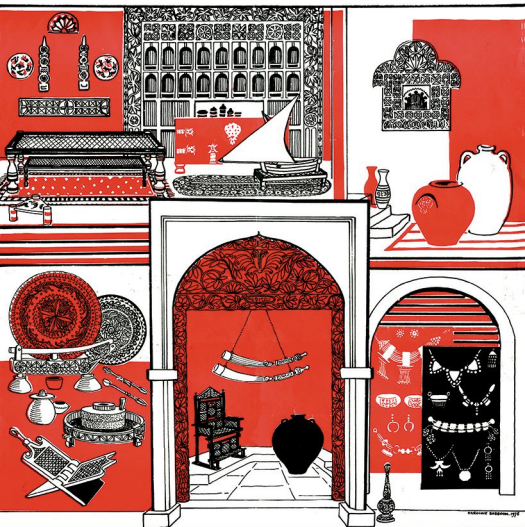


OXFORD

A Material Culture

*Consumption and Materiality on the Coast
of Precolonial East Africa*



STEPHANIE WYNNE-JONES

A MATERIAL CULTURE

A Material Culture

*Consumption and Materiality on the Coast
of Precolonial East Africa*

STEPHANIE WYNNE-JONES

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

OXFORD

UNIVERSITY PRESS

Great Clarendon Street, Oxford, OX2 6DP,
United Kingdom

Oxford University Press is a department of the University of Oxford.
It furthers the University's objective of excellence in research, scholarship,
and education by publishing worldwide. Oxford is a registered trade mark of
Oxford University Press in the UK and in certain other countries

© Stephanie Wynne-Jones 2016

The moral rights of the author have been asserted

First Edition published in 2016

Impression: 1

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in
a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without the
prior permission in writing of Oxford University Press, or as expressly permitted
by law, by licence or under terms agreed with the appropriate reprographics
rights organization. Enquiries concerning reproduction outside the scope of the
above should be sent to the Rights Department, Oxford University Press, at the
address above

You must not circulate this work in any other form
and you must impose this same condition on any acquirer

Published in the United States of America by Oxford University Press
198 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016, United States of America

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
Data available

Library of Congress Control Number: 2015954096

ISBN 978-0-19-875931-7

Printed in Great Britain by
Clays Ltd, St Ives plc

Links to third party websites are provided by Oxford in good faith and
for information only. Oxford disclaims any responsibility for the materials
contained in any third party website referenced in this work.

Preface

This volume was substantially written during a Leverhulme Early Career Fellowship held at the University of Bristol. I am extremely grateful to the Leverhulme Trust for the time and space this afforded. The period of research created by the fellowship has shaped the direction of my work ever since.

The fieldwork at Kilwa reported here formed the basis of my doctoral thesis. I am grateful for the support provided in producing that thesis by my supervisor, Professor David Phillipson. My doctoral work was supported by a studentship from the Arts and Humanities Research Board. Fieldwork was funded from a range of sources: British Institute in Eastern Africa; AHRB; Anthony Wilkin Fund; H. M. Chadwick Fund; Smuts Memorial Fund; Tweedie Exploration Fund; Churchill College, Cambridge; Sir Bartle Frere's Memorial Fund; Worts Travelling Scholarship; UAC of Nigeria Fund; Ridgeway-Venn Travel Studentship. Research at Vumba Kuu and on Mafia was funded by the British Institute in Eastern Africa during my time as Assistant Director. The financial and logistical support of the BIEA has been crucial throughout my work on the eastern African coast. Work in central Tanzania was funded by the Leverhulme Trust as part of my fellowship. Ongoing excavations at Songo Mnara, directed in collaboration with Dr Jeffrey Fleisher and referred to here only in places, are funded by the National Science Foundation (US), Arts and Humanities Research Council (UK), with additional support from the Society of Antiquaries of London.

Archaeological work in eastern Africa is not possible without assistance from and collaboration with local colleagues. I am indebted to the staff of the Antiquities Unit in Dar es Salaam and to colleagues at the University of Dar es Salaam, notably Dr Bertram Mapunda. In Kenya, I am grateful to the staff of the National Museums of Kenya, particularly at Fort Jesus, Mombasa, notably Ibrahim Namunaba, Herman Kiriamu, and Mohammed Mchulla, who made work at Vumba Kuu possible.

