This issue contains a wide range of research papers. Monroe discusses the relationship of the trans Atlantic slave trade on the emergence of states in Benin. Robbins and his colleagues examine the reuse of trade items in a historic site in Botswana. Here, bottle glass was "flint knapped" into serviceable tools. Kienon-Kabore discusses the social role of iron technology and its producers in a community in Burkina Faso. Insoll and his colleagues introduce a study of the impact of the Mampurugu Kingdom on neighboring societies in northern Ghana. One of the co-authors, Banjamin Kankpeyeng, also contributes a separate paper describing an earlier archaeological survey of Kpaliworgu, also in northern Ghana.

Onjala reports on his current study of the technology used at several Kenyan MSA sites. Relying on museum collections, he assesses the degree of standardization in tool production as a proxy for the emergence of "modern" behavior. Togola, Cissé and Fané report on the emergence of a complex urban settlement in Gao, Mali, while Ogundele reports on ethnoarchaeological work in Niger State, Nigeria. Willett reports the availability of a CD Rom containing a full record of Ife art, much of which has disappeared from Nigerian museums.

Croucher discusses her survey of clove production on the island of Zanzibar (or Unguja), and its role in changing economic and social relations in the 19th century. Thorp discuss an archaeological survey that identified Later Stone Age and Iron Age sites in the Majilangwe Trust area of Zimbabwe. Connah’s general paper examining how to present a past for the African continent was presented in the final plenary session of the Bergen SAfA meeting.

New membership rates are listed inside the cover. Starting this year, SAfA membership includes the possibility of discounts on any or all of three journals: the African Archaeological Review, Journal of African Archaeology and Afrique: Archéologie et Arts.

The 12th PanAfrican Congress of Prehistory will be hosted by the Archaeology Unit of the History Department at the University of Botswana from July 3 to 10, 2005. Further information is available online at http://www.ub.bw/departments/humanities/panaf2005/index.html.

The Archaeology Department of the University of Calgary will host the next SAfA meeting in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, from June 22 to June 26, 2006. Calgary is one of two large cities in the province of Alberta; Edmonton, where I live, is the other. While the cities are often rivals, Africanist archaeologists at their respective universities are close colleagues. At the University of Calgary, archaeology is offered in its own separate department. Calgary has always had a specialist in African archaeology, starting with Professor Peter Shinnie, in whose honor the conference is held. At the University of Alberta in Edmonton, archaeology is one of the four subfields within the Anthropology Department. The general theme for the conference is "Integrating African Archaeology". A conference web page is now available at http://www.ucalgary.ca/~ndavid/SAFA.

In the general section of this issue of Nyame Akuma, you will find information about a new initiative - a SAfA book prize. Under the leadership of its new president, Dr. Peter Mitchell, the SAfA executive has decided to sponsor the SAfA Book Prize in African Archaeology for the best contribution made in this field by a work published in the years 2004 and 2005. The first award will be made at the 2006 SAfA meeting in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. More details are provided in the announcement.
Introduction

Exploring the relative impact the trans-Atlantic trade had on the peoples of West Africa has been a major theme in the historiography of the region (see Thornton 1998 for a general discussion). What has been called the transformation thesis suggests that the advent the trans-Atlantic slave trade in West Africa had dramatic consequences for societies in the region. Such impacts include population decline, warfare, the formation of despotic kingdoms, and long-term economic weakness in the face of an expanding colonial Europe. A number of studies have questioned the destructive impacts of the trans-Atlantic slave trade in Africa. Some have argued that the slave trade had a relatively small impact on African societies as a whole, that involvement in the slave trade actually stimulated economic growth rather than destruction, and that political changes in the period were the result of internal African political forces rather than external stimuli.

Archaeology is increasingly involved in this debate. Archaeological projects have commenced that specifically address the nature of European / African interaction at important loci for European trade in West Africa, such as at Fort Ruychaver (Posnansky and Van Dantzig 1976) and Elmina (DeCorse 2001a) in Ghana, and at Savi in the Republic of Bénin (Kelly 1997). These studies have greatly contributed to our understanding of the nature of this interaction, its affects on local West African populations, and the degree to which European contact affected African world-views in the long run. Recent research has turned from an interest in coastal or European settlements, to the “down-the-line” effects of the slave trade on societies in the interior (see contributions to DeCorse 2001b).

In the summer of 2000, I initiated the Abomey Plateau Archaeological Project in the Republic of Bénin to explore the relationship between the trans-Atlantic slave trade and state formation in West Africa (Monroe 2003). The Kingdom of Dahomey, located in the modern Republic of Bénin, came to power as a hinterland provider of slaves to the coast in the 17th century (Figure 1). Conquering the coastal kingdoms of Hueda and Allada in the 1720s, Dahomey emerged as a principal participant in the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Dahomey remains one of the best documented examples of African state formation in the period, and as such, it has played a central role in this historical debate. In particular, the relationship between the advent of trans-Atlantic trade and the process of political centralization has been explored by historians in detail.

On the one hand, it has been argued that the manner in which Dahomey administered its domain was a radical departure from the strategies employed by 17th century polities (Akinjogbin 1967; Polanyi 1966). This view emphasizes the failure of 17th century West African polities to deal effectively with the administrative demands of the slave trade. According to this model Dahomey was different. It

Figure 1: Major polities on the Slave Coast during the 17th and early 18th centuries.
was able to weather the effects of the slave trade by creating a strong centralized bureaucracy. Some have disagreed with this model, arguing that although Dahomey was more dependent on a military ethos for stability than its predecessor, it largely maintained the political ideology and administrative tactics of its predecessors (Law 1991).

Thus Dahomey provides an opportunity to explore archaeologically two processes of fundamental concern to Africanist archaeologists today, the impact of the slave trade and the processes of state formation. The A. P. A. P. was initiated in order to explore these questions from an archaeological perspective. This report briefly describes the methods and preliminary results of three seasons of fieldwork in the Republic of Bénin. Preliminary conclusions are made supporting the argument that dramatic political reorganization followed the advent of the trans-Atlantic slave trade on the ‘Slave Coast’ of West Africa.

Research Focus

For any who have visited the Republic of Bénin with an interest in its history, one cannot help but find his or her way to Abomey, the pre-colonial capital of the Kingdom of Dahomey. Renowned for its royal palace, restored in recent years, and the location of the Musée Historique d’Abomey, it is one of many royal palaces constructed throughout the countryside in the pre-colonial era. Such palaces were the centers of political discourse in Dahomey. They served as residences for the king, his wives, and the various servants and slaves that served their needs. They also provided contexts for staging state ceremonies such as the so-called “Annual Customs” in which largesse was distributed to the populace and human sacrifices were performed. Dahomean royal palaces served major administrative functions as well. Indeed many of the royal wives were administrators themselves, and the interior courts of the palace at Abomey were stages upon which all the notable dignitaries of the day vied to tip the balance of royal favor in their direction. This fits into a general West African pattern in which the various domestic, ritual, political, and economic roles of the elite were played out within the walls of the royal palace (Kelly 1997; Ojo 1966)

The A. P. A. P. was designed to explore the evolution of the royal palace in Dahomey as a method of measuring changing political organization over time. Cross-cultural archaeological research has suggested that as polities become increasingly centralized, the nature of political control at the regional level is affected dramatically. Specifically, state facilities are increasingly built at a distance from the capital so as to more effectively integrate territories (Schreiber 1987). Additionally, the ground plans of such facilities are often transformed as a result of changes in the political sphere (Hillier and Hanson 1984). In particular, as political organization becomes increasingly centralized and bureaucratic, archaeologists commonly witness an increase in spatial segmentation and hierarchy in loci for elite interaction (Kent 1990; Moore 1992). Thus the primary goals of this project were to examine the distribution and internal layout of Dahomean royal constructions over time and space, so as better understand the nature of political change in Dahomey during the era of the trans-Atlantic slave trade.

The Exploratory Phase

In the summer of 2000 an exploratory phase was initiated with the goal of identifying the regional

Figure 2: Aerial photograph of the royal palace of King Glele at Cana-Mignonhi. Note the visibility of the palace walls indicated by dark linear features.
distribution of Dahomean royal palaces. The research focus was the Abomey Plateau, homeland of the Kingdom of Dahomey, and the limits of its political control in the 17th century. A reconnaissance strategy was adopted drawing from aerial photos, interviews with informants at regional centers, and survey by car along historically attested roads between the old capital, Abomey, and its secondary centers. This proved an effective method for identifying royal palaces in the region.

Aerial photography and local knowledge proved to be in significant agreement. Aerial photos were available 1:10,000 scale for an approximately 500 km² area around Abomey. These photographs revealed 14 pre-colonial constructions ranging in size from approximately four to thirty-four hectares, in addition to the nine royal and princely palaces well documented within Abomey itself (Figures 2 and 3). Informants from Abomey and smaller towns on the plateau proved extremely helpful in locating palaces identified using aerial photographs. These informants also provided valuable contextual information including hypothetical occupation dates and administrative functions for each construction. Period sources also corroborated much of this collected data. Numerous palaces are referred to in period texts. All but two (Agrimey and Zagnanado) were identifiable on the ground. Additionally, descriptions of particular palaces in period texts ultimately refined the occupation dates and administrative functions suggested by informants.
Architectural Survey

In two subsequent seasons, the winters of 2001 and 2002, a sample of these Dahomean royal palaces was intensively mapped. Six royal complexes built in the town of Cana (Figure 4), historic Calmina, were chosen for analysis. Firstly, Cana is remembered in both local traditions and European sources as the major administrative center outside of Abomey. It presented an ideal setting in which to explore political changes in Dahomey over time. Second, unlike Abomey, Cana declined dramatically in the late 19th century following French conquest. Thus its royal palaces have been subject to little restoration in the 20th century, and therefore contained less disturbed archaeological contexts. Lastly, local traditions and period sources suggested that each of the six complexes at Cana were built by successive kings over the 18th and 19th Centuries, only to be abandoned within one or two generations of his reign. Each palace thus represented a relatively thin slice of time, presenting the opportunity to examine architectural change based upon surface remains alone.

In 2001, I began an intensive survey of royal architectural remains at Cana, focusing on the area of each palace within clearly identifiable palace walls. Today and in the past, buildings were constructed largely of pisé or rammed earth. As a result of the heavy rainy seasons of southern Bénin, such walls decay within a few years if not maintained annually, and leave only low mounds approximating the original shape of the structure or wall. These mounds, and the borrow pits from which earth is drawn to

Figure 4: The royal palaces and modern settlement at Cana, Republic of Bénin.
Figure 5: Plans of the royal palaces of Cana, Republic of Bénin.
construct them, are often clearly visible from the surface in absence of ground cover. Within the walls of each palace at Cana, 100% of all ground cover was cleared, revealing the visible traces of collapsed walls, mounds, and depressions. In the winter of 2001, three complexes were fully surveyed and mapped (Cana-Totah, Cana-Kpohon, and Cana-Mignonhi). In the winter of 2002 three additional complexes at Cana were examined (Cana-Degueli, Cana-Agouna, and Cana-Gbengamey) (Figure 5).

Test Excavation

Local traditions attributed each of the royal complexes identified in 2000 to a particular king or pair of kings. Period texts provided additional evidence for when each palace was occupied. Excavations were conducted in 2001 and 2002 to retrieve datable material that could be used to qualify or corroborate this historical data, and to begin to characterize the assemblages of these previously unexplored archaeological sites.

In 2001 three small 2 x 2 m test pits were excavated in architectural mounds in three palaces at Cana (Cana-Degueli, Cana-Gbengamey, Cana-Mignonhi). Few artifacts were recovered in these excavations. These included local pottery and tobacco pipes, as well as imported European glass, ceramic, and pipe fragments. Much of the European material was of a late 19th century date, postdating the predicted occupation dates of all but one palace (Cana-Mignonhi). Additionally, the majority was located at or around the surface level of units suggesting post-occupation deposition.

It was not surprising that so little was found on architectural surfaces since West African houses are kept very neat and free of debris by daily sweeping. Material collected on a daily basis is commonly dumped onto a larger pile or in borrow pit. In 2002 features at each palace were excavated which, based on high densities of surface artifacts, appeared to be either trash-heaps or back-filled borrow pits. At each complex, at least one ten by one meter trench was excavated in such a feature. At Cana-Totah an additional trench was excavated when the first was not forthcoming. All units were excavated in natural levels and all soil was passed through five-millimeter screens.

These trenches contained a wealth of materials. Locally manufactured items dominated all of the assemblages. These included ceramics, tobacco pipes, shell beads in various stages of production, iron implements, groundstone, and bone/ivory and metal finger rings and bracelets. In contexts dating to the late 18th and 19th Centuries, European imports also comprised a significant part of the assemblage (Table 1). European goods identified included ceramics, tobacco pipes (mostly Dutch), and glass bottle fragments. Numerous beads of unknown origin also characterized all the assemblages and await further analysis. In addition, two flintlock mechanisms were recovered with other gun hardware in one excavation unit (Cana-Mignonhi).

Table 1. Minimum number of identifiably European imported goods by type excavated in each of the four royal complexes at Cana. Minimum number per cubic meter of earth excavated is represented in parentheses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site / Period</th>
<th>Totah / Early 18th C</th>
<th>Degueli / Mid-Late 18th C</th>
<th>Agouna / Late 18th C</th>
<th>Ghengamey / 19th C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ceramics</td>
<td>0 (0.0)</td>
<td>0 (0.0)</td>
<td>3 (0.6)</td>
<td>66 (4.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glass</td>
<td>0 (0.0)</td>
<td>0 (0.0)</td>
<td>12 (2.4)</td>
<td>38 (2.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tobacco Pipes</td>
<td>0 (0.0)</td>
<td>6 (0.5)</td>
<td>10 (2.0)</td>
<td>6 (0.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>0 (0.0)</td>
<td>6 (0.5)</td>
<td>25 (5.0)</td>
<td>110 (51.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M³ excavated</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11.25</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
All but two (Units 6 & 7 at Cana-Totah) of the seven excavation trenches yielded abundant undisturbed cultural remains. The first of these two units was nearly empty of artifacts. Dateable materials were recovered from Unit 7 at Cana-Totah, yet they were limited to the surface and immediately below. Rodent burrows visible in profile indicate that this 19th century material was intrusive.

Excluding the two unproductive units from Cana-Totah, analysis largely confirmed the palace occupation dates provided by local traditions and period texts (Table 2). Seriate analysis of carved roulette decorations on local ceramics recovered from the five other palaces corroborated the relative sequence of palace construction suggested by historical sources. Additionally, imported European goods provided a terminus post quem and terminus ante quem for three of the palaces. These dates were also in agreement with historical sources. These results generally confirm the value of combining textual, oral, and archaeological data to date pre-colonial royal constructions.

These excavations were also abundant in ecofacts. Carbonized palm kernels, a secondary product of palm oil production, were found in abundance. Faunal remains were also common. The assemblages were dominated by large and small mammal remains, yet the bones of fish, birds, reptiles, and one amphibian were also identified. Analysis of this assemblage is only beginning, but thus far goat, cattle, pygmy hippopotamus, aardvark, colobus monkey, grass-cutter/agouti, guinea fowl, catfish, elopiform fish, and python have been identified with certainty, indicating a varied and diverse royal diet (Thomas Wake, UCLA, personal communication). It is hoped that future analysis and excavation will contribute to a greater understanding of how the royal elite were sustained, and what light this can shed on the administration of the kingdom.

**Discussion**

Three seasons of archaeological research were conducted on the Abomey Plateau in the Republic of Bénin in order to understand the nature of political change in Dahomey in the era of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Preliminary conclusions, described in detail elsewhere (Monroe 2003) can now be made. During the 17th century, palace construction was focused within the capital Abomey, reflecting relatively indirect administrative control. During the 18th century, palaces were increasingly built upon the major trade routes to the coast, following expansion in that direction. In the 19th century, palace construction extended eastwards. This expansion was contemporary to the collapse of the Kingdom of Oyo to the east, Dahomey’s major inland competitor in the 18th and early 19th century. The degree of regional control in the 18th and 19th Centuries was thus far greater than during the 17th, and reflects growing central administration of coastal-inland trade routes as well as agricultural zones.
Additionally the layout royal palaces at Cana underwent significant change over the course of the 18th through 19th Centuries (Figure 5). The early 18th-century palace of King Agadja has a very simple ground-plan characterized by a few small courts which appear to contain temple complexes and reception halls. Agadja’s successor, Tegbesu, took only a slightly different approach to palace construction. Tegbesu’s mid to late 18th-century palace is much larger, nearly 34 hectares, likely reflecting administrative expansion. However, it consists merely of agglomerations of architectural units similar to those present at Cana-Totah. The royal complexes at Cana are more internally complex and formally segmented by the late 18th century. This is indicated by an overall growth in the number of courts, as well as the presence of formal architectural divisions in the palaces of Kpengla and Agonglo. This architectural tradition was fully elaborated in the palace of Guezo and Glele, kings of the 19th century. Again note the presence of major dividing walls, as well as numerous courts throughout both palaces. The final complex in the sequence, located at Cana-Mignonhi, appears to be a reversal of the overall pattern of rising spatial complexity. However, archaeological and historical evidence suggests this complex was abandoned soon after construction commenced during the invasion of the French army in 1893. Thus overall the royal complexes at Cana appear to become increasingly spatially complex over time. This may reflect an expansion in the bureaucratic administration, as well as a rise in its overall complexity.

These results support the argument that Dahomey underwent significant political reorganization from the 17th through 19th Centuries. The archaeology of this region, however, remains in its infancy. Future research will be geared towards better understanding the nature of political centralization at the regional level and the evolving bureaucratic palace infrastructure.

Acknowledgments

This research was generously funded by the UCLA International Studies and Overseas Program, the UCLA Department of Anthropology, and the UCLA Friends of Archaeology. The project was supported and encouraged by a number of individuals in Bénin: Professors Joseph Adandé and Alexis Adandé of the Department of History and Archaeology at the Université National du Bénin, Zéphiran Daavo, Director of the Musée Historique d’Abomey, and His Majesty Da Langanfin Glele Ahotogbé, King of Cana. The success of this project in the field was due in no small part to the hard work and diligence of Mr. Christian Médard Assogba, maîtrisse student at UNB and field assistant par excellence. Lastly, this research would not have been feasible without the guidance and encouragement of Professor Merrick Posnansky.

References Cited

DeCorse, C.


Hillier, W. and J. Hanson

1984 The social logic of space. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kelly, K. G.


Kent, S.


Law, R.

Monroe, J. C.

Moore, J. D.

Ojo, G. J. A.

Polanyi, K.

Posnanksy, M. and A. Van Dantzig

Schreiber, K.

Thornton, J. K.
Botswana

Retouched Glass dated to the late 19th Century at Toteng, Botswana

Lawrence H. Robbins
Department of Anthropology
Michigan State University
East Lansing, Michigan
USA, 48824

Alec C. Campbell
Crocodile Pools
PO Box 306
Gaborone, Botswana

Michael L. Murphy
Social Science Department
Kellogg Community College
450 North Avenue
Battle Creek, Michigan
USA, 49017

Introduction

In this paper, we describe the first discovery of intentionally retouched bottle glass reported for the Kalahari of Botswana (Figures 1 and 2). The retouched glass was found at Toteng, along the Nchabe River near Lake Ngami (Figure 3). During the course of investigating the spread of domesticated livestock into the area historic items such as 19th Century bottle glass, porcelain, glass beads and iron nails were frequently noticed lying on the surface in a dispersed scatter, especially at the site of Toteng 1.1 Campbell’s (1992) pioneering work at this site had already demonstrated that such historic material was probably associated either with the store of J. Oscar Stromboom that existed on the site of Toteng 1 between 1874-1885, with people such as a group of Dorsland Trekkers (late 1875), or with A. Schultz and A. Hammar (late 1884) who camped at the store (Shultz and Hammar 1897; Tabler 1973). In 1885, the Amandebele attacked the Batawana driving them westward and burned the store, leaving Toteng deserted.

