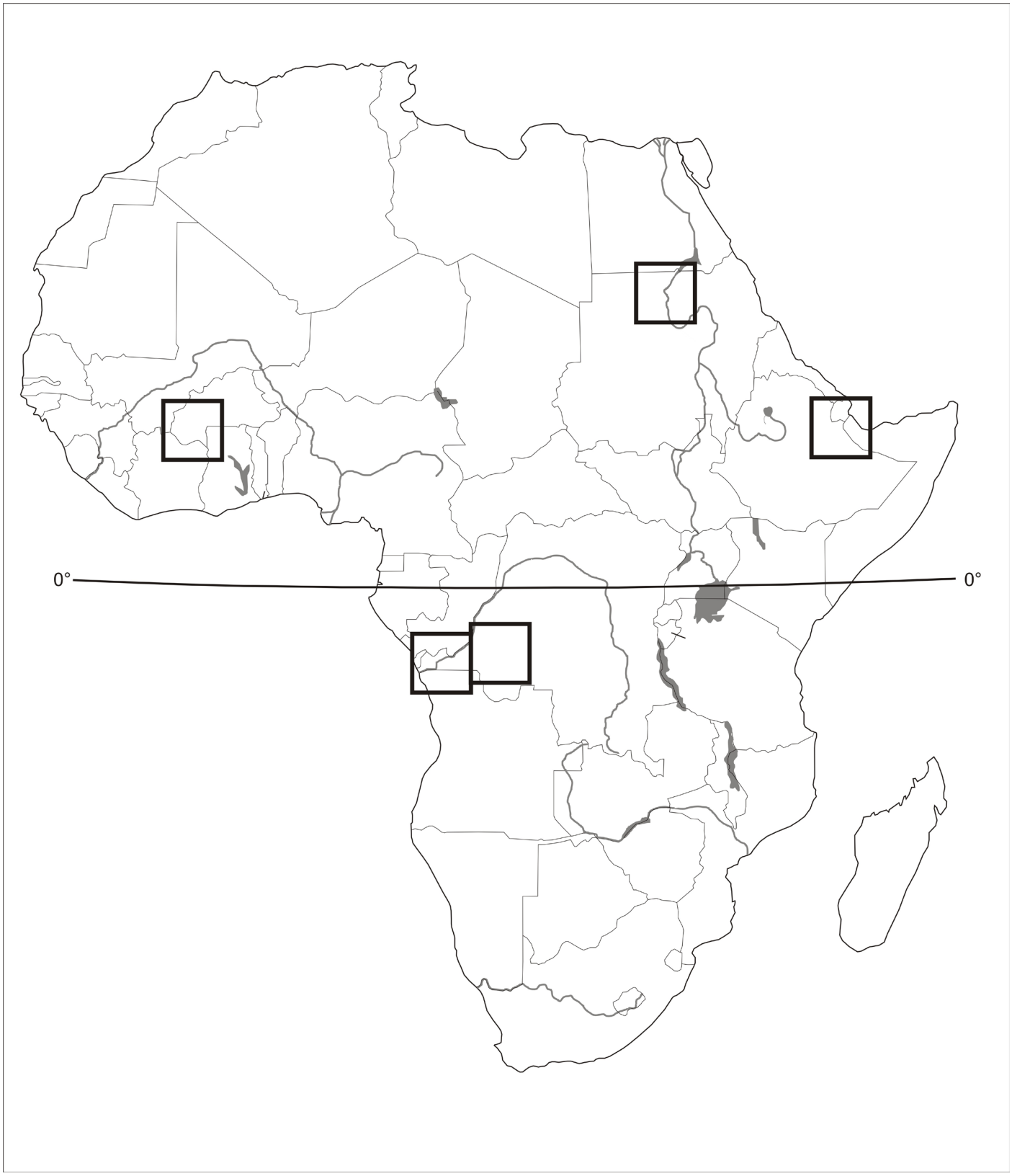

General areas of articles in this volume
Localisation des articles de ce volume

EDITORIAL

Dear readership,

Despite the unfortunate delay of the publication of the December 2018 volume (90), its content represents an interesting geographical coverage with the five papers representing West Africa, the Horn of Africa and Central Africa. Articles also cover diverse chronological periods. For example, the focus of two papers at the southern margins of the Central African rainforest in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is on the later first millennium BC. Two other papers look at sites dated to the second millennium AD. These concern the Loropeni ruins in northern Burkina Faso and the ancient structures in the Awdal region in Somaliland. The fifth paper examines tethering stones in northern Sudan in relation to reconstructing ways of handling animals since the mid-Holocene.

