



Nyame Akuma number 80 presents 12 contributions: 11 papers addressing archaeological research and one conference report. The archaeological papers can be grouped into three thematic categories.

Two papers address evidence of Paleolithic sites. Mercader and Sillen report on the first paleoanthropological study, begun in 2010, in the Urema Rift region in the Gorongosa National Park in Mozambique. Mozambique is a critical location for the study of early human evolution. The paper summarizes results of survey that identified multiple MSA assemblages, and excavation of sites with MSA as well as LSA and IA artifacts and associated materials. The second paper in this theme is that of Osypinska and Osypinski who provide a summary of their second field season of investigations of Late Pleistocene settlement in the Middle Nile Valley in the Northern Province of Sudan. (The 2012 season report is found in NA 78). This new data includes excavation of a Paleolithic settlement that included remnants of wooden structures and activity areas that will ultimately provide insights into local resource exploitation.

Seven papers address the origins of historic states in Central, East and West Africa. Two of these studies are from the KongoKing project. Clist *et al.* describe results of the 2013 field season of excavation, survey and ethnographic study of ceramic *chaîne opératoire* near *mbanza* sites and their environs in the Lower Congo Province (DRC). (The 2012 field season report is found in NA 79). The 2013 excavations contributed to the understanding of the Kongo Kingdom's material culture, settlement organization, burial practices and trade networks. The ceramic studies should eventually contribute a local cultural sequence. The second

paper by Nikis *et al.* provides preliminary results of a study of copper metallurgy in the origins of the Kongo Kingdom and its neighbours, particularly the Kingdom of Teke. Excavation of sites near Mindouli and survey in the Mbé area (Teke's capital) confirm the presence of copper metallurgy. These sites were associated with different pottery types that are linked to trade routes and will eventually provide a local cultural sequence for this region as well.

In western Uganda, Iles explores the importance of iron metallurgy in the development of the Bunyoro Kingdom in the mid-1st millennium AD. Prior to Iles' study, iron production in this area was poorly documented. Iles recovered rich evidence of iron production in western Uganda and the location of these sites in relation to different polities and major salt production centers may eventually prove to be useful in understanding social and economic interaction in this region.

Two papers address the development of polities on Mayotte Island in the Comoros archipelago. Pradines suggests a new explanation for the wealth of the site of Dembeni that flourished between the 9th and 12th centuries AD. Pradines argues that during its florescence Dembeni was a major distribution site for rock crystal in the Indian Ocean trade. It remains to determine who controlled this trade: the Malagasies who exported the rock crystal to Mayotte, or the Maores who imported it. The second paper by Pauly presents results of excavation conducted between 2006 and 2012 at the site of Acoua, a small farming/pastoral/fishing community that became a port in the Indian Ocean trade. While other sites, including Dembeni, were abandoned following the reorganization of commercial networks in the 12th century AD under the dominance of Madagascar merchants, Acoua benefitted as a refueling station. The paper presents evidence of the changing social and economic life of Acoua based on excavation and survey of the town's enclosing wall, gate, the construction of Mayotte's earliest known mosque in the 12th century, and the

remains of aristocratic stone masonry buildings from the 14th and 15th centuries AD. Oral history and written documentation further contribute to an interpretation of the changing political structure of the island during the medieval period.

The role of trade in the development of states in West Africa is investigated in two studies. Ansah reports on 2010 excavations of the site of Ahwene Koko (previously excavated in 1973 by the author) which were to determine the role of international trade in the development and expansion of the Wenchi state beginning in the mid-2nd millennium AD. The new excavation recovered material similar to that found in 1973, and further demonstrated that the site is very large and that material evidence of trade and economic influences from North Africa are present and attest to the importance of international trade in the state's development. Gokee *et al.* explore the impact of the rise and fall of various West African states on the Upper Niger Basin in northeastern Guinea, including the Empire of Mali. The study conducted survey in the region around Kankan and posed several research questions that address the social, economic and political changes that occurred in the region from the mid 1st millennium AD to the early 20th century. The study establishes a preliminary chronology based on ceramics for medieval and historic facies in the region, but note considerable variation in ceramic style and technique at different sites that needs future study. Medieval sites were located on large rivers that were routes for trade and cultural interaction and were undefended. After the collapse of the Empire of Mali, historic facies sites were fortified. There is also evidence that different types of settlements, depending on their economic production, thrived or were subject to slave raiding. The implications are that archaeology can provide considerable information on the impact of different historical polities in this region over time.

The last two papers address broader issues. Radhouane reviews the history of pearl millet cultivation and calls for more research into the

broader geographic origins, spread and use of this cereal in Africa, Europe and Asia. Mc Donald, a soldier in the Irish Defence Forces who served recently as a UN Military Observer in the Moroccan controlled North West Zone of the Western Sahara, reviews the archaeology in that region including lithic scatters and burial monuments he observed on patrol. Mc Donald calls for the development of better connections between archaeologists and military observers. Military and culture heritage organizations are beginning to provide some training, but more is needed. Training of military is preferred for security reasons to the practice of embedding archaeologists in military operations. The benefit of developing a connection between academics and military personnel is the opportunity to provide and to improve upon conservation and identification of archaeological sites in otherwise similarly inaccessible zones in Africa.

The final contribution is a report by Posnansky on the ENQUA meetings in Kenya in July 2013. Posnansky encourages SAfA and other Africanist societies to support regional meetings in order to build up regional knowledge and local research.

If subscribers have suggestions to improve NA, please submit them to me by email prior to the SAfA PanAfrican meetings in July 2014 (dlyons@ucalgary.ca).

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