Most of the historic items that we found at Toteng 1 were located within a distance of approximately 100 meters from the foundation of the store, uncovered by Campbell (1992). Further compelling evidence of a linkage to the period of Stromboom’s store was provided by the discovery in July, 2003 of the remnants of a large iron lock with Victoria Regina engraved on it (Figure 4). Hunters and traders had been visiting nearby Lake Ngami since 1849, but Stromboom’s store was the only permanent building, other people operating from their wagons. The store, or people camped near it, appears to be the most logical source for the above artifacts. For this reason it is virtually certain that the glass was derived from the store, or from traders camped next to the store. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the retouching of the glass is firmly dated to the period between 1874-1885.

When it was initially noticed that some of the glass was intentionally retouched we carefully inspected all of the glass fragments that could be found on the surface in the general area. We noted that there were many un-retouched pieces of 19th Century glass, most of which would have been suitable for retouching. For this reason, the use of the retouched glass at Toteng appears to have been expedient for tasks carried out on the spur of the moment in the proximity of the store, unless, of course, other retouched pieces were carried away and were used and discarded at distant locations. We did find a very small clear glass bladelet with evidence of utilization approximately 7 km from Toteng 1 (Figure 2, lower right). While the bladelet was excavated from the 95-100 cm level of Toteng 9, in apparent association with LSA debitage, we cannot rule out rodent disturbance in accounting for the depth of the find and the association. As far as we are aware, neither retouched glass, nor glass debitage has been found at sites outside of the Toteng area in the region.

Description

Before describing the material in detail, it is important to emphasize that the artifacts from Toteng 1 were on pieces of glass that had been heavily frosted by the action of wind blown sand and most of the retouched edges were also frosted, after the retouching itself was done. Overall, the frosting of the retouch, along with the number of relatively continuous retouch scars, and the very close morphological similarity of the glass specimens to stone tools from the area provides compelling evidence that the
Figure 1. Glass artifacts from Toteng.

Figure 2. Close up view of retouched edge.
flake scars were not the result of natural factors or accidental causes such as trampling by cattle or damage by ox drawn wagons. While the retouched glass found at the nearby site of Toteng 2 was not as frosted as those found at Toteng 1, all of the characteristics of retouch mentioned above were present. Other pieces of glass that had random or recent scars were occasionally found but were omitted from inclusion with the intentionally retouched artifacts because these scars are believed to have been produced by natural factors.

**Toteng 1**

While the results of the excavation of Toteng 1 have been described elsewhere, the site is best known for the presence of Bambata pottery and the earliest evidence of sheep and cattle in Botswana (Campbell 1992; Huffman 1994; Reid et al. 1998; Robbins et al. ms). As mentioned previously, the retouched glass was found scattered on the surface with other historic artifacts. However, there were also occasional finds of LSA debitage, potsherds and faunal remains on the same wind blown erosion surface areas that contained the historic material. A description of the retouched glass follows (Figures 1 and 2).

1. Frosted green glass: (4.15 x 2.25 x 0.6 cm). This specimen has a negative scar of a bladelet measuring 1.8 x 0.7 cm on the surface of the glass. We think that it is highly unlikely that such a removal would have been produced by trampling or other
natural factors. In order for this to have resulted from trampling, the glass would have to have been buried in such a way that it was both solidly embedded and in a position where it was standing on end with most of the glass exposed. It seems more likely that it was held in the hand. The glass appears to have been deliberately flaked in a manner that is identical to a typical LSA single platform core that was only used for a single removal and was discarded. This suggests a considerable skill level in “flint knapping” techniques on the part of the person that removed the glass bladelet.

2. Frosted green glass (6.5 x 6.25 x 0.5/.85). The neck area of a bottle with the letters L and E visible at the edge of the break shows continuous retouch along one side and along the end similar to a scraper. The retouch is steep (at an approximate 90 degree angle to the surface of the glass) and the scars are frosted. The working edge on the side is concave. When the glass is turned over with the inside of the bottle facing up, continuous retouch is evident along one concave end. In contrast, these scars are not frosted.

3. Frosted green glass (2.8 x 2.2 x 4). There is a straight line visible on the interior surface. It has a steeply retouched concave edge and in lithic assemblages the artifact might be termed a hollow scraper. The opposite edge has steep scars that resemble backing and one edge is awl-like in appearance.

4. Frosted green glass with lighter frosting than above (4.25 x 3.25 x 0.5) This specimen has 4/5 continuous scars along one edge and there is also evidence of recent damage. The edge angle is steep.

5. Frosted green glass (4.7 x 2.2 x 0.6). Two opposite sides have been worked. One side features a notched and steeply retouched area. The opposite side has a serrated or denticulate edge.

6. Frosted light purple glass (2.2 x 1.15 x 0.4). Although the similarity is probably fortuitous, this specimen resembles a crude segment or crescent. It has a convex, backed or steeply retouched side. There are seven scars along this edge and they are larger than what one sees on LSA backed segments.

**Toteng 2**

This is a small site that is situated less than a half km from Toteng 1. Thus, it was also quite close to the location of Stromboom’s store. The surface of Toteng 2 is marked by a low-density scatter of lithic debitage, sherds, bone fragments, porcelain and bottle glass. Although the site has not been excavated, two auger holes, using a special sand bucket auger, revealed approximately 1 meter of sand overlying calcrite. One auger hole yielded an ostrich eggshell bead and a small flake. The second auger hole was entirely sterile. In contrast to Toteng 1 all of the glass that was retouched was only very lightly frosted, if at all. Most likely, the artifacts were not as exposed to the wind as those found at Toteng 1. Nonetheless, each of the artifacts has been systematically retouched. The specimens include:

1. Black glass, lightly frosted (3.5x 2.7 x 0.6). The artifact has a side notch and a pointed end with steep retouch on the opposite end. It is similar to a combination scraper and awl in a stone artifact typological classification. Five flake scars are clearly evident.

2. Black glass, lightly frosted (5.8 along worked edge x 4.7 x 0.7). Approximately 11 continuous flake scars are evident along a straight edge. The angle of the working edge is steep and the lithic typology counterpart would be a steep scraper. This is one of the most obviously retouched pieces in the entire collection (Figure 1, 2, piece B).
3. Black glass, lightly frosted (3.6 x 2.4 x 0.6). The retouch is very clear with 4 continuous scars on one end and 2 on the side. The artifact is characterized by a projection produced by the intersection of the end and side scars. It would be classified as an awl or bec if made on stone instead of glass (Figure 1, piece C).

4. Black glass, lightly frosted (3.2 x 2.4 x 0.5). Four continuous retouch scars are clearly seen on one side, extending for 1.7 cm. The angle of the retouch is at an approximate 45 degree angle and the artifact would probably be called a scraper if found in a lithic assemblage.

Discussion

Our findings for the Toteng area are consistent with the anecdotal description of Bartle Frere (1881, cited in Clark 1959:26-27 and Goodwin 1935). Frere (1881) reports that Bushmen (presumably in Damaraland since the individual reporting the evidence to Frere was located there) used glass from the base of perfume bottles to make arrowheads while other Bushmen in what was then Basutoland used glass from soda bottles. In South Africa, Mason (1949) describes retouched green glass scrapers found on the surface of several sites that also contained Wilton artifacts belonging to the LSA. Mason (1949:54) suggests the retouched glass “might have been made during the early nineteen century, the glass perhaps being filched from Voortrekker camps or farms.”

In the Walvis Bay area of Namibia, bottle glass has been found on contact period pastoralist sites. Those pieces that are clearly retouched date to the early 19th century and primarily come from the thick bases of wine bottles (John Kinahan, personal communication). Kinahan (2000: figure 6:1) illustrates the process of bottle reduction where several small negative blade removals from the bottle/core are very similar to the bladelet scar noted previously on specimen 1 from Toteng 1.

The glass we collected at Toteng 1 comes mainly from the straight walls of green wine bottles (specimens 1-5). There is one thin, pale purple piece from an apparent medicine bottle (specimen 6) and one very small clear flake (origin unknown) from deep in the excavation.2 At Toteng 2, where we collected the un-retouched base of a black, square bottle (65 mm x 65 mm), almost certainly a gin bottle, four black pieces that were retouched (specimens 7-10) are from the walls of that bottle.

In most cases, the retouch on the Toteng glass was systematic and relatively continuous on edges. It displays a good working knowledge of the basic principles and skills involved in “flint knapping.” For this reason, it is tempting to link the retouching of glass at Toteng to Khoisan peoples (Bushmen) since their ancestors are widely believed to have been responsible for making Later Stone Age tools (Deacon and Deacon 1999). Although it is very likely that there were Khoisan people (Bushmen) in the Toteng area, it is, of course, not possible to identify the ethnic identity of the individual/s that flaked the glass in the late 19th century because of the likelihood of people from different ethnic backgrounds visiting the store or camping near it for brief periods. The Bushmen are known as Banoka (a Tswana word meaning ‘river people’) and they include speakers of Khwe languages such as the Deti of the Nchabe and Boteti River area. It is even possible that other Bushmen, who might have accompanied traders, chipped some of the glass. None of the local elders that National Museum staff talked to in the course of our work remembered anyone deliberately retouching glass. However, a Muyeyi woman, in her early 90s residing at Toteng, related that the sharp edges of broken pieces of glass were occasionally used on a casual basis.

The discovery of retouched glass artifacts at Toteng logically begs the question of when stone tool making ended in the Kalahari, as part of the broader context of the termination of the use of flaked stone technology in southern Africa. George Stow (1905) believed Bushmen were still working stone in southern Africa as late as 1860, but he did not see this. However, Dunn (1931) does report seeing stone chipped in the 1870’s to the south of the Orange River. Dunn (1931: 57-58) notes: “The smaller flakes are not suitable for spear-heads, but they resemble the small arrow-heads I saw an old Bushman woman making at Struis Pits, Bushmanland in 1872.”

In parts of the Kalahari there appears to have been a long period of contact between peoples termed “Early Iron Age and Later Stone Age.” This is best seen at the Tsodilo Hills between approximately the 7th and 10th centuries AD at the village of Nqoma as well as in levels at Depression and White Paintings Rock Shelter (Robbins and Campbell 1989; Robbins et al. 2000). At Nqoma numerous LSA artifacts were found in an Early Iron Age village that was based on agropastoralism and was involved in long distance
as well as regional trade (Denbow and Wilmsen 1989). The rock shelters have produced small numbers of typical Early Iron Age sherds and iron beads and clips in levels that contain numerous LSA artifacts. There is also evidence of contact in the specularite mines at Tsodilo where LSA debitage and Early Iron Age pottery has been found in a test pit in Greenstone Mine and in the tailings of other mines (Robbins et al. 1998). The most recent hint of flaked stone tool use at Tsodilo was the discovery of a quartz crescent/segment found just above a hearth dated to the 16th Century at the Depression site in the 0-10 cm level. Findings from rock shelters on the southeastern Hardveldt of Botswana also suggest contact between approximately AD 800-1300 (Robbins 1985, 1986).

**Conclusion**

Bottle glass provides a good “raw material” to flake and it can readily be used to produce a sharp edge, as well as a useful scraping edge. It is not surprising that bottles sometimes had a double life, first as a container for beverages, medicines etc., and subsequently as a new raw material for making tools. The transfer of the techniques of flaking stone to glass was a widespread event especially as bottle glass became available with the spread of European trade and the establishment of colonial frontiers. A few examples serve to illustrate this point. At Fort Michilimackinac in northeastern Michigan (British and French occupation, 1715-1781), two projectile points were found that were flaked by Native Americans from green bottle glass (Maxwell 1964) and glass scrapers used by Native Americans are also known, far to the south in Florida, from Spanish Frontier outposts (Goggin 1951). In northern Australia Allen (1973: figure 9) shows retouched bottle glass artifacts used by Aboriginal peoples dating to the 19th Century that are very similar in general appearance to the glass “scrapers” found at Toteng. The National Museum of Australia also contains an impressive exhibit showing an abundance of finely made glass spear points produced by Aboriginal peoples. Clearly, Southern Africa was also part of the “retouched glass phenomena” that has now been extended into the Lake Ngami area of the Kalahari as a result of our findings at Toteng.

**Footnotes**

1. Funding was provided by NSF grant BCS-0313819. We thank the Office of the President of Botswana for granting permission to conduct this research and T. Pule, Director of the National Museum of Botswana for collaboration. We are grateful to the following colleagues and students who helped in the field: G. Babutsi, L. Thatlehego, S. G. Phaladi, M. M. Mmolawa (National Museum), G. A. Brook and P. Srivastava (University of Georgia), S. Dingalo and A. Mabuse (University of Botswana), T. Shick (Michigan State University) and M. E. Robbins. In addition we thank P. Segadika, P. Thebe (National Museum), K. Nkakobang who is Kgosi (traditional chief) of Toteng, M. Main and John Kinahan.

2. The glass flake was recovered from Square M, 60-65 cm. Since several tin fragments were also recovered along with glass as well as flaked stone we believe that glass and tin were found at this depth due to rodent disturbance.

**References**

Allen, J.

Campbell, A.C.
1992 Southern Okavango integrated water development study: archaeological survey of proposed Maun reservoir, Gaborone, Department of Water Affairs.

Clark, J. D.

Deacon, H. J. and J. Deacon
1999 *Human Beginnings in South Africa*. Walnut Creek, California: AltaMira Press.
Denbow, J. and E. Wilmsen

Dunn, E. J.

Goggin, J. M.

Goodwin, A. J. H.

Huffman, T. N.

Kinahan, J.
2000 *Cattle For Beads*. Department of Archaeology & Ancient History, University of Uppsala, Sweden, Namibia Archaeological Trust, Windhoek, Namibia.

Maxwell, M. S.

Mason, R. J.

Reid, A., Sadr, K., and N. Hanson-James

Robbins, L. H.


Robbins, L. H. and A. C. Campbell

Robbins, L. H., A. C. Campbell, M. L. Murphy, G. A. Brook, P. Srivastava, and S. Badenhorst
ms. The advent of herding in southern Africa: Early AMS dates on domestic livestock from the Kalahari Desert, Botswana, article under review.

Robbins, L. H., M. L. Murphy, G. A. Brook, A. H. Ivester, A. C. Campbell, R. G. Klein, R. G. Milo, K. M. Stewart, W. S. Downey and N. J. Stevens

Robbins, L. H., M. L. Murphy, A. C. Campbell and G.A. Brook
Schulz, A. and A. Hammar


Stow, G. W.


Tabler, E. C.

**Burkina Faso**

**Siderurgie directe du fer: Cohesion sociale et paix. Le cas de Bulkiemde**

Timpoko Kienon-Kabore
Département d’histoire et l’Institut des Sciences Anthropologiques de Développement.
Université de Cocody
Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire

**Resume**

Les conflits et les guerres sont aujourd’hui omniprésents au sein de nos états et sociétés. Les foyers de tensions se multiplient en Afrique alors que la majorité de certaines structures traditionnelles sont réputées hospitalières et tolérantes. L’étude de ces valeurs anciennes sont à encourager pour comprendre la rupture qui s’est opérée entre la tradition et le modernisme et les voies et moyens de concilier les deux afin de ne pas perdre ce que nous avons de plus précieux : nos valeurs traditionnelles. C’est dans cette optique que nous présentons la sidérurgie directe du fer au Bulkiemdé non pas dans son aspect technique, mais sous l’angle social. Il y a effectivement, dans ce corps de métier, un lien étroit entre la sidérurgie directe du fer et la culture de la paix.

**Introduction**

L’étude de la métallurgie directe du fer préoccupe bon nombre de chercheurs eu égard aux nombreux intérêts qu’elle présente dans le monde en général et en Afrique en particulier. Les aspects techniques de cette science ont beaucoup intéressé les historiens et les archéologues. L’accent a été effectivement mis sur les modes de prospection, d’extraction, de réduction, de transformation de la loupe en produits finis etc… Même si ces études sont encore insuffisantes, elles ont permis néanmoins de recueillir une bonne partie de nos traditions ancestrales sur le plan des techniques, de l’éducation, du cultuel et de l’organisation sociale. Ces résultats ont révélé de très grandes richesses insoupçonnables.

Notre patrimoine culturel Africain regorge de richesses morales instructives et éducatives qui pourraient être utiles dans nos sociétés en perte de valeurs et en proie aux guerres et conflits de tous genres. A ce siècle nouveau, où l’Europe cherche à s’unir en créant une monnaie commune et forte, l’Afrique est toujours au discours de guerre et de conflits. Les programmes politiques exploitent les terrains sensibles telles l’ethnie, la religion, les origines... Les foyers de tensions se multiplient avec son cortège de misères. Nous devons tenter de remédier à tout cela en puisant le meilleur dans ce patrimoine culturel riche en enseignement, abandonné au profit d’autres cultures. Pour atteindre cet objectif, le réinvestissement de nos résultats de recherche doit être pris en compte dans nos projets de développement culturel, économique, financier et politique et être adapté à nos réalités. Dans le cas contraire, ils ne seront stockés que dans les bibliothèques et seulement valables pour les seuls initiés. En quoi la sidérurgie directe du fer peut être un exemple pour l’étude de la culture de la paix?

Au cours de nos recherches, nous avons constaté un lien étroit entre la sidérurgie directe du fer et la culture de la paix. Le forgeron, acteur principal de cette technique, est le symbole de la paix et de la cohésion sociale au sein de sa communauté de forgerons et des autres membres du village. Il est le maître du feu et constitue à ce titre le centre de toutes les activités du village. Par son pouvoir sur le feu, source de vie, il entretient ce que l’homme a de plus précieux et fabrique les objets nécessaires à toutes la communauté, sur le plan cultuel, culturel, agricole etc... Il joue aussi le rôle incontournable de médiateur pour la paix entre tous les hommes, forgerons et non forgerons et aussi entre les dieux et les humains, pour assurer un équilibre social indispensable à la bonne marche du village. Son organisation sociale, professionnelle, ses fonctions portent en elles les prémices de la recherche de paix et de concorde sociale. Ce sont autant d’axes autour desquels s’articulera notre réflexion.

Pour cette étude sur la sidérurgie du fer et la culture de la paix au Bulkiemdé, nous présentons la province et mettons l’accent sur l’organisation des forgerons et leur rôle, porteurs de message de paix et de cohésion sociale.
Carte 1. Carte de situation.
Carte 2. Province du Bulkiemde.
Cadre géographique, chronologique et spécificité socioculturelle


Le cadre chronologique de cette étude s’étend de la fin du XVème siècle, période d’installation des Nakomsé, au XXème siècle, époque d’arrêt de l’extraction et de la réduction du minerai de fer dans plusieurs contrées de l’Afrique en général et au Bulkiemdé en particulier. Cet arrêt est la conséquence de l’introduction du fer de récupération, de la répression coloniale et de la nouvelle donne économique. Le forgeron malgré cette situation a continué à travailler à la forge et à jouer son rôle cultuel et culturel.

