

Developments in Rural Life on the Eastern African Coast, A.D. 700-1500

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[T]he countryside, like cities, has its own complex history of development. States were not composed of timeless villages and customs on top of which were built urban environments. (Yoffee 2005: 137)

Introduction

This paper concerns developments in rural life on the eastern African coast from A.D. 700 to 1500, based on research conducted on Pemba Island, Tanzania (Fig. 1). The coast is well known for its ancient Swahili urban centers or “stonetowns,” which first developed in the early second millennium on the littoral of Somalia, Kenya, Tanzania, and Mozambique, and in the Comoros and northern Madagascar. *Stonetown* is based on a varying architectural component of these settlements—mosques, multistory houses, tombs—made from coral, lime mortar, and plaster; despite the name, the greater proportion of buildings was always wattle-and-daub. Stonetowns remain visible as stone ruins or indeed, endured as the core of urban centers in the modern period (e.g., Mombasa, Lamu). Since the 1980s, when Swahili indigeneity was successfully argued by linguists, historians, and archaeologists (Allen 1974; Nurse and Spear 1985; Chami 1994; Horton 1996; Kusimba 1999), coastal archaeology has grown exponentially, concentrating mostly on stonetowns themselves. This has produced considerable understanding of towns’ individual and regional complexities as well as regional patterns in urban structure and life. Few towns have been examined using a more functional view of urbanism (see below), however, where larger centers can be shown to have ties to their smaller regional neighbors. To contribute to this effort we have sought to recover more ephemeral village sites, and areas of

stonetowns featuring wattle-and-daub architecture, to complement and integrate with data from the stone-built parts of the Swahili landscape.

The present research is based on two projects, both of which grew out of a pilot season in 1998 at the stonetown of Chwaka in northern Pemba (LaViolette 2000). Fleisher (2003, 2010a) carried out a major systematic archaeological survey in the northern quarter of the island in 1999-2000, recovering buried settlements in the countrysides around Chwaka and another stonetown, Mkia wa Ngombe (Fig. 2), and digging test units in a sample of villages. We followed that survey with a large-scale collaborative project (2002-06) featuring household archaeology, co-directed with Dr. Bertram Mapunda (formerly U. Dar es Salaam, now Jordan University College, Tanzania), at four sites—Chwaka, Tumbe, Kimimba, and Kaliwa—spanning the 7th-15th centuries, the focus of the present discussion (Fig. 2). Two are first-millennium A.D. villages—Tumbe and Kimimba—one large, one small, occupied before the emergence of stonetowns on the coast. The third is a small, early second-millennium village, Kaliwa, situated near Chwaka. Although we feature village life in this discussion, we include Chwaka itself because of the critical context and comparison it provides.

As a brief background, Swahili origins took place within an Iron Age context, as speakers of Northeast Coast Bantu and Cushitic languages moved into a then-lightly populated coastal niche in the mid-1st millennium A.D., practicing mixed farming and wild resource utilization. These proto-Swahili were not the first coastal dwellers to engage in long-distance trade relations with African societies further inland and Indian Ocean peoples beyond the continent (Casson 1989; Horton and Chami 2017), but they built a society in which such trade became an important pillar. As early as the 8th century, coastal dwellers began practicing Islam, integrating Islamic social and cultural influences into their eastern African cultural milieus. After A.D. 1000,

Swahili stonetown polities began developing at locations spread along the coast. These towns interacted with and referenced each other, but were largely independent politically. They appear to have varied in their internal power structures along a continuum between having a single leader, or a large number of elites (Allen 1993). Stonetowns have been the subject of research since the 1940s. First- and second-millennium villages on the coast have received much less attention (but see e.g., Kusimba et al. 2013; Wright 1984, 1993; Wynne-Jones 2005, 2016).

The present archaeology allows us to say new things about villages, and to complement the scant village-based work from other coastal regions. With the diversity that has been documented among stonetowns, we should expect to see it in the archaeology of the countrysides too, as has been the case in other parts of the world. The questions about rural history we wish to answer here include: How diverse were villages before the emergence of urbanism? Once Chwaka emerged, how did its size, location, diversity of activities, and lifeways compare with those at its smaller neighbor, Kaliwa? What types of relationships occurred overall between town and country? And what was daily life like in these villages, and how did it change over time? We hope that studies such as this encourage others to survey increasingly for and excavate settlements and more ephemeral buildings (Fleisher and LaViolette 1999a, b), so that their inhabitants are shown to play an active role in the Swahili and larger eastern African story.

Pemba Island

Pemba is a verdant island 60 km off the northern Tanzanian coast, in recent history the more rural half of the Zanzibar archipelago which includes Unguja (Zanzibar) Island just to its south (Fig. 1). Pemba measures c. 1000 km², bounded by a jagged coastline producing some stretches extending less than 10 km east/west. Coral reefs encircle the island; they open to

protected harbor areas where ancient and modern towns are sited. Three major topographic zones include steep, wooded hills on the west side, open valleys and ridgetops north and east, and scrubby flatlands with limestone outcrops to the east and south. Around Chwaka in the far north, deep yellowish-grey sandy loams predominate, supporting contemporary farming of cassava, beans, and millet, and coconut plantations. Farmers plant rice in briny inlets and valleys, and graze small numbers of cows, sheep, and goats. The agricultural system is influenced by shifting monsoon winds from the northeast and southwest creating variable annual rainy seasons. For nearly two millennia, monsoons have enabled annual trading voyages from northern Indian Ocean ports to the eastern African coast and back (Horton and Middleton 2000: 9-10).

To contextualize the present discussion, we briefly recount the archaeological research on Pemba to date. It began nearly a century ago, as British colonial officers (Pearce 1920; Ingrams 1931; Buchanan 1932) explored its standing ruins: to them, proof of prior waves of Orientalist colonization (LaViolette 2017). Professional archaeology followed, including Kirkman's (1959) excavations at Ras Mkumbuu stonetown. Horton and Clark's (1985) survey of sites with aboveground ruins on Pemba (and Zanzibar) provided a baseline for a new culture history (Horton forthcoming) and preservation efforts, and encouraged more research. The latter included work at Pujini (LaViolette 1989, 1996, 2000), Chwaka and Tumbe (Fleisher and LaViolette 2013), discussed further below, and Mtambwe Mkuu and Ras Mkumbuu (Horton forthcoming). Much of the work in towns included excavations in non-stone parts of the sites. Tumbe (see below) produced evidence that it was a large trade village (Flexner et al. 2008; Fleisher and LaViolette 2013). An important departure from this stone-site focus (except for Tumbe) was Fleisher's (2003, 2010a) survey, which provided for a reconstruction of the settlement system prior to and during urban development. Walshaw (2010, 2015) carried out the

coast's first archaeobotanical research at Chwaka and village sites, and Stoetzel's (2015) phytolith-based study of anthropogenic change included work in northern Pemba. Croucher (2015) explored the 19th-century Omani clove plantation at Mgoli. Most recently, Fitton (2017) has done work on waterfront structures, including at Tumbe, and large-scale collaborative work on early coastal linkages across the Indian Ocean has included data from Pemba (e.g., Crowther et al. 2016).

