Flotation at Songo Mnara: First Macrobotanical Finds

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Regional Botanical Sampling

Fleisher 2004:92
Water recycling

Contexts analyzed

Units 1,2,3,6,7,10,11,12,14,15
House 44 – kitchen in Unit 10? 5 samples
Unit 12 – tomb association
Representation by Taxon: Wood

94% Ubiquity
Highest – Units 10,14,15
Lowest – Units 6, 7

Parenchyma

44% ubiquity
Highest – Units 10,15
Absent – Units 1,2,3,14
From banana, yam?
Coconut

50% ubiquity
Absent: Units 3, 6, 14, 15

Fruit/Nut

56% ubiquity
Unit 10 – 100% ubiquity
Absent – Units 1, 2, 15
Asian Rice and chaff

17% ubiquity – only U 10 (rachillae – n=14) and Unit 7 (grain fragments SNE=1)

Rice rachillae (Chwaka)

Rice grain (Chwaka)

African Millet and Grass

Millets – 17% ubiquity (Unit 10,15)
Grass – 11% ubiquity (Unit 10, 12)
Digitaria – Unit 15 (n=1)

Digitaria (Gambia)

Sorghum (Chwaka)
Cotton (Baobab?)

50% ubiquity
Highest – Units 10,15
Absent – U 1,2,3,6,7

Beans

28% ubiquity
Present – Units 1,7,10,15
*Vigna* – Units 10 (10033),15
*Vicia faba* – Unit 10 (10033)
*Pisum* ? uncarbonized
Wild and Weedy Greens

*Portulaca* cf. *oleracea* – 33% ubiquity

*Polygonum* – 6%

cf. *Silene* – 6%

*Caryophyllaceae* – 6%

Unidentified Seeds, Fragments

94% ubiquity
Plant Use Patterning - Domestic

House 44

*Unit 10 (back room)*
- plant processing – likely storage
- richness due to depositional, preservation, or taphonomic factors?

Units 1, 2, 3, 6 - botanicals in other parts of house

House 23

*Unit 14 (courtyard)*
- wood fragments from burnt stump

*Unit 15 (inner room)*
- relatively rich in botanicals (millet, cotton, *Vigna*)

Plant Use Patterning cont’d

Household at Unit 11?
modest archaebotanical findings

Ritual Areas

Tomb

Unit 12 – burning of foods? (wood charcoal, coconut, fruit/nut, parenchyma, grass chaff)
Conclusions

High resolution plant use patterning

Drier coastal environment – millets

Rice limited, but significant

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