Organisation des forgerons métallurgistes: une vraie recherche de cohésion sociale

Organisation professionnelle des forgerons


Le métier de forgeron: Un vrai outil d’intégration

Les modes et les conditions d’accès au métier de forgeron sont une véritable voie d’intégration qui méritent d’être pris en exemple pour leur souplesse et leur caractère valorisant. Les forgerons du Bulkiemdé sont de deux types, les forgerons de naissance et ceux de conversion. L’existence de ces deux types de forgeron est la conséquence de l’absence d’endogamie fondement social de certaines sociétés de forgeron comme au Yatenga et dans certaines zones de l’ouest du Burkina Faso. L’endogamie a entraîné la mise à l’écart des autres membres de la société et le repli des sociétés de forgerons sur elles-mêmes avec des quartiers propres à elles. Au Yatenga on ne devient pas forgeron on naît forgeron ou on « tombe forgeron » c’est-à-dire qu’on devient forgeron par bannissement.

Au Bulkiemdé par contre l’on peut devenir forgeron. Les artisans sont issus de groupes socioculturels différents. On rencontre alors des forgerons de conversion Nyônyôosé, Nakomsé, Sikomsé et même Yarsé et des forgerons de naissance installés dans des quartiers dont la toponymie évoque leur origine forgeronne. Le métier de forgeron est d’une très grande ouverture. Il suffit d’en faire la demande et de maîtriser les aspects techniques et cultuels de la sidérurgie directe du fer après un apprentissage sérieux et long. On assiste ainsi à des installations de forge dans des quartiers non forgerons.

Les relations matrimoniales qui unissent les communautés villageoises constituent aussi de véritables vecteurs de transmission du savoir-faire des forgerons, d’intégration et de cohésion sociale. Un enfant peut bénéficier de l’héritage culturel de sa mère forgeronne, (elle ne pratique pas le métier de forgeron mais est forgeronne par son origine) même si son père n’est pas de la famille des forgerons. Etre neveu des forgerons est un privilège sur le plan de la
coutume. Il peut être intégré à la société des forgerons de son propre gré s’il est majeur ou à la demande de ses parents dans le cas contraire.

Ce brassage culturel des populations à travers la conversion au métier de la forge et les relations matrimoniales assure une cohésion sociale importante et un profond respect des métallurgistes qui sont intégrés dans la société et non mis à l’écart et méprisés comme au Yatenga. Un fait important dans cette organisation des forgerons est l’égalité des droits et devoirs des forgerons de naissance et convertis devant le chef forgeron et la société des forgerons. Il n’existe aucune ségrégation selon les origines de ces derniers. Dans l’unité, leur objectif est d’œuvrer pour le bien être et la paix des habitants de leur localité.

Le forgeron: un artisan à la conquête perpétuelle de la paix et de la concorde sociale

La forge : Rôle unificateur et protecteur

L’ouverture du métier de forgeron a entraîné la naissance de plusieurs types de forge. Ce sont, la grande forge, les forges protectrices et le kudkutgu.

La grande forge, « le kudkansanga » est la forge mère détenue par le chef forgeron dont dépendent tous les autres artisans. Ce chef forgeron par le biais de la forge mère est le garant de l’unité des forgerons et du bien être de toute la société. Au sein de cette forge aucune transformation de la loupe en produits finis n’est effectuée. Les grands sacrifices rituels relevant de la demande de devins y sont pratiqués pour éloigner le mauvais sort d’une famille, d’un quartier, d’un village, afin d’assurer la paix, la concorde et le bien être social.

Les forges protectrices ou forges sanctuaires sont installées dans des familles de personnes qui ne sont pas initiées au métier de forgeron, mais qui en font la demande pour protéger les leurs des maladies, des esprits malfaisants et des sorciers. Le kudkutgu est l’atelier de forge où le forgeron confectionne ses objets, soigne, conseille et protège.

Le forgeron : Thérapeute et médiateur pour la paix

Le forgeron, personnage central de la société est au début et à la fin de la vie. En effet, il soigne les femmes stériles, accouche aussi celles qui sont dystociques et apporte son concourt en matériel et en culte pour l’enterrement des individus de tous les habitants du village.

Le forgeron au sein de cette société devient un personnage incontournable. Il soigne le corps et l’esprit, protège et conseille. En effet, Il est un thérapeute, sollicité pour les soins des enfants et des adultes. Il soigne les hémorroïdes, les femmes stériles, confectionne les bracelets et amulettes pour la protection du corps et de l’esprit etc…Le forgeron conclue ainsi un pacte entre les familles qu’il protège et les dieux de la forge chargés de maintenir une certaine paix sociale en châtiant les contrevenants aux lois de la société (tuer en sorcellerie, empoisonner ou jeter un sort…).

Le forgeron est aussi sollicité pour son rôle de médiateur dans les conflits. Son intervention, volontaire ou à la demande des villageois, en cas de conflits, de querelles graves dans les familles, de tentative de suicide est considérée comme sacrée et ne doit pas être refusée. Le rejet du pardon entraîne des sanctions graves de la part des dieux de la forge et des forgerons eux mêmes qui peuvent interdire le don ou la vente d’objet en fer à la personne ou à la communauté concernée.

Au sein des familles, il est aussi chargé d’annoncer les décès. Par son action il apaise la douleur et évite aux âmes sensibles de se faire du mal. Une personne prise en flagrant délit de suicide est invitée à ne plus recommencer, dans le cas contraire, il ne bénéficiera pas des rites purificatoires des forgerons avant l’enterrement, ni des instruments en fer nécessaires pour creuser sa tombe. Il est aussi considéré comme le médiateur privilégié entre les choses de la terre, les êtres vivants et les dieux de la foudre, d’autant plus qu’il est le maître du feu. De ce fait il est le seul autorisé à purifier le corps des humains et des animaux abattus par la foudre.

Son objet de pacification est l’enclume. Elle constitue l’élément central de la forge au niveau de la technique et du cultuel. A chaque règlement de conflits, le forgeron la jette entre les belligérants qui ne sont plus autorisés à enjamber l’objet de culte pour continuer le conflit. Le forgeron est aussi le seul à pouvoir confectionner les objets de culte en fer pour les Nyônyôosé (la hache en fer) et les Sikomsé qui ont besoin d’instrument en fer pour réaliser leur masque.
Conclusion

Les forgerons contrôlent une bonne partie de la vie des communautés villageoises. Il devient ainsi l’artisan incontournable qui s’active pour la survie de la société, par le biais de la confection des objets, par son rôle culturel et cultuel et surtout par sa médiation pour la paix et la concorde sociale.

Toutes ces valeurs Africaines que nous négligions pour n’utiliser que celles venues d’autres contrées sont à étudier pour en tirer ce qui pourrait être utiles pour nos sociétés modernes. Nous devons prendre en compte les ruptures et les permanences pour cerner ce qui manque au sein de nos organisations politiques, économiques, sociales, culturelles et éducatives. Car il faut le dire les sociétés occidentales que nous envions tant se sont bâties sur le socle de leur passé.

Notes de bas de page

1. Les populations Mossé (sing. Moaga) sont un ensemble composite de peuples différents sur le plan culturel. Se sont: les Nakomsé venus du nord Ghana détenteurs du pouvoir politique, les Nyônyôosé chefs de terre, les Tansobdemba les chefs de guerre, les Sikomsé danseurs et porteurs de masque, confrérie dont le Siku est la base de la croyance et les Yarsé peuple commerçant venu du mandé.

2. Lorsqu’un non forgeron ou un Nakoibga (sg. de Nakomsé) est surpris à la forge en train de manipuler les outils de travail, « il tombe forgeron » et reste dans ce statut définitivement.

3. Les Nyônyôosé sont les maîtres de la terre et sont les détenteurs des autels de la divinité. Les Nakomsé quant à eux assurent le pouvoir politique, au Yatenga ils dédaignent le métier de forgeron et ne se convertissent jamais au métier de forgeron.

Bibliographie

Ardouin, C. L.

Badolo, I.,

Bernus, E.

Coulibaly, E.
1989 *La métallurgie du fer dans la région de Sanaba (province de la Kossi, Burkina Faso)*. Mémoire de maîtrise, Université de Ouagadougou.

1997 *Savoir et savoir faire des anciens métallurgistes: recherches interdisciplinaires sur les procédés en sidérurgie directe du fer dans le Bwamu (Burkina-Faso-Mali),* TI et TII, Thèse Unique, Université de Paris I Sorbonne.

Kienon, T.

Kiethega, J. B.
Introduction

During August 2004, a preliminary archaeological reconnaissance was completed in the Tong Hills, and Garu Area, Upper East Region, and Nakpanduri, Northern Region, Ghana. The primary aim of this field season was to assess the potential for developing a longer term research project with two main intentions: firstly, assessing the impact of the Mamprussi Kingdom upon its neighbors, principally to the north, and secondly, assessing variant perceptions of landscape amongst the Tallensi primarily as a mechanism for indicating the fallacy of phenomenological models currently fashionable in aspects of prehistoric European archaeology (Tilley 1994; Insoll 2004). The research described here was completed under Ghana Museums and Monuments Board permit number 0151/vol.6/257 in co-operation with the Upper East Regional Museum.

Survey

To achieve these aims, archaeological survey was focused upon three primary areas each associated with a different ethnic group affected by the Mamprussi in varying ways; the Tong Hills (Tallensi), Garu (Kusasi), and Nakpanduri (Bimoba). Transects were walked in each area and the results plotted using a GPS.

Tong Hills (N10°40′33.3″ W000°48′54.0″)

The whole of the plateau encircled by the Tong Hills was traversed by a transect of approximately 6 km in length. This was placed so as to incorporate the different quarters of Tamboog, Bonchiog, Kpatari, Gundari, Nanchieyir, Sakpiega, and Sameed. Moreover, topography was also taken into account so the ascent to the Yaame (Tonna’ab) shrine was included as was the descent from the Tong Hills to Santeng on the plain near the White Volta River below (N10°39′58.5″ W000°48′40.3″).

The results achieved were varied, with a definite difference in the density of archaeological materials such as iron slag and ceramics noticeable on the surface. At the southern end of the plateau and on the path leading down to the plain at Santeng below archaeological material was rare. Interestingly, these were areas which were also much more degraded in terms of vegetation cover than elsewhere and were almost uninhabited today. Moreover these are areas which have little contemporary ritual significance and thus movement into and around this area of the plateau is virtually unrestricted. This is a factor of some consequence as in the “active” central area of the plateau, where cultivation is intensive and where the dispersed compounds associated with all the quarters listed above except Tamboog cluster, access is restricted on account of the shrines dotting the landscape. However, both paths and fields were liberally scattered with archaeological material, in part perhaps a consequence of manuring activities.

In order to further test this visible difference in archaeological surface material patterning test excavations were completed in two rock shelters at the southern end of the plateau; Kpeline Cave (N10°40′21.4″ W000°48′54.3″) and Songpaaveng cave (N10°40′31.1″ W000°49′05.5″). These were the first ever excavations completed, apparently, in the Upper East Region, and certainly in the Tong Hills. Test pits of 1 square meter were excavated down to bed rock in both rock shelters. Both yielded assemblages of ceramics in otherwise undifferentiated damp red
brown fill. According to oral tradition both caves were refuge sites, though from whom is unclear - possibly the British during their campaigns to subdue the area at the beginning of the twentieth century (see Fortes 1945:12), or alternatively earlier, and associated with local conflict and slave raiding (see below). The latter explanation seems more viable.

The date of the assemblages is not certain, however there was a complete absence of lithics of the types described by Casey (2000) as associated with the LSA of the nearby Gambaga Escarpment. Moreover, the cord impressed wares, based upon parallels with ceramics recovered from excavations completed by Kankpeyeng (personal observation) in the neighbouring Upper West Region suggest a comparatively early, though Iron Age date, for they precede roulette decorated wares brought in by the Mande, possibly in the 15th-16th centuries (Figure 1). However further work is needed to substantiate this. Although oral traditions also refer to the Namoos element of the Tallensi, the plains dwellers (Fortes 1987), coming from Mampurugu, no parallels can as yet be drawn with ceramics from there, partly on account of an absence of reliable and/or published assemblages from the Mampurugu area (but see Kense 1992).

Various other areas of archaeological interest as well as distinct sites were also recorded on the Tong Hills transect. These included a multi-activity rock shelter which was planned; Gbegbeya Veug (Hyena’s Cave – N10°40’ 19.1” W000°48’59.9”). Extensive areas of grinding and pounding hollows as well as cup marks cut for game playing were recorded here, as well as clay structures used, according to local informants, for roasting meat by the Tendaana or Earth Priest, whose drum associated with the annual Golib Festival was also stored in the same shelter (Figures 2 and 3).

Survey at the northern end of the plateau again provided a contrast with the central and southern
sections. This was because from the North-western edge of the blacksmiths quarter, Sameed, extensive land terracing systems were found (Figure 4). The existence of these has been previously noted (Kankpeyeng 2001), however their age is not known. Oral traditions refer to their being of some antiquity; their being associated with the ‘ancestors’, but otherwise when terracing first began to be used is unknown. No indication as to this was found during the survey. The ceramics on the field surfaces could not be considered a reliable chronological indicator being largely introduced, as noted, apparently during manuring practices and through rubbish disposal. The excavation of elements of these terracing systems will be made a priority of the next season.

Further elements which were completed during the reconnaissance survey in the Tong Hills included conducting preliminary interviews with various people, male and female, and of different ages and social status, regarding landscape perception and understanding. Unsurprisingly, these vary considerably according to both ritual and practical knowledge and the continued collection of this data will be an ongoing aspect of the project. Moreover, preliminary interviews were also conducted with the blacksmiths of Sameed. These blacksmiths no longer smelt iron nor have any idea when or where (if ever) iron smelting was undertaken by the Tallensi. This in itself is intriguing and suggests a further possible avenue which can be pursued in terms of former interactions with Mampurugu, with the latter as a possible source of iron, supplementing local production in the Tong Hills which is seemingly represented by the slag recorded during the survey, regardless of local information to the contrary.

No trace of Islamic influence was found in the Tong Hills either archaeologically: mosques, burials, trade goods etc. (Insoll 1999, 2003), or in the form of vestiges in myths or traditions. Considering that parts of Mampurugu have been ‘semi’-Islamised for perhaps several centuries, this is also of interest bearing in mind the aforementioned Mampurugu associated origin traditions for the Namoos. This too will be further investigated in the future.

Figure 2. Grinding and pounding hollows, Hyena’s Cave (photo. T. Insoll).
A second transect was completed to the east of the modern settlement of Garu. This area was chosen as a major centre associated with the Kusasi ethnic group who occupy land to the northeast of Mampurugu (Mather 1999). Moreover this is also an area within which Muslim trader Mossi communities are settled providing a possible interesting contrast in terms of archaeological site patterning. This proved to be correct. The banks of the River Gyalakologo, 2 km east of Garu, where accessible, were walked northwards upstream until progress became impossible. The river banks provided a window of archaeological visibility in this area of otherwise densely utilised agricultural and swampland (the latter also used for rice cultivation).
**Figure 4.** Field terracing systems, Sameed (photo. T. Insoll).

**Figure 5.** Granary or storage bins, Kugri (photo. T. Insoll).
Various concentrations of sherds were recorded on the sand banks and gravel spits in the river. These seemed to be primarily Iron Age in date though were interspersed with some seemingly worked quartz artifacts. Although dating is uncertain these pottery and lithics concentrations were associated with contemporary crossing points, or fords, on the river (for example, N10°51'55.8" W000°09'36.3"). Hence these would seem to be an indication of trade routes crisscrossing the region and otherwise invisible away from the river where they have been obscured by modern occupation and the previously mentioned intensive land use. Besides the sherd and lithic scatters, no visible structures, burials, activity areas, or other features were noted.

This stands in contrast to the Mossi trader settlement surveyed, Warinyanga (N10°53'45.8" W000°04'05.9"), and ca. 12 km east of Garu. Here a variety of structures were recorded including an area of compounds identified by local informants as the ‘original’ place of the village, a mosque built in a Sudanese style, as well as an extensive musalla, used for community prayer at festivals, and an area of furnace remains and iron slag over 100 m in diameter attesting to iron production on a large scale. This settlement was of great interest as it was outside the orbit of Mampurugu, ethnically and culturally, but was seemingly linked to the latter via trade; specifically, forming the terminus of a trade route running east through Togo and Burkina Faso and onto, ultimately, Hausaland.

Nakpanduri

The third area investigated was on the top of the Gambaga Escarpment, in topographic contrast to Gam on the plain below, and was focussed around the modern settlement of Nakpanduri. This town is situated about 30 km east of Gambaga, the former capital of Mampurugu. Hence it was anticipated that some degree of influence would be evident from the latter. Nakpanduri is also situated in an area primarily inhabited by the Bimoba ethnic group who, in contrast to both the Kusasi and Tallensi, have been wholly neglected, seemingly, by anthropologists, and certainly by archaeologists.

Transects were walked both north-east and north-west from Nakpanduri to the escarpment edge for approximately 5 km in each direction, their terminus being dictated by the cliffs. In the former area, Tuksieri or Kugri (N10°39'00.5" W000°10'27.5") numerous archaeological features were recorded including refuges, granaries, and storage bins built in the rock outcrops interspersed amongst the fields. These were frequently very well constructed; utilising worked and unworked stone slabs, puddled mud, and timber (Figure 5). Similar features were recorded on the other transect in the Gunsuga area. Moreover these refuges were also located on the cliff face itself; and on a much larger scale than on the plateau above. For example at Jakper (N10°39'06.7" W000°11'09.9"), meaning “old mountain”, granaries and a defensible access point, a funnel through the rock leading to cliffside galleries, perhaps to defeat horsemen, were recorded (Figure 6). These were very reminiscent of structures built by the Dogon on the Bandiagara Escarpment in Mali (see for example Bedaux 1988), though obviously no direct parallel is here being drawn.

Some pottery sherds were associated with these structures, though collections were not undertaken, the emphasis being placed upon obtaining C14 samples on account of the excellent survival of organic materials such as wooden beams and straw temper used in the granaries. Two good samples were collected and have yet to be processed but it is hoped will give an idea of date to accompany the oral traditions which though again lacking a specific temporal dimension, clearly stated that the refuges and their associated structures were built by the Bimoba and their ancestors to avoid Muslim slave raiders. These raiders operated as late as the end of the nineteenth
century, but began considerably earlier, for it is probable that Mampurugu prospered, in part, through slave trading.

The full extent of these refuge sites is not known but similar galleries and structures were recorded during the survey as far as 9 km east in the vicinity of Tusig, on the border with Togo (N10°39'10.6" W000°04'12.4"), specifically, a site previously reported by Carter and Carter (1964). The western extent of these refuge sites is not yet known. However, a schematic rock painting, executed in red ochre, was recorded on the roof of a rock shelter at the top of the face of the portion of the Gambaga Escarpment known as Gingana (N10°36'32.5" W000°21'11.9") (Figure 7). This was some distance west of Nakpanduri being located nearer Nalerigu and accessible by paths leading from the roadside village of Zaratinga.

The rock painting itself was seemingly unconnected with the refuge sites, being situated at the head of a path leading down the escarpment to the White Volta and the plain below. This would appear to be only the second recorded instance of rock art in Ghana, the first being noted by Carter and Carter (1964). Overall, accessibility is a major problem with the cliff sites as many, owing to their nature as refuges, are placed so as to be inaccessible precluding safe access to them without specialist equipment. Such investigation will, however, be made a priority for the future.