Although Pemba has been regarded as the “agricultural breadbasket” of Mombasa and Zanzibar over recent centuries (LaViolette and Fleisher 2009: 433), prior to the arrival of the Portuguese in the opening years of the 16th century the island boasted some of the densest urban development along the coast (Garlake 1966: 7). From the 11th-15th centuries, five major stonetowns (including Chwaka) thrived on the shores of central and northern Pemba, along with eight smaller towns that were home to a single stone mosque and wattle-and-daub houses. The presence of so many large and small towns encircling Pemba's coastline suggests it was a particularly important and competitive coastal region during these centuries (Fleisher 2003), providing a dynamic setting in which to examine transformations in village life.

What follows

We begin by providing a series of working definitions of the categories employed here. We follow with relevant studies of rural settlements from other world regions, and then review ethnographic observations of Swahili village life that have influenced archaeological views of the past. Our research and results follow, an exploration of changing patterns of rural production and consumption from the 8th-15th centuries, an opportunity to witness an insular landscape transform from one populated by different kinds of villages, to one with a multi-tiered, urban

settlement system. We conclude with a discussion comparing our results to other expectations and coastal areas, hopefully having increased space for once-almost invisible places and people to emerge.

Some Definitions

We wish to clarify how we are using terms that are somewhat interchangeable in archaeological and ethnographic literature: rural, village, countryside, and hinterland. For us, *rural* indicates settlements located away from cities and towns, but involved in social, political, economic and/or religious relationships with them. These settlements are often called ‘villages’ or ‘hamlets’ in the literature. Thus we distinguish *rural villages*, associated with cities and towns, from *villages*, those unrelated to, or existing prior to, larger centers (Flannery 1976; Bandy and Fox 2010).

In archaeological terminology, *hinterland* often refers to the area surrounding and connected to an urban center (Schwartz and Falconer 1994). In eastern Africa, however, *hinterland* is used most often to refer to areas linked to coastal cities, but located west of the coastal corridor, distant from cities themselves: what C. Kusimba (2009) calls “the more rural hinterland” (also Kusimba and Kusimba 2005). His research, along with that of Helm (2010) and Walz (2010), has documented the larger African regional spheres within which coastal settlements functioned, “ethnic mosaics” (Kusimba and Kusimba 2005) that included a wide range of social formations (hunter-gatherers, pastoralists, farmers), and trade routes that linked coastal and interior destinations. These were zones of interaction to be sure, but not ones in which coastal residents interacted on a daily basis. We call the latter, in which such quotidian interaction took place, the *countryside*, to distinguish it from *hinterland*. Definitions of urban

settlements and urbanism continue to be debated (see discussion in Sinclair 2017); we take a functional view of cities (LaViolette and Fleisher 2005), as below.

Rural Communities in Complex Societies: Models from Archaeology

The present work follows upon influential archaeology in other urban systems, work that aims to describe ways that rural communities effected, and were affected by, urban transformations (Webster and Gonlin 1988; Schwartz and Falconer 1994; Smith 1994; Yoffee 1995, 1997; Yaeger 2003; Lohse and Valdez 2004). It is long recognized that the emergence of cities directly affected the social and economic life of surrounding countryside populations, a process Yoffee (1997, 2005: 60) has called “ruralization” as counterpart to urbanization. Ruralization marks the increased role rural settlements are seen to play in urban systems. This includes increased food and craft production in the countryside to satisfy demands in the urban core, and increased demand for rural labor in towns. The demand for things “urban” can increase in the countryside as well, where inhabitants can emulate material culture and styles of the urban core (Smith 2003: 10; Yaeger 2003). In a functional understanding of urbanism, ties binding rural and urban communities are viewed as symbiotic, with rural communities functionally part of urban systems. Trigger’s (1972: 577) oft-cited definition of urbanism, which we embrace (LaViolette and Fleisher 2005), hints at this “relationship to a broader hinterland,” and suggests generally that villages were places of agricultural production. Conversely, some descriptions of the urban/rural relationship emphasize the exploitative nature of urban centers; rather than cities and villages working as a functional unit, urban attempts to gain access to rural goods have been viewed as “predatory...siphoning off as many assets as possible, while stopping short of undermining rural infrastructure” (Schwartz and Falconer 1994: 3).

More recent archaeological examinations of rural settlements have moved away from functional or Marxist interpretations to emphasize the nature of regional identities, and the intra-settlement organization of rural settlements themselves as compared to nearby urban centers (Robin 2003; Yaeger 2003; Wynne-Jones 2007a). Such attention by archaeologists to rural or ‘commoner’ populations has helped dispel persistent myths about them: e.g., they were homogenous across time and space, passive in relation to more powerful centers, and conservative in daily practices (Marcus 2004). Homogeneity, once assumed, has been dispelled time and again, through exploration of multiple houses within a rural community (Gonlin 1994), and contemporary rural communities within a larger region (Yaeger and Robin 2004). For example, Yaeger and Robin (2004: 162) argue conclusively for significant differences between two Late Classic Maya commoner settlements in Belize: “households varied from nuclear to extended family groups, and their members had different access to labor, engaged in diverse ritual practices, and portrayed their connections to outsiders in distinct ways.” This refutes “reconstructions of pre-Hispanic Maya society that envision commoners as a uniform, homogeneous peasantry” (Yaeger and Robin 2004: 162).

Similarly, research at the 7th-century Mayan site of Ceren, El Salvador, challenged assumptions of commoners’ passivity vis-à-vis powerful centers. Evidence there revealed that most goods needed for daily life were produced in villages themselves. However, additional evidence suggested that households produced surplus for consumption in other villages, and in centers. Commoners had the power to be self-sufficient, but in Sheets’ view (2006: 116), chose interdependency with multiple communities and were no “mindless cogs in the productive gears supporting elites.” This type of study challenges the notion that elites were all-powerful in early complex societies, and helps us envision their negotiated practices with commoners.

Nevertheless, misconceptions about rural areas continue to abound in the archaeology of complex societies for several reasons. First, rural areas remain only rarely the object of research attention, and are still approached as “simpler” counterparts to “complex” urban areas (Smith 1994: 144). As noted, this has been partially ameliorated by research that considers rural communities in their own right. Another challenge is the nature of archaeological research in villages. Marcus (2004: 268) has argued that normative excavation strategies—based on limited numbers of small test-pits—have made it impossible to see differences between them, and serve to reify assumptions about homogeneity. This issue, indeed, plagues the archaeology of the Swahili coast, where most excavations at villages and towns (e.g., Chami 1994, Wilson and Omar 1997) are carried out in 2 x 2 m trenches. This is partially due to cultural historical questions posed, for which test-pit excavations produce stratigraphic sequences of local pottery and other materials. It may also be seen as a reaction to the large-scale clearance projects practiced by colonial scholars (Kirkman 1963; Chittick 1974), but archaeologists would benefit from a middle ground in which larger exposures are used to understand domestic and other settings. When researchers have examined spatial patterning of artifacts, production, and house organization and construction, they achieve a greater sense of rural variability (e.g., Yaeger and Robin 2004; Robin 2012, 2013). Marcus (2004) further argues that research on village settlements often focuses on urban precursors, rather than settlements contemporaneous with mature urban centers.

