries AD (see chapter 7, this volume). However, no metal or remains of iron smelting have been found so far for this time period. In fact, no remains of iron smelting furnaces are known for Unguja Island in this time period at all. Given the amount of iron smelting which was taking place on the sites of the same time period on the mainland, it is obvious that metal must have been known on Zanzibar and on other islands of the region in that time, but received from the mainland, where ore was abundant. Few metal objects, including an arrow head, were recovered from the lower levels of Unguja Ukuu which dated to the late first five centuries AD. This factor possibly caused the emporium to have been located on the mainland coast, where metal and animal resources were ample.

It has already been shown above that the people of the EIW period on the Swahili coast were in contact with other parts of the world, particularly the Romans, Persians, Indians, Arabs and Axumites (For conspectus see Chami 2006). Beads from these parts of the world have been collected from the lower layers of Unguja Ukuu (Juma 2004) and the Rufiji Delta region (Chami 2006). Pottery from these regions has been recovered from Machaga Cave, Kilwa and Unguja Ukuu (ibid). It was also noted that Roman documents report of these trade contacts and that Romans found Arabs in this part of the world, learning the local language and intermarrying (Casson 1987).

The research which has been reported in this volume suggests that the settlements of this period on Zanzibar are few and dispersed, as so far no large scale site has been found. Whether excavated or surface finds, potsherds of that period are few. Settlements of that period in the Rufiji Delta region and Mafia Island are numerous and large, suggesting population concentration during this period. Ptolemy the geographer placed the capital of Azania between latitude 7.5-8° on the line which crosses the Rufiji region and Mafia Island. The trade activities of this period must have reached as far south as South Africa and in all the islands, possibly including Madagascar, which Ptolemy's mapped in his *Geography* (see Chami 2006). The glass bead mentioned above from the Comoros also seems to have been of this period or before.

AD 600-900

The history of Zanzibar from this time period is more known and less controversial. Works first published by Chittick (1974, 1984) and Horton (1984/1996) were chronologically and theoretically consolidated only recently with the works of Chami (1994) and Juma (2004). These latter archaeological works found cultural layers with pottery and other materials beginning from about AD 500-600. The new findings suggested that this period under discussion had began earlier than thought. This cultural period on the coast of East Africa has been known as Tana Tradition or Triangular Incised Ware (see Chami 1994; Sutton 1994-95). In this work the latter concept is used. The debate which existed on the scholarship of the coast of East Africa was whether these sites were of people whose history pre-dated Islam in East Africa, or they were of foreign Islamic founders. Another argument was whether the cultural materials were of people known as Cushitic speakers and pastoralists, or of Bantu speakers and agriculturalists.

It must be reiterated here that these debates have ceased to be relevant after the discovery of many archaeological sites, including those presented in this volume. Cultural, and therefore genetic, continuity from the Stone Age has been argued and too much information now exists, showing that the Triangular Incised Ware sites were of people with a history going back to the Early Iron Working period. The dating of these settlements to the beginning of the fifth to sixth centuries AD is another affirmation that the culture had pre-Islamic beginnings and hence a population that was present in the region from the period of the EIW (Chami 1994; Juma 2004).

There is no doubt today that the people of this time period adopted and continued

with the modes of production which existed in the past. This means agriculture and animal domestication continued as it had during the previous traditions from the Neolithic period. It is however possible that animal domestication may have been practised more in some regions of the coast than others. Sites on the central coast of Tanzania (Chami 1994: 68) and those on the Lamu archipelago (Horton 1996) and Zanzibar (Juma 2004) have yielded cattle, caprine and chicken. It is also logical that the ratio between cultivation and pastoralism would have differed from one period to another, and even from one region to another. For instance, in Pemba today the northeast corner of the island which is drier practices a pastoral mode of production while the rest of the island is agricultural.

It should be stressed that the time of the Triangular Incised Ware period, from about AD 600 to 900, the climate was drier compared to today (Chami 2003). It is likely that the northern coast was more pastoral in the manner in which it has been argued by Horton (1984/1996). However, in the south, from Bagamoyo region to Mozambique, valley agriculture could have continued and indeed most settlements are found in lowlands, valleys and lakes/swamps or streams of water (Chami 2003). Communities were also fishing (Horton and Mudida 1993; Juma 2004) and involved in trade. If not for the unfortunate school of thought, during the 1980s, which argued that trade and domestication occurred on the Swahili coast in the Islamic period (for conspectus see Chami 2001a; 2006), it is not contested today that animal domestication had been introduced in the larger region of the sub-Saharan Africa by the time of the Triangular Incised Ware tradition (see Robertshaw 1993, Chami 2006). Continued opposition of the argument of early pre-Islamic domestication and trade (Sinclair 2007: 189) is ideological rather than scientific.