Conclusions

The results achieved from the reconnaissance survey both indicate the varied nature of Mamprussi interaction with their neighbours in terms of trade (Kusasi and Mossi), population exchange (Tallensi) and potentially enslavement (Bimoba), but also the varied nature of the archaeology, and moreover, its visibility. Furthermore the potential for future research in the Upper East and Gambaga Escarpment (Northern Region) was shown to be immense and various new research questions have inevitably been generated, as has already been described. A multi-year archaeological research project integrating both survey and, crucially, excavation, will be initiated in
order to gain a fuller understanding of chronology, and the many facets of regional interaction seemingly evident. This will be allied with the collection of oral tradition and a systematic interview programme. The next season, focussed upon the Tong Hills in the first instance will take place in August 2005.

Acknowledgments

Timothy Insoll would like to thank the British Academy for funding the fieldwork. He would also like to thank Joanna Casey, Peter Shinnie, and Charles Mashers for advice prior to the completion of the fieldwork. The assistance of Malik Mahmoud in the field is gratefully acknowledged, along with that of all the other local guides and informants.

References

Bedaux, R.

Carter, P. L. and P. J. Carter

Casey, J.
Fortes, M.

Insoll, T.

Kankpeyeng, B.

Kense, F.

Mathers, C.M.

Tilley, C.
Two seasons of fieldwork were conducted at Kpaliworgu, northern Ghana from 1997 to 1999. The archaeological study identified, mapped, and excavated portions of the old settlement of Kpaleworgu, located on the major bend of the Kulpawn River (Figure 1). The site is linked to the Kantosi, a Mande migrant group in northern Ghana, now widely dispersed among other ethnolinguistic groups within the region. The Kantosi presence in northern Ghana is associated with the introduction of Islam and artisanal skills, notably weaving and metal working, as well as distinctive decorative types on local ceramics. The fieldwork at Kpaliworgu was designed to examine culture contact between the Kantosi and other ethnolinguistic groups in northern Ghana. The Rockefeller Foundation and Syracuse University provided funding for the fieldwork.

Figure 1. Location of Kpaliworgu.
Reconnaissance Survey

Preliminary field reconnaissance of the site was conducted in May and June 1997. Christopher R. DeCorse at Syracuse University joined the research team to inspect parts of the site. Elders of the Kantosi led the research crew through parts of the old settlement and pointed out many surface features. They also narrated oral traditions of the Kantosi which also contained information on the history of the settlement. While these visits were promising, the rainy season had commenced, grasses had grown tall, and the site could only be reached by foot over a three-kilometer distance from a feeder road. In addition, local labor to support the fieldwork is only available in the dry season as all the people at the neighboring communities of new Kpaliworgu, Gbantala, Holomuni and Katua are peasant farmers who usually concentrate on their farm work during the rainy season.

Further survey was suspended until the dry season, between December and April, because of the inaccessibility of the site. I carried out two principal seasons of fieldwork: May 1997 to April 1998, and December 1998 to March 1999. The May 1997 to April 1998 field season was devoted primarily to collection of oral traditions, mapping, surface surveys, and test excavations. The December 1998 to March 1999 season was equally devoted to mapping, the recording of surface features, and more excavations. Controlled bush fires had to be set to burn off grass at the beginning of each of the field seasons. The burning was done two weeks before survey work could be conducted to allow for the strong harmattan winds to blow off the ash from the ground so that the surface features and artifacts could be seen.

Surface Surveys

Walking surveys in December 1997 helped to identify the primary surface features of the site. Elders who had knowledge of some features conducted me around the settlement area. Additional surveys were
continued simultaneously with the mapping and excavation. New information on surface features of the site necessitated the simultaneous operations.

The survey data revealed the site to be very large. Old Kpaliworgu covers an area of about 15 km², having sprawled along the Kulpawn River. Portions of the site are on both sides of the River (Figure 2). The settlement spread five kilometers in North-South direction and three kilometers East-West. The greater portion of the site is on the western side. Significant surface features of the site identified during the walking surveys included house mounds, heaps of stone (some mixed with local ceramic sherds), short mud walls, stone outlined prayer areas or mosques, and two stone grave markers. Surface scatters of local ceramic sherds, metal and lithic objects were also identified. We also observed animal burrows in some parts of the site. The disturbance revealed materials such as local ceramic sherds and shell.

Elders showed me a thick forest of trees and related it to one oral tradition on the abandonment of the settlement. The community is said to have used this area to hide from enemies prior to the abandonment of the site. I was also shown a shrine at the bend of the river where annual sacrifices are still offered to the River God. An oxbow lake to the north of the settlement was also identified (Figure 2). A Kantosi oral tradition I collected associates the oxbow lake with the abandonment of the settlement. In this rendering of the abandonment, people left after the drainage of the lake on the orders of a curious chief who wanted to investigate the source of the lake or its richness in fish and water, especially when they received visitors.

Mapping and Drawing

To facilitate the mapping of the large site within time periods available for fieldwork, the area was divided into nine loci. The loci were demarcated with arbitrary lines separating clusters of house mounds. Maps showing all house mounds, prayer grounds or mosques, and other principal features were drawn for the different loci. Excavated units were also plotted on the maps. Six loci of close proximity were connected on a single site map. The Kulpawn River was related to these loci. Maps for three other loci were separately drawn because their greater distance from the other loci made it impossible to conveniently place them on the same map. Each was over a kilometer distant from the next locus. A prismatic compass and tape were used to create the maps. The compass was used instead of a level because the latter proved to be slow when an initial attempt was made to grid the site in January 1998. Experience from the establishment of grids for portions of the two loci (A and B)

Figure 3. Photograph of stone outline mosque or prayer area at Locus B.
Figure 4. Stone outline of mosque or prayer area at locus B. Note the orientation of the mihrab is not exactly east. The mihrab is the zoned space to the east. The entrances are the wider open areas to the west and northeast.

Figure 5. Grave marker at Locus A.
demonstrated how difficult it would have been to establish a grid system for the whole site. Tall shrubs were a considerable hindrance.

Surface Features

(1) Architectural Features. The principal architectural remains at ancient Kpaliworgu are represented by house mounds. Seventy such mounds were recorded. Two different mound types were present; those that showed traces of walls and those without any wall traces. The mounds with traces of house forms were present at only two loci. These traces indicate both round and rectangular house forms. Those without traces were present at all the loci. The mounds with traces of architectural forms suggest a more recent abandonment than those without any traces (Agorsah 1986, 1985; DeCorse 2001; McIntosh 1977, 1976).

In addition to the house mounds, a short section lateritic wall mortared with mud, identified only at one locus, measured 120 cm in length, 80 cm in thickness and 50 cm in height. Elders suggested that it was the remains of the only Friday mosque that was located at the site. A Friday mosque is the largest mosque in a town and the place where the entire Islamic community worships. The elders said that the Kpaliworgu Friday mosque was built from a mixture of shea butter, honey, and lateritic soil. Traces of the wall showed that it was rectangular and was probably unroofed or had been roofed with grass. There was little debris inside. Some elders suggested it also served as a meeting ground or town hall. Traditions collected from the Kantosi living in southern Burkina Faso also mention the mosque. During a pilgrimage to the site in April 1999 (while this archaeological survey was ongoing) the southern Burkina Faso group members removed and ate pieces of the walls of the Friday mosque as a spiritual reverence of visiting their ancestral home. I talked with the elders who compelled the visitors to stop such actions in order to preserve the wall.

(2) Prayer Areas. One of the most conspicuous categories of surface features identified by elders consists of laterite boulders arranged in oval forms. Seven such features were noted, one each at three loci and two each at two loci. These formations were stone outlined mosques or, more correctly prayer grounds for the five daily prayers. The prayer areas never had any walls; they were just cleared areas set aside for prayer. They were located close to house mounds without any trace of the house form. They were oriented with the Imam or prayer leader’s section (mihrab) facing east, a practice typical of Islamic mosques or prayer grounds. There were zoned spaces for the imam or leader of the prayers, demarcated by the rock boulders. Entrance areas were shown by openings on the northern, southern, and western sides.

Figures 3 and 4 are a photograph and drawing of one such feature. Elders confirmed that these areas were Islamic prayer grounds or mosques. We identified similar stone outline mosques or prayer grounds at the present settlement of Kpaliworgu with members of families of close lineage performing prayers together inside such features close to their house or cluster of houses. I also observed prayers being said in them. Similar ones have also been identified in other world areas, including other parts of West Africa (DeCorse 1989; Helms 1990:73; Insoll 1999:46,47). For example, dry-stone crescent prayer walls were also found throughout the western Sahara (Insoll 1999:47), with another example built by the Tuaregs of the Hoggar in the central Sahara (Reygasse 1950; Mercer 1976:144) and others by the Islamic Yalunka and Fula in northern Sierra Leone (DeCorse 1989). I have also observed similar prayer areas in modern Islamic communities in northern Ghana. The lateritic boulders at Kpaliworgu were probably carried over long distances to the site. They are not available naturally at the site. I observed, however, that such rocks were available in outcrops about two to three kilometers to the west of the site.

(3) Grave-Markers. Two grave markers were identified; one each at two loci. Excavation of one of these features confirmed that it was a grave marker. The grave marker removed from the unit located was a flat granite or granodiorite slab that projected out of the ground to height of fifty centimeters (Figure 5). At the base were laterite boulders all around. Prior to the excavation of the unit, elders who visited the site with me explained that the grave marker was a natural feature. However, a human burial was recovered at a depth of one meter below the marker. Elders did not permit the excavation of the second feature because of the recovery of the human burial from the first one. I negotiated and signed an agreement with Kantosi elders before the removal of the human remains. As part of the agreement, the human remains are to be returned and reburied. Such reaction from
the elders demonstrated the significance of archaeological research in enhancing ethnic pride and culture-history and the importance that can be associated with archaeological remains.

Other Surface Features: Other surface features identified at five loci consisted of piles of stone and local ceramic sherds. Superficially, they resemble the Komaland stone circle mounds identified within the Sisili-Kulpawn river basins, which the Yikpabongo excavations of 1985 directed by James Anquandah of the University of Ghana showed contained human burials with terracotta figurines. Excavations of three such mounds at Kpaliworgu recovered only large amounts of local ceramics and stone. No figurines were recovered. During the fieldwork we observed that farmers heaped stones and local ceramic sherds into piles while clearing land, suggesting that these mounds were created as a result of recent farming practices. The use of simple agricultural tools such as hoes necessitate the piling-up of such materials to allow for easier tilling, and to prevent damage to farm implements or injury to the farmers. Baobab trees were present at two loci. Elders noted two striking baobab trees at one loci as having sprouted out of the graves of the first couple that settled at the settlement.

Excavations

Excavations were undertaken concurrently with the mapping. Excavated units were located based on the presence of surface features, artifact scatters, or size of house mounds. As a control, some test units were also located in areas where there was no surface evidence. All loci were tested, except one where bees drove off the research crew. Only local ceramic sherds were collected from the surface at this location. A total of ten house mounds were sampled. Depth of the units varied from 1 m to 2.2 m. Excavations were carried out by arbitrary levels. The dry and compacted soils that made it impossible to discern the natural stratigraphy. Deposits underwent color changes as the soil dried out in the dry season. The dry and compacted soil compelled the use of mattocks and pick axes to dig. Effort was, however, made to locate all artifacts in situ and with little damage. Sieving soil through one-eighth inch mesh screen ensured maximum recovery.

Artifacts were moved to the Upper East Regional Museum at Bolgatanga, where they were washed (as was the case of the finds from the first season), sorted, tabulated, and deposited. Local ceramics excavated from units placed in the small stone mounds were not analyzed because it was felt they lacked adequate contextual information. As contemporary farming practices suggested that the stones and sherds were gathered by modern farmers, data from the mounds would be of mixed age and context and unreliable for assessing chronology or artifact distribution. The human remains, charcoal samples, and small finds were moved to Syracuse University and further analyzed.

The 1997-1998 Field Season. During the first field season block excavations were completed at four loci. The excavations allowed for an understanding of the distribution of artifacts at the site and comparison of the artifacts from the different loci. Larger units better suited for sampling the different loci for they provided profiles that were helpful in defining the stratigraphic relationship of interrelated structures and features. Units were extended to recover human remains or to further expose features such as lateritic compacted floors. After exposure of the features further excavation was done to recover material below the burials or compacted floor. The test trenches excavated cut through the greater parts of the heaps of stone and local ceramic circle mounds (stone mounds) in order to determine and define the stratigraphic relationship between any features or artifacts. As noted earlier, excavations of five heaps of stone mixed with local ceramic sherds did not show any significant features nor produce any significant artifacts apart from large quantities of local ceramic sherds and production tools.

The 1998-1999 Field Season. During the second season (1998/99), 1 m² excavation units were used to provide clearer stratigraphic profiles for seven units. These units were used to further refine the chronology for the site and to relate the loci to each other. In order to facilitate the identification of soil color types, water was sprayed on the walls before the profiles were drawn. In these units care was taken to ensure that no intrusive features were present and the stratigraphy, as carefully could be determined, was horizontal. Artifacts recovered from the excavations included 11,527 diagnostic local ceramic sherds, 3 intact pots, 17 diagnostic local tobacco pipes, 80 fragments of local tobacco pipe fragments, 13 spindle whorls, glass fragment, imported ceramic sherd, 59 metal pieces/objects, 116 lithic material/equipment,
bone hooks, bone bead, shell bead, glass beads, pieces of iron slag, one gun flint, cowry shells, 3906.53 grams of shell (from dietary animal species), 2146 fragments of fauna bone, and human remains belonging to three individuals.

Chronology

Trade materials (beads, cowry, glass, and ceramics) provided the basis for establishing a chronology for Kpaliworgu settlement occupation. These were of key importance because they can be very closely dated compared to local manufactures. In addition, local tobacco pipes, produced after the introduction of tobacco as a trade item or cultigen, were helpful in establishing the chronology. Finally, two radiocarbon dates (Cal BP 560 to 290 and Cal 280 to 0) from two units of different loci were obtained to further confirm assessments about the initial occupation of the site. The dates from the charcoal samples and the trade materials agree with the report of George Ekem Ferguson was abandoned by 1900. It is suggested that the principal occupation of the settlement was between the mid 17th century and 1900.

Local Ceramic Chronology. The chronology discussed above allows for an understanding of the local ceramic chronology. The comparison of the dates of the two loci, represented by two excavated units, made clearer the seriation charts for the decorative types of the local ceramics. Three decorative types were crucial: roulette-stamped, cord-marked, and striated. Cord-marked was the most dominant decorative type from the beginning of the settlement in the 17th century. Striated appeared at later stratigraphic levels and seems to be a later introduction, probably introduced in the 19th century. Roulette-stamped decorated sherds were present at five loci, with none recovered at the only other locus tested. The roulette-stamped decorations were used at the other five loci tested through their occupation. It also suggests that the loci where it was absent was probably occupied by the first settlers, because of the presence of cord-marked local ceramic decorations, the earliest type, at this locus. These loci continued to be occupied during the period when striated decorations were introduced and used because of the presence of striated and roulette-stamped at these areas.

Human Burials

Three human burials were recovered: Burial 1 and 2 were recovered from the same locus and Burial 3 at a different locus. Only Burial 2 was indicated by a grave marker. Burials 1 and 2 were oriented in a north-south direction with heads to the south. They were laid on their right side facing east. Lateritic boulders and used grinding stones were used to ensure that the direction was maintained. The boulders were around the pelvic bones and the used grinding stones were placed on the hands. Burial 1 had the individual’s legs flexed. Burial 2 had its legs slightly flexed. The skulls were not resting on the phalanges; rather the indications were that the hands were stretched and placed in front of the stomach. One of the individuals had two small grinding stones resting on the phalanges. The grinding stones probably served as weights to help maintain the burial orientation and cannot be considered as grave goods.

Burial 1 appeared at a depth of 160 centimeters. Burial 1 represents a single, middle to adult age, individual, probable male (Goode-Null: personal communication). A medium size burnished pot with a lid (a broken local ceramic sherd) was placed to the west of the head. No artifacts were recovered below the burial, nor were any grave goods associated with this individual. Elders explained, that the grave marker for Burial 2 indicated an elder. According to them, only elders’ graves are marked. The skeletal remains of Burial 1 were better preserved that the others. Burial 3 was probably unusual. It lay in an almost vertical position but looked inclined. The feet were about forty centimeters below the head. The skull, teeth and feet elements were the only remains recovered. Elders could not provide any explanation for the unusual burial.
Conclusion

The surface features and excavated archaeological data obtained during the fieldwork at Kpaliworgu helped to evaluate information on the Kantosi provided by oral tradition, Arabic scripts, and scholarly works. The archaeological record verified the site chronology and revealed the subsistence strategies, artisanal practices, trade relations and world view of its inhabitants. The research demonstrates that immigrant populations underwent significant acculturation. The patterning of the archaeological data at Kpaliworgu and the ethnographic practices of the Kantosi groups suggest that the degree of acculturation among these groups varied depending on the duration of stay. The study indicates that immigrant groups minimally influenced the culture of indigenous ethnolinguistic groups in northern Ghana. The study further elaborates the manifestations of the world system (DeCorse 2001; Gutkind and Wallerstein 1976; Mendonsa 2001) in the hinterland areas of West Africa, and noted the cultural transformations that occurred in northern Ghana as a result of the trade and intensified warfare that accompanied the indirect contact following the presence of Europeans along the coastline of West Africa. The varied data acquired during the study provides an understanding of the dynamics involved in culture contact and identity formation in northern Ghana, and underscores the use of archaeology as a powerful tool for reconstructing and interpreting the histories of communities for which there is limited written record.

References

Agorsah, K.

DeCorse, C. R.

Gutkind, P. C. and I. Wallerstein, editors

Helms, S.

Insoll, T.

McIntosh, R.
1976 Finding lost walls on archaeological sites-The Hani model. Sankofa 2: 45-53.

Mendonsa. E. J.

Mercer, J.

Reygasse, M.
The Emergence of Modern Human Behavior: The East African evidence

Isaya O. Onjala
Department of Anthropology
University of Alberta
Edmonton, Alberta
Canada, T6G 2H4

Abstract

Processes and patterns of artifact production in the Middle Stone Age (MSA) may be equally complex and organized reflecting aspects of modern human behavior as seen in the Later Stone Age (LSA). This is contrary to the currently held view that significant complexity and organization could only be possible in the LSA industries starting around 40,000 BP associated with the emergence of anatomically modern humans. Using Upper Palaeolithic materials that are said to correspond to the LSA in sub-Saharan Africa, a definition of modernity has been created that stresses the changes that marked the transition to modern behavior in Europe. The application of such a definition, however, remains problematic in other parts of the world where other ways of detecting modern behavior must be established in order to better understand the emergence of cultural modernity.

East Africa contains MSA assemblages that may be useful in understanding the emergence of modern behavior. A number of problems, however, face researchers in the pursuit of this understanding. These can be overcome through multi-site investigation approach, open discussion and agreement among researchers on what to look for and how to get evidence on modern behavior. Attention must also be put on long surviving materials of technological nature, particularly stone implements favored by the conditions in the region. An introduction to an ongoing similar approach in a part of the region (the Central Rift Valley and Lake Victoria basin) indicates that technological systems at various sites reflect manufacturing procedures, raw material acquisition and use, as well as the general use of the environment and regional linkages. These and other proxy evidence make it possible to assess complexity, organization and standardization at the MSA, which in turn enables us to understand the state of modern human behavior during this time in the region.

