



EDITORIAL

This volume has six contributions from scholars working in Central, Northeast and East Africa from diverse time periods and research interests. One study addresses the problem of utilizing early collections in museums that lack detailed provenance. Four papers report on survey and excavation of features and sites in archaeological landscapes in Cameroon, Sudan, South Sudan and southwest Ethiopia, and the sixth paper addresses metal-mining evidence in the eastern highlands of Zimbabwe.

Alex Wilshaw investigates archaeological collections from the early 20th century housed in the National Museum of Kenya. These collections are either not used or are under-used by researchers because they lack provenance. Wilshaw is able to provide locations for seven collections from the Late Stone Age of the Central Kenyan Rift. This is an important study as it draws attention to the potential of including museum collections in contemporary research that are otherwise wasted – not only in Kenya but across the continent.

Scott MacEachern, Jean-Marie Datouang Djoussou, and Rébecca Janson provide a report of the 2010-2011 excavations and survey around DGB-1 and DGB-2 sites in Far North Province, Cameroon. These two sites are the largest of the DGB sites found in this region, the two sites are contemporaneous dry-stone terrace and platform complexes, and they are located approximately 100m apart. In addition, the project conducted a survey to determine the relationship between these two sites and Keroua, a pre-colonial capital of the Wandala state that was also occupied at the same time. A third component of the project was the production of a 3-D model using high-resolution laser scanning, GPS mapping and photography of the DGB-1/-2 site complex that will provide an impor-

tant tool in architectural interpretation of these sites and their conservation. The results of the study improve the known chronology of DGB sites and occupational use of terraces between the sites.

Osypińska and Osypińska provide a summary of the first season of archaeological survey, excavation and geomorphological research in the Middle Nile Valley in the Northern Province of Sudan. Their goal is to investigate the Late Paleolithic peoples in this region. The project excavated a number of well-preserved settlements where people living between the 2nd and 3rd cataracts produced and used levallois tools when people elsewhere, including in the Egyptian Nile Valley, were using blades.

Matthew Davies presents the results of an archaeological survey of the Juba-Nimule Nile region in South Sudan. The study provides important archaeological information for this region that has received very little archaeological investigation. Davies survey demonstrates the huge potential of the area to contribute to broader archaeological issues including the emergence of complex hunter-foragers, the spread of food production, metal-working, agricultural intensification and colonial encounters. Large numbers of sites were located including farming hamlets and villages supporting the interpretation that the region was once densely occupied. The lack of an established chronology or artefact typologies for South Sudan impede interpretation of the contemporaneity of sites and features and much more research in this archaeologically rich region is indicated.

Marcus Brittain and Timothy Clack report on the Mursiland Heritage Project in southwest Ethiopia, in particular on monumental stone architecture in the Lower Omo Valley. The region was thought devoid of archaeological potential for periods after the MSA. However, their survey has now located 25 circular stone platforms that share a consistent architecture and orientation, stone cairns, stone circles and stelae and other features.

The stone platforms were previously thought to be part of burial features and are dated to the last 200 years. Test excavations of some circular stone platforms revealed scatters of bone (often in the circle centre), lithics and high phosphate levels that are possibly from bodily substances. Oral history of Mursi and Bodi pastoralists in the study area indicate large-scale migrations and population displacement of the Bodi from now Mursi-territory about 200 years ago in a period of climatic change. Both ethnographic groups use stone circles in rituals associated with cattle. In particular, the Bodi perform cattle sacrifice using stone platforms that are similar (but not identical) to the archaeological examples. These features provide an opportunity to investigate cultural blending and ceremonial architecture in a proto-historic landscape during a period of environmental change and population movement.

Ann Kritzinger presents further discussions of her theory that features in the eastern highlands of Zimbabwe (Nyanga) are metal-milling sites. Her theory challenges the agriculture/settlement hypothesis of John Sutton and Robert Soper. Instead of platforms built on hillslopes for farmsteads and tanks constructed for keeping dwarf cattle, Kritzinger argues that these features were used to mine gold. Kritzinger suggests that grinding equipment (saddle querns, grinding hollows in certain contexts near water) were used to crush gold-bearing quartz and not grain, although more sampling of these features is required.

Thank you for your continued support of *Nyame Akuma*.

Diane Lyons
Editor