The two papers on the DRC are both connected to the BantuFirst project (https://www.bantufirst.ugent.be/) that continues the organization and interdisciplinarity of the KongoKing research project on which the team has reported in several papers in *Nyame Akuma* between 2013 and 2015. In this volume Clist, Bigohe, Mambu and Bostoen briefly present the project, and give the preliminary results of fieldwork in the Kongo Central Province. Excavations on six new and four previously documented sites as well as surveys on 73 localities offer new insights on Early Iron Age farmers from around 1900 years ago, and possibly also on the hunter-gatherers present at that time and earlier. In the second article, Seidensticker, Jungnickel, Mambu, Yogolelo, Kidebua and Bostoen first explain how they approached research in a little-studied area to the east of Kinshasa, in the Kwango, Kwilu and Mai-Ndombe Provinces. They combine analysis of archives of the ancient excavations at the Mukila site with new fieldwork in order to understand and date the previously reported stone industries and pottery. The site is of interest because of the archaeological focus on the material remains of the earliest pottery producing communities. From their surveys in the Bandundu region and between Bandundu and Kinshasa, they infer that the area has high potential not only for Holocene but also for Late Pleistocene archaeology.

Farma's article describes his fieldwork in a 2 km perimeter surrounding the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Loropeni in Burkina Faso. These intriguing large rectangular ruins were in use between the 11th and 18th centuries and have attracted worldwide scientific and public interest. Farma's goal is to study the social context of these enigmatic buildings. Surveys in the vicinity of the ruins yielded 135 stone built structures and 19 sites related to iron production activities. The surface of the sites varies between 4 and 600 m². Most of the walls have collapsed and stone foundations rarely exceed 1 m in height. In this article, he gives the preliminary results of the excavations on six of these sites.

de Torres, González-Ruibal, Antonio Franco and Dualeh Jama report on the 2018 survey of the Incipit-CSIC Archaeological Mission in Somaliland which concentrates on the role of the region in the trade networks that connected the Horn of Africa with the broader world. A preliminary report on the ancient history of the colonial town of Bulhar was published in volume 87 of this Bulletin. This time they document four towns or villages, and a religious center at Dameraqad. All studied sites so far seem to have been abandoned by the late 16th–early 17th centuries and are unlikely to be older than the 13th–14th centuries.

For interpreting the tethering stones that Hamdeen documented in the Wadi Gorgod, the author combines sources from excavated contexts, experimental archaeology, imagery in rock art, and paintings in royal tombs. The stones may have been used as parts of traps for capturing wild animals in order to tame them, export them alive, or simply hunt them. Finally, they were likely used in animal husbandry and pastoral settings to prevent domestic animals from straying.

At the end of this volume we look at the future of our field and you will find a contribution by the SAfA 2020 Organizing Committee and their Organizing Secretary, Peter Mitchell. The 25th biannual SAfA meeting will take place in Oxford and aims to foreground the challenges of 2020 with respect to the social role and interdisciplinary nature of our research.

Looking at the future of *Nyame Akuma*, I would like to welcome Liza Gijanto who has agreed to serve as the English editor from volume 91 onwards. I take this opportunity to acknowledge Dores Cruz, who served as the English editor for volumes 86-89, for her professional collaboration, enthusiasm and commitment to editing *Nyame Akuma*, as well as Katharina Hemingway for all her efforts in the layout of volumes 86-88. Her careful templates and Dores' investment in the guidelines, copyediting and proofreading greatly facilitated the work of the Publications Service of the Royal Museum for Central Africa.

