



EDITORIAL

This issue is my first as editor of *Nyame Akuma*. I begin by thanking *Nyame Akuma's* previous editor, Pam Willoughby, for her 14 years of dedicated service to the bulletin. In putting this issue together I was guided by her sage advice and experience, and learned how much work and time is required to complete each *Nyame Akuma* issue. *Nyame Akuma* provides Africanist archaeologists a venue for reporting recent research activities and preliminary results to other Africanist scholars. Under Pam's editorship *Nyame Akuma*, which is not peer-reviewed, received a "B" rating by the European Reference Index for the Humanities. This rating is superior to many peer-reviewed journals rated within the same index. I will endeavour to maintain the level of quality that *Nyame Akuma's* readership has come to expect from Pam's hard work.

In this issue, there are seven papers that present research in North, East and West Africa and span a time frame from the Early Stone Age (ESA) to the Later Iron Age (LIA). Six of these papers present previously unreported data from survey and/or excavation.

Three papers (Barthelme et al; Haynes et al; Kleindienst et al.) focus on field survey and/or excavation of Early Stone Age and/or Middle Stone Age (MSA) sites in North and East Africa. Haynes and Klimowicz describe previously unreported open-air MSA sites in Hwange National Park, Zimbabwe. The results of the study indicate that MSA hominins used the landscape differently than did their ESA predecessors. Their paper is an important contribution to our understanding of variability in MSA sites in north-western Zimbabwe where sites from this period are poorly reported. Barthelme, Hunt, Ngari and Kipintoi report on renewed survey and excavations in the Lake Magadi Basin in southern Kenya. The project is part of an interdisciplinary and international field course that focuses on Kenyan archaeology and human evolution in Eastern Africa. The project has students investigate hunting and gathering populations that occupied the area from the middle Pleistocene to the Holocene. In the first part of an interim report on their 2008 field season, Kleindienst, Smith and Adelsberger present geoarchaeology and Pleistocene prehistory in the Kharga Oasis. The team reports on several previously unrecorded sites, including seven Kharga sites, two of which belong to a new cultural unit. Relocations and descriptions of previously reported sites are described.

Seitsonen's paper encourages researchers to consider using more widely available GIS data to investigate land-use studies of past peoples in Africa. Seitsonen presents a preliminary GIS Site Catchment Analysis in the Loita-Mara Region of South-west Kenya. The study tests if there is a correlation between PN sites and agricultural land as was suggested previously by Robertshaw and Collett. In addition to testing this hypothesis, the study demonstrates the potential for modeling past land-use and settlement systems of agriculturalists and pastoralists in eastern Africa using refined spatial-temporal data.

Two papers address important areas of the Iron Age. Kahlheber, Hohn and Rupp report on preliminary analyses of archaeobotanical samples from Nok sites in Nigeria. Their study provides much needed economic context for the "Nok culture", and more broadly, the archaeobotanical evidence from these sites, (and from other research reported from West Africa), lends support to the authors' suggestion that at the beginning of the Iron Age a plant exploitation system, based on mixed cropping of pearl millet and cowpea and the exploitation of oleaginous tree fruits, was spread throughout the West African savannas.

Iles doctoral research in Uganda presents the first archaeologically oriented study of Later Iron Age metallurgy in Bunyoro-Kitara. The study builds upon the rich ethnographic and ethno-historic work of iron industries available in this region. Her analyses of archaeometallurgical samples from LIA sites located in her study area, promise to refine our understanding of techniques and local variability in iron production in Western Uganda's LIA.

Finally, Kalb proposes Awsa in the Central Afar Depression of northeastern Ethiopia, as the location for the Land of Punt, a topic that has generated much scholarly debate. Kalb's study is based on his interpretation of bas-relief and hieroglyphic records of Queen Hatshepsut's trading expedition to Punt.

In sending future submissions to *Nyame Akuma* please note my email and mailing addresses on the inside cover. In addition, you will find some changes to the guidelines for authors, particularly in the formatting of text and images. Soon I will be posting detailed guidelines for authors on the SAFA website. I look forward to your submissions!

Diane Lyons