



EDITORIAL

I am writing this approximately a week before the SAfA conference begins in Calgary. For me this once, attending SAfA just involves driving south about three hours from the provincial capital of Edmonton where I work at the University of Alberta. In advance, I would like to thank the University of Calgary organizing committee for their work on our behalf. But all of us Albertans would like to welcome conference participants to our dynamic province. While Calgary and Edmonton are a long way from Africa, the subject of our research interests, our hospitality is likewise world renowned. This conference is held on behalf of Professor Peter Shinnie, who was the first professor of African archaeology at the University of Calgary, and was the founder of *Nyame Akuma* and the organizer of the first SAfA meetings (then the Society of Africanist Archaeologists in America or SAAAm).

Congratulations are also due to Elisabeth Hildebrand who just received the PhD dissertation prize at the April 2006 meeting of the Society for American Archaeology or SAA in San Juan, Puerto Rico. While the SAA is largely concerned with New World archaeology, its conference includes all regions of the world and all time periods in human history. The prize is given to the best doctoral dissertation in archaeology. It is a notable achievement that the SAA recognized an African ethnoarchaeological study as worthy of this prize. Elisabeth did her PhD research at the University of Washington, St. Louis under the supervision of Dr. Fiona Marshall. Her dissertation title was *Enset, yams, and honey: Ethnoarchaeological approaches to the origins of horticulture in southwest Ethiopia* and was completed in 2003.

This issue includes a series of papers, which are all about the West African past. This was not intentional, but was a product of the submission schedule. Ndah describes the formation of the Equipe de Recherche Archéologique Béninoise, or Benin archaeological research team. He discusses their research in the Mekrou River valley of Parc W, which is located at the junction of three countries - Benin, Burkina Faso and Niger, and is jointly managed by them. It is also the subject of Idé's article. Idé discusses the natural and cultural resources of this same park in Niger, both modern and past. Boachie-Ansah describes a salvage archaeology project near the airport in Accra, capital of Ghana. Using ceramic styles, he argues for cultural continuity over time, an idea which is also supported by oral history. Gblerkpor describes a survey of terrace sites around Krobo Mountain in southeast Ghana.

Kelly outlines an archaeological survey of historic sites he recently conducted in Guinea. The focus was especially on identifying locations associated with the Atlantic slave trade. Ogundele and his co-author describe a survey of mud wall structures in Nigeria. Some of these are still extant, while others have decayed over time into mounds. Like most of the other authors whose research is discussed here, their work involves a combination of history, oral history, ethnoarchaeology, and archaeological survey and excavation. Ogunfolakan *et al.* discuss ethnoarchaeological and archaeological research in Yorubaland, and Milburn briefly reports on a rock art site in the Western Sahara.