Background

The emergence of modern human behavior has been a major topic of debate amongst palaeoanthropologists in the past few decades. Two opposing views have been advanced in explaining both the timing and place of emergence. The first view is that modern human behavior emerged suddenly around 40,000 BP and marks the transition from Middle Palaeolithic (MP) to Upper Palaeolithic (UP) in Europe (Mellars 1973, 1996a, 1996b; White 1996). This revolutionary change also ushered in the use of symbols and a major shift in technological patterns (Mellars 1989; Soffer 1989). The second view is that modern human behavior appeared gradually over the course of the African Middle Stone Age (MSA) (McBrearty and Brooks 2000). While the two views differ on the time and origin of modern human behavior, they do agree that Africa was the origin of biologically modern humans. Klein (1999), one of the scientists highly involved in this discussion argues that pre-modern humans underwent a recent and sudden evolutionary event in which mutation occurred enabling the brain to develop abilities to make symbols. Such abilities allowed humans to disperse throughout the world and also use their developed superior cognitive capabilities to expand from Africa into the Old World where they replaced or mixed with archaic peoples and their cultures.

Given the above scenario and the supporting genetic evidence that Africa is the place of origin of our own species, one would expect that cultural modernity would similarly have its earliest appearance somewhere in Africa. Contrary to this, the debate on the transition to modern behavior has focused on the European evidence giving definition of modernity as the use of symbols, sophisticated bone and stone technologies, effective resource exploitation strategies, planning, art, ornamentation and complex social formation and systems of exchange (Klein 1992, Mellars et al. 1989). A closer look at the list of characters or traits indicate that majority of them may only apply locally as they may not survive longer in other environments, particularly the tropical conditions of Africa. There is therefore need to use evidence from other parts of the Old World in the pursuit of a better procedures and organization and therefore reflects a
people’s general world view and level of complexity (Franklin 1990; Parkman 1972). My on-going research uses MSA assemblages to explore processes and patterns of production in assessing modern behavior during this period. Technological organization, complexity and standardization may contribute to our understanding of the magnitude or level of modernity for this period. It is my opinion that materials from various East African sites, though scanty, will be able to point towards the presence or absence of cultural modernity during the MSA.

Problems facing the East African evidence

Evidence from East Africa is only beginning to be used in the debate on the emergence of modern human behavior. A number of localized problems, however, stand on the way to understanding cultural modernity in this region. First, there are only a few well-stratified sites to provide clues or to enable for the detection of the patterns of modern cultural developments. Most MSA assemblages come from small or shallow open-air sites. Others come from thin lenses or horizons within stratified rock shelter or cave sites. In Kenya, for example, except for a few sites like Prospect Farm (SASES: GsJi 7 and 8) and Muguruk (SASES: GqJc 1) with relatively large assemblages of MSA material, other assemblages are rather small compared to either Early Stone Age (ESA) or LSA ones in the region. This limited MSA record also contrasts greatly with other areas such as Southern Africa where sites like Border Cave, Boomplaas, Apollo II, Rose Cottage, Sehonghong, Moshebi’s Shelter, Montagu Cave, Peer’s Cave and Klasies River Mouth (Deacon 1989) have multiple horizons of MSA assemblages.

The practice of comparing MSA and LSA materials in order to understand the nature of modernity during the MSA also poses a problem. Such comparisons lead to the conclusion that there is little modernity in the MSA. Modern laws of production indicate that development is time-transgressive. An item manufactured today will show superiority in workmanship and design over those manufactured a year or so earlier even if the manufacturers are the same. Comparing such items for any reason must take into consideration the factors and forces of production, which in most cases reflect more on the product than the cognitive or mental abilities of the manu-

facturers. Comparing the MSA and LSA in order to understand modernity in the former should, therefore, not be the focus considering the time-transgressive nature of production. Instead, MSA assemblages should be investigated using a set of items that define modernity and such items used to assess the degree of modernity there is in the different assemblages.

A third problem concerns the tropical environment in which East Africa is found. The highly unpredictable humid weather with alternating wet and dry conditions facilitates faster deterioration of both organic and inorganic materials. The result is that the further one moves from the present, back into prehistory, the less are the chances of recovering any meaningful quantity of organic materials. Even other materials are lost to the dynamic forces of weathering, soil formation and sedimentation along side human factors (Figure 1). This scenario makes it impossible for bone and wooden implements, unless deposited in very exceptional conditions that favor preservation, to survive in MSA horizons. Acidic soils and conditions remain a major threat to organic materials in prehistoric sites. Most faunal remains from across sites in the region exhibit faster deterioration making it strenuous to identify specimens to body parts and species. The problem is not confined to artifacts and ecofacts alone. Equally affected are other cultural markers for art and social practices such as burials. Most of the indicators for modern human behavior that would qualify for the European definition espoused could be gone. Understanding the topic therefore depends on an understanding of the surviving materials, mainly of stone origin marking the technological sector of cultural development. This should be relied upon to contribute a larger percentage of the data or evidence. Proxy data from both environmental exploitation and climatic conditions should further provide a boost to this key body of data.

Lastly, there is the impact of human and animal populations on sites in the region. Most of the MSA and LSA sites are found in populated areas. Such sites have therefore suffered one way or another due to human activities with the result that valuable evidence gets lost each day. Compared to South Africa and European sites most of which are preserved in either caves and/or rock shelters, East African sites are less protected from the hazards that cause destruction. Human activities such as development
works have destroyed and continue to destroy sites in the region. The fact that sites are found on people’s property means that they can do and have done whatever they like with them, as legislation remains soft in the protection of past heritage. Researchers have had to contend with the owners even after permits have been obtained from relevant government departments.

These problems lead to three observations surrounding the evidence and our understanding of modern human behavior in the region. First, there has been little research purely carried out to understand this important topic during the MSA in the region. Instead MSA assemblages have been investigated in attempts to understand both transitions from the ESA and to LSA (Merrick 1975) or in to compare materials with the later periods (Ambrose 1984). Other investigations have been to define particular industries (McBrearty 1986; Anthony 1978). Secondly, other places have better preserved and fairly long sequenced sites, which in some cases have multiple MSA occupation levels. Such excellent cave/rock shelter preservation conditions make the East African evidence less attractive due to its scarcity and difficulty of collection. Lastly, the problems have made it possible to only use evidence from either Eurasia or South Africa to define or argue for modern human behavior. Does this mean East Africa has nothing to contribute towards this important debate despite the evidence for the origin of biologically modern humans from the region? In the contrary, MSA assemblages offer opportunities that should be utilized to develop new approaches in understanding the topic of emergence of modern human behavior.

**Developing new approaches**

To understand modern human behavior in East Africa during the MSA, new approaches to research and treatment of the available evidence must be established. While a renewed call for a systematic investigation of the period across the region must be
made, focus has to be on (i) the use of non-perishable cultural materials such as stone implements and associated proxy evidence from the environment and (ii) the generation of information from a number of sites to create a bigger picture in understanding different aspects of modern behavior. This approach would be similar to the 1960s and 1970s practice of using large-scale interdisciplinary projects in both information gathering and dissemination of research findings. It would also make use of regular workshops and consultation forums to ensure the realization of the desired goals. Given the many sites and associated wealth of material, databases for regular consultation should be established and made available for researchers as a way of information sharing strategy.

The current trend adopted by researchers is that individuals work at particular sites at various sections of the region. While this trend should continue as dictated by individual interests and research support from different institutions, those interested in understanding the emergence of modern human behavior in the region must develop a corporate approach in line with the intricate nature of the sites and materials they contain. Individual sites or sections may not provide the complete picture we are looking for. Investigations involving wider geographic areas, together with adequate consultation in the process, seem to be the only way forward. With clear rules and guidelines on what to look for in the assemblages, researchers will be able to bring together evidence to understand this important topic of modern human behavior during the MSA.

**Testing the new approach**

My current research within the Central Rift Valley and Lake Victoria Basin of Kenya is an investigation of the MSA technology. The main goal of this investigation is to identify aspects of modern human behavior in the technological system. Lithic raw material procurement, use of the environment/landscape, where and how tools were produced and the associated decisions, reflect a wide range of variation in behavior that may be useful in understanding cultural modernity. My primary target therefore is to identify any existing variations in the different assemblages and then find the causes for such variation. And lastly, the investigation seeks to establish whether there is any formal standardization of artifacts and/or reduction process within the two regions. How both assemblage variability and standardization results point towards modern human behavior forms the key element of discussion both at the theoretical and practical-analytical levels of the investigation.

---

**Table 1:** Background information on the sites and assemblages used in the current investigation. Dates have been obtained from Ambrose (2001), Merrick (1975) and Michels et al. (1983).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SITE</th>
<th>SASES No.</th>
<th>YEAR OF EXCAVATION</th>
<th>RESEARCHER</th>
<th>APPROXIMATE DATE</th>
<th>SAMPLE SOURCE</th>
<th>SAMPLE SIZE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prospect Farm (PF)</td>
<td>GsJi 7 &amp; 8</td>
<td>1963 – 1964</td>
<td>Barbara Anthony</td>
<td>50,000 to 120,000 BP</td>
<td>MSA Locality 1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>312 889 327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enkapune Ya Muto (EYM)</td>
<td>Gr Ji 12</td>
<td>1982 &amp; 1987</td>
<td>Stanley Ambrose</td>
<td>50,000 to 59,000 BP</td>
<td>MSA Endigi Industry</td>
<td>135 601 41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prolonged Drift (PD)</td>
<td>Gr Ji 11</td>
<td>1969 – 1970</td>
<td>H. V. Merrick</td>
<td>Ca 30,000 BP</td>
<td>MSA</td>
<td>30 265 45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cartwright’s site (C)</td>
<td>GsJ 75</td>
<td>1960s collections</td>
<td>L. S. B. Leakey</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>MSA</td>
<td>12 18 65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muguruk (M)</td>
<td>GqJc 1</td>
<td>1979 – 1980</td>
<td>Sally McBrearty</td>
<td>60,000 to 100,000 BP</td>
<td>MSA Horizons (L4)</td>
<td>15 130 15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To realize this goal, lithic materials (cores, flakes and selected shaped tools) from five sites were investigated between 2003 and 2004 (Table 1 and Figure 2). As these were collected during previous excavations, information about them was obtained from the National Museums of Kenya’s Division of Archaeology’s database, which is stored in the form of site and excavation forms, site folders and index cards, field notes and artifact catalogue as well as publication lists. This information allowed for the selection of MSA assemblages while discriminating against materials of either the transition from ESA and to LSA.

All cores from the MSA assemblages of Prospect Farm and Enkapune Ya Muto were examined, as well as a limited number from the other sites. Generally, there were fewer cores than other categories of artifacts within the assemblages. This necessitated the use of almost all available cores that were found within the assemblages at both Prospect Farm and Enkapune Ya Muto. The scarcity of cores and the
complexity of artifact occurrence as well as lack of clear records at the other sites dictated the use of only a limited number of cores.

Whole flakes from the selected assemblages were analyzed to shade light on the reduction process. These are not affected by or modified through either use or retouch and are therefore suitable for this purpose. The quantity of whole flakes in the selected assemblages differed but remains adequate for the purposes of this investigation. A number of retouched tools were analyzed from the sites but only the dominant categories, especially scrapers and points, were factored into understanding the reduction sequence and measures of standardization.

Once the materials were selected, catalogue numbers were given. Each specimen was then subjected to metric measurements in a standard archaeological analysis with information entered into data sheets. A morphological observation using a coded system was also carried out to extract information on various aspects of technology and the specimens’ relation to the environment during its life span.

The measurements and coded observations will provide the basis of both the descriptive and analytical requirements of this investigation. This work is still underway. The descriptive level will establish the technological activities that created the assemblages while the analytical level will provide the interpretation of the activities using statistical measures to create pattern profiles. Identified patterns on raw material economy, core types, flake morphology and size and tools within the tool category will further point towards the following. (1) selection and transportation or treatment of raw materials; (2) shaping of or core preparation strategies; (3) production of flakes and selection of blanks for tool making, and (4) retouch and production of various tools. This information, together with theoretical models for understanding hunter-gatherer societies, will then be used to assess the cognitive abilities of the makers of these MSA assemblages.

In conclusion, this research lends support to the new approach suggested earlier in this paper in two major ways. First, it uses material from different sites and regions and therefore seeks to compare and establish how the makers of the MSA assemblages reacted to and impacted their different environments. Information exchange and regional interaction, if detected, may lead to clear indication of the genesis of modern behavioral patterns. Secondly, it relies on stone artifacts, which form a greater percentage of the cultural remains for the MSA period. Proxy data or evidence derived from environmental exploitation and climatic conditions of the period provide but a limited amount of information on behavioral patterns. In order to understand the complete picture, however, corporation and expansion from such small projects to larger ones will be required. Consultation and establishment of common data bases where data from smaller sites/different areas/regions can be obtained and jointly analyzed will remain a priority in understanding this important topic within the East African region. It is towards this direction that MSA researchers in the wider Eastern African region should go. Or is there another direction that should be taken?

References Cited

Ambrose, S. H.

Anthony, B.

Clark, J. D.
Clark, A. M. B.


Deacon, H. J.


Franklin, U.


Kelly, R. L.


Klein, R. G.


McBrearty, S.


McBrearty, S. and A. Brooks


Mellars, P.


Mellars, P. and C. Stringer, editors


Merrick, H. V.


Merrick, H. V. and F. H. Brown


Michels, J. W., I. S. T. Tsong and C. M. Nelson


Parkman, R.

Soffer, O.  

White, R.  
The archaeological reconnaissance carried out during summer 2002 in the vicinity of Gao (Mali) and farther along the now desiccated valleys of Tilemsi and Anchaouadj has demonstrated that a few millennia ago, this region on the margin of Sahara desert was intensely occupied. This intense occupation, clearly associated with better climatic conditions, extends back to the Late Stone Age (LSA). In total, 70 archaeological sites (18 LSA sites, 42 Iron Age settlement mounds, 7 ancient cemeteries and 3 iron smelting sites) were identified, recorded by size, surface archaeological material and features, and location on different geomorphological zones. Site areas at these Iron Age mounds explode to an estimated average of 10–20 ha, reaching more 50 ha at the largest one and suggesting a process of early urbanism. The numerous exotic goods (especially glass beads and cooper objects) uncovered at some of these mounds indicated that long distance trade played an important role in the economy of the Gao area.

The archaeological reconnaissance carried out during summer 2002 in the vicinity of Gao (Mali) and farther along the now desiccated valleys of Tilemsi and Anchaouadj has demonstrated that a few millennia ago, this region on the margin of Sahara desert was intensely occupied. This intense occupation, clearly associated with better climatic conditions, extends back to the Late Stone Age (LSA). In total, 70 archaeological sites (18 LSA sites, 42 Iron Age settlement mounds, 7 ancient cemeteries and 3 iron smelting sites) were identified, recorded by size, surface archaeological material and features, and location on different geomorphological zones. Site areas at these Iron Age mounds explode to an estimated average of 10–20 ha, reaching more 50 ha at the largest one and suggesting a process of early urbanism. The numerous exotic goods (especially glass beads and cooper objects) uncovered at some of these mounds indicated that long distance trade played an important role in the economy of the Gao area.

Objectifs et méthodes de recherches
Figure 1: Localisation de la zone d’étude en République du Mali.
Au plan méthodologique, l’étude qui a utilisé une approche régionale, a été essentiellement centrée dans une bande s’étendant sur les deux rives du Niger (rive gauche et rive droite respectivement appelées Haoussa Gourma par les populations de Gao). Cette bande englobait la mince plaine d’inondation du Niger et le plateau adjacent souvent occupé les dunes de sables pour la plupart stabilisées. Au nord-est, la prospection s’est étendue le long des deux principales vallées fossiles, le Tiremsi et son affluent Anchaoudj.

Tous les sites archéologiques identifiés au cours de la prospection ont été enregistrés en termes de leur localisation, de leur étendue et des vestiges archéologiques de surface. Toutes les structures et le mobilier archéologique de surface (céramique, matériel lithique et autres trouvailles comme les perles et les objets en métal) ont été notés et examinés sur place en vue de nous permettre d’établir une chronologie préliminaire de l’occupation des différents sites reconnus. Une petite collection d’études, issue de ramassage de surface sur les sites reconnus, a été constituée et déposée à la Direction Nationale du Patrimoine Culturel à Bamako.

Les sites néolithiques

L’occupation néolithique de la région est attestée par 18 sites essentiellement situés le long des deux principales vallées fossiles (le Tiremsi et de l’Anchaoudj) et dans les dépressions inter-dunaires. Le mobilier archéologique de surface est essentiellement composé de lithique, de tessons de céramique et de restes organiques (coquillages de mollusques surtout huîtres, arrêtes de poissons et ossements de grands herbivores : hippopotame et phacochère). L’analyse du matériel immobilier (céramique et lithique) est en cours.

L’outillage lithique (Figures 2 et 3) est dominé par les éclats associés à divers outils retouchés (grattoirs, perçoirs, pointes de flèches) ou polis (essentiellement herminettes et bracelets) et à un matériel de broyage (meules, molettes et pilons). La céramique, assez fragmentée, est caractérisée par la prédominance de tessons à bord simple. La pâte est compacte et homogène avec un dégraissant fin de chamotte et de sable. Le décor est varié avec des motifs imprimés exécutés avec divers types de cordelettes ou avec un peigne à dents généralement fines et appliqué de manière plus ou moins serrée (Figure 4).

La chronologie exacte de ces sites néolithiques reste à déterminer. Mais, à première vue, on pourrait penser, sur la base de la similarité du matériel archéologique de surface (notamment la céramique et le lithique) qu’ils correspondent à la même période que l’important gisement de Karkarichikat. Ce site, situé à 45 km de Gao dans la vallée du Tiremsi, remonte à 1360 ± 110 BC (Mauny 1955; Smith 1974).

Pour mieux comprendre ces sites néolithiques, il est nécessaire de les situer dans le contexte de la néolithisation de la zone sahélienne qui borde le Sahara au sud. De nombreuses régions de cette zone semi-aride se caractérisent par un néolithique récent qui, en rapport avec la désertification du Sahara, débute aux environs de 4000 BP. Les populations, de plus en plus confrontées à la sécheresse croissante, descendent du Sahara central pour des régions (vallée du Tiremsi, Méma, Hodh mauritanien) offrant des conditions écologiques plus favorables à leurs activités de chasse, de pêche et de cueillette (MacDonald 1994; Petit-Maire et al. 1983; Raimbault et al. 1990; Smith 1974).

En ce qui concerne la zone d’étude, ces communautés néolithiques sont plus nombreuses le long des vallées fossiles comme Tiremsi, l’Anchaoudj et dans les dépressions inter-dunaires. Dans un contexte général de désertification, ces unités géomorphologiques avec leurs ressources (eau, faune et flore abondantes) ont certainement constitué des terres privilégiées pour l’occupation humaine. Comme à Karkarichikat, ces diverses communautés néolithiques étaient certainement déjà sédentarisées avec des activités d’élevage, de chasse, de pêche et de cueillette.