Finally, ethnographic data have been deployed problematically to interpret life in ancient rural settlements. When coupled with assumptions that rural settlements are relatively homogenous and static, ethnographic and ethnohistoric data become a too-easy way of fleshing out the social context, especially absent significant archaeological data (Webster and Gonlin

1988). Stahl's (2001) work in the Banda region, Ghana, argued for a more critical approach to ethnographic analogies. In examining a village community at different periods from the 13th-20th centuries, she demonstrated how the application of contemporary ethnographic images would obscure complex political-economic relationships evident archaeologically. Contemporary villages that appear *materially* similar to past examples can actually blind archaeologists to the changing web of social, political, and economic relationships villagers negotiated through time (Stahl 2001).

The case of ancient communities on the eastern African coast is no exception. Many of the issues that have been confronted in regions with longer research trajectories, such as Mesoamerica and Mesopotamia, have yet to be addressed there. These include an almost exclusive focus on urban settlements and elite contexts within them, as noted (cf. LaViolette and Fleisher 2009; Fleisher 2010a; Wynne-Jones 2007a; Pawlowicz 2011); an over-reliance and sometimes uncritical application of modern Swahili ethnographic models; limited archaeological research at village sites; and prioritizing chronology and culture history at villages that grew into stonetowns (e.g., Chittick 1974; Horton 1996). Our efforts here are meant to define baseline features of rural life in one region, but we expect to see continued complexity emerge if and when the archaeology of other coastal regions includes more rural data.

Ethnographic Models of Swahili Rural/Village Settlements

Archaeologists have relied on Swahili ethnographic research to think about ancient rural communities, most notably on 20th-century settlements by Middleton (e.g., 1972, 1987, 1992; Middleton and Campbell 1965; Horton and Middleton 2000), Prins (1961, 1965, 1971). These are richly descriptive, largely ahistoric ethnographies in Lamu and Zanzibar in the 1950s, the

basis for many archaeological discussions of Swahili rural places. Donley-Reid's (e.g., 1990) influential ethnoarchaeological studies of stone-house-dwelling elites in urban Lamu have been used to interpret ancient houses, as discussed below. Additional ethnography includes Caplan's (1975, 1997) work on Mafia Island, Landberg's (1977) study of a coastal Tanzanian village, and Goldman's (1996) study on Pemba. These last situate issues of political economy and identity historically, and are thus less frequently invoked for distant periods.

Archaeologists have relied on two models of urban/rural relationships based on comparative archaeological and ethnographic material (cf. Sinclair and Håkansson 2000: 463). The first envisions Swahili cities atop a pyramid of settlements, below which were towns, and then villages as varying production centers at the base; the lower two tiers move goods up the hierarchy to cities, which were regulators of the system (Kusimba 1999: 123-4). This model has many correlates drawn from ethnography and archaeology worldwide, and has been a de facto way in which we envision the coast, but largely in the absence of village data. The second model comes from Middleton's (1992: 54-75) Swahili ethnographic work, and formed the basis for Horton and Middleton's (2000) discussion of the urban/rural dynamic. They argued for two types of Swahili towns—"stone-towns" and "commoner-towns" (2000: 126-7). Commoner-towns were places of small-scale craft and foodstuff production, with goods locally consumed and traded to nearby stonetowns (Middleton 1992: 58). Thus, commoner-towns are deemed relatively self-sufficient compared to stonetowns, dependent on goods produced in villages themselves (Middleton 1992: 56; also, Kusimba 1999: 133, 142). In exchange for these goods, commoner-town residents received goods and services from hinterland and overseas ports, as well as military protection when needed. As Middleton (1992: 56-7) notes, "[commoner-towns] have been and are more or less self-sufficient, but the stone-towns are not so; all are linked by

patterns of exchange of foodstuffs, labor, many kinds of productive, technical, and processing services, religious cults, [and] marriage partners...” In this way, supra-local interactions were seen as important to Swahili stonetowns, consistent with other city-state systems.

The necessary, interdependent interaction of stonetowns and commoner-towns was viewed as forming cohesive settlement systems, or “conurbations” (Horton and Middleton 2000: 136). Middleton argued (1992: 55) that the entwined nature of the two meant that their distinctions did not fit comfortably with traditional notions of urban/rural: “simplistic geographical notions that make a distinction between urban and rural communities have little relevance for the Swahili.” Indeed, 20th-century Swahili terminology for settlements indicates the elusiveness of a sharp town/country distinction: *mji* refers to towns *and* villages (Prins 1961: 90), and indicates settlement autonomy rather than function. In common usage, larger settlements are *mji* and smaller ones are diminutized as *kiji* (Prins [1961: 90] argues *kiji* were inhabited by slaves or squatters, perhaps an earlier connotation). Thus, in this model, terminologically and ethnographically, Swahili settlements are “ends of a continuum,” with the distinction between stone- and commoner-towns representing ideal types (Middleton 1992: 55). Even this ethnographically sensitive model belies the complexity of settlement types as observed in the mid-20th century (Prins 1961). Our point, however, is that in Middleton’s model, neither stonetowns nor villages are self-sufficient.

Both generalized and more ethnographically grounded models thus provide hypothetical examples testable with archaeological data, rather than necessarily accurate images of ancient settlements. Research from the last 20 years has shown that stonetowns varied considerably from each other as did the landscapes around them, and that the organization and role of rural settlements within such landscapes also varied (Wilson 1982; Horton 1994; Wynne-Jones 2007a;

Fleisher 2010a, 2017; Pawlowicz 2011). Indeed, modern Swahili village life was forged in a complex history including Omani and European colonialism. Finally, we can test the underlying assumption that urban and rural settlements were parts of truly integrated settlement systems, what Middleton (1992: 55) called the “internally complex organic unity of Swahili society.”

What common themes emerge from the two dominant models, and what expectations of the archaeological record are based on them? Principally, that from a relatively undifferentiated village-dominated landscape, villages became increasingly tied to urban areas. Rural production then supplanted that of the urban core, as villagers produced for the region rather than for themselves alone. We turn now to Pemba, to see how well our data conform to these assumptions.