Permission to use images in this book has been granted by the Ashmolean Museum, Royal Geographical Society, British Institute in Eastern Africa, and by Mark Horton. I am very grateful for their

assistance, and they have been attributed where necessary. All other images are my own.

Many colleagues and friends have contributed to this volume, either directly or indirectly. I am grateful to them all. In particular, I would like to thank Jeffrey Fleisher, always a ready source of encouragement and wisdom. Less direct contributions have come from discussions with colleagues, including Mark Horton, Søren Sindbæk, Sheila Kohring, Seth Priestman, and Elizabeth Lambourn. Thanks also to three anonymous reviewers, who made this a much better book. I am grateful for their careful attention to detail and their enthusiasm for the project. A final thank you to Tom Fitton for last-minute help with illustrations. All errors and absences, of course, remain my own.

Contents

<i>List of Plates</i>	ix
<i>List of Figures</i>	xi
<i>List of Tables</i>	xv
1. A Material Culture: Introduction	1
2. Objects in the Swahili World	20
3. Kilwa Kisiwani: Establishing a Town	55
4. Vumba Kuu: Negotiating Similarity and Difference	89
5. Moving Inland from the Coast	115
6. Community and Identity in Material Culture	143
7. The Indian Ocean before the Arrival of Europeans	173
8. Swahili Material Worlds	194
<i>References</i>	203
<i>Index</i>	231

List of Plates

1. Mihrab of mosque at Gede, showing holes that would have contained inlaid bowls, now robbed
2. View of fourteenth–sixteenth-century ruins at Songo Mnara, Kilwa archipelago
3. The mosque at Chwaka, Pemba Island
4. ETT jars from Manda, Unguja Ukuu, Tumbe, Ungwana
5. Red burnished bowls from Manda
6. Spindle whorls from the Kilwa region
7. A selection of imported ceramics from the excavations at Kilwa
8. The Great Mosque, Kilwa Kisiwani
9. The Mtambwe Mkuu hoard
10. Gold Kilwa coins
11. Turquoise-glazed jar

List of Figures

1.1. Map of the eastern African coast, showing major sites mentioned in the text	2
2.1. Map of the ruins at Kilwa Kisiwani	22
2.2. Map of the Lamu archipelago, showing the towns of Shanga, Manda, and Pate	25
2.3. Mosque sequence at Shanga	26
2.4. Carved porites from the mihrab at Shanga	27
2.5. Development of 'Tana Tradition' ceramics of Phase A and B at Shanga	28
2.6. Map of the ruins at Manda	30
2.7. Map of the Zanzibar archipelago, showing Unguja Ukuu and Tumbe	32
2.8. Map of sites associated with ETT/TIW ceramics	37
2.9. Stone houses in contemporary Lamu	40
2.10. Decoration in the ndani of a house in Lamu	42
2.11. Plan of idealized stone-house layout	43
2.12. Locally produced shell beads (from Songo Mnara)	48
3.1. Map of Kilwa Kisiwani town plan recovered through excavation	56
3.2. Reconstruction of Husuni Kubwa	59
3.3. Kilwa-type coin (from Songo Mnara)	60
3.4. Map of late first millennium AD remains at Kilwa Kisiwani	62
3.5. Map of eleventh–twelfth-century remains at Kilwa Kisiwani	64
3.6. Map of thirteenth–fourteenth-century remains at Kilwa Kisiwani	66
3.7. The House of the Mosque, Kilwa Kisiwani	67
3.8. Inlaid bowls, House of the Mosque	67
3.9. The Small Domed Mosque, Kilwa Kisiwani	68
3.10. Map of Kilwa in its regional setting	71
3.11. Map of ruins at Songo Mnara	73
3.12. Map of late first millennium AD sites in Kilwa region	77
3.13. Map of eleventh–thirteenth-century sites in Kilwa region	78
3.14. Map of fourteenth–fifteenth-century sites in Kilwa region	79

