



## EDITORIAL

In this issue of *Nyame Akuma*, nine papers present a range of research from across sub-Saharan Africa. Eight of these papers contribute to four general areas of interest: social analysis, the West Atlantic trade, culture resource management, and Africa's archaeological history. The ninth paper in this issue is a response.

Antonites and Kruger present a preliminary assessment of faunal distributions on a 19<sup>th</sup> century VhaVenda settlement. Specifically they investigate the distribution of fauna at TSH 32 site, the largest stonewalled settlement in the Ha-Tshirundu Mountains. Although researchers have identified the function of certain spaces, the authors argue that a nuanced examination of the use and discard of animal remains across the site can provide a better understanding of the meaning of the site and how people actually acted in these spaces. Although their results are preliminary, analysis indicates clear differences in species recovered from male and female use-areas of the settlement. Seitsonen, Sonninen, and Heikkilä also investigate socio-cultural relations, but in the Pastoral Neolithic (PN) period in northern Tanzania. Their research is part of a larger study investigating the chronology and nature of PN influences and the introduction of domesticates in the Rift Valley of northern Tanzania. Their study involves XRF analyses of lithics (particularly obsidian) and ceramics, as well as faunal analysis. Ultimately, material analysis will shed light on the sociocultural interactions of groups in Tanzania in the PN period. Further north, Tahir constructs a cross-cultural comparison of ethnographic studies of rock gongs in Africa to interpret the use and social importance of gongs found in the third cataract region of the Nile River Valley in northern Sudan. In this region, gongs are associated with rock paintings of animals and Christian crosses. Based on this spatial association, these gongs are believed to

span the period of time from the Neolithic to at least the first millennium AD.

Liza Gijanto and Sarah Platt provide a preliminary analysis of recent archaeological investigations at a former British out factory and its associated village of Berefet on the south bank of the Gambia River. The study contributes to the recent interest in investigating the impact of West Africa's Atlantic commerce by investigating the local experience of this trade in Gambian communities living within and outside of commercial centers. The comparative study of earthenware indicates two distinct ceramic traditions along the river, but it is yet unclear if these distinctions are a result of different local production and consumption practices, or of potters' response to changing market conditions with the introduction of metal vessels. Also in relation to West Africa's Atlantic trade, Horlings' preliminary survey of bell shaped wells in Nigeria may be evidence of a 19<sup>th</sup> century slave depot. Similar features in other parts of West Africa may prove to have a similar function, but the author cautions that much more research is required.

The role of culture resource management includes the conservation of ancient materials held in museums as well as the conservation of archaeological evidence in sites endangered by modern development. Oyinloye describes the conditions of the first National Museum of Esie in Nigeria. The museum was constructed to house the famous Esie soapstone figurines discovered in 1945. Unfortunately, Oyinloye finds the conditions of the museum to be poor, and provides a number of suggestions to conserve its collections including improvements to the store, better training of staff, and, ultimately, a new building to protect Esie's heritage. In regards to resource management of archaeological sites, Pradines and Brial report on their research project that addresses the beginning of Islam and Indian Ocean trade on Mayotte Island in the Comoros. Dembeni is the largest and most important site from this period on Mayotte Island, but it is not well documented or excavated. Pradines and Brial

found rich archaeological materials in their survey of Dembeni, including substantial evidence of urbanization, a mosque, tombs, and large quantities of ceramics and imported objects. Pradines and Brial warn that there is an urgent need to investigate the site because of the impact of modern urban growth and road building.

Getachew Meressa Nigus documents the history of archaeology in Ethiopia from early European travelers until the beginning of systematic archaeology in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Until the 1970s, foreign scholars dominated archaeological research in Ethiopia. Since that time Ethiopia's Federal authorities and emerging Departments of Archaeology at Addis and Axum Universities have ensured training and development of indigenous scholars. The paper contributes to the history of archaeology

in the Horn of Africa and for the continent more generally.

In the response section, Kritzingler addresses comments regarding her interpretation of gold extraction and ore dressing in pre-colonial Zimbabwe (see *NA 73*) by John Sutton (see *NA 74*) and R. Soper elsewhere. Kritzingler provides further evidence here to support her argument and discusses planned research to examine aspects of her hypothesis.

Please continue to send your articles to *Nyame Akuma*. As a note, abstracts from the SAfA conference in Toronto are available on the new SAfA website.

Dr. Diane Lyons  
 Editor, *Nyame Akuma*