It must be noted that the people of the Triangular Incised Ware tradition inherited a *long durée* tradition of sailing long distances not only for fishing, but also for commerce. The sites of this period have many trade goods of a quantity unprecedented in the previous periods. Some of the goods such as pottery of the Late Roman period and some segmented beads reported by Juma (1996; 2004) could even be of before this period, as indicated above. However, most of the green and blue glazed Sassanian ware and glass beads continued throughout the period of the Triangular Incised Ware tradition to the Islamic period, and more so after AD 1000. This is true all the way to Comoros Islands and to Southern Africa at Chibuene and Natal.

The abundance of Sassanian pottery in almost all known sites of the Triangular Incised Ware tradition scattered from southern Somalia to the Comoros and Mozambique, and even in sites in northern Madagascar, indicate a brisk commerce that existed between East Africa and Persia under the Sassanid rule. The Romans had lost the Indian Ocean from about the fourth century AD, and competition to fill the vacuum was between the then rising Axumites and Sassanids (see Chami 2002b). The latter nation took control of the Indian Ocean more securely from the end of the sixth century AD (for conspectus see Whitehouse and Williamson 1973).

For this large territory in the Triangular Incised Ware tradition, it seems the site of

Unguja Ukuu in Zanzibar or one of those on the central coast of Tanzania should have been the capital in the pre-Islamic period. The early sites of this time period date to between AD 600 and 700. This period, during which Islam was not probably established in Eastern Africa, had much affinity with the previous EIW tradition (Chami 1994). Mark Horton (1984/1996) found a mosque floor in Shanga dating back to about AD 750. Could the Muslims have infiltrated the Swahili coast before that date?

What we can only say is that Islam had spread to Sudan by the mid seventh century (Ahmed 2008), but there is no evidence of its spread south beyond that line in the mid-eighth century. The sites of this early period are quite large, most of them being more than four hectares. In the Comoros, at the site of Male B (see chapter 9, this volume) on Ngazidja, one had to walk about 200 metres along the beach observing cultural materials of the Triangular Incised Ware tradition and many potsherds of Sassanid green and blue ware. Probably the largest concentration of this material culture ever observed by the author is the one at Unguja Ukuu in Zanzibar.

The settlements of the Triangular Incised Ware tradition had a second phase when Islamic trade goods are evident from after AD 750 to 900. This is the period when the tradition is widespread and large sites are evidenced in Kilwa and the Lamu archipelago (Chittick 1974, 1984; Horton 1976). Pemba is also known to have large sites of this period (LaViolette and Fleisher 1975). It is questionable whether there was one capital controlling the region or each island or area had its own autonomy, as reported for the EIW settlements by the Romans. Perhaps clues can be obtained from the written records.

The settlements of the two phases of the Triangular Incised Ware tradition are documented by Arab travellers and geographers as reviewed elsewhere (Trimingham 1975; see also Chami 2002b). One document authored by Al Jahiz, *Kitab Fakhr as-Sudan ala 'l-Bidan* (the book of the ascendancy of the Negroes over the whites), which dates back to the eighth to ninth centuries AD, is reported to have documented an event which occurred in the seventh century (AD 600-700): Omani Arabs attempted to invade the East African settlements of this period, but their move was crushed. Were these Arabs attempting to spread Islam to the Swahili coast as they were doing in Sudan at the same time (see Ahmed 2008)? This question remains an enigma.

Al Jahiz also wrote that the same type of communities were continuing by the 9th century and Islam was not yet a phenomenon on the Triangular Incised Ware tradition by then. The people of the coast of East Africa, then known as *Zanj*, were having a king (*falume/farume*) and religious leader/s. Open air sermons of traditional religion were also attended by the king. There was also a standing/organised army (see Freeman-Grenville 1975; Chami 2002b).