The Present Study

As stated at the outset, the data presented here resulted from two field projects. Fleisher located 34 sites in the northernmost quarter of Pemba, spanning the 8th-18th centuries A.D.: field houses, hamlets, and villages, including Kimimba and Kaliwa, measuring less than .5 to 6 hectares (ha), with most 1.5 ha or less. The survey recovered evidence for an extensive, pre-A.D. 1000 settlement system (Fleisher 2010a), suggesting the region went through a dramatic transformation from the 8th-15th centuries A.D. He identified three settlement periods: A.D. 750-1050, 1050-1300, and 1300-1500. From 750-1050, the region was settled with a dense array of fieldhouses, hamlets, and villages. At about 1050, stonetowns Chwaka and Mkia wa Ngombe were founded; at the same time, the number of regional villages declined, which continued into the third period, 1300-1500. Fleisher (2010: 274) suggests that countryside populations were

moving into the towns, effectively depopulating the countryside due to new opportunities that towns afforded (LaViolette and Fleisher 2009; Horton forthcoming).

That early village landscape was dominated by Tumbé (LaViolette and Fleisher 1995, 2009; Fleisher and LaViolette 2013) from the 8th-10th centuries A.D. Once towns emerged in the 11th century, there were many fewer contemporary village sites, supporting the idea that countryside populations were instrumental in founding and developing Chwaka. A few villages remained (e.g., Kaliwa) but were occupied longer, effectively more permanent than those in the 1st millennium. Fleisher (2010a: 279) has argued for a “synoectic” process, in which “new centers [were] formed through the acceptance of domination by a political center or through the movement of populations into a new political center.” We revisit this in our conclusion.

The collaborative household project focused on the four sites discussed here, over three field seasons. We will use three major classes of resulting data to compare sites of each period. For the early period, Tumbé/Kimimba, we present 1) occupation data, 2) production data related to a large corpus of bead-grinders, and 3) imported ceramic and glass data. For the later period, Chwaka/Kaliwa, we discuss 1) occupation data again, 2) imported ceramic and glass data again, and 3) faunal data (fish/shellfish, other meat). We chose these categories based on the best available data at this point in our analysis. We will argue that in an 8th-10th-century village landscape, one large village seems to have controlled aspects of life in a smaller neighbor. In contrast, from the 11th-15th centuries in a then-urban landscape, a stonetown and its village neighbor display many shared similarities in activities and economies. These data signal an effort to define baseline features of rural life for a particular coastal area, and to build an understanding of settlement characteristics, production/consumption, and possible relationships with emerging urban centers.

The chronological estimates for the four sites are based on local ceramic typologies,

imported pottery types, and radiocarbon dates derived from excavated charcoal samples, summarized in Table 1. For Kimimba and Kaliwa, there is only one reliable radiocarbon date each, but these accord well with estimates from local pottery (Early Tana Tradition from Kimimba) and imported pottery (Longquan celadon and blue/green monochromes from Kaliwa). Dates from Tumbe and Chwaka are more complicated. Tumbe is spatially extensive (Table 1) with a small vertical stratigraphy, so detecting chronological change is difficult. Most radiocarbon dates clustered in the 8th-10th centuries, although some were 7th-8th centuries. Chwaka is also spatially extensive, smaller than Tumbe, but with deep stratigraphy, up to 3 m in places. As seen in Table 1, Chwaka's earliest occupation (in the lowest levels in certain areas, i.e., Operation 7 and deposits related to the earliest mosque) seems to coincide with the final years at Tumbe or just post-abandonment. Chwaka grew steadily in the 12th-13th centuries, with most areas containing deposits related to that time, and reached its maximum in the 14th-15th centuries, coinciding with occupation at Kaliwa. We include population estimates, with full disclosure that these are the roughest of estimates based on our sense of likely house density and occupation, broadly compared to wattle-and-daub houses and settlement sizes now. These convey our sense of the small size of Kimimba and Kaliwa relative to the expansiveness of their larger neighbors, and also the difference between Tumbe and Chwaka at their largest.

[TABLE 1 HERE]

First-Millennium Pemban Villages: Tumbe and Kimimba

While Chwaka was one of dozens of 2nd-millennium Swahili towns along the eastern African coast and offshore islands, earlier Tumbe is a less common settlement type (Fleisher and LaViolette 2013) (Table 1). We call it a “sprawling village,” for although “busy with productive

and mercantile activities,” it was “ultimately not much different in organization than nearby smaller villages” (LaViolette and Fleisher 2009: 440). Discussed below, the evidence for production suggests little economic integration with surrounding villages, and thus little indication of urbanization/ruralization. Tumbe comprises 20-30 ha of deposits along 600 m of waterfront overlooking Micheweni Bay (Fig. 3), and extending 600 m inland (Fleisher and LaViolette 2013). Today it is covered with coconut and cassava, two small areas of 18th-19th-century Omani Mazrui structures, and a modern school. The earliest possible date of occupation for Tumbe is approximately A.D. 600 based on radiocarbon dating. However, dates from many excavated contexts suggests that occupation was densest from AD 700-950. We consider this the primary occupation; we think it unlikely that all parts of this site were inhabited contemporaneously, and that it may be palimpsestic. The overall density of deposits nonetheless suggests it was populous, one of the largest coastal settlements at this time (Fleisher and LaViolette 2013). The 700-950 deposits are 0.2-0.4 m thick, averaging 0.7 m below the surface.

We dug test excavations in 1997-98 (LaViolette 2000), after which Fleisher (2003) did extensive shovel-testing as part of his 1999-2000 survey. In 2002-04 we dug 26 test units at Tumbe measuring 110 m² total, expanding four significantly. The most important finds include two burned wattle-and-daub houses with abundant household materials: tens of thousands of Early Tana Tradition ceramics, ~2000 sherds of Chinese and Middle Eastern ceramics, 2800 glass fragments, copper/-alloy earrings, finger rings, and large sewing needles, lead, bead-making and iron production debris (see below), a kitchen oven, and extensive faunal and botanical remains. We think Tumbe flourished at the large-village level, engaged in active

domestic and long-distance economies without becoming urban (Flexner et al. 2008; Fleisher and LaViolette 2013).

Just 2 km south of Tumbe is Kimimba, a compact site of 2 ha located in a flat, sandy area with few drainages and an adjacent spring, about 1 km inland from Pemba's eastern shore (Fleisher 2017). Kimimba is a single-component settlement contemporary with Tumbe (8th-9th centuries A.D.) and abandoned slightly earlier. The site was excavated extensively, with 17 units covering more than 106 m² total (Fig. 4). Deposits were found in a compact layer 20-25 cm thick overlaid by 20-30 cm of sterile topsoil, and sealing a white sandy subsoil. Excavations revealed burned daub concentrations from structure walls (although no intact houses), a handful of shallow pits, and post molds. Pottery of the Early Tana Tradition (or Triangular Incised Ware), the widespread 7th-10th-century ceramic horizon of the coast and interior, dominated finds with ~7,800 sherds excavated and analyzed.

A comparison of Tumbe and Kimimba reveals that although they were similar in many ways relating to daily life, a number of measures distinguished them: occupation, intensity of production, and connections to long-distance trade networks.

