



EDITORIAL

Over the last year or so, we have lost some of the leaders in African archaeology, most notably Professor J. Desmond Clark, a pioneer of stone age research and a strong proponent of SAfA. Many of us will remember his retirement conference, held at the University of California, Berkeley in 1986. It was only a retirement from regular teaching as Desmond continued to contribute in many ways. The year 2001 saw the publication of the third volume of his *Kalambo Falls Prehistoric Site* reports, completing the description of the stone age archaeological assemblages at this important long term Zambian locality.

In April 2003, Susan Kent of Old Dominion University passed away suddenly in Milwaukee, where she was attending the annual meeting of the Society for American Archaeology (SAA). Susan is known to many archaeologists worldwide for her major contributions to method and theory. She conducted ethnoarchaeological research among the Basarwa of Botswana, and most recently conducted archaeological excavations on the MSA and LSA in South Africa. She edited a number of books in anthropology and archaeology, including *Analyzing Activity Areas: an ethnoarchaeological study of the use of space* (University of New Mexico Press, 1984), *Farmers as hunters: the implications of sedentism* (Cambridge University Press, 1989), *Cultural diversity among twentieth-century foragers: an African perspective* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), and most recently, *Ethnicity, hunter-gatherers and the "other": association or assimilation in Africa* (Smithsonian Institution Press, 2002). Another pioneering work was a volume on *Gender in African Prehistory* (AltaMira, 1998), based on a symposium held at the SAfA meeting in Poznan in 1996. She was a professor at a small university and was their only archaeologist. Yet she managed to be one of the most productive people in our field, and a mentor to many scholars, both within and outside of Africanist archaeology. For example, she made a notable contribution through the Committee on the Status of Women in Archaeology (COSWA) of the SAA. She also served as an officer of numerous scholarly organizations including the SAA, most recently as their book review editor. She will be greatly missed.

Patricia Vinnicombe has also passed away. She was a pioneer of South African rock art studies, discovering and meticulously recording many sites. She is probably best known for her book, *People of the Eland* (Natal University Press, 1976). An obituary written by Justine Olofsson has appeared in the April 2003 issue of *The Digging Stick*, the newsletter of the South African Archaeological Association. It reports that after her retirement from the Western Australia Department of Aboriginal Affairs, she returned to South Africa to catalogue her archive of rock art images, and her personal correspondence. This material is curated

at the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg as the RARI Vinnicombe Collection.

On a brighter note, Merrick Posnansky, Professor Emeritus of History and Anthropology at UCLA has been awarded the John Harrington medal of the Society for Historical Archaeology for 2003. This award is named in honor of John Carl Harrington (1901-1998), one of the pioneers of historic archaeology in North America. The award is presented for a life time of scholarly contributions to the discipline. This is richly deserved. Merrick pioneered the study of historical archaeology at UCLA, and trained a number of people doing African historic archaeology as well as what is generally referred to as "diaspora studies", the study of Black people throughout the Americas. It is perhaps fitting that this issue of *Nyame Akuma* should have a diaspora article (by Johnson), the first since I became editor.

The SAfA biennial conference will be held in Bergen, Norway from June 26-29, 2004. It is organized by Randi Haaland and hosted by the Centre for Development Studies at the University of Bergen. A web site giving more details is available at <http://www.uib.no/safa2004/>. We hope to see as many of you as possible.

The SAfA executive is planning a beefed up web site, with more information about current events, graduate theses/dissertations and other information of use to our members. Eventually, there will also be electronic access to *Nyame Akuma* and other publications. There will be more news about this project shortly.

The papers in this issue include the usual reports of initial discovery of sites. Masao *et al.* report on stone age research in the Serengeti National Park of Tanzania, while Wright discusses the Pastoral Neolithic at the Tsavo National Park in Kenya. Both these places are better known for their natural history; their human history has become of interest only recently. Finneran and Phillips report on the discovery of stone age sites in the Tigray region of Ethiopia, and Garcea about a salvage or rescue project in the Sudan.

Okoro addresses issues of applied archaeology, or why do archaeological research at all. He shows that studies of traditional technological practices in Ghana, such as well manufacture and maintenance, can be of relevance to rural people today. Ossa Mvondo and Hamman describe the history and ethnohistory of textile production in the Lake Chad basin. Lawson discusses the development of complex societies in The Gambia, as does de Barros for Togo. Kleindienst *et al.* report on palaeoenvironmental and archaeological research at Kharga Oasis in the Western Desert of Egypt, the area made famous by Gertrude Caton-Thomson. By providing a similar palaeoenvironmental framework, Brook *et al.* supplement Robbins's long term work on the stone age prehistory of the Tsodilo Hills in Botswana.