The documents also suggest that by the eighth and ninth centuries there was a cultural or political problem leading to a division between the north-Qanbala and the south-Lunjuya. As seen below, this may mean a separation between the north and the south of the Swahili coast or, as we know today, that the two locations meant Pemba and Unguja

respectively, could have been a separation between the two islands which controlled different parts of the mainland north and south respectively. Was this problem religious? In the 10th century Masud reports more about Quabalu and of a Muslim population there. Suffice to argue here that the division which one sees at the 9th century documents of the East African territory between Qanbalu and Lanjuya also appear, as noted earlier, in archaeological records as it is going to be shown below. This division can tightly be dated to the first half of the 10th century. This division is also shown in the map of Idrisi of the 12th century.

AD 900 to 1200

This period is important in understanding how the northern coast of the Swahili came to look different from the southern coast. As it was noted earlier, archaeology shows a development of, in some degree, different cultural materials between AD 900 and 1200 between the north and the south, where the boundary appears at an approximate line crossing Bagamoyo District (see Chami 1998). As noted above, Idrisi's map shows these two divided territories, where the line crosses in the water between Pemba and Unguja. He refers Pemba as *Qanbalu* and Unguja as *Anjaba Unquja* (see Trimingham 1975:138).

The northern region is called *Ard az-Zanj* and the southern one *Ard Sufala*. At this time it is important to note several settlements known today which are shown in Idrisi's map. In the northern region one can see *Mulanda* (Malindi?) and *Manbasa* (Mombasa). The whole southern coast of Somalia south of Mogadishu (shown as a river) was all part of *Ard az-Zanj*, which suggests that the people there were Swahili, Bantu speakers. Indeed Cosmas Indicopleustus suggested the same geography in the sixth century AD (for conspectus see Chami 2006). In *Ard Sufala*, Mafia was shown as *Kahua*, there is Kilwa, the Rovuma river, and the Comoros were known as *Angazija*, while Madagascar was known as *Qumr*. The Mozambican channel as far as south as Limpopo was known as *Khalij al-Qumr*, and was also part of *Ard Sufala*. The Swahili coast, today's western Indian Ocean seaboard, was known as *Bahr az-Zanj*.

According to Masudi (10th century), *Qanbalu* was an island located in the geographical position of present day Pemba.

Among the inhabitants of the island is a community of Muslims, now speaking *Zahjiyya* (the language of the Zanj), who conquered this island and subjected all the Zanj on it in the same manner as the Muslim conquest of the Island of Crete in the Mediterranean. This event (the conquest of *Qanbalu*) took place around the period of the changeover from the Umayyad to the 'Abbasid dynasty. (Trimingham 1975:130).

For those expecting to hear that Islam was brought to East Africa by Arabs or Persians, it is necessary to observe in this quotation that the people who conquered *Qunbalu* and installed Islam are *Zanj* or Africans, and their language is that of the Swahili coast: *Zanj*. It was also shown above that Al Jahiz reported the African people who fought Arabs in the seventh century, probably when the latter invaded to introduce Islam. The title of his work

is in fact on the defeat of Arabs by "Negroes". On this question of who introduced Islam to the Swahili coast, one can also read the 10th century report by Buzurg ibn Shahriyar. A hijack of an African King of the Sufala region and his sale as a slave to a rich man in the Middle East led him to adopt Islam, and when he managed to come back to his country in the Sufala region, he converted all his citizens to Islam (see Freeman-Grenville 1962).

It is likely that the conquering of *Quanbalu* was by Swahili/Bantu speaking people who had already adopted Islam in Arabia (Chami 2002b) or on the northern coast, probably on modern Kenya or southern Somali coast. It was only a conquering of *Quanbalu*, or Pemba, and not of the entire Swahili coast. Partly due to this information, scholars erroneously came to argue that there was a land in the northern coast, *Shungwaya*, which was ancestral to the Swahili people and even of the Triangular Incised Ware tradition. (Allen 1993; Horton and Mudida 1993). The date for this origin was therefore put at about AD 900 and the assumption was that these ancestral people had also been Persians or Arabs or Africans, who had been genetically affected by the Middle Eastern people.