Occupation

House and construction evidence suggests that residents of both villages lived similarly in wattle-and-daub; there is no evidence of the architectural differences in type and scale that became status markers later (Kusimba 1999; Wynne-Jones 2007a; LaViolette 2008). Tumbe excavations recovered daub concentrations representing individual houses and associated material (Fleisher and LaViolette 2013). Even without complete house footprints from Kimimba (Fig. 5), daub concentrations and postholes are clear evidence of houses. Kimimba's daub has

the same morphology as that from Tumbe: chunky fragments bearing pole impressions of various sizes, typical of wattle-and-daub construction. There is little difference in daub density across the sites, indicating similar settlement plans of individual houses with little space between them. Both villages contained relatively compact strata: 20-40 cm of cultural debris in most excavated locations. In terms of site size and length of occupation, however, there are significant differences (Table 1).

Production: Bead Grinders

Grinders are common in most 1st-millennium coastal assemblages, and co-occur with Early Tana Tradition pottery. They are typically local potsherds bearing multiple grooves ground into their surfaces, most likely debris from discoidal shell-bead production with potential additional uses; some were sherds from imported ceramics (Fig. 6). Flexner et al. (2008) have provided a synthesis of these materials from the coastal corridor, and note they are found exclusively in deposits predating A.D. 1000. They are found in all early settlements located on Pemba, with distinctions between individual assemblages. Tumbe contains the largest assemblage of grinders ever found, 3500+ examples. In comparison, the large similarly dated sites of Manda (Chittick 1984) and Shanga (Horton 1996) yielded 106 and 81 grinders. Some smaller sites from the Tanzanian mainland coast yielded as many as 240 (Chami 1994). Tumbe thus stands alone, with grinders found throughout the deposits and in high-density hotspots. This led Flexner et al. (2008: 177) to suggest “household specialization... [with] evidence of a skilled production technique likely carried out as a part-time activity.”

Kimimba’s deposits also yielded grinders from across the settlement—a total of 135, high relative to sites generally—but at numbers indicating beads were produced at a lower intensity

than by their neighbors, even adjusting for the potential scale difference of communities. Two Kimimba locations produced higher densities (n=33 and 54), but in contexts with high artifact densities overall, likely community middens. The distribution of materials across Kimimba mirrors that of Tumbe, offering a way to compare life in the two settlements. On one hand, the type of production was probably at the household level at both sites, dispersed among different families and groups. Also at both, bead production occurs with common domestic debris rather than in restricted production areas. This suggests real similarities in the organization of production. On the other hand, the striking intensity of production at Tumbe hints at higher consumption there (Flexner et al. 2008: 178; Fleisher and LaViolette 2013), possibly for trade and exchange (Chittick 1974; Chami 1994). The differences in production between Kimimba and Tumbe are likely of intensity rather than kind; we think Tumbe successfully “adapted a long-standing economy of household production to an increased demand for shell beads, without dramatic changes in the settlement’s socio-economic or political organization” (Fleisher and LaViolette 2013: 1166). However, the overall similarity between the production process indicates little economic integration between the two settlements.

Imported Goods

Tumbe and Kimimba reveal, strikingly, roughly the same *diversity* of material culture: local pottery, imports, iron production debris, and grinders. However, the *density* of imported goods differs substantially. At Tumbe, imported pottery is a common part of the assemblage (3-4%), but found in only trace amounts at Kimimba (Fig. 7). Tumbe’s wealth indicates it was one of three main trade settlements on the late 1st-millennium coast (Fleisher and LaViolette 2013), akin to Unguja Ukuu (Juma 2004) and Manda (Chittick 1984). If Tumbe was an important

center, certainly prominent on Pemba, a comparison of its assemblage with those of surrounding villages is a way to investigate socioeconomic relationships between them, and to examine claims made about Swahili villages from ethnographic data.

Imports at Swahili sites are often used as a proxy for connection to Indian Ocean trade networks. They include glazed and unglazed pottery, glass vessels, glass and stone beads, copper/-alloys, and lead. Wright (1993) suggests that the initial control over trade relations—and the goods obtained—may have been key to the process of differentiation between Swahili village settlements. On Pemba, this may be the case, as imported pottery densities are lower in sites farther from the coast (even if just a few kms), and significantly different at Tumbe, Kimimba, and other village settlements (Fleisher 2003). Table 2 presents two ways of comparing these assemblages, using a ratio of imported to local pottery and density of imports in the excavations (see Wright 1993).

[TABLE 2 HERE]

Kimimba's small number is striking: more than 143 m² excavated produced only 16 sherds (40 g) of imported pottery (11 Sasanian Islamic, 5 whiteglaze, 1 Dusun stoneware): due to the extensive excavation, this is unlikely a sample-size issue.

Glass presents another opportunity to demonstrate trade connections. It is present at Kimimba in some abundance: 206 recovered fragments representing a half-dozen different vessels, including a rare, molded glass beaker. Densities were nonetheless a fraction of those at Tumbe. The small number of total imports, compared to the thousands of imported sherds and glass fragments recovered just 2 km away at Tumbe, suggests their flow to settlements was uneven, and that the trade carried out at Tumbe was exceptional. No other 8th-10th-century sites on Pemba (of 16 located) contain such a rich assemblage (Fleisher 2003).

It is possible that Tumbe, as the region's central settlement, exerted control over the village economy of northern Pemba through control of trade goods. In this case, the differential distributions of imported pottery would index economic integration between settlements in the region, expected in the models of rural-urban relations presented by Middleton (1992), Kusimba (1999), and others: urban centers required goods from rural areas in exchange for imports. In this scenario, emergent elites in larger coastal villages and towns would use imports to obtain food and other materials to sustain long-distance trade activities: a form of wealth finance (D'Altroy and Earle 1985) that would indicate a 'proto' urban-rural relationship on Pemba.

A second scenario is that the distribution of imports represents the variable connections communities had with long-distance traders, but that settlements were relatively autonomous and *not* regionally integrated; in this case, Tumbe still would not be urban, nor the villages rural, in the sense framed by Yoffee (2005). Tumbe's size and relative wealth do not alone indicate systemic relations between settlements. Additional rank-size data also suggest that during the 8th-11th centuries, such relationships did not likely exist (Fleisher 2010a).

A number of social and economic practices could explain the differences in artifact densities without assuming control by Tumbe. Imports at Kimimba could have been acquired by its residents visiting Tumbe. Also, imports may not have been traded in their original form: among the few imports from Kimimba is a ground triangular sherd of Dusun stoneware, suggesting the possibility that imported pottery was moving, at least sometimes, as broken fragments (Fig. 7; Chapman 2000). It is notable that Kimimba's entire imported ceramic assemblage would add up to a fraction of one vessel. We thus argue that distinctions between import quantities and densities at both sites provide another line of evidence to suggest relative day-to-day independence between them.

