

CHAPTER 4

Excavations at Bwembweni: An Early Triangular Incised Ware Site of Kaole, Bagamoyo

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Archaeological investigation at Bwembweni Kaole, confirms the existence of the early Triangular Incised Ware tradition along the coast of Bagamoyo. The excavations yielded ceramics that have both elements of Triangular Incised Ware and Early Iron Working traditions. By this work, Bagamoyo is now established to have been occupied since 6th Century AD.

Introduction

This chapter reports on excavations conducted at the site of Bwembweni-Kaole at Bagamoyo in Tanzania. The excavation carried out established the site to be of the early Triangular Incised Ware (TIW) tradition that dates between the 6th C and the 7th C AD (Chami, 1994, 1998, 2001). Bwembweni is located 2km south of Kaole ruins and 6 km south of Bagamoyo town (Figs. 1&2). The site is found within a farm with a few scatted coconut trees, banana and mangrove to the south of the site. About 1 km to the north of the site, there is a fishing village known as Pumbuji. Apart from fishing, which is the main economic activity, the villagers also grow various food crops such as maize, cassava and varieties of leguminous crops.

Prior to the work reported here, archaeological excavations were carried out in 2000 at the Swahili site of Kaole ruins (Chami, 2002). In addition to the excavations, Chami also carried out a survey 2 kilometers south of the Kaole ruins and found potsherds that he hypothesized to be of the early TIW tradition (Chami, 2002). Based on this, it was decided to excavate to investigate this hypothesis. In addition, the excavations were conducted to examine the nature of the pre-Swahili settlement at Bwembweni.