Les buttes d’habitats anciens

Au total, ce sont 42 buttes d’habitats anciens qui ont été reconnus au cours de la prospection. La majorité de ces sites sont localisés dans la vallée du Niger qui, certainement en raison de ses potentialités (présence de l’eau et de terres fertiles pour l’agriculture) a constitué une terre d’attraction. Ces sites se présentent sous forme de buttes atteignant parfois plus de six mètres de hauteur au dessus de la plaine environnante (Figure 5) pour une superficie qui atteint souvent près de 50 ha comme à Gao Sanèye et Tchado.
Figure 2: Exemples de lithiques: Tagmart.
Figure 3: Lithiques néolithiques - site 10.
Figure 4: Poteries néolithiques du Hama Kouladji 2.
Figure 5: Vue d’une butte d’habitat ancien. Site de Kaga Hondo.

Figure 6: Impacts de pillage sur le site de Gao Sanèye.
Le mobilier archéologique de surface, très divers, est composé de tessons de poterie, scories, matériel de broyage (fragments de meules et de broyeurs), de perles (en verre, terre cuite ou cornaline), d’objets en métal (cuivre ou en fer) et d’ossements divers (essentiellement mammifères). Les structures de surface sont plus rares. Notons cependant la présence de blocs de pierres souvent organisés en tas ou en cercles à la surface de certaines buttes. S’agit-il de la matérialisation d’inhumations pré-islamiques ? Des vestiges humains, notamment des squelettes humains mis à jour par l’érosion ont été localisées sur certaines buttes.

Notons l’intense pillage pendant les dernières décennies sur le site de Gao Sanèye maintenant défiguré par des centaines de trous à la surface de toute la butte (Figure 6). Les milliers de perles exotiques déterrées par ces pilleurs et revendus sur le marché des antiquités au Mali et à l’étranger. La présence de objets exotiques, notamment des perles et des objets de cuivre, corrobore le rôle extrêmement important joué par ce site dans le commerce trans-saharien et tant évoqué à la fois par les traditions songhoy et les chroniqueurs arabes.

La reconnaissance de 2002 a permis de mettre en évidence la richesse du secteur de Gao en grandes buttes d’habitats anciens. Ces buttes, qui se pressent dans la vallée du Niger et le long des vallées fossiles, rappellent par leur morphologie et le mobilier archéologique de surface notamment la céramique, celles des autres régions du Moyen Niger, le Delta Intérieur, le Méma et la zone lacustre (McIntosh 1995; McIntosh et McIntosh 1980; Raimbault et Sanogo 1991; Togola 1993). La chronologie de ces sites d’habitats anciens reste à cerner. Mais la morphologie et le caractère du matériel de surface semble indiquer que ces buttes correspondent à la même époque. A ce jour, une période d’occupation allant du VIème au XIIème siècles a été obtenue sur le site de la mosquée de Mansa Moussa (actuellement dans la ville de Gao) dans une sondage exécuté par T. Insoll. L’importance du dépôt archéologique (atteignant souvent plus de six mètres), amène aussi à penser qu’elles ont fait d’une occupation s’étendant sur plusieurs siècles Certaines des buttes, notamment Gao Sanèye et Tchado rivalisent de taille...

La présence de ces importants sites suggère que la zone de Gao a été marquée, comme le sud du delta autour de la ville actuelle de Djenné, par un processus d’urbanisation précoce, hypothèse d’ailleurs largement soutenue par les chroniqueurs arabes qui présentent Gao comme l’une des plus vieilles cités de l’Afrique de l’Ouest (Cuq 1975 ; Mauny 1961). Cette urbanisation a certainement été favorisée par certains facteurs dont, en premier lieu, le développement du commerce trans-saharien et la naissance du Royaume Songhay dont Gao sera la capitale à partir du XIème siècle. Le rôle de Gao comme un des entrepôts les plus importants du commerce trans-saharien évoqué par les chroniqueurs arabes est attesté par la présence de nombreux objets exotiques (perles, objets en cuivre, poteries émaillées) trouvés en fouilles stratigraphiques (Insoll 1996).

Les cimetières musulmans

Les nécropoles musulmanes reconnues au cours de la mission sont au nombre de sept. Ces cimetières, de dimensions différentes, se caractérisent par la présence de diverses tombes dont certaines sont matérialisées par des stèles avec épitaphes en Arabe gravés. Le plus connu de ces cimetières est celui de Gao Sanèye situé à environ 500 mètres de la butte du même nom (Farias 1974; Flight 1975, 1979; Mauny 1961; Sauvaget 1949). Parmi les cimetières découverts pendant la prospection, celui de Tafdit, dans la vallée d’Anchouadj, est l’un des plus importants. Il mesure plus d’un hectare et comporte plus de 120 stèles épigraphiées. Ces stèles, pour la plupart sont des pierres provenant de la région. Certaines sont des meules et des pilons (probablement récupérés des sites néolithiques voisins) offrant une surface déjà polie qui a été utilisée pour recevoir les inscriptions. La transcription de ces épitaphes reste à faire. Mais, à première vue comme à Gao Sanèye, elles semblent nommer de simples personnes (hommes ou femmes), mais aussi des érudits. Elles révèlent également une variété de styles dans les inscriptions (Figure 7) suggérant diverses origines.

Conclusion

Cette phase pilote au cours de laquelle 70 sites archéologiques ont été inventoriés confirment la richesse des environs de Gao en vestiges archéologiques. La remarque la plus importante est la grande diversité des vestiges reconnus. Ces vestiges vont de la préhistoire (notamment le néolithique terminal) à la période des grands empires, témoignant d’une occupation humaine. Cette séquence d’occupation, l’une des plus longue du Moyen Niger, constitue la preuve que la zone de Gao offrait, par rapport à la période actuelle, de meilleures conditions pour l’homme. La densité des sites varie d’une zone écologique à l’autre, avec les plus fortes concentrations dans la vallée du Niger et le long du Tilemsi et l’Anchouadj qui, en raison de leurs potentialités étaient plus attractives aux populations fuyant la désertification. La situation stratégique de la zone, au débouché des routes caravanières, en fait pendant les périodes historiques un des importants carrefours des routes caravanières qui traversaient le Sahara. En rapport avec ces routes caravanières, l’Islam s’implante fortement comme l’attestent les nombreuses nécropoles avec épitaphes gravées. Nombre de traits qui caractérisent les autres régions du Moyen Niger, notamment l’urbanisation dont les témoins sont les grandes buttes d’habitats anciens, sont présents aux environs de Gao. Comme ailleurs le long du Moyen Niger, ces buttes témoignent d’une certaine prospérité et traduisent l’existence d’une situation politique assez stable. Ces premiers résultats ouvrent de nouvelles perspectives de recherches pour la zone de Gao. A quand remonte la fondation des nombreuses buttes reconnues? Pendant combien de temps ces buttes ont été habitées et quelles sont les raisons de leur abandon? Quelles étaient les populations qui habitaient ces buttes et quel était le mode de vie de ces populations? Voici autant de questions qui ne trouveront de réponses que dans des fouilles archéologiques substantielles.
Références bibliographiques

Cisse, B et A. Y arrara
sans date Une tradition songhoy nous dit l’historique de Gao, des origines à la disparition des Dia al-Yaman. Document dactylographié sans date. Gao: DRJSAC.

Cuoq, R.

Dawa, S.

Flight, C.

Gaussen, M. et J. Gaussen

Faris, P. de Moraes

Insoll, T.

MacDonald, K.

Mauny, R.

McIntosh, S. K.

McIntosh, S. K. et R. J. McIntosh

Petit-Maire, N et J. Riser, editors
Raimbault et Sanogo, K.

Sauvaget, J.

Smith, A. B.

Togola, T.
1993  *Archaeological investigations at Iron Age sites in the Mema Region, Mali (West Africa)*. PhD Dissertation, Rice University.

Toure, M. E.
Introduction

The Ungwai are one of the savanna peoples of Nigeria. They live interspersed among other ethnic groups such as the Gwari, Kamuku and Hausa. Local rivers and streams include Mariga, Koriga and Kaduna. One of the trees available in this locality is shea butter tree otherwise known as *Butyrospermum paradoxum* (Dalziel 1937; Keay 1959; Ogundele 1992, 1998). The vegetation is a reflection of the prevailing climatic conditions that can be explained against the background of annual rainfall as well as its distribution; severity of the dry season, local farming practices (including bush burning) and types of soils.

One of the objectives of this on-going research is to find out the nature of spatial behavior among the people (the Ungwai) through time and space. That is to try to establish the impact of topography among other things on the people’s settlement patterns and history. These people are well known for hilltop occupation in pre-colonial times, although they (the descendants of the ancient Ungwai) now live in the adjoining plains (Gleave 1966; Gunn and Conant 1960).

Ungwai Ethnography

Ethnographic research was conducted here as an adjunct to archaeological investigations. Considerable emphasis has been laid on the use of domestic space and the place of agriculture in the general spatial behavior of the Ungwai. This was with a view to describing and explaining the archaeological occurrences on the local hilltops and slopes (Ogundele 1992, 1998).

The Ungwai are basically subsistence farmers growing such crops as yams of different species (such as *Discorea rotundata* and *Discorea cayenensis*), beniseed, a variety of beans, sorghum, millets and different kinds of leaf greens (Gunn and Conant 1960). Ethnographic work has revealed two types of farms: Home/Compound farms and Bush/Distant farms. Home farms are usually located at the edges of each compound. The common crops grown are onions, pepper, and a variety of leaf greens as well as tobacco among others. These farms are smaller in size than the distant ones. Only members of a given compound are allowed to farm near the houses. On the other hand, the second type of farm (distant farm) may be as far as 400 m or more from the compound where the farmer lives. Such farms are larger in size than the compound farms.

Elders and compound heads of neighboring Ungwai communities are responsible for working out some arrangements for land sharing for cultivation purposes. In this respect, equity and fairness remain the guiding principles. This is an attempt to reduce frictions to the barest minimum (Bohannan 1954; Haruna 1991, Pers Comm; Gunn and Conant 1960). In case there are land disputes, the council of elders as well as priests especially of the Maigiro deity would wade in as soon as possible in order to bring about peace and harmony.

The Ungwai agriculture cannot be separated from spatial behavior with respect to residence. An Ungwai compound is normally circular in shape with one or two enclosures for keeping cattle. These enclosures are constructed with dry guinea-corn stalks and are located at the periphery of the compound. Cow dung, poultry droppings and vegetable wastes are often used as manure to sustain the soils, particularly the home farms. As a result of this soil maintenance strategy, the Ungwai in such communities as Tanko Wakili, Yelwa Kabitu, Isa Baba, Kagara and Mai-Kujeri are always recording high crop yields annually. This is without applying any form of inorganic fertilizer that is generally expensive. A considerable part of the plains always has cow dung resulting from grazing. This dung gets mixed up with the soil thereby increasing its fertility, especially for rice cultivation.
Living houses are constructed with mud blocks and are circular in shape. They have thatched roofs that can last up to four years before any major repair work or total replacement is done. Other identified and mapped settlement features include goat houses and granaries. Indeed, the numbers of granaries in an Ungwai compound are larger than those of other features. These storage structures (granaries) are a major component of the cultural landscape. This development is a reflection of the great importance attached to cereal cultivation in the region.

Archaeological Survey

Reconnaissance work started in the study area as a follow-up exercise to the ethnographic research. This research area covers Tegina, Kagara, Mai-Kujeri, Sarkin Nauma and Pandogari. The history of the research can be stretched as far back in time as 1991 when this author commenced work in the region with the assistance of Miss Nike Oguntokun. Several archaeological sites - rock shelters and open settlements on hilltops and slopes were discovered. Two of the hill complexes so far minimally surveyed are Kabitu and Makangara. According to oral information and ethnographic findings, these hilltops were occupied by the ancestors of the Ungwai in pre-colonial times. These ancestors entered Kaduna river valley from the Republic of Niger.

The Makangara hilltop complex is located some 15 km west of Kagara. Some local Ungwai living near the Kabitu hill complex assisted us in carrying out the reconnaissance of the region. Local participation made it much easier to locate archaeological sites. This exercise also benefited from the ethnographic work done prior to hard archaeology (Kleppe 1997). We explained to these locals or guides/informants what we were looking for such as potsherds, iron slag pieces, house remains, stone walling systems and lithic artifacts (grinding stones and hammers). These artifacts are indicative of human occupation of any given terrestrial space at one or more temporal levels. With this background information, the party set out for the archaeological reconnaissance of the Kabitu hill complex. This exercise led to the discovery of several loci of human activities on the hilltop.

Two rock shelters were discovered and designated KG1RS1 and KG1RS2 respectively. KG1RS1 (rockshelter 1) was located to the south west of Kagara town and it appears that this site has been disturbed greatly by erosion and human activities. Indeed, this rockshelter situated at the foot of Kabitu hill, is being used by the present-day inhabitants of Kagara and its environs as part of a market square/place every five days. The major chamber of the rockshelter is roughly 6 m in diameter and the surface soil is very compact. According to the local informants, it is taboo to allow the place to be excavated. This was because a market place is to a large extent, sacred. Excavation would amount to desecration and this could lead to ugly consequences for the settlers.

In contrast, KG1RS2 (rockshelter 2) with a smaller chamber and located about 25 m southwest of KG1RS1, has several potsherds, few metal objects such as knives and finger rings as well as hammer stones littering its surface. This was a relatively better preserved rockshelter site, where excavations could be conducted in the near future in the face of adequate funding.

The open site on the hilltop was rich in archaeological finds and features. These include remains of circular houses, stone walling systems and grinding hollows on the local outcrop. A considerable part of this site has been mapped and limited excavations conducted. But much cannot be said yet about the functions of some of these structures given the problem of a total lack of radiocarbon dates and detailed excavations. It is hoped that further intensive archaeological research would be done here as funds are made available from the Niger state government of Nigeria or the National Commission for Museums and Monuments with its headquarters in Abuja.

The Makangara hill complex has so far produced one large rockshelter designated KG2RS1 (rockshelter 1) and an archaeologically rich open site. This open site is designated KG2S1 (open site 1). The team was able to do very little reconnaissance survey on this hilltop (which is over 700 metres in length). Artifacts such as potsherds, grinding stones, grinding hollows on a section of the outcrop, tuyeres and slag were identified in KG2S1. However, this complex is yet to be mapped and excavated given the constraints of time, logistics and above all, a gross lack of funding.
Conclusion

Oral information and ethnographic findings have enabled us to locate some archaeological settlement sites on the local hilltops and slopes in Ungwailand, within the Kaduna river valley. These sites are of two categories, namely rockshelters and open settlements. The limited archaeological work carried out so far seems to suggest that the hill settlers were related to the contemporary occupants of the adjoining plains. This connection can be understood against the backdrop of circular arrangements of compounds and the houses, identified in both topographic situations (upland and lowland). However, a more intensive ethnoarchaeological work is no doubt necessary in order to clarify our understanding of the functions of houses or structures on the hilltops. This is in addition to the question of contemporaneity or otherwise of the identified clusters or groups of houses/structures there (hilltops). In this regard, several radiocarbon dates are needed from the Kabitu and Makangara hill complexes. This is an expensive exercise that can only be successfully carried out in the face of adequate funding.

References

Bohannan, P.
1954 Tiv Farm and Settlement. London: Her Royal Majesty’s Stationery Office.

Dalziel, J. M.
1937 The Useful Plants of West Tropical Africa. London.

Gleave, M. B.

Gunn, H. D. and P. Conant

Keay, R.W.
1959 An Outline of Nigeria’s Vegetation.

Kleppe, E. J.

Ogundele, S. O.


Udo, R. K.
I am happy to report that the CD-ROM that I demonstrated last year at our meeting in Tucson is finally available. It is based on the records I have made over a period of forty years that are the only complete account of what should be in the National Museum of Ife Antiquities which, after re-cataloguing only part of the collection, inexplicably destroyed its original catalogues. There have been many thefts from the Museum in recent years. Ife material on loan to the Jos Museum was also stolen in 1987. The Art Museum of the Institute of African Studies at the Obafemi Awolowo University in Ife is reported to have been robbed of its entire collection. The archaeological material recovered from excavations by members of their staff and formerly housed there is also documented on the CD-ROM. Ife pieces that I have examined in museums and private collections outside Nigeria are included too.

The 340,000 word text also describes the archaeological investigations that have been conducted in Ife since 1910, often drawing on unpublished records of archaeologists who are now dead. There are text chapters devoted to the history of archaeology in Ife, the evidence for dating, the technique of casting, the composition of the metals used in casting and the social rôle of the sculpture. A chapter by Barbara Blackmun discusses the hands of individual artists. There are 2200 illustrations.

Behind the text lies a database that allows for detailed searching on a wide range of characteristics to detect stylistic features shared by several sculptures. It also allows any individual piece to be identified and matched to its illustrations and description.

Apart from the disc’s obvious rôle as a scholarly resource for both teaching and research in archaeology and art history, it is important that the contents of the two Ife museums should be published so that other museums world-wide as well as private collectors and dealers should be able to check whether an Ife antiquity offered to them has been stolen. The records on which the disc is based have already served to identify and enable the return from Europe of pieces that the Museum had not even reported missing!

For more details see the web site: www.hunterian.gla.ac.uk/artofife/index.shtml from where it can be ordered at half the price I predicted at the meeting, namely UK£ 25.
TANZANIA

Zanzibar Clove Plantation Survey 2003: Some Preliminary Findings

Sarah Croucher
Archaeology
School of Arts, Histories and Cultures
University of Manchester
Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9PL
United Kingdom
E-mail: sk_croucher@yahoo.co.uk

Introduction

This paper is a short summary of the results of the ‘Zanzibar Clove Plantation Survey 2003’, which was designed to investigate archaeological remains relating to nineteenth century clove plantation sites on the islands of Zanzibar. The fieldwork relates to the political entity of Zanzibar, and hence the islands of both Zanzibar (Unguja) and Pemba. They currently form part of the United Republic of Tanzania and lie off the east coast of mainland Africa. This survey season formed part of the author’s PhD research at the University of Manchester and was carried out with the assistance of the department of Archives, Museums and Antiquities of Zanzibar.

Project Background

This project arose from a research aim of studying cultural change in nineteenth century Zanzibar. During this period Zanzibar became the center of the Omani empire. This included the court of the Sultan (the ruler of Oman) being moved from Muscat to Zanzibar in 1840 (Bhacker 1992:92). This was partly due to the growing economic expansion of Zanzibar and Pemba. Large numbers of immigrants arrived on the islands at this time, both to work in the city and towns and on the plantations. Immigrants arrived from Oman, India, the Comoro Islands, the Hadramaut Coast (Yemen) and slaves were also brought involuntarily from mainland eastern central Africa (Burton 1872:368; Fair 2001:13). These new residents also lived and worked with the pre-existing indigenous communities of the islands; the Wahadimu, Watumbatu and Wapemba. Clearly then it might be expected that major social changes took place based upon the sheer fact that thousands of immigrants from many different backgrounds were arriving throughout the nineteenth century.

Cloves were introduced to the islands early in the nineteenth century from South East Asia. Planting reached its peak between 1835 and 1845 (Cooper 1977:50) and although plantations covered neither the whole of Zanzibar or Pemba, they seem to have made a significant impact both physically and socially on the landscapes of the islands. They were also sites on which many of the different residents of nineteenth century Zanzibar may have interacted and negotiated social roles and identities. This is a fertile area for research.

