



EDITORIAL

We begin Volume 72 of *Nyame Akuma* with Yusyf Juwayeyi's remembrance of Dr. Mgomezulu (1948-2009), Malawi's first archaeologist, who passed away in May 2009. Dr. Mgomezulu leaves a substantial legacy of Africanist research and contributions to the protection of African cultural heritage.

This volume has eleven papers that represent research in the Horn of Africa, East Africa, Central Africa, southern Africa and West Africa. The papers range from field reports to preliminary results of long-term and on-going projects that span a time frame from 250,000 years ago to present-day. These papers address the history and status of craft workers, slavery, iron working, trade, major cultural transitions, and the dynamic processes of human interaction with environments and landscapes.

Two papers address the social position of craft workers in southwest Ethiopia. Weedman Arthur et al. present a report on their long-term work among the Omotic-speaking Gamo peoples. The project is investigating the origins of caste-like artisans through oral history and archaeology. This research addresses an important social issue in Ethiopia. Anthropologists have described artisans in many societies as marginalized, but the history of these people has not been demonstrated historically or archaeologically. Their approach integrates indigenous perspectives into the construction of their history. In the same general region, Temesgen Burka investigates iron workers of the Oromo-speaking peoples of Wollega. He concludes that the marginalization of iron-workers is a status imposed in recent centuries by the Semitic-speaking Amhara peoples, and that Wollega smiths had an important socio-political-religious position in society that is retained (in a weakened form) to this day. He questions if smiths in this area are in fact marginalized.

There are four papers of research in East Africa. Marshall presents a summary of her dissertation research on fugitive slaves, called the watoro, who created new communities in 19th century Kenya. Her project has implications for comparative study of maroon settlements in the Americas. The study also contributes to general theoretical issues related to the processes of community creation and maintenance. Three papers address research in Tanzania. The first paper by Lyaya presents results of archaeological field research in southwest Tanzania. His project goal is to determine a material signature that distinguishes iron bloom refining sites. These sites result from an intermittent stage of iron-production where the initial bloom is smelted for a second time in a special furnace, prior to smithing. This three-stage process is found in central and eastern Africa. Lyaya concludes that the three stages of iron production can be distinguished by the different slags that each stage produces as well as by associated material features. The second paper by Pawlowicz presents archaeological research undertaken around the town of Mikindani on the southern Tanzania coast. The purpose of his research is to evaluate the ways in which past communities in the region participated in the economic and cultural systems of the East African Swahili

Coast during the second millennium AD. The third paper is by Biginagwa who provides preliminary results of his excavations in northeast Tanzania. His study investigates the relationship between the expansion of the caravan trade during the 19th century and possible agronomic transformation and land-use changes in the areas crossed by the caravan trade routes.

From Zimbabwe, Wriston and Haynes present recent results of on-going investigations of the prehistoric landscape use and paleoenvironmental conditions in Hwange National Park during the past 250,000 years. The goal of the project is to improve our understanding of the LSA people's lifeways before the introduction of agropastoralism and to investigate when the transition from hunting-gathering to agropastoralism occurred in this region.

Two papers from Central and West Africa report on excavations of LSA and EIA sites in the rain forest belt. Meyer et al. report on excavations of iron production in eastern Cameroon at the sites of Bagofit and Mampang, both situated near Abong Mbang. At Bagofit three bowl furnaces and several pits were discovered that date to the first centuries AD. Their results constitute some of the earliest evidence of early iron production as well as EIA settlement in this region. The paper by Alabi et al. presents recent excavations at a rock shelter (with ceramic and aceramic occupations), located at Ita-Ogbolu in southwest Nigeria. The study contributes to the poorly understood LSA of Nigeria's forest zone, and the site has affinities to materials recovered from Iwo Eleru. This study provides further data on the nature of the environment, the peopling of the forest zone of West Africa, as well as the cultural dynamics and subsistence strategies these people practiced.

Two final papers investigate more recent time periods in West Africa. Ogundele and Lumowo present investigations of archaeological and oral traditions in Beromland, Nigeria. Their project's goal is to develop an understanding of aspects of the settlement history and culture of the Berom of Shen from the pre-colonial/colonial/early post-colonial period to the ethnographic present. In this study they investigate the Shen hilltop site. The site is historically important to the origin of the Berom peoples and the material remains are an example of how aspects of British colonial ways of life were critically integrated into a Nigerian culture. DeCorse et al. reports on coastal excavations in Ghana conducted as part of an ongoing program investigating transformations in African societies during the era of the Atlantic World. The study presents preliminary results from surface site survey and excavation (including remains of a European fort), underwater excavation of a 19th century shipwreck, and salvage documentation of the remains of a probable 18th century ship.

Subscribers should note changing costs for *Nyame Akuma* that are posted on the inside cover of this volume. These changes are necessary to meet increased costs of production and postage of hardcopy subscriptions. As always, I look forward to your submissions!

Diane Lyons, Editor