



EDITORIAL

Volume 74 of *Nyame Akuma* presents six papers that address research in different parts of sub-Saharan Africa: Senegal, Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Tanzania, and Lesotho. Despite regional diversity, these papers share certain themes. In addition, John Sutton provides a response to a previous paper published in NA in June 2010.

The first two papers examine social histories of communities. Cameron Gokee reports on archaeological research at the Middle Iron Age site of Diouboye situated on the lower Falémé River in eastern Senegal. The site was located on the boundary of Bambuk whose gold and other resources fueled the trade across the Sahara, and eventually across the Atlantic. The project's goal is to investigate how people in villages like Diouboye, negotiated diverse levels of power and reproduced social institutions at the periphery of the political and economic networks developing in the last half of the first millennium AD. The second paper by Samuel Oluwole Ogundele and Ukamaka Ebonine, explores the poorly investigated history of the Owu kingdom in Yorubaland using ethnographic and archaeological research in the town of Orile-Owu. The towns of the Owu kingdom were protected by a series of ditches and earth embankments, and it is these researchers' goal to provide future archaeological investigation for the purpose of developing tourism in the area.

Two additional papers investigate technology and site formation processes. Edwinus Layaya examines the bloom refining process in Mbozi, Tanzania using ethnoarchaeological and archaeological methods. Different from iron production in other parts of sub-Saharan Africa, which involved smelting and blacksmithing stages, some central and east African iron smelters practiced an intermediate process to purify the smelted bloom in a separate furnace before the bloom was processed by blacksmiths. In a comparative study of Fipa and Nyiha iron production (which are the same), the study concludes that there are differences in the slags produced by the smelting and the refining processes, and that these practices and their furnaces were spatially distinct.

Yonatan Sahle and Agazi Negash present an ethnoarchaeological investigation of site formation processes associated with the manufacture, use and discard of stone scrapers by Hadiya hide-workers in southern Ethiopia. They determine distinct refuse patterns for different stages of stone acquisition, tool production, resharpening and discard. The researchers also distinguished between groups of hide-workers who mine their own raw materials, from those who purchase stone in the market.

Finally, two papers are linked by the theme of conservation of archaeological resources under

threat of industrial development. Geoffroy Heimlich's investigation of rock art in Lower Congo in the western part of the Democratic Republic of Congo hopes to realize a pilot initiative to place this rock art on the UNESCO list of World Heritage sites. The project will provide a complete inventory of the rock art, including the production of a digital record of the images that will be integrated into a GIS-type data base, direct dating of the art in order to correlate it with the area's archaeological sequence, and it will determine the relationship between the rock art and the Kongo kingdom. Contemporary use of these sites for ceremonial purposes will also be addressed. The study is urgent as several rock art sites are being disturbed by industrial projects.

Peter Mitchell and Charles Arthur report on recent work of the Metolong Dam Catchment in Lesotho. A 14km stretch of the Phuthiatsana River will be flooded permanently by the dam, and the study provides a rare example of a well-funded and planned culture resource management project in Africa. The paper presents preliminary results for the first two phases of a four phase study. The first phase of survey documented and assessed archaeological sites and rock art in the catchment zone. The second phase involved excavation and conservation of certain key sites located in phase one. Excavations produced some surprises. From the rockshelter site of Ntloana Tsoana, the team recovered previously unknown deposits from the mid/late Holocene as well as the first datable context of a late Pleistocene Robberg Industry in western Lesotho. The project has provided training for colleagues and students from the National Lesotho University and has established the infrastructure for future mitigation projects in Lesotho.

John Sutton responds to Ann Kritzinger's paper, published in NA in June 2010, which challenged the agricultural interpretation of extensive terracing and other features of the Nyanga Hills in eastern Zimbabwe. Sutton reasserts the evidence that these features are part of a specialized farming system, and challenges Kritzinger's suggestion that these features are products of gold mining.

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