

## CHAPTER 2

# Preliminary Analysis of Lithics From Kuumbi Cave, Zanzibar

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In this chapter, a preliminary analysis of the lithic assemblages from the stratified site of Kuumbi cave on Zanzibar Island is presented. The stratigraphy covers a period of from c 22000 BC up to the present time. It is concluded that the sequence contained three vertically separated industries. In the uppermost levels is an expedient technology based on silicified limestone, in the middle of the sequence a quartz industry and in the oldest, lowermost part of the stratigraphy a flaking floor from the production of coral stone implements.

### Introduction

In 2002 I had the opportunity to analyze a lithic assemblage from Ukunju, a cave on Mafia Island on the East African Coast. The assemblage was dominated by flaked quartz based on small rounded beach pebbles (Chami, 2004). Apart from the quartz, there were also remnants of what I considered a flaked assemblage based on silicified limestone. The analysis of the quartz assemblage was quite straightforward. I leaned on experiences from analysis of similar industries in Sweden (Knutsson, 1988; 1998; Knutsson *et al.*, 1999). The assemblage was dominated by split quartz nodules, small flake fragments and a few cores, mainly bipolar on anvil type. No formal tools could be identified. The silicified limestone assemblage was not discussed further at that time because I had no previous experience with this type of material. Questions were actually raised as to whether the assemblage was man made or not and since no experimental replication had been carried out, I thought it best not to go any further in discussing details. The detailed discussion of the stratigraphy, chronology and the cultural setting in general is presented in Chami (2004).

Some year's later Felix Chami of the University of Dar es Salaam surveyed for prehistoric sites on the East African coastal area including Zanzibar. Several cave sites were found on Zanzibar and in 2005 investigations started in two of them: Kuumbi on the south-eastern coast and Machaga just south of Zanzibar town on the west coast. Both caves contained a 2 – 2.5m stratigraphy with faunal as well as lithic assemblages, the latter seemingly similar to the material from Mafia. The investigations in Kuumbi Cave were continued in 2005 through a joint project between Uppsala University and the University of Dar es Salaam, when Trench 6