In sum, the two assemblages suggest the settlements were largely independent in subsistence and production, but that Tumbe kept some control over movement of imports into the countryside. We have not featured subsistence evidence in this comparison; however, Walshaw (2015: 44-9) reported few cultivars (a single millet grain) at Kimimba, while at Tumbe there is heavier reliance on pearl millet, and evidence for introduced plants. Kimimba yielded evidence for a wider range of fruits and starchy plant organs than did Tumbe (Walshaw 2015: 44-49), suggesting that while both villages exhibit mixed subsistence economies, they differed. While a full discussion is beyond our scope here, this evidence supports that there were some differences in resource access between the two. There is little indication that they were integrated or interdependent in any meaningful way, and offer a good example, although in the absence of actual towns, of Middleton's (1992) town and country continuum on the contemporary coast. And, if there was some control by Tumbe over the flow of imports to Kimimba, this resonates with Kusimba's (1999) hierarchical model, although once again in the absence of actual towns, and with no evidence of countryside production flowing into Tumbe.

The Early 2nd Millennium: Chwaka and Kaliwa

We turn to an examination of occupation, import, and faunal data from Chwaka and Kaliwa. Chwaka is a mid-sized Swahili stonetown, seemingly representative of many early towns in size, population, and proportion of stone to wattle-and-daub architecture. Separated from Tumbe by 300 m, Chwaka was founded just as Tumbe was abandoned, or perhaps some decades after. It flourished for 500 years, close to the open ocean, Pemba Channel, and mainland and with direct access to a protected harbor. At its 14th-15th century height, it covered 12 ha and had three standing stone mosques. The congregation mosque had a cluster of a dozen stone

tombs nearby, including two “pillar tombs,” a unique feature of Swahili architecture (Fig. 8). There was minimally one stone house, and hundreds of wattle-and-daub houses. As noted there is up to 3+ m of cultural deposits. We estimate the population at 3,000-5,000. In the joint project, we excavated 30, 1 x 1 m units to determine settlement chronology and house locations, followed by extensive large-scale exposures in house deposits and community middens which yielded a wide array of features and domestic and imported materials. We also excavated in the stone mosques, determining a four-mosque sequence (Horton 2004) we have tied to the town’s growing population (Fleisher 2010a), the prioritizing of religious specialization over long-distance commerce, and changing religious and social mores (LaViolette et al. 2014).

Kaliwa lies on a small hill next to the modern village of Tumbe Mjini (Fleisher 2003) and adjacent to the shoreline, 2 km north of Chwaka. Along the coast to its north is mangrove, and south are beach deposits. This remains a major fishing beach today. There is no current habitation there, although villagers traverse Kaliwa daily walking to the fishing beach. Cassava and coconut palms cover much of the site, and, to the south lies a modern cemetery covered in dense growth. Kaliwa was indicated initially by an extensive surface scatter of local pottery (Fleisher 2003). Site boundaries were defined through surface finds and shovel-tests; these and further explorations in 2000-04 revealed it to be c. 2 ha, similar in spatial terms to Kimimba. Excavations exposed 1 m of cultural debris beginning at the surface (Fig. 9): dense middens abundant with local pottery, a small but diverse assemblage of imported pottery, glass, and beads, and a rich assemblage of fish and other animals. Imported pottery and radiocarbon dates indicate its occupation in the 14th-15th centuries A.D., when Chwaka was in its final period and at maximum size.

Deposition and occupation

Chwaka was occupied more than twice as long as Kaliwa, and has a deeper, more complex stratigraphy. Deposit depths, however, as related to chronology, stand in contrast to many similarities between the sites vis-à-vis deposit content and density, and type of occupation. Artifact assemblages from both represent a full range of material culture. We discuss some differences between artifact classes below, but note that artifact density—and local pottery in particular—were high at both sites. From Kaliwa excavations of 40 m² overall, we retrieved 30,000+ sherds; similar densities of local pottery were found in many excavations at Chwaka. In comparison to deposits from Kimimba and Tumbé, we believe that those from Kaliwa and Chwaka indicate increased consumption of material culture overall, and greater population densities. Also, despite their dramatic difference in size, and likely prestige (i.e., Chwaka's scale and monumental architecture), everyone at Kaliwa lived in wattle-and-daub housing as did the great majority at Chwaka.

Imports

Based on house excavations at both sites, we can say something about how imported pottery was distributed regionally. Most historical evidence suggests that during the early 2nd millennium, imports were funneled to settlements through trade based in elite merchant homes. Archaeology offers abundant evidence that such materials were nevertheless not kept in the hands of elites but distributed broadly. Excavations of wattle-and-daub houses at Chwaka yielded a full range of imports including glazed pottery from the Persian Gulf, China, and Red Sea, glass vessels and beads, and copper bowls and jewelry, all in significant quantities (LaViolette and Fleisher 2009). In most such houses, imported ceramics comprised between 1-

2% of the total pottery recovered, generally equal to percentages encountered from elite houses and middens in what was likely Chwaka's most prestigious neighborhood, framed by the mosques. In one house at Chwaka, from a single occupation deposit, came 42 sherds of imported pottery (3.8% of all pottery from those levels) representing seven different types. The most dominant—Chinese celadon bowls, Martabani storage jars—were represented in this single context by more than a half-dozen different vessels.

Perhaps more unexpectedly, excavations at Kaliwa (Fleisher 2003: 186-8) revealed a full range of imports, including all major ceramic types of the period (Fig. 10; Chinese celadon, Persian sgraffiato and monochromes, Chinese stoneware storage jars), glass vessels, and beads of glass, carnelian, and rock crystal (the latter possibly made locally from mainland sources). These occurred in lower frequency than in contemporary deposits at Chwaka (and other stonetowns); at Kaliwa imports were less than 1% (.008) of pottery excavated. Despite the lower frequency, these finds suggest that imports were easily obtained by a range of communities: among them, urban dwellers living in wattle-and-daub houses, and villagers. The relative similarity of the assemblages between communities of different socioeconomic status suggests that, despite the possibility that goods may have been flowing initially into merchant-elite hands through restricted exchange networks, goods ultimately became more available to all.

This evidence may complicate ideas about the nature and use of imports, and ways urbanites sought to distinguish themselves from rural villagers. For example, Kusimba (1999: 133) has argued that imported ceramics were "circulated only in very restricted circles...[which] caused them to become emblematic of upper class status." This is a widely shared view of imports among coastal archaeologists, based on an 18th-20th-century image of Swahili life produced by Middleton (1992) and Donley-Reid (1990). In particular, Donley-Reid's (1990)

ethnoarchaeological research on merchants' stone houses in Kenya contributed to this notion, by exploring the meaning behind uses of imported blue-on-white porcelains. Because such ceramics were crucial to *elite* notions of purity and power, she felt they would be associated exclusively (and timelessly) with elites.