Historical research focusing upon 19th century Zanzibar has been carried out using documentary evidence (see for example Cooper 1977; Sheriff 1987). However, these studies have mainly focused on urban areas of Zanzibar and economic histories of plantations in the nineteenth century. Although very aware that vast social change occurred in nineteenth century Zanzibar, these historians acknowledge that there is a paucity of documents which can be used to shed light upon social change on Zanzibar at this time (Cooper 1981). Thus it seemed that archaeology, in conjunction with oral historical and documentary historical research had the potential to investigate social and cultural change on nineteenth century - particularly through researching specifically clove plantation sites. In addition although some nineteenth century sites have been recorded in the region (see Clarke and Horton 1985; Fleisher and LaViolette 1999) there has been a lack of systematic archaeological work aimed specifically at documenting later nineteenth century sites on the coast and it seemed that a project aimed at looking at nineteenth century clove plantation sites would significantly add to our archaeological understanding of the region. The Zanzibar Clove Plantation Survey was also an opportunity to analyze regional landscapes in nineteenth century Zanzibar. It aimed to investigate the range of archaeological sites relating to clove plantations and other settlement on Zanzibar in specific areas to create a better understanding of the nineteenth century landscape through survey.
Methodology

Archaeological surveys have been carried out in the past with a variety of aims (see for example Clarke and Horton 1985; LaViolette and Fleisher 1995). Fleisher and LaViolette (1999) considered which survey methodologies might be most effective on the island of Pemba. They concluded that later sites on Pemba were often visible on the surface, whereas earlier sites have to be located by shovel test pits, since they are often buried beneath the ground surface (Fleisher and LaViolette 1999:104). Thus it was decided that in a short space of time carrying out purposive survey which asked local residents in specific areas about the location of archaeological sites would be effective in locating nineteenth century settlement sites. This would also be a cost effective way for small team to locate sites in a short space of time.

Sites were recorded as ‘Site Constituents’ (these were recorded as SC01 etc.) (after Hester et al. 1997). A site constituent might be an artifact scatter, structural remains, a mound or combination of these. It was recorded as a single site constituent if these features were clearly the remains of a single site – such as structural remains with an associated artifact scatter. In a small number of cases we encountered element which seemed to be part of a single site, but were a considerable distance apart e.g. structural remains with an artifact scatter 100m away. These elements would then be given separate SC numbers.

Four survey areas were chosen for the project (Figure 1). The survey methodology was to be the same in the four regions, two on Zanzibar (Dunga and Mahonda) and two on Pemba (Mtambile and Piki). A key point in selecting the four areas was that they had all been at least partially covered in clove plantations in the nineteenth century (see Sheriff 1987:52 for a map of the coverage of clove plantations on the two islands).

Results

The survey recorded 64 site constituents which from the ceramic evidence all dated to the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This has been the first step in producing a larger body of knowledge about a previously unexplored period of Zanzibar’s archaeology. However, this is only a small part of the significance of these results.

A range of different kinds of sites were recorded, and these were documented with the aid of oral histories from the local residents of the survey areas. Some of these sites were easy to categorize into the simple definitions of sites associated with either plantation owners or slaves. However from the survey it seems that many residents of nineteenth and early twentieth century Zanzibar and Pemba fitted less clearly into these positions in society; many sites could be categorized as specifically ‘plantation owner’ or ‘slave sites’. However these sites were clearly connected to clove plantations. Sometimes this was just that members of a village or household that had formerly been at the site had undertaken seasonal labor on plantations. Alternatively, sometimes villagers had a very small holding of clove trees consisting of just one or two trees that they farmed themselves.

The proportions of the different kinds of sites varied considerably; the majority (42) of the sites were old village sites such as those described above. Nearly a third of sites (18) were those of plantation owners, with only a tiny fraction of the sites recorded relating to slaves.

It is difficult to reach any major conclusions about nineteenth century artifacts from the survey which simply made surface collections at artifact scatters. However, there are a number of trends that seemed apparent in the artifactual assemblages and worthy of discussion.

Few sites seem to have a major component of Chinese blue and white ceramics or ceramics imported from the Arabian Gulf as earlier sites on the coast do, although Chinese blue and white porcelain was found. Instead imports from Europe dominate, particularly the bright ‘rice bowls’ imported from the Netherlands, Scotland and England. These were decorated by sponge-printing often with hand painted elements in the design and were exported mainly to the Asian market in the mid- to late-nineteenth century. They have been found in other locations around the Indian Ocean such as Sri Lanka, Malaysia and Indonesia (Kelly 1999:183).

In addition to these European imports two sherds of red and black painted terracotta ceramic were collected. These appear to be sherds of ‘water jars’ from India. Indian wares similar to this were also found at the site of Fort Jesus in Mombasa in the nineteenth century contexts (Kirkman 1974: 92) and
Figure 1: Map showing survey area locations
it would be unsurprising to find Indian ceramics within a clove plantation context given the close trading ties that existed between Zanzibar and India in the nineteenth century, further propagated by large numbers of Indians migrating to Zanzibar. Large numbers of local ceramics decorated with incised ‘scalloped’ designs and red paint were also recorded, and it is clear that locally produced ceramics continued to remain an important ceramic ware throughout the nineteenth century on all sites. Potters are still active on Zanzibar today producing undecorated cooking wares and incense burners.

Changing identities on nineteenth century clove plantations

From this survey it is possible to begin some tentative discussions of the varied and changing identities which existed on nineteenth century Zanzibar. Firstly, it was easy to see the variety of clove plantation owners who had existed. The typical stereotype of an Omani male paternalistic slave owner as head of a large plantation clearly did exist to some extent. At site SC19 in the Mahonda area, an artifact scatter, stone architectural remains and a mound were recorded. This had reputedly been the home of Udi Masoud, a rich nineteenth century plantation owner who reportedly said of his holdings “it cannot rain without raining on my shamba” as he owned so many shambas (farms or plantations) on both Zanzibar and Pemba. The ceramics on this site dated to the late nineteenth century, and the ruins had clearly once been an impressive stone house.

Alternatively to this kind of plantation owner’s home was the site of SC24 in the Mtambile area. This had been the home of Mwanaiki Nassor, a female plantation owner. Her grandson and great-grandson showed the site to us and told us a little about her. We were told that she had lived in a wattle and daub house with a makuti (palm leaf thatch) roof. The remains of this could clearly be seen as a mound. She also had workers living around her home in houses built entirely of thatching, but no remains of these could be seen, despite extensive survey in the area. This was clear material evidence that plantation owners did not live only in large stone houses but also in more modest wattle and daub buildings. It also demonstrated the fact that plantation owners were not only men connected to the court of the Sultan of Oman, but more modest women living outside of this social circle and clearly outside of the ideas of paternalistic heads of plantations which have been suggested for the region (Cooper 1981). Rather than create a clear stereotype of plantation owners an understanding needs to be created that a variety of people fitted into this role from important men living in stone houses to both men and women who may have lived in more modest wattle and daub buildings.

As opposed to the ready evidence for plantation owners, slave sites were far harder to identify. Those which were recorded were not as clear cut as plantation owners’ sites. Three artifact scatters were recorded in areas where local informants told us slaves had been living, although there was nothing remarkable at these sites to differentiate them from those of other nineteenth century Zanzibar residents. This means that at least whilst only dealing with surface remains these have to be interpreted on the basis of oral history alone. A graveyard was also recorded (SC12), which we were told had been a slave graveyard. This consisted of around ten visible graves with headstones and footstones of coral rag, and was largely overgrown. There was again nothing visible which could support its attribution as a slave graveyard, but were this to e true it would suggest that, in public at least, slaves were converting to Islam.

The difficulty in recognizing slave sites was one of the major problems encountered by the survey. There are a couple of possible reasons for this; current residents of Zanzibar and Pemba may not wish to clearly identify slave sites given the post-revolution politics of the islands. Slaves may also have also left few visible traces in the archaeological record. Oral histories suggested that slaves often lived in houses entirely of thatch (this kind of house is still found on Pemba today) and these will have left few traces visible on the ground surface after a hundred years. Despite this it does seem that slave sites can be tentatively identified, and that excavation in particular may help to further understand these kinds of sites.

Directions for future research

This phase of fieldwork has amply demonstrated the huge impact that clove plantations have had on the landscape of Zanzibar and Pemba. How-
ever, these sites can be understood further by the examination in depth of the use of space and material culture at one such site. Small scale excavations were carried out in February and March 2004 at the site of Mgoli on Pemba as this site seemed to have the best potential for yielding contextual information relating to a variety of plantation residents. The results of this excavation are currently being analyzed. This survey has also shown the great potential that exists for research upon nineteenth century sites in one region of Eastern Africa. This is a period for which little is known archaeologically not only on Zanzibar but across the whole region. However it is hoped that this problem is gradually being rectified.

Acknowledgments

Funding for this fieldwork came from the British Institute in Eastern Africa and the Zochonis Special Enterprise Awards of the University of Manchester. The Department of Archives, Museums and Antiquities of Zanzibar provided both my research permit and also the logistical support which allowed this survey to take place. The various people who assisted me on fieldwork on both Zanzibar and Pemba are too numerous to mention, but I would particularly like to thank Ali a Dade my antiquities representative, and Ange Brennan from the University of Manchester who accompanied and assisted me with the survey.

Bibliography

Bhacker, M. R.

Burton, R. F.

Clark, C. and M. Horton

Cooper, F.


Fair, L.

Fleisher, J. and A. LaViolette

Hester, T. R, H. J. Shafer and K. L. Feder

Kelly, H. E.

Kirkman, J.

LaViolette, A and J. Fleisher
1995 Reconnaissance of Sites Bearing Triangular Incised (Tana Tradition) Ware on Pemba Island, Tanzania. Nyame Akuma 44: 59-65

Sheriff, A.
Introduction

The research described here was undertaken as part of a three year project, initiated and supported by the British Institute in Eastern Africa, which commenced in July 2002. The project on ‘Landscape and Environmental Change in Semi-Arid Regions of Eastern and Southern Africa: Developing Interdisciplinary Approaches’ brings together a multi-disciplinary team to investigate the impact of environmental and climate change in the African archaeological and historical record spanning more than five millennia. The areas chosen for the study are Malilangwe Trust in the south-eastern lowveld of Zimbabwe, the Laikipia Plateau in north-central Kenya, and the Kabwe valley in central Zambia. The project is funded by the British Academy.

This review will focus on the archaeological research undertaken in 2002 and 2003 on Malilangwe Trust estate about 20 kilometres east of Chiredzi in the south-eastern lowveld of Zimbabwe. Malilangwe Trust is within the lowlands surrounding the Limpopo and Save rivers which span the southernmost and south-eastern regions of Zimbabwe (Figure 1). Previous archaeological research in the south-eastern lowveld, including Malilangwe Trust, indicated that the area has a rich archaeological heritage but little was known about the chronology of human settlement there or about the relationship of this heritage with the archaeological traditions and industries from surrounding areas in Zimbabwe, Mozambique and South Africa (Thorp, in press).

Surveys and Excavations

Between July 2002 and August 2003, a programme of archaeological and rock art surveys as well as excavations was undertaken at Malilangwe by researchers from the British Institute in Eastern Africa (BIEA), National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe (NMMZ) and the Rock Art Research Institute, University of the Witwatersrand (RARI). The first phase of fieldwork undertaken by Carolyn Thorp involved a survey to collect data on the relationship between past human settlement and the environment of the estate. The survey was designed using Malilangwe’s GIS with the assistance of Bruce Clegg of Malilangwe Trust. The estate was divided into nine distinct ecological zones based on soil type, geology and vegetation types. The two zones most likely to have been used for human settlement were targeted for survey. These zones were the sandstone hills which run in a north-east to south-west direction across the estate and alluvial fans adjacent to Malilangwe is in a key geographical location on the south-eastern edge of the known distribution of several important archaeological traditions in Zimbabwe, including the Later Stone Age Dombozanga Industry dated to approximately two thousand years ago, the Early Iron Age (EIA) Gokomere Tradition dated from the sixth to the tenth centuries AD and the Zimbabwe state which flourished between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries AD with its capital at Great Zimbabwe (Figure 1). The Malilangwe area is also on the north-eastern periphery of the known distribution of sites linked with K2 and Mapungubwe in South Africa (Figure 1), where southern Africa’s first complex state developed between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries AD.

The main ethnic group now living in southeastern Zimbabwe is the Tsonga speaking Hlengwe with some Shona speakers. From 1908, the process of land alienation by the British South African Company began in the south-eastern lowveld and the indigenous population was gradually moved into “Reserves”. By 1949, large scale European owned commercial cattle ranches were established in the region. Cattle ranching gradually gave way to game ranching from the 1980s onwards in much of the semi-arid lowveld of Zimbabwe.
the larger rivers. Using Cartalinx® and Idrisi® software random points were generated on a one kilometer square grid covering these zones and seven squares with the lowest random numbers within each zone were selected for survey. Five north to south transects were digitized over each square kilometer selected using Cartalinx® software (Clegg 2002, pers. comm.). The resulting routes were uploaded onto a GPS which was used to walk the transects (Figure 2). Some time was also spent visiting known sites on the property.

Sixty sites ranging in date from at least 8,000 years ago to the 1960s were recorded (Figure 2). Some promise to yield information that will fill the gaps in the known sequence of human settlement of the south-eastern lowveld of Zimbabwe. Three of the sites were excavated and this summary will highlight the new evidence for human occupation at Malilangwe which was revealed by the survey and excavation findings.

Caves and rock shelters

A large proportion of the sites located were rock shelters, overhangs and boulders with rock art. A separate survey and study of the rock art of Malilangwe was undertaken by RARI as part of the overall project (Pearce et al. 2003). One of the rock shelters (Chinzwini Rock shelter 21°02’12”S, 31°54’32”E) was excavated by a team lead by Carolyn Thorp in July/August 2002. Four square meters were dug to bedrock at a maximum depth of 113 cm. Four natural stratigraphic layers were recognized in the deposit comprising from top to bottom: Level 1 (Surface and KD), Level 2 (ANC), Level 3 (SM) and Level 4 (DB). Three radiocarbon samples from Chinzwini have been dated and these dates reveal an intermittent sequence of occupation between 6400 BC and 1000AD.
Figure 2. Sites located and transects walked during the 2002 archaeological survey of Malilangwe Trust.
It seems likely that the last hunter-gatherers occupying Chinzwini shelter, represented by the assemblage in Level 3 (SM spit 1), were in contact with agriculturists who made Gumanye style ceramics at around 1000 AD. The shelter may not have been occupied for some time before this date as the preceding occupation is dated in Level 3 (SM spit 4) to between six and seven thousand years ago. A date between 7000 and 8000 BP came from Level 3 (SM spit 6). This suggests that Layer 3 below SM spit 2 probably represents a series of pulses of occupation between 6700 and 8400 BP. Preliminary results of the stone artefact analysis from this level suggest that these assemblages are scraper dominated. If this proves to be the case once the analysis is completed, this assemblage will contrast with contemporary assemblages in the Matopo area called Nswatugi 3 and Nswatugi 4 by Nick Walker (1995:204-5; Table 120). These Matopo assemblages have roughly equal proportions of scrapers and backed tools with backed tools becoming more predominant through time.

The impression gained from the material analyzed so far from Layer 4 (DBR) at Chinzwini is that this assemblage is similar to material found from Level IV downwards at Nswatugi dated to about 9000 BP, which included rare long thin geometrics (segments) more than 25 mm in length (Walker 1995:76). This date would also fit well into the stratigraphic sequence at Chinzwini as the Layer above (Layer 3 - SM Spit 6) is dated to at least 8400 BP.

Evidence from faunal remains recovered at Chinzwini and at the previously excavated site of Induna Cave (Thorp 2001; Scott 2003a, 2003b) shows that hunter-gatherers living in the Malilangwe hills adopted similar strategies to LSA hunter-gatherers of the Matopo in south-western Zimbabwe who hunted and trapped small mammals and reptiles, especially dassies, hares, tortoises, small antelope and large lizards (Walker 1995: 221-227).

Nick Walker has proposed that hunter-gatherers may have dispersed into the lowveld from areas like the Matopo hills once early farming communities became established there approximately two thousand years ago. He suggests that foraging societies were able to survive longer in marginal areas less suitable for farming (Walker 1995:255; Walker and Thorp 1997:25). So far the data from Malilangwe supports this suggestion. The evidence for interaction between the hunter-gatherers at Chinzwini and farmers with Gumanye style ceramics at about 1000 AD supports evidence from Induna Cave which pointed to a continued stone tool using hunter-gatherer presence in the south-east lowveld until the early 13th century AD (Thor 2001).

The mid to early Holocene dates from Chinzwini are surprising. They show that hunter-gatherers were present in the lowveld during the period between roughly 6000 and 8000 BP, and the stone tool assemblage from Layer 4 may possibly represent an even earlier occupation at about 9000 BP. Previous excavations of LSA sites in the southern lowveld have produced little evidence of hunter-gatherer occupation of this marginal environment until approximately 2000 BP (Walker 1995: 238). Assemblages that may date to the earlier part of the LSA, before 8000 BP, are represented on the northern edge of the lowveld at Gokomere Eastern Cave (Walker 1993; 22; Walker and Thorp 1997: Table 2). However previously excavated southern lowveld sites, including Dombozanga, Mpato and Mtanye shelters (Figure 2), show little evidence of occupation during the earlier part of the LSA (Robinson 1964; Cooke and Simons 1969; Walker 1972).

Open settlements

Six of the sites recorded during the survey can be attributed to Early Farming Communities (EFC) and probably date to the 6th and 7th centuries AD (Figure 2: sites 1, 2, 37, 39, 41, 43). These sites were all located on or near alluvium close to the larger rivers on the property and most of them were found on an alluvial fan adjacent to the Chiredzi River. Gokomere pottery was found on the surface at five of these sites although sherd s from one of the sites (Figure 2: site 37) may be similar to Happy Rest (Matakoma) ceramics, dated between the fifth and seventh centuries AD in the South Africa. Simbiri (site 37) (21º03’16”S, 31º52’48”E), was excavated by a team lead by Carolyn Thorp in August 2003. The occupation layer was a dense scatter of potsherds with some animal bone slag, iron and dhaka lumps found between thirty and forty centimeters depth. Most of the finds had a weathered appearance and no features were found.

A small ceramic assemblage of 806 sherds was recovered. Some sherds at this site were jar rims with diagonal incision on the lip or thickened jar rims decorated with incised cross hatching on the rim (Figure 3: 1 and 2). Other sherds were from thickened jar rims
with comb stamping or bangle impressions on the lip (Figure 3: 3). A fragment of a flat pottery disc decorated with incised cross hatching was found at site 37 (Figure 3: 4). According to Huffman (1989:70), these aspects of decoration are emphasized in Happy Rest (Matakoma) pottery assemblages in contrast to Gokomere assemblages where thickened rim bands are largely decorated with comb stamping and decoration on the lip is rare. Excavation of Simbiri has not produced a large enough ceramic assemblage to determine its affinities with certainty, although it has been radiocarbon dated to the seventh century AD. The small faunal sample included Burchell’s zebra (*Equus burchelli*) and cattle (*Bos taurus*) remains (Magoma and Badenhorst 2004).

The survey located four sites with pottery styles indicating occupation dates between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries AD. Two of the sites appear to have possible Gumanye occupations (Figure 2: sites 5 and 31) and two are possibly small Bambandyanalo or Mapungubwe phase settlements (Figure 2: sites 22 and 50). One of these sites (site 5) on Hlamba Mlonga hill (21°03′21″S, 31°52′57″E) was excavated by a team lead by Carolyn Thorp in August 2003. A 6 x 3 meter trench was dug in the possible elite area located on a flat grass covered plateau west of the highest point on the hill and bounded by collapsing rough stone retaining walls.

