Nyame Akuma Issue 82 has eleven submissions, ten of which address the recent past and contemporary cultural knowledge. Two papers report on ongoing collaborative archaeological and historic research in Sierra Leone as part of Syracuse University’s Archaeological Initiative for the Sierra Leone Estuary. The project investigates the impact of the Atlantic trade in this region. Amartey and Reid present preliminary investigations of the broader impact of the trade in the estuary landscape specifically sociopolitical changes evident in settlement patterns and in long-term changes to maritime and agricultural economies in the region from the 15th century. Christopher DeCorse reports on his research on Bunce Island. The island was an important outpost for exporting slaves to North America and the West Indies in the 17th and 18th centuries. The project is assessing the archaeological evidence of the slave trade on the island for the purpose of developing a strategy for its preservation and management.

Two papers investigate social identities in West Africa. Calvo et al. present results of their 2009 and 2013 ethnoarchaeological research of the “Oral history, archaeology and ethnoarchaeology in the upper basin of the White Volta (NE Ghana) project”. The study examines how diverse social identities are constantly renegotiated in the daily lives of people in the study area, including identities of ethnicity. Their focus is how ethnic identities are materially manifested, particularly in pottery and domestic places. Chinyere Ukpokolo critically evaluates the ethnographic evidence of the Owu history of origin and diasporic identity based on fieldwork conducted in Orile-Owu in southwest Nigeria in 2011. Specifically, Ukpokolo draws upon collective memory and praise poems (oriki) to justapose the vernacular perspective on Owu history to that told by scholars.

Four papers summarize 2014 research of Le projet KongoKing, directed by Koen Bostoen, research that is elucidating the history and political process of the ancient Kongo kingdom. Bernard Clist et al. present results of 2014 field excavations, survey and laboratory research in the Province du Bas-Congo, RDC. The research included a number of control excavations at sites in the study area, particularly at Misenga, Sumbi and Ngongo Mbata. Specific studies of contemporary and more ancient material culture are presented in the three other KongoKing Project papers. Igor Matonda et al. summarize archaeological and ethnoarchaeological investigations of pottery intended to identify pottery production centres in three provinces of the ancient Kongo kingdom: Nsundi, Mpangu and Mbata. Much of the 2014 research tested hypotheses developed in previous years’ research. Mandela Kaumba also conducted ethnoarchaeological and museum studies of pottery from the late 19th to 21st centuries. The 2014 research will help to determine regional variations in production. Unfortunately pottery production is almost part of the ethnographic past in the province of Bas-Congo, but six potters’ production sequences were recorded. The fourth report by Nikis and Champion summarize distinct but collaborative research in the KongoKing project. Nikis conducted excavations and field survey of sites to determine the chronology and exploitation of copper resources in the southern Republic of Congo during the period of the Kongo kingdom. Champion collected soil samples for archaeobotanical analysis from these excavations and conducted the first flotation program in the Republic of Congo. The goal of Champion’s research is to determine food history in this region.

Ikram Madani et al. also contribute to the botanical knowledge of Africa. Their project documented cultural knowledge of medicinal plants of the Kababish tribe in Ga’ab El Lagia oasis
west of Dongola, Sudan. Their paper presents the first ethnobotanical survey for this region and is a significant contribution to the sparse ethnobotanical record of the country.

One paper addresses Ethiopia’s recent past. Timothy Insoll, Habtamu Tesfaye and Malik Saako Mahmoud present preliminary results of survey and excavation in Harari Regional State. The project’s intent is to reconstruct the chronology for the city of Harar and its environs, and to provide archaeological evaluation of narratives of local people’s origin and of Islamic political history in the area.

Osypiński and Osypińska provide the only paper in this issue dealing with archaeology of more ancient times. Their paper summarizes 2014 excavations of a ceremonial complex in Egypt’s Eastern Desert. Excavations inside the main enclosure of the animal cemetery at Wadi Khashab recovered a human child burial and animal burials predominated by the remains of cattle. Cattle burials were associated with stone superstructures and stone stelae probably dating to the 4th millennium BC and are interpreted as practices of migrant cattle keepers in the Sahara.

Once again we thank you for your submissions to Nyame Akuma.

Dr. Diane Lyons
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