In conclusion, volume 90 would not have been possible without the contributing authors, whom I thank, as well as all the collaborators of volume 90: Katharina Hemingway, Elisabeth Hildebrand, and Gabriele Franke for their assistance in English proofreading; Nadine Devleeschouwer for the French proofreading; and the Publications Service for layout and final copyediting. A special word of thanks goes to our current SAfA President, Elisabeth Hildebrand, for her continued support for and attention to *Nyame Akuma*.

Els Cornelissen

ÉDITORIAL

Chers lecteurs,

Le numéro (90) de décembre 2018 paraît malheureusement en retard ; il présente cependant un contenu intéressant, avec cinq articles couvrant diverses aires géographiques en Afrique de l'Ouest, dans la Corne de l'Afrique et en Afrique centrale. Sur le plan de la chronologie, deux articles se concentrent sur la fin du premier millénaire avant J.-C., à la lisière méridionale de la forêt tropicale d'Afrique centrale. Deux autres textes se penchent sur des sites datant du second millénaire de notre ère. Il s'agit des ruines de Loropéni dans le nord du Burkina Faso et des anciennes structures situées dans la région d'Adwal au Somaliland. La cinquième contribution concerne des pierres d'attache trouvées dans le nord du Soudan et leur pertinence pour reconstituer des manières de détenir les animaux dès l'Holocène moyen.

Les articles sur la RDC sont tous deux liés au projet BantuFirst (https://www.bantufirst.ugent.be/) qui poursuit la même organisation et la même interdisciplinarité que son prédécesseur, le projet de recherche KongoKing, dont l'équipe avait rendu compte dans plusieurs textes parus dans *Nyame Akuma* entre 2013 et 2015.

Dans le premier de ces articles, Clist, Bigohe, Mambu et Bostoen présentent brièvement le projet et donnent les résultats préliminaires du travail de terrain dans la province du Kongo-Central. Des fouilles sur six nouveaux sites et sur quatre sites déjà documentés, ainsi que des prospections sur 73 localités livrent de nouvelles perspectives sur l'Âge du Fer ancien à partir d'il y a 1900 ans environ, et probablement également sur les chasseurs-cueilleurs présents à cette époque et auparavant.

Dans le second texte,Seidensticker, Jungnickel, Mambu, Yogolelo, Kidebua et Bostoen expliquent d'abord comment ils ont abordé la recherche dans une région pratiquement vierge sur le plan archéologique, dans les provinces du Kwango, du Kwilu et de Mai-Ndombe à l'est de Kinshasa. Ils combinent l'analyse d'archives issues des anciennes fouilles menées sur le site de Mukila avec un nouveau travail de terrain afin de comprendre et de dater les industries lithiques et la céramique signalées antérieurement. Le site est intéressant pour ce projet qui, sur le plan archéologique, se concentre sur les vestiges matériels des premières communautés productrices de céramique. Les prospections qu'ils ont menées dans la région de Bandundu et entre Bandundu et Kinshasa leur ont permis d'apprécier le potentiel que cette région présentait non seulement pour l'archéologie de l'Holocène, mais aussi pour celle du Pléistocène tardif.

La contribution de Farma porte sur son travail de terrain effectué dans un périmètre de 2 km autour de Loropeni au Burkina Faso, site reconnu Patrimoine mondial par l'UNESCO. Ces intrigantes ruines rectangulaires, aux larges proportions, étaient en usage entre les XIe et XVIIIe siècles et suscitent l'intérêt des scientifiques et du public à travers le monde. L'auteur s'efforce d'étudier le contexte social de ces constructions énigmatiques. Des sondages dans les alentours des ruines ont révélé 135 constructions en pierre et 19 sites liés aux activités de production de fer. La surface de ces sites varie entre 4 et 600 m². La plupart des murs se sont effondrés et les fondations en pierre excèdent rarement 1 m de haut. Farma livre ici les résultats préliminaires des fouilles réalisées sur 6 de ces sites.

de Torres, González-Ruibal, Antonio Franco et Dualeh Jama rendent compte du terrain mené en 2018 au Somaliland dans le cadre du Incipit-CSIC Archaeological Mission. Ce projet se focalise sur le rôle de la région dans les réseaux commerciaux qui reliaient la Corne de l'Afrique au reste du monde. Un rapport préliminaire sur l'histoire ancienne de la ville coloniale de Bulhar avait été publié dans le numéro 87 de ce bulletin. Cette fois-ci, ils documentent quatre villes ou villages, ainsi qu'un centre religieux à Dameraqad. Tous les sites étudiés jusqu'à présent semblent avoir été abandonnés fin du XVIe-début du XVIIe siècle et ne datent probablement pas d'avant les XIIIe-XIVe siècles.

