
THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE RIVERINE ENVIRONMENTS OF THE
UPPER NILE VALLEY IN UGANDA

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INTRODUCTION

Mention of the Nile Valley normally brings to mind the Egyptian pyramids and the Sahara desert through which the Nile meanders to its final destination in the Mediterranean Sea. This is because most of the publicity and publications on the Nile have mainly focused on Egypt and some areas in Sudan. While the Nile has given life to Egypt and Sudan and the areas to the south, especially the Upper Nile Valley in Uganda where the Nile starts its long journey, this river has been equally important in the lives of the people who live there. The area to the south has however remained archaeologically unresearched. River Nile starts with a small river, River Kagera, in Rwanda, which flows into Lake Victoria and then out of the lake as River Nile, at Jinja in Uganda, to start its long journey to Egypt.

Generally, there has been very little archaeological research done in Uganda, and the little that has been done has tended to focus on the grassland areas of western Uganda, the western Rift Valley and the dry savannah areas of northeastern Uganda such as Karamoja. Therefore central Uganda, especially those areas bordering Lake Victoria and along the banks of the Nile which are covered by thick equatorial forest, have hardly been touched. According to settlement traditions, these areas have been home to the very early Bantu-speaking peoples whose ceramic traditions link them to the Early Iron Age (EIA) agricultural and iron-using populations of the interlacustrine region dating back to as early as the first millennium BC.

The objectives of the African Archaeology Network Urban Landscapes Project, for Uganda, under the sub-theme "The Riverine Environments in the Upper Nile Valley," were to carry out a systematic reconnaissance in order to establish the archaeological character of the area. It was also intended and planned to carry out limited test excavations at