Lsa Occurences from Open-Air Contexts in Central Uganda: The Case of Southern Kyagwe

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This paper explores the potential of open-air sites to the study of Late Stone Age (LSA) occurrences. It reports about the study conducted in Southern Kyagwe found in central part of Uganda. In southern Kyagwe two open-air sites of Koba and Senyi were identified and our investigation was carried out at these two sites specifically. The main objective of this research was to investigate and examine LSA archaeological occurrences at Koba and Senyi open-air sites of southern Kyagwe in central Uganda.

The study broadly focused on artefact typology on the basis of physical attributes, the raw materials, environmental settings and stratigraphic sequence in the area of investigation. There is a high potential for studying Stone Age in Uganda. Although many scholars have devoted their efforts studying Early Stone Age (ESA), Middle Stone Age (MSA) and LSA industrial complexes in Africa and identified numerous cultures, most of the LSA studies have concentrated on covered sites, that is, either rock shelters or caves. For the case of Uganda, whereas the western and northern parts of the country have been subjected to Stone Age investigations, central Uganda has received very little attention in this respect.

A combination of survey and excavation was employed in the fieldwork to recover LSA assemblages. Deliberate sampling was employed in selecting the survey area, potential areas for excavation and specimen for analysis. The resultant data significantly contributes to an understanding of the LSA occurrences in open-air settlements and determine their possible correlates with the already documented LSA assemblages from covered sites. Hopefully this will enrich our understanding of LSA hunters/foragers' settlements in East Africa.

Background

LSA is a term used in sub-Saharan Africa to denote the end of stone technology in human cultural history (Kessy, 2005). In East Africa and many parts of Africa, LSA industry is dated between 45,000 and 1000 years ago (Nelson, 1973). Nevertheless, this chronological framework is still debatable among scholars. The LSA industrial complex is generally characterized by the presence of smaller retouched lithic artifacts known as microlithics (Leakey, 1931; Nelson and Posnansky, 1970; Willoughby, 2007). These were often fitted onto handles, whereas several could be used to form composite tools (Phillipson, 1977). Microliths are defined as small shaped implements, one or more edges of which have been blunted by steep unifacial trimming or vertical backing directed simultaneously