Archaeological sites of *Ard Sufala* are now known in many places from the Bagamoyo area, which is opposite to Zanzibar, down to Mozambique (Chami 1998; Kwekason - forthcoming). It is a tradition termed by this author as Plain Ware (Chami 1998) and observed in Kilwa by Chittick (1974) and termed Early Kitchen Ware Period 2). The author has observed similar cultural materials in eastern Zimbabwe in the Nyanga region while working with Plan Shenjere for her PhD. The pottery observed is the same as that at Great Zimbabwe, among what is classified as class 2 ware (see number 22, 33, 35, 36 and few others in that class (Robinson 1961:199-200). Whether this type of site can be found north of the Bagamoyo-Pangani River area or in Pemba awaits further research, but Chittick (1984) and Horton (1984/1996) did not observe this tradition in the Lamu archipelago and my survey work in Pemba is yet to find such a site.

For Zanzibar, the largest open site to be excavated, Unguja Ukuu and Machaga cave seem to also miss this cultural horizon. For Kuumbi, the author thinks that most of the pottery scattered at the water pool towards the dark end of the cave, very fragmentary, is of this tradition. Same pottery can be observed in the dark chambers of Machaga Cave. In these caves, it seems that people of this period were not in the open part of the cave, but in the dark area and near the 'escape' tunnel, suggesting insecurity or other reasons yet to be identified. Pottery of such sites are yet to be found in Comoros, but future research may establish the tradition.

If this picture being drawn for the scatter of the Plain Ware period sites, of between AD 900 and AD 1100-1200, is actual as it is thought here, then what is reported in the Arab documents of this period is vindicated by archaeology. As the author noted elsewhere (Chami 1994, 1998), it seems there was hostility from the north. As indicated in the quotation above, the Islamic crusade reached this part of Africa, and the people of the northern coast were probably adopting Islam from the eighth century, in the later Triangular Incised Ware tradition, and by the ninth century they were proceeding southwards with attacks, and possibly isolating the south from trade goods arriving from

the north. Archaeological sites of the time of the Plain Ware tradition are poor in trade goods, except for the island settlements such as Kilwa.

It is difficult for now to know where the capital of *Sufala*, the region of Plain Ware tradition, would have been. However, Buzurg ibn Shahriyar places it on the mainland, as the wind driving the Arab traders missed *Quabalu* and hence ended up further south, probably on the mainland between Bagamoyo and the Dar es Salaam area, or even further south as far as Kilwa. The escape and return of the hijacked king from Egypt, where his master had gone with him for trade, also followed the mainland coastal route without suggesting that there was crossing of water to an island. Settlements unknown today but recorded on the map of Idrisi for *Ard Sufala* include *Tubna/Bat-hama* in the area of present day Dar es Salaam, and *Sayuna* at the Delta of Ruvuma south of Kilwa.

The knowledge of the Comoros Islands and Madagascar is also very interesting, as they appear more clearly in this time of Plain Ware tradition, about 800 years after Ptolemy's *Geography* suggested knowledge of them. We have shown above that all cultural traditions beginning from Stone Age are found in the Comoros, at the least. This confirms that the islands were known in the Swahili world and continued interacting with the rest of the Swahili coast. Idrisi's map identifies the Comoros as *Ngazija*. We know today that Ngazidja is the largest island in the north of the island nation. We also know today that the islands of the Comoros have been known historically by East Africans as *Ngazidja*. How did it change that modern geography identifies the four islands of the archipelago, of which Ngazija is only one, as 'the Comoros'?

It is apparent that ancient islanders in this region of the Comoros and Madagascar identified themselves with the volcanic activities of islands in their region. Idrisi's *Qumr* for Madagascar is a corruption of 'Comoro', which was a Bantu speaker's word *komoro* or *komoto* or *Kwa moto* meaning 'belonging to fire' or "at the place of fire". This name would have emerged due to the volcanic eruptions of the region, during which fire could be seen from a distance while sailing in the southern East African Indian Ocean. People coming from those islands could also have reported of fire on their island(s). The whole region therefore, with Madagascar as the largest island, was identified with this fire. Actually by AD 900 the culture of the northern Madagascar is that of the Swahili tradition, and the Bantu speakers from there would have related more to *Comoro*, culturally and linguistically.

Stone architecture is attested to have began in this period, more so from about the 10th century. Kilwa, Pemba, and the Lamu archipelago were probably the first to practise this technology in a higher degree as already demonstrated by Chittick (1974, 1984) and Horton (1984/1996), but there is no doubt that most parts of the Swahili coast knew about the technology earlier than AD 1000 and that the concentration at a particular point was due to wealth available there. Garlake (1966) had no doubt at all, as seen below, that the technology developed within the Swahili traditional context.

