

# Preliminary report on excavation at Pangani Bay, Tanga Region on northern Tanzania coast

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## Abstract

*The study of Pangani Bay archaeological sequence stratified with ceramic and other artifactual evidence is a key to understanding continuity and change in maritime culture of the Bay and even wide area of the Tanzania coast from 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> Millennium A.D. An important question is: Can the maritime settlement history of the Pangani Bay be understood as a single continuous cultural tradition from 500 A.D. to 1500 A.D., or were there major cultural discontinuities during the course of its history? This paper presents preliminary excavation and analysis results from Pangani Bay. The excavation and then analysis conclude that the evidence points to an overall cultural continuity with notable incursions of foreign cultural elements into Pangani Bay.*

## Introduction

This paper attempts to present the preliminary results of archaeological excavation work conducted at Pangani Bay in 2010. Pangani Bay (5° 25' 60" S., 39° 0' 0" E) is a hydrographic bay located at the end of the Pangani River mouth as it enters the Indian Ocean (Figure 10.1:). This study focused on uncovering cultural sequences and materials that can show indigenous traces for the origin of Swahili culture in the area. The excavations show that Pangani Bay is rich in archaeological materials, spanning from the Zanjian (TIW) period (750-1200 A.D.) to the Swahili (1250-1500 A.D.) and the Post-Swahili (Post-1500 A.D.) times.

East African coastal archaeologists have for a long time been curious about how individual littoral sites may have contributed to the formation of Swahili culture in the first and second millennium A.D. (Chami, 1994; Horton, 1996; Kwekason, 2011; Walz, 2010). This excavation report contributes to such curiosity. In 2010, the author decided to excavate and then analyse data from Pangani Bay to satisfy one main objective and two specific objectives. The main objective concerns the study of

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