3.15. Map of sites with stone-built components in Kilwa region	80
3.16. Ceramics from excavations at Kilwa Kisiwani	82
3.17. Stepped courtyard at Husuni Kubwa and in one of the Songo Mnara houses	86
3.18. Decorative bowls of the fifteenth century, Kilwa Kisiwani	88
4.1. Map of the southern coast of Kenya, showing location of Vumba Kuu and Wasini Island	92
4.2. Map of the site of Vumba Kuu, showing extant structures	97
4.3. Type 3 ceramics, straight-sided bowl with flattened rim	99
4.4. Map showing location of VMB008 in the Vumba landscape	101
4.5. Graph comparing bowl forms in VMB008 and VMB007	102
4.6. Incense-burner and lamp from VMB008	103
4.7. Glass beads from VMB008	105
4.8. Potter's mark on ceramic from Vumba Kuu	107
5.1. Caravan routes connecting the coast with the eastern African interior during the nineteenth century	119
5.2. Detail from the 'Slug Map' of 1855	121
5.3. Memorial to the meeting between Livingstone and Stanley, Ujiji, Tanzania	134
5.4. Coastal ceramics of the nineteenth century from (a) Ujiji and (b) Pemba Island	135
5.5. Map of brine springs around Uvinza, Tanzania	136
5.6. Map of Vinza chiefs' territories	137
6.1. Graph of ceramic types identified by Wilding, with approximate distributions over time	146
6.2. Map of sites studied as part of Tana Tradition ceramics project	148
6.3. The evolution of coastal carinated bowls	152
6.4. Decorative bowl types of the fourteenth–fifteenth centuries at Kilwa	153
6.5. Map showing location of Mafia archipelago	154
6.6. Ceramics from potter workshops on Mafia Island	156
6.7. Ceramic <i>kikaango</i> , with <i>jiko</i> underneath	157
6.8. Tomb at Gede, with inset imported bowl	161
6.9. The Swahili house	164
6.10. Decorative detail in stepped court, the 'Palace', Songo Mnara	166

List of Figures

xiii

7.1. Map of Indian Ocean, showing direction of major monsoons and sites mentioned in text	176
7.2. Port sites of the Persian Gulf, seventh–tenth centuries	180
7.3. Map of Siraf, eighth–tenth centuries	182
7.4. Plan of Banbhore	184
7.5. Trader's house in Mocha	192

List of Tables

1.1. Broad chronological outline	15
3.1. Ceramic types at Kilwa Kisiwani	83
4.1. Table of ceramic types and frequency across Vumba Kuu	100
4.2. Painted and graphite bowls, imported ceramics, and beads at Vumba, by excavation unit as percentage of site assemblage for each artefact type	103



Plate 1. Mihrab of mosque at Gede, showing holes that would have contained inlaid bowls, now robbed



Plate 2. View of fourteenth–sixteenth-century ruins at Songo Mnara, Kilwa archipelago



Plate 3. The mosque at Chwaka, Pemba Island



Plate 4. ETT jars from Manda, Unguja Ukuu, Tumbe, Ungwana



Plate 5. Red burnished bowls from Manda



Plate 6. Spindle whorls from the Kilwa region



Plate 7. A selection of imported ceramics from the excavations at Kilwa



Plate 8. The Great Mosque, Kilwa Kisiwani



Plate 9. The Mtambwe Mkuu hoard



Plate 10. Gold Kilwa coins



Plate 11. Turquoise-glazed jar

A Material Culture: Introduction

Africa's eastern littoral borders the Indian Ocean, providing the setting for the settlements, people, and language known collectively as Swahili, which have been a key part of that ocean's trading networks for at least two millennia. Graeco-Roman sailors visited the now-forgotten metropolis of Rhapta, and their voyages were recorded in the narratives that later became the first-century *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* (Casson 1989). Traces of that early contact survive in the form of beads and coins, yet are limited in number and diffuse in nature (Chami and Msemwa 1997a; Horton 1990). From the seventh century onwards, a series of more permanent settlements began to monopolize this trade; by the eleventh century some of these had grown into towns that were able to control and provide a focus for the mercantile opportunities of the Indian Ocean. The trading economy of Swahili towns was based on the wealth of the African continent—gold and ivory were particularly valuable exports—and underlain by a mixed economy and diverse population of fishers and farmers, traders and craft-workers (Horton and Middleton 2000; Kusimba 2008). By the 'golden age' of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the Swahili were an African society of considerable cosmopolitanism and fame, with towns like Kilwa Kisiwani known throughout the medieval world (Sutton 1993, 1997).

Swahili archaeology is focused, conceptually and methodologically, on the series of stone towns that grew up along Africa's eastern coast from the end of the first millennium AD (Figure 1.1). These towns developed as key nodes in both local and international networks of interaction, and became the conduits through which the African continent traded and communicated with the wider Indian Ocean world. The material settings of the towns, and particularly