Islamic pottery of this period is mainly an Islamic copy of Chinese ware and Sgraffiato

of different designs (see Juma 2004). Chinese ware also appeared from this time period entering the coast of East Africa probably from the Middle East. It is also from this time period, from about the 10th century, that coins were made by different Swahili dynasties, the most powerful being Kilwa (Chittick 1974; Horton 1996). It is certain that at least from the 10th century, if not earlier, gold was becoming the main item of trade and Masud reports that it was obtained from territories in southern Africa. Other trade goods included beads from India, which reached southern African territories in good amounts, and both locally made and imported cloth. Spindle whorls are commonly found in sites of this period.

Arab documents also report of iron mining and the use of silver. Other local resources reported include wild animals, probably hunted for food, skins and ivory. Fishing was reported and some of the fish were prepared for sale. Cultivation also took place and crops such as banana, millet and tubers/yams were used as food. The Arab records has more information on these than archaeology currently demonstrates.

AD 1200 to 1500

Cultural materials of this period have been classified as Swahili or Neck Punctuated Ware (Chami 1998), because this is the time period when the Arab scholars refer to the East African coast as Swahili (see Ibn Batutta in Gibb 1939) and archaeology has uncovered ceramics of this period spread in many parts of the coast of East Africa all the way south to the Comoros and Madagascar with a line of punctuations around a short neck (Chami 1998; Radimilahy 1998, see Chapter 4 & 9).

Cultural materials of this period were reported from Machaga Cave (Chami and Wafula 1999) and more of these have been found in Kuumbi Cave and sites of the South District of Zanzibar (chapter 4 and 6, this volume). The cultural materials of this period are also part and parcel of the stone town culture, which was at its peak at this period. This was a period during which the Swahili people were very prosperous, with nearly every community building in stone, with many large settlements; excavations at these settlements have yielded numerous remains of trade goods such as Indian trade wind beads, Islamic wares of mainly monochrome, lustre and late Sgraffiato, and abundant remains of Chinese pottery and coins. Kilwa was the largest settlement of this period on the Swahili coast, and their economy was possibly the largest ever formed on the coast of East Africa before the arrival of Seyyid Said in the 19th century.

The Swahili towns, their origin and their economy and cultural patterns have been discussed elsewhere (see Chami 2008b). Suffice here to point out a few important things worth mentioning. One is the fact that the period AD 1200-1500 has Arab, Chinese and Portuguese travellers' testimonies of the East African coast and its hinterland. One can certainly argue that this is a more historical period than before. Even some tombs of this period have inscriptions, some of which are in *Kiswahili*, using Arabic lettering. With all this data, debates about who the Swahili were – and how the culture came about – should not have been extended for decades, or at least should not have been so profuse.

By AD 1200 the larger physical features of eastern Africa, including the Great Lakes, the Nile, the coastal islands and other places – some with their modern names – were already registered abroad. As discussed before, Idrissi's map, had this information (Trimingham 1975). Of importance is information on the coast of East Africa and its interior available in China in the AD 1200-1400, as mapped by Wheatly (1975). It shows the Great Lakes, mountains including Kilimanjaro, and all the islands of East Africa, including the erupting Comoros and others. These records likely date to the 10th century, as the information suggests that Islamic communities were more concentrated on the northern coast, what was then known as *Ard az Zanj*. The Chinese map shows concentration of Mosques in the north of the Swahili coast. It is apparent that the region south of Bagamoyo could have had fewer Islamic communities, as archaeology does not show many large settlements between that area and Kilwa. Ibn Batutta, when he visited Kilwa in about AD 1330, also reported Muslims on the island of Kilwa, which was at war with non-Islamic communities on the coastal and interior.

In the Chinese records, the largest island of the Comoros was known by its current name, Ngazidja. Kilwa, Unguja, Mombasa and Malindi can also be inferred from the map.