Based on our small window of evidence, however, the wide distribution of imported goods in non-elite urban and rural village contexts, even purported luxury or prestige items, is indicative of more open access to those goods at least in this place and time. The way goods were distributed is unknown, yet whatever those processes (from patrons to clients, or in local markets for local consumption; see Fleisher 2010b), many or even all members of society appear to have had access to a broad range of goods. The economic distinctions between social classes were thus one of degree rather than kind. This once again echoes Middleton's (1992) view of a settlement continuum from commoner-towns to stonetowns, for the more recent period, rather than truly discrete kinds of settlements, to which we return in our conclusions.

Faunal remains

Fish/shellfish consumption

Faunal analysis provides a way of measuring differences in consumption of marine resources between town and country. Ogeto Mwebi, National Museums of Kenya, carried out the present analysis; shellfish were identified by Paul Msemwa (for methods and full results, see Fleisher 2003: 354-85). Assemblages discussed here are from middens with similar levels of preservation, excavated with similar methods.

Both Chwaka and Kaliwa sit at the edge of Micheweni Bay, with sandy flats exposed at low tide. In contemporary eastern Africa, shellfish gathering for food is common and accounts

for a substantial part of the diet of poorer coastal people; children also collect and prepare it for themselves. Msemwa's (1994) account of contemporary collectors in Dar es Salaam shows that many coastal residents collect shellfish resources as part of a broad-based subsistence economy, and at times when other food resources are more uncertain. Excavations at Kaliwa revealed one of the highest densities of shell remains for anywhere reported on the coast (Fleisher 2003: 364). Such densities, especially compared to those at Chwaka which were much lower, may confirm the expectation that shellfish exploitation would be higher in non-elite/non-urban contexts. The most common species at Kaliwa were *Pleuroploca trapezium*, *Chicoreus ramosus*, *Strombus gibberulis*, and *Terebralia palustris*. The first three are found in the intertidal reef, under rocks covered with sand and eel grass (Spry 1968). *T. palustris* live in large colonies in mangroves, and may be used for food and bait (Kirkman 1954: 154; Wilson and Omar 1997: 60; Radimilahy 1998: 195). Most shells were recovered complete, suggesting they were boiled rather than used in production of objects such as beads. If we can use density of shell material as a proxy for consumption, Kaliwa's 14th-15th-century residents consumed more than ten times as much as their contemporaries at Chwaka.

Fish bones from Kaliwa (Unit 1) provide the richest assemblage of faunal materials, with close to 2600 bones analyzed, 2011 of which were identified to taxa or at least family level (Table 3, below); the total fish bone makes up 86% of the faunal assemblage analyzed from this unit, with 40 identified species representing 19 families. A comparative sample from a Chwaka midden (Unit 7) contained more than 1033 fish bones analyzed, 568 identified to family level (Table 3). The total number of fish bones in this assemblage comprises 35% of all bone analyzed in Unit 7, including 30 identified species representing 15 families. Of these, Acanthurids—surgeon/unicorn fish—are particularly interesting when comparing Chwaka

and Kaliwa. These were abundant in both settlements' assemblages; this family provides good-quality meat and is caught using nets, spears, and traps (Horton and Mudida 1993: 689-90). At Kaliwa, they accounted for 42% of all identified fish bones, and at Chwaka, 10%. This discrepancy is likely based on heavy consumption at Kaliwa of *N. hexacanthus*, sleek unicorn fish, with 24% of all fish bone identified there compared to only 6% at Chwaka. Notably, *N. hexacanthus* is found in large groups and close to the sea floor, in slightly deeper coastal waters—15 m and greater—than many others identified. These quantities suggest Kaliwa fishers exploited the far edges of the shallower zones in the northern waters, employing more offshore strategies than those indicated by other species (Horton and Mudida 1993: 689-90; Mwebi 2000).

[TABLES 3 AND 4 HERE]

Other meat consumption

The overall assemblage of faunal remains from Kaliwa and Chwaka suggests different patterns of consumption (Tables 3, 4).¹ Calculated as ratios of all bones identified (Table 3), cattle at Kaliwa represent only 4% of the assemblage (10% if large, likely cattle “Mammal IV” bones are included). In contrast, cattle bones at Chwaka (Unit 7), using the same calculations (Table 4), represent 23% of the assemblage (as much as 62% if Mammal IV bones are added). In general, Kaliwa's assemblage thus suggests that most protein was derived from fish, with a small proportion secured through domesticates. The frequency of identified fish bones at Kaliwa is c. 88%, with other identified animal bones (mostly domesticates) accounting for

¹ The Chwaka faunal assemblage is from Unit 7, the deposits from which are successive midden deposits from earliest occupation to abandonment. Materials from Layers 1 and 2 are contemporaneous with the deposits from Kaliwa.

12%. Although at Chwaka fish resources comprise a significant proportion of the identified assemblage, other animals (mostly domesticates) dominate at 71%. In sum, numerical differences between types of animals exploited at Kaliwa and Chwaka suggest that at the latter, residents seem to have had better access to domesticates and non-fish meat resources.

These data indicate that while substantial differences appear in the economies of this town and village, they differ in amount rather than kind. At Kaliwa, most protein derived from fish resources, with a small proportion secured through domesticates, and residents exploited shellfish in much larger quantities. By one measure, Kaliwa's 14th-15th-century residents consumed more than ten times the shellfish than contemporaries at Chwaka. In town, although fish/shellfish comprised a smaller portion of the diet, it was still significant; conversely, village dwellers also had access to domesticated animal resources. There is some evidence to suggest that Kaliwa's villagers indeed increased their access to domesticated cattle, chicken, and sheep/goat over time. We thus can suggest that as towns developed, villagers acquired goods conventionally regarded as exclusive markers of elite status, such as imports and certain domesticates.

Kaliwa's fish evidence also suggests villagers engaged in more specialized forms of fishing than Chwaka's residents, based on the large numbers of trapped, sleek unicorn fish at Kaliwa. Kaliwa's residents likely then had access to deeper-water boats, and focused on particular fishing strategies just beyond the reef. That these fish were likely consumed at Kaliwa itself suggests this was not a form of production that would have served the larger stonetown region, based on current data.

How do these settlements thus compare to each other, based on the lines of evidence we have presented here? Chwaka was certainly much larger and longer-lived than Kaliwa; it had

impressive stone architecture at the time Kaliwa was its neighbor. But virtually everyone at Chwaka lived in houses of the same construction as those in the village, and all shared a great deal of their material culture, including the wide range of imported ceramics. There is more that can be done with the faunal data, however at present we can suggest that at Chwaka, more people ate more meat from livestock, while at Kaliwa, more ate fish, and certain deeper-water fish in abundance.

Discussion and Conclusion

We began by asking a series of questions that we have tried to answer with archaeological data. How different were villages from each other before Chwaka and other towns emerged? Kimimba and Tumbe, late 1st-millennium neighbors, were quite different in scale, but their residents built and lived in identical houses. Among other activities, some forged iron, and perhaps more made shell beads. Bead-making varied drastically in terms of scale: but Tumbe's intensity of production dwarfed that everywhere else on the coast in those centuries, and Kimimba's bead-making is consistent with most sites of the period, if not greater. Perhaps linked to their craft production in some way, Tumbe's residents had abundant access to Indian Ocean goods then available on the coast, while Kimimba's residents had considerably less access. Tumbe was a bottleneck in terms of imports, but we cannot pinpoint why or how.

