

Excavation of Lwala Site, Ssi- Mukono District Uganda

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Introduction

Lwala is a Late Stone Age (LSA) to Early/Later Iron Age (EIA-LIA) site located in Ssi sub-county, about 200m south east of Gava Memorial Primary and Secondary School in Kyagwe - Mukono District, Central Uganda (Figure 8:1). The area is characterized by the rainforest environment following its location to be near Lake Victoria as well as the Inter-tropical Convergence Zone. The main occupation of its inhabitants includes crop cultivation and herding. This archaeological investigation was carried out in July to August 2009, by an international team of instructors and students from the University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania as well as Kyambogo and Makerere of Uganda.

Background

The earliest archaeology of central Uganda (Buganda) was conducted at the Hipo Bay rock shelter, Luzira and Waiya, Entebe to establish pottery sequences of the area. The research results indicated that these were the lowest cultural sequences to have been occupied by the makers of Urewe ware (dimple based) over a considerable period of time (Posnansky 1961). From that period, the archaeological research in the area became dormant for a period of almost 40 years, until Reid's (2002) investigation of Sanzi, Kinanisi, Ssi, Kalangala and Masaka sites, where various pottery traditions including Urewe, Roulette Sanzi and Entebe were recovered. According to Reid, majority of outstanding Urewe sites occur along Lake Victoria shores. In these areas, Urewe ware dominates the lower stratigraphic sequences and seems by 1000 AD to have been replaced by two types of transitional pottery namely, Sanzi and Entebbe or the widely distributed LIA roulette. This investigation was followed by Mulidwa's (2004) excavation of Kikubamutwe and Malindi on the west bank of river Nile, near Jinja, where some ceramics that seem to predate (400 AD, whose name is not noted down) EIA ceramics were recovered. However, in some contexts, the pre EIA ceramics were associated with LIA materials leading to suggestion that the area was disturbed.

The latest archaeological investigation of central Uganda was carried out at the Lolui Island by Posnansky and Reid (2005) and by Tibesasa (2007) at the Nkuba rock shelter. Research results suggest the Lolui Island to have been occupied during the Middle Stone Age of the Mid-Pleistocene and again later from the first Millennium AD up to 1908. The Lolui Island investigation suggests the lower sequences to comprise of Urewe ware that dates from 500 BC to 800 AD. However, this suggestion remains tentative because the