A major contribution by Ibn Batutta in the 1330s was the description of Mogadishu, which by his time seems to have been occupied by modern Somalis, a non-Bantu speaking community. He described the Swahili community to have settled from the Lamu Archipelago in the north, down south to Kilwa, and he was the first person to refer to the people of this region as *Sawahili*. He saw people of this region as agriculturalists and 'jet black'. This information again proves the genetic and cultural continuity from the earlier periods discussed above. Surprisingly, Ibn Batutta did not see stone architecture at the two large Swahili towns of Mombasa and Kilwa. This aspect needs to be explained (Sutton 1998; Chami 2008b), as archaeologists all agree that the large Swahili towns were indeed made of stone houses at this time.

Despite the description of this region by eye witnesses such as Ibn Batutta, Chinese and Portuguese visitors, it has been described by modern scholars in a most bizarre manner, that the wealthy people of this period were not Africans but invaders from the Middle East and elsewhere as described before in chapter 2. It is the contention here that this kind of racist thinking should no longer bother serious Africanist scholars (see Chami 2006). The impressive monumental architectural remains of this time period with large towns with mosques, palaces and tombs, and evidence of profuse amounts of imported goods, caused racist scholars to doubt the inhabitants as Africans. Actually large monumental tombs of the Swahili coast, erected around the *Kibla*, are not Islamic in tradition, at least for Sunnis from which the Swahili Islam came from. The doubt that the Swahili towns are not African in origin was well expressed by many non-African, scholars including Abdul Sheriff (2002:14-15) of Zanzibar town until now :

Religion and the fundamental bases of culture generally came from abroad, though they were gradually indigenised. The standing buildings architecture appeared on the

coast 'fully fledged' in the earliest known buildings, and thereafter, according to Peter Galarke, only 'a slow deterioration in the standards of workmanship is discernible'. This occurs not only when cultural links with the motherland weaken, but also when commercial connections are strengthened, permitting new imports to extinguish some indigenous workmanship. (Sheriff 2002:14-15)

It is true that the Swahili coast received and adopted some cultural elements from other parts of the world, particularly from the Muslim world; and there is no doubt that some visitors had settled in some communities along the Swahili coast and intermarried with the inhabitants. However, no serious historians can think of a colonial situation of an Arabian or Persian cultural circle, in the form of German *Kulturkreis* school (see Harris 1968), moving to the Swahili world. There is no observer or document of pre- AD 1500 that provides such evidence for colonisation of the Swahili people at this time of higher Swahili civilization. To the contrary, all documents cited above suggest an indigenous development with foreign trade connections. In fact the work of Garlake, which Sheriff cited, does not support the introduction of architecture to the Swahili coast from the Middle East or elsewhere. According to Garlake (1966) the Swahili architecture emerged and evolved on the East African coast and it was not a wholesale importation from abroad. Sutton set this argument as presented by Garlake. The ruins at Kilwa, Songo Mnara and elsewhere on the coast and islands of Tanzania and Kenya, are therefore the relics of earlier Swahili settlements, not those of foreign migrants or invaders ('Arabs', 'Shirazi' or whatever), as is commonly averred. Although the mosques and tombs are by definition Islamic, they are not simple transplants from Arabia or the Persian Gulf. Their architectural style is one which developed locally, being distinctive, in both its forms and its coral masonry techniques, of the Swahili coast. (Sutton 1998: 118)

AD 1500 to 1850

This is a period which can formally be placed in the historical period and hence there is little contribution from archaeological work mentioned. The history of this period for Zanzibar and the rest of the coast of East Africa was a theme of the book of Abdul Sheriff (2002). For the development of Zanzibar as a town and capital of the modern Zanzibar islands, also see Sheriff (2001). Probably the best review of the question of the peopling of Unguja and Pemba islands has been offered by Abdurahman Juma (2006). This volume has brought together oral tradition, socio-political history of the islands since the time of the Omani rule, and archaeological records which demonstrate a long human occupation of the islands. Suffice at this juncture to discuss only a few general issues.

The period beginning AD 1500 ushers in a period when the coast of East Africa was faced with unprecedented political and economic episodes. Such events may have happened in the ancient past, but we do not have enough evidence of them as we do after AD 1500. At this time, the coast of East Africa was invaded by Europeans: first the Portuguese, followed by the French, Dutch, English and German. Since the time of Roman visitation to the coast of East Africa in ancient times, sub-Saharan Africa never saw Europeans in their waters, with the exception of a few individuals, like Marco Polo, whose reports are absent. The effect of this invasion by Europeans has also been discussed by Sheriff (2002).