A preliminary assessment of the ceramics in relation to the five radiocarbon dates obtained from Hlamba Mlonga indicates four possible phases of occupation. From the surface downwards these comprise a recent (18th C to 19th C) Hlengwe occupation in the surface level; a Zimbabwe phase (14th -15th C) occupation in level DBR; a Mapungubwe occupation (13th C) is represented by dhaka structures in FDG 1 – 2 and a Bambandyanalo (K2) with Gumanye occupation below FDG 2 dates to the 11th C. It seems likely that both Gumanye and K2 (Bambandyanalo) communities occupied the area at the same time, with the K2 component possibly representing the ruling elite strata of society and the Gumanye component forming the peasant strata. This was followed by a Mapungubwe phase, then a Zimbabwe phase occupation of the area.

Glass beads and a cowrie shell found at Hlamba Mlonga hill suggest that the community living there was tied into the Indian Ocean trade network represented by trading settlements such as Chibuene on the Mozambique coast. Late first and early second

---

**Figure 3.** Ceramics from Simbiri: 1 and 2. Tr A Orange Spit 1; 3 and 4. Tr L Orange spit 1.
millennium AD inhabitants of Hlamba Mlonga must have traded with coastal settlements in a similar way to later Hlengwe people. Historical evidence shows that ivory, iron ore and wild animal skins were traded by the nineteenth century Hlengwe using routes along the Save and Limpopo rivers to Ka Pfumo located between the Save and Inhambane. Malilangwe is well situated to take advantage of the Save valley as a route to the coastal trading centres.

Five sites (Figure 2 sites 2a, 5 (1a), 40, 42 and 47) located during the survey are either modern and date to the colonial period or have Hlengwe pottery and are therefore relatively recent. These sites are almost all situated along the main rivers and are close to old arable lands identified through vegetation disturbance. The only exception is a possible burial (Figure 2: site 14) which is located in a small cave in the sandstone hills. It is likely that some of the other possible burials in the hills are related to recent Hlengwe occupation but larger samples of pottery from these sites are needed to confirm this. The archaeology of settlement attributable to Tsonga speaking Hlengwe people in Zimbabwe is only just beginning and this entity was first recognized at Malilangwe (Thorp 2001). The archaeological evidence therefore confirms historical evidence that recent Hlengwe settlement on Malilangwe was mainly along the Chiredzi and Runde rivers and few settlements were far from perennial water sources (Clegg 1999: 54). This settlement pattern is true of surrounding areas occupied by Hlengwe who are referred to as a riverine people by many sources (Bannerman 1981: 15).

**Survey of metal resources and metal production sites**

In July/August 2003 Lorraine Swan then at (NMMZ) undertook a survey of sites with known metallurgical associations. Eighteen sites with archaeological evidence for smelting or smithing and twelve sites with grinding hollows which were probably used to prepare mineral ore were identified during the field survey. In addition, small amounts of slag were found in settlement contexts at three sites.

Collections of diagnostic ceramics from the ground surfaces at these sites and historical information (Bannerman 1981) suggest that iron smelting or smithing occurred from the time of the establishment of Early Farming Communities at Malilangwe until the early twentieth century. There appeared to be a close spatial relationship, at least on the surface, between EFC ceramics and smelting debris where they were found on hilltop contexts at Malilangwe. The presence of first millennium AD, Kalundu Tradition pottery on hilltops in the Limpopo Valley close to Mapungubwe has been explained in terms of rainmaking contexts (Huffman 2000). This might also be the case at Malilangwe. However, only excavation could clarify the relationship between the pottery and smelting remains on these sites. Magnetite ore, found at smelting sites representing different chronological periods, appears similar to quartz magnetite seen at Mangula Hill, just north of Malilangwe, which is said to have been an important source of ore used by the Hlengwe in the recent past (Bannerman 1981; Sparrow pers. comm., 2003). Further research will be undertaken during the project to investigate the chronology, technology and scale of iron production as well as its effects on the environment of Malilangwe.

**Discussion**

Indications of changes in settlement location in relation to the environment are evident from the survey data. Hunter-gatherers at Malilangwe between approximately 8000 BP and the early 13th century AD focused their settlement and activities in the sandstone hills at Malilangwe. Early agriculturist communities were established in the 5th and 6th centuries AD on alluvium close to the larger rivers as well as around the ecotone between the alluvial areas adjacent to larger rivers and the sandstone hills. Some agriculturist settlements appeared in the hills during the K2 (Bambandyanalo) and/or Mapungubwe period between about 1000 AD and 1290 AD. The dates for the establishment of Early Farming Communities around 500 AD and the end of the hunter-gatherer occupation at Malilangwe around 1220 AD imply a long period of overlap between these communities which is supported by data from the excavation of Induna cave - a hunter-gatherer occupation site (Thorp 2001:12). The encroachment of agriculturist settlement into the hills over this period may be evidence of a change in the relationship between hunter-gatherers and agriculturist communities through time at Malilangwe. Whereas these two communities may have been relatively independent of each other during the initial establishment of farming at Malilangwe when farming settlements were located on the fringes of the hills or further away from the hills adjacent to
the Chiredzi river, later relationships during the period when farming settlements encroached into the hills may have involved a subservient client role for the hunter-gatherers. Hunter-gatherers elsewhere in southern Africa often took care of livestock for farmers in return for payment of grain or meat/milk. Finally, in the historical period farming settlements of Hlengwe people were once again concentrated in riverine environments.

So far the survey at Malilangwe has identified six sites dating to the 6th and 7th centuries AD but sites dating to the period between the 8th and 10th centuries AD have not been found. This situation may change once more research is undertaken. The apparent upsurge in agriculturist settlement at Malilangwe during the sixth and seventh centuries AD appears to support evidence from climatic research that southern Africa enjoyed a warmer and wetter climate between 250 AD and 600 AD (Tyson and Lindesay 1992).

There is good evidence that the Shashe-Limpopo basin was depopulated during the dry conditions of the ‘Little Ice Age’ between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries AD (Huffman 1996). Some evidence of sites dating to this period has however been found at Malilangwe. Firstly the occupation with Zimbabwe phase pottery on Hlamba Mlonga Hill, dating between the late thirteenth and early fifteenth centuries could represent continued settlement in the area at the beginning of the ‘Little Ice Age’. Possible Khami phase pottery found on a multi component site next to the Chiredzi River could date to the fifteenth or sixteenth centuries AD (Thorp 2001:6). Finally there are preliminary reports of Zimbabwe Tradition sites probably dated between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries AD in the Chiredzi area (Burrett n.d.; Horne 1977; Swan n. d.). However all of these sites are situated near large perennial rivers apart from the Hlamba Mlonga site which is close to a spring. Proximity to these water sources may have made it possible to occupy parts of this region even during periods of low rainfall, particularly if the sites represent communities trading local resources such as ivory and iron tools in exchange for grain from the better watered areas to the north on the escarpment. The Malilangwe environment is well endowed with perennial water sources including the large rivers and several springs. The environment of Malilangwe seems richer in terms of permanent water supply and vegetation growth than surrounding areas and this is evident from Landsat images of the region (Bruce Clegg pers. comm., 2002). Malilangwe therefore may have attracted human settlement even during dryer climatic phases.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to Lorraine Swan and Phillip Owiti for drawing Figure 1, and to Phillip Owiti for assistance with producing Figures 2 and 3. Thanks to Ceri Ashley for drawing the ceramics in Figure 3. Thanks to the Mailiangwe Trust, and particularly to Bruce and Sarah Clegg, for access to and assistance with GIS data. Thanks to Malilangwe’s scouts for assistance in the field. We are very grateful to Malilangwe Trust for accommodating and feeding the research team throughout the fieldwork. National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe provided equipment and personnel in support of the project. The project is funded by the British Academy.

References


Horne, J.  

Huffman, T. N.  
1996 Archaeological evidence for climatic change during the last 2000 years in southern Africa. *Quaternary International* 33: 55-60.

Magoma M. and S. Badenhorst  
2003 The bone remains from Simbiri, an Early Iron Age site in south-eastern Zimbabwe. Unpublished report, manuscript on file BIEA.

Pearce, D. G., S. Mguni and W. Steyn  

Robinson, K. R.  

Scott, K.  
2003 Faunal report on Chinzwini Rock Shelter. Unpublished report, manuscript on file at the BIEA.
2003 Faunal report on Induna Cave. Unpublished report, manuscript on file at the BIEA.

Swan, L.  

Thorp, C.  

Tyson, P. D. and J. A. Lindesay  

Walker, N. J.  

Walker, N. J. and C. Thorp  
Writing Africa's archaeological past

Graham Connah
Australian National University
Canberra, Australia
E-mail: graham.connah@effect.net.au

Note: This paper was read in the final plenary session of the SAfA Conference held in Bergen, Norway, 26-29 June, 2004.

Archaeology concerning Africa remains characterized by a particularistic approach, inevitably reflected in its publications. A synthesis at either a continental or regional level has been relatively uncommon. Nevertheless, archaeological publication needs to reach beyond the specialist reader and provide general studies. Although there is now a growing volume of such literature, a variety of problems limit its impact, particularly in Africa itself. Cost, availability, language barriers, and the level at which books are written, are all impediments but the synthesist has also to overcome difficulties arising from the huge size of the subject in both time and space, the patchiness of archaeological research, the massive and diverse literature which is often difficult to access, and the need to integrate archaeological with historical, linguistic and other evidence. However, the most fundamental problem remains the need for a model more suited to the circumstances of the African past than the Eurocentric one still favored by some.

SAfA conferences such as this one are essentially particularistic in their content, looking closely at discrete subject areas, usually with a limited location in space and time. Collectively the papers that are given present a kaleidoscope of individual research outcomes, the essential brevity of those papers contributing to the fragmentation of what we hear. Furthermore, because of the common practice of parallel sessions, each one of us can only listen to those individual studies that seem most relevant to our own work. Other than the occasional keynote speaker, briefed to take a broader view and often wheeled out at the beginning of a conference such as this, it is relatively rare to find papers being given that try to make overall sense of the complex jigsaw of information that African archaeology now presents at a continental or even regional level. In short, there are not many people who attempt to put the big picture together.

Constructing that big picture, that is to say putting the pieces of information together to make a coherent story, is the task of the synthesizer; a relatively rare bird in African archaeology. However, for archaeologists an ability to piece together the past is surely the ultimate objective of our discipline, even if post-processualists do claim that the past does not exist except in the minds of each one of us, where it takes on a different form in each individual. Whether we like it or not, the general public, who even if only indirectly usually employ us, expect something more than particularistic data or esoteric theorizing. On the world scene there have been quite a number of archaeologists whose writings show that they have realized this and we have also seen the growth of a positive industry of introductory university texts. So far, Africa has been less well served, perhaps because of the comparatively late growth of archaeological research in the continent, research that was very limited until about fifty years ago. As a result, the synthesis of African archaeology has been relatively rarely undertaken but there are signs that things are changing. Let us consider, therefore, the task of what I have called ‘writing Africa’s archaeological past’, although in doing so I shall (with apologies) restrict my discussion to material published in English.

Archaeologists working in Africa have always accepted that their ultimate obligation was to publish the results of their investigations, whether conducted in the field or in the laboratory. Although there have been many instances where this has not occurred or has been done only in a preliminary fashion, there have been four main outlets for such publication. These have consisted of the research monograph, the journal paper, the traditional conference proceedings, and the edited volume of papers often but not necessarily resulting from a conference. Essentially, all of these forms of publication consist of archaeologists writing for other archaeologists. Nevertheless, it is these publications that collectively provide the body of data that is the raw material of synthesis. This latter more general writing actually comprises a fifth sort of publication but usually at a very different level, where the main concerns for an
author are to reach a wider readership and to meet the requirements of commercial publication. Pleading publishers is usually easier if a straight undergraduate text is intended, although publishers in the English-speaking world, whether in the United States or not, estimate commercial viability on the basis of predicted sales in that country. Books written for the so-called 'general reader' are usually a more difficult proposition, unless they are concerned with Ancient Egypt or are 'coffee-table books', that emphasize illustration at the expense of text. The author attempting to write a regional study or a continent-wide study will often have problems finding a publisher. The question always asked is who the intended readership is to be. Given the cost of books published in the so-called developed world, sales in Africa itself will be minimal and sales elsewhere in the world will probably be modest unless by chance the book is taken up by university students or by their teachers.

This is the context in which we might consider some of the main examples of synthesis in African archaeology that have been produced over the years. Perhaps the earliest attempt at a continental level in English was H. Alimen’s *The prehistory of Africa* of 1957 (originally published in French in 1954), that consisted of an account of stone industries with not much else. Even in Desmond Clark’s *The prehistory of Africa*, of 1970, there was little attention to the iron-using agricultural and pastoral societies of the last few thousand years. Although Roland Oliver’s and Brian Fagan’s *Africa in the Iron Age*, of 1975, redressed the balance, it in turn gave no account of African peoples before 500 BC. Only with David Phillipson’s *African archaeology*, of 1985 and 1993 with a third edition due shortly, did readers get for the first time a comprehensive text that covered the whole of the human story for the whole continent. In the meantime, there have been a number of syntheses that were confined to particular regions and/or periods, although the mass of material on Ancient Egypt cannot be considered here. Even for the rest of the continent there are far more examples than can be mentioned but it is worth reminding ourselves of some of the more significant. Thus we have: Peter Garlake’s *The kingdoms of Africa*, of 1978; James Anquandah’s *Rediscovering Ghana’s past*, of 1982; Martin Hall’s *The changing past*, of 1987; my own *African Civilizations* of 1987 and 2001; John Sutton’s *A thousand years of East Africa*, of 1990; Derek Welsby’s *The Kingdom of Kush*, of 1996; Chapurukha Kusimba’s *The rise and fall of Swahili states*, of 1999; Innocent Pikirayi’s *The Zimbabwe Culture*, of 2001; and Peter Mitchell’s *The archaeology of southern Africa*, of 2002. This selection provides some idea of the spread of subject matter. What is interesting about these books is that the more successful of them probably succeeded simply because they did attract the attention of university teachers of African archaeology, in spite of being targeted at a more varied and broader readership.

How far these attempts have been successful in reaching out to wider readings is difficult to determine. In particular, it is uncertain just what impact they have had within Africa itself, for many of these books have been published outside of the continent and have been either difficult to obtain within Africa or priced beyond the limits of both private and institutional pockets. In addition, they have often been pitched at a level that inevitably limited their attraction for the non-technical reader coping with a second language. Only occasionally do writers seem to have addressed this problem, such as Thurstan Shaw in *Discovering Nigeria’s past*, of 1975, which originated as a series of broadcasts on Nigerian radio and was published in Ibadan, Nigeria. There was also Laurel and David Phillipson in *East Africa’s prehistoric past*, of 1978, that was produced in Nairobi, Kenya, and based on a series of articles previously published in a Nairobi Sunday newspaper. The fact that these examples are so old suggests that more such attempts are now needed, although more recent publications of this sort could have been overlooked by me because of their essentially ephemeral character.

Perhaps the easiest and cheapest way to reach a wider audience is now the Internet, and the dissemination of information electronically certainly does have an important role to play. However, in some parts of Africa sufficiently reliable electrical and telephonic services are lacking and, in addition, the computer hardware remains beyond the financial capacity of many people. For numerous Africans the printed book still provides the most dependable and economic means of accessing knowledge. Clearly, such books are more likely to reach a wider African readership if produced by local publishers at a modest price, and they are more likely to be comprehended if written by local authors. It could also be beneficial if, instead of publication in English or other European languages, material at the grass-roots level was provided in some of the main African languages. It is
vital that the widest possible spectrum of people be given a chance to learn about their own heritage. Indeed, it is probably at the vernacular primary school level that archaeologists would have the best chance of influencing future appreciation of such heritage.

Reaching such wider readerships involves what many perceive to be the dangerous business of ‘popularization’. Some archaeologists regard it as professional suicide, in spite of the many demonstrations in archaeological literature worldwide that this does not need to be so. Writing about archaeology at any level requires literary skill as well as archaeological know-how, and the wider the audience the greater the literary skill that is needed. The aspiring author of popular literature has to learn a whole new craft, in which understanding the potential readership is as important as understanding the subject written about. However, the latter also presents problems for the synthesist general writer. As we are all aware, the literature for African archaeology is huge, simply because the subject is so enormous, and to make matters even more difficult it is divided between a number of languages. As if that was not enough, it is also frequently difficult to access: worldwide I know of no library that can be said to have a really comprehensive collection of books and journals concerned with African archaeology. Add to this the unevenness of the archaeological record, in which some areas of the continent are so well represented and others so poorly represented, and the task of the synthesist becomes extremely difficult.

However, the general writer has also to face other problems. Most obvious of these is the difficulty of integrating archaeological data with information drawn from a variety of other sources, such as palaeoanthropology, linguistics, oral traditions, documentary records, and so on. Nevertheless, the most fundamental problem remains that of identifying a meaningful model for representing the African past. Although some Africanist archaeologists still cling to it, nineteenth-century Eurocentric epochalism is inherently limited in its utility as a conceptual framework. Instead, we need to be able to identify human groups in terms of their distribution, their date, their interaction with their environment, their subsistence, their material culture, their symbolic behaviour, and other distinctive attributes, rather than merely putting a technological label on them like ‘Late Stone Age’ or ‘Early Iron Age’. Already, many archaeologists are seeking new ways of presenting the African past. In the process, the old dichotomy of prehistory and history (a concept also of European origin) is becoming increasingly blurred and some of us are accepting the idea of a seamless past rather than an artificially divided one.

Some years ago, Brian Fagan, who has had remarkable success as a general writer for wider audiences, remarked to me that he no longer considered himself to be an archaeologist, he now thought of himself as an author. In our task of writing Africa’s archaeological past, it is my hope that we could be both.
The SAfA Book Prize in African Archaeology

Peter Mitchell
St. Hugh’s College
Oxford University
Oxford, OX2 6LE
United Kingdom
E-mail: peter.mitchell@st-hughs.oxford.ac.uk

In recognition of the growing wealth of African archaeology book titles and in the hope of strengthening publishers’ interests in the field of African archaeology, the SAfA Executive is proud to announce the institution of the SAfA Book Prize in African Archaeology for the best contribution made in this field by a work published in the years 2004 and 2005. The first award will be made at the 2006 SAfA Meeting in Calgary, Canada.

The SAfA Book Prize is open to books and monographs, including site reports, in all fields of African archaeology, including ethnoarchaeology and the African diaspora, from the beginnings of the archaeological record to the present. Single author, multi-author and edited works are all eligible. There is no restriction as to language.

The award will be made to that book which makes an exceptional contribution within one of the following areas or a significant contribution in a number of them:

1) an important theoretical advance in African archaeology;
2) an important methodological advance in African archaeology;
3) a major advance in our knowledge of the African past;
4) success in taking African Archaeology to a world audience;
5) success in breaking down disciplinary divisions in African archaeology, be they temporal, geographic, linguistic or other;
6) success in championing the value of African Archaeology within an African nation or community;
7) success in championing the protection and preservation of Africa’s archaeological heritage.

Nominations can be made by publishers and/or by individual SAfA members, but publishers will be limited to two books or monographs each. The closing date for submissions will be January 31st 2006. Those intending to nominate a book should contact the SAfA President, Dr Peter Mitchell, in the first instance at peter.mitchell@st-hughs.ox.ac.uk.

Submitted works will be made available free of charge to African university and museum institutions at the close of the Calgary meeting.