A drastic change in the climate of tropical Africa may have significantly driven early human evolution. New findings by an international team of scientists studying sediment cores from Lake Malawi, east-central Africa demonstrate that a transition from a time period with extreme droughts (135,000 to 75,000 years ago) to a stable, wetter climate may have stimulated the expansion and migration of early human populations. During the most severe episodes, the lake was less than 100 meters deep rather than 700 meters. Before about 70,000 years ago, the climate was highly variable, African lakes dried up completely and then refilled, and plant and animal populations grew and died out. Then around 70,000 years ago, the climate became wetter and stabilized, and African lake levels rose dramatically. Human populations grew rapidly and migrated at that time.