Following this European invasion were the Omani Arabs, who were in part invited by Swahili rulers to assist in removing the Portuguese, but who also came to East Africa due to their own expansionist agenda. We do not have any evidence of previous successful Arab invasions on the Swahili coast, unless we accept the reported Roman period presence of Yemeni Arabs as colonizers on Rhapta. It is unclear how they entered *Azania*, but they claimed to the Romans that they were in control of Rhapta. As shown earlier, the Romans did not confirm this.

The Portuguese controlled the East African coast until about 1700, before they were pushed to Mozambique by the Omani Arabs, who took over control the Swahili towns. At the beginning of this new phase, the declining economies of the Swahili towns were briefly rejuvenated, but after few decades the towns passed to Arab control. The movement of the Omani political capital to Zanzibar by 1840s, when Seyyid Said moved there, also meant that the Swahili coast effectively became an Omani colony under the protection of the British. Zanzibar town then grew to become the capital not only of Omani Kingdom, but also of East Africa as far as the Congo (for conspectus see Sheriff 2002).

Another important aspect to be discussed here is the trade of humans as slaves, coupled with other items such as ivory. Sheriff (2002) dedicates his book to this. For the first time in history, from about 1700, Muslims, Hindus and Christians saw Africans as 'kaffirs', or heathens, and targeted them for slavery. A great market for human trade had grown up in Zanzibar by 1800 and many other places on the coast. Most of the Swahili coast slaves were sold to the Portuguese and French colonies, Arabia and India.

It is also from about AD 1800 that the islands of the Swahili coast and parts of the Islamic mainland coast are thought to be a land of Arabs and Persians. The Swahili and other black people in these areas were regarded as slaves brought recently from the mainland hinterland. Black people in Zanzibar and Pemba were at this time period called *Wahadimu*, meaning slaves or lower class labourers. The pre- AD 1500 history, which is discussed above, seemed to have disappeared from the records.

The Omani rulers and those elites who benefited from this new version of history asserted themselves as the owners of the islands and all large Swahili towns. Yet the Omani governor in Zanzibar was only installed in 1744, with the agreement that Mwinyi Mkuu, the original African King, should continue being recognised by his people as the King. The agreement was not honoured by 1800, when the King was removed from the capital city, Zanzibar and forced to move his country capital at Bweni. Similar treatment was proffered to the *Mwinyi Mkuu*, or the *Wenye Enzi*, of Kilwa and the Comoros. Others were expatriated to Oman, while others like those of Kilwa had escaped to Mozambique Island.

Of course the problem of Africans in Zanzibar and elsewhere – of associating their lineage with the arrival of people from the Middle East – has contributed to diverting the attention of historians from viewing the peopling history as of internal origin and instead focused on external origins. The last families of the *Mwinyi Mkuu* dynasty in Zanzibar are alleged to have been of Alawi clan, who originated from Muscat and married into

the ruling family. These kinds of foreign origin stories among the Swahili ruling families, from Somalia to as far south as Madagascar, makes the writing of African history difficult – because the people themselves alleging to have come from the Middle East do not look Middle Eastern, and indeed no king of any state in the Middle East would accept them as citizens of their countries. Sutton (1998) and Juma (2006) have provided detailed explanations of this problem. The main explanation to this problem is the loss of power by Africans to foreigners, and hence a refusal to be identified as slaves. It was noted above that from AD 1800, Africans were viewed as slaves.

Another explanation is the disbelief by foreign invaders that Africans had built a heroic *longue durée* history with spectacular architecture. Scholars were convinced that the history of that achievement must be sought from the foreign world; Africans were taught that the coastal history was not of their own ancestors. A wealthy African family with a long [African] ancestral pedigree had to think that its ancestors must have come from abroad, as taught by western scholars.

Hollingsworth described a great Persian or Arabo-Persian Empire in the pre-Portuguese times, which he said was known as the Empire of Zenj or Zinj. Ingrams also devoted a section of his work to the Zinj Empire, which of course never existed. (Allen 1993:4)

Probably another reason for this problem is that of looking for prestige by relating oneself to the lands of Islam and prophets. This problem has brought many headaches to scholars of the African past, and the thrust of this volume has been to assist in clarifying some of the issues associated with this 19th century problem. As long as people of the Swahili coast continue to confuse religion and ethnicity – that by being Muslim one is therefore an Arab – this problem will continue for a long time to come.