Later on, how did Kaliwa's settlement characteristics (size, location, diversity of activities and lifeways, longevity) compare with those of Chwaka? What types of relationships overall can be detected between town and country? An embedded question of how populations were dispersed across the landscape prior to and after Chwaka's emergence, and other stonetowns in northern Pemba, has been answered through Fleisher's (2003, 2010a) survey and test excavations. Several

conclusions from his work provide real food for thought. We know that the village landscape of the 1st millennium changed markedly, such that by the early 2nd millennium most villages had been abandoned, including Tumbe and Kimimba: part of a landscape reorganization seen in multiple ways on the coast c. A.D. 1000 (Fleisher et al. 2015). Where did those populations (and multiple generations of their descendants) resituate themselves? Apparently, many gradually moved into the towns (synoecism); just a few villages remained in northern Pemba, Kaliwa being one (Fleisher 2003, 2010a). Why did people make that move? We think it likely that an important reason was access to urbanity itself, including grand religious architecture, and religious specialists, in the stonetowns, a wider array of goods, and participation in public practices around an Islamic way of life emerging earlier and most clearly in towns (Fleisher 2010a; LaViolette et al. 2014).

This scenario has bearing on our question about what life was like in villages, and how it changed over time. Kimimba's dwellers, whether or not they had access to imports, helped create and lived in the shared social world of northern Pemba, and indeed of the broader coast and hinterland. All used Early Tana Tradition pottery (Fleisher and Wynne-Jones 2011), and participated in an emerging Swahili lifeway, which, though not identical from region to region, comprised many practices and beliefs that would surely have been shared even at great distances. In Tumbe and Kimimba—with just a short walk between them—it must have been the case that there were family and other social ties, visits made, meals shared, gifts exchanged on a regular basis. The differences we can detect archaeologically between them speak to some of our questions about settlement self-sufficiency, but the complex human interactions between any two communities separated by 2 km cannot be fully revealed. The patterns we see in the robust material assemblages nevertheless suggest real differences in access to particular goods and the scale of certain activities that inform us about daily life.

In 2nd-millennium Chwaka and Kaliwa, also separated by only 2 km, we see settlement differences: some important architectural ones, scale, and to some extent, foodways. But equally, we have clear evidence of ongoing contact in the presence of such shared material culture, domestic and imported, and related practices. Did many living in Kaliwa spend parts of their days in Chwaka, trading fish resources for other goods, visiting family and friends, praying in the elegant mosques? We can only imagine so, and picture that both earlier and later communities were deeply socially enmeshed with their neighbors. Wynne-Jones (2007b), in a regional settlement study spanning A.D. 800-1300 around the important Swahili center of Kilwa in southern Tanzania, argued for the development of an urban focus in constructing regional identities through use of material culture. It was in the direction of Kilwa, she argued (2007b), that rural identities were formed, even as they remained relatively unencumbered by urban political economy. While our research circumstances differ, and we cannot make the case for new identity formation in the countryside, Wynne-Jones' work reminds us of the importance of social changes in studying settlement transformations, and that future countryside research in other coastal areas has the potential to speak to different kinds of questions and reveal different regional histories.

Circling back to models of urban/rural relationships that have been in use on the coast (Middleton 1992; Kusimba 1999), we can say that the pictures emerging from Kimimba and Tumbe, Kaliwa and Chwaka do not adhere closely to either set of expectations, yet there are points of possible convergence with each. In the (non-urban) relationship between Kimimba and Tumbe, we cannot argue for Kimimba's supplying subsistence and other goods to Tumbe, but can say that there might have been some controls exerted over the flow of luxury imports (and imported cultigens?) to Kimimba, if not over the village itself. Some sort of control over resources is exactly the kind of pattern that might be expected of the urban/rural dynamic on the post-A.D. 1000 coast, if

Kusimba's (1999) view were to be supported. To that point, Wright (1993) argued for control over imports as a way in which certain people were able to build status; what we might be getting a glimpse of here is an early instance of control over imported goods in one or both contexts, as Tumbe dwellers were able to keep imports largely at home.

For the later period, it is possible that Kaliwa was supplying fish to Chwaka on a regular basis, which would echo expectations of Yoffee's ruralization (2005). But we do not see evidence that Kaliwa's residents were kept from benefitting from, for example, exotic luxury goods (cf. Kusimba 1999). Were such goods arriving first in Chwaka under the aegis of elite merchants, who then put them in circulation in both Chwaka and Kaliwa through trade and exchange? Was it possible Kaliwa's residents had direct access to foreign merchants themselves, sited right on the shoreline? We cannot yet answer these questions, but we think the data presented here add complexity to both of the dominant models of Swahili villages, for the first and second millennia. In both comparisons—between Tumbe/Kimimba and Chwaka/Kaliwa—there were continuities in the way the people lived in larger and smaller settlements, in both periods, suggesting relative independence of villages from each other and from the stonetown. For the second millennium, this seems to contradict Kusimba's model of rural-urban relationships for Swahili towns, and reinforce the continuum that Middleton describes for commoner-towns and stonetowns. Perhaps one of the most surprising findings, however, is the unequal distribution of imported materials in the first millennium, a pattern that might indicate distinctions emerging in a proto-urban time and place. And yet the pattern does not hold; as we see in the early days of the second millennium AD, Tumbe was abandoned, and distinctions that emerge between urban Chwaka and the village of Kaliwa are one of number rather than kind.

This complexity returns us to our opening quotation (Yoffee 2005): a call to keep the countrysides—full of their own complexity—in our constructions and reconstructions of the ancient Swahili coast and eastern African region. Our combined work is the first to tackle a coastal landscape and region-based questions this intensively. What we hope to have shown is that if researchers target villages “in their own right” through survey and excavation, rewards for understanding the 1st-millennium coast, and the complexity in later urbanization and ruralization dynamics, will follow.

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Figure Captions

Figure 1: Map of archaeological sites on the eastern Africa coast

Figure 2: Map of northern Pemba, with sites discussed in text

Figure 3: View of Micheweni Bay from Chwaka, looking northeast

Figure 4: Excavations at Kimimba, 2000

Figure 5: Daub with pole impressions from collapsed earthen house, Tumbe

Figure 6: Bead grinders on local pottery from Kimimba

Figure 7: Left: blue/green alkaline-glazed ware from Tumbe; right, ground sherd of Dusun from Kimimba

Figure 8: Coral architecture at Chwaka. Left, excavations at the Friday mosque; right, pillar tomb

Figure 9: Excavations at Kaliwa showing midden deposits

Figure 10: Imported pottery from Kaliwa. Top, Chinese celadon; bottom, painted/glazed Persian pottery