Pour interpréter des pierres d'attache qu'il a trouvé lors des prospections dans le Wadi Gorgod, Hamdeen combine des sources diverses : contextes fouillés, archéologie expérimentale, imagerie de l'art pariétal et de peintures dans des tombes royales, afin de comprendre la relation hommes-animaux. Les pierres peuvent être utilisées

comme des parties de pièges pour capturer des animaux sauvages en vue de les apprivoiser ou de les exporter vivants ou tout simplement pour les chasser, ou bien elles étaient utilisées dans l'élevage et dans un cadre pastoral pour éviter que les animaux ne s'égarent.

À la fin de ce volume, nous traiterons de l'avenir de notre domaine ; vous trouverez une contribution du Comité organisateur de la SAfA 2020 et de son secrétaire d'organisation, Peter Mitchell. La XXVe Rencontre biannuelle de la SAfA se tiendra à Oxford et visera à mettre en avant les défis de 2020 pour le rôle sociétal et la nature interdisciplinaire de nos recherches.

En ce qui concerne l'avenir de *Nyame Akuma*, je souhaite la bienvenue à Liza Gijanto qui a accepté d'exercer la fonction d'éditrice en anglais à partir du numéro 91. À cette occasion, je remercie Dores Cruz, éditrice des numéros 86 à 89, pour sa collaboration très professionnelle, son enthousiasme et son engagement dans l'édition de notre revue, ainsi que Katharina Hemingway pour tous ses efforts dans la mise en page des volumes 86 à 88. Son élaboration des canevas d'édition et l'investissement de Dores en matière de directives et de révision des textes ont facilité le travail du service des Publications du Musée royal de l'Afrique centrale.

En conclusion, ce numéro 90 n'aurait pu voir le jour sans les auteurs qui y ont contribué, tout comme je remercie les collaborateurs de ce numéro : Katharina Hemingway, Elisabeth Hildebrandt et Gabriele Franke pour leur aide dans la correction des textes en anglais ; Nadine Devleeschouwer pour la révision en français ; le service des Publications pour la mise en page et la relecture finale.

Pour clore cet éditorial, j'adresserai un remerciement tout particulier à notre présidente actuelle, Elisabeth Hildebrand, pour le soutien et l'attention constante qu'elle porte à *Nyame Akuma*.

Els Cornelissen

Burkina Faso

Recherches archéologiques dans la périphérie du site des ruines de Loropéni (sud-ouest du Burkina Faso)

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Introduction : état de la question et problématique de recherche

Le site des ruines de Loropéni, inscrit sur la liste du patrimoine mondial de l'UNESCO en 2009, est le spécimen le mieux conservé d'un ensemble d'enceintes et de structures construites en pierre et en argile connu sous le nom de « ruines du pays lobi». C'est une enceinte monumentale de 11 130 m^2 aux murs parfois encore hauts de 6 mètres. Les enceintes et structures en pierre se trouvent sur un vaste territoire communément appelé « pays lobi » qui s'étend du sud-ouest du Burkina Faso au nord-est de la Côte d'Ivoire. Elles sont également signalées dans le nord-ouest du Ghana.

Bien présents dans les traditions orales des populations locales, ces vestiges n'apparaissent pour la première fois dans les sources écrites qu'au début du XXe siècle, au moment où le pouvoir colonial cherchait à administrer les territoires nouvellement conquis. Leur caractère monumental a suscité fascination et curiosité auprès des administrateurs coloniaux et ensuite du grand public, d'où la triple interrogation sur leur(s) origine(s), leur(s) fonction(s) et l'époque de leur construction (Delafosse 1902 ; Somé 2014 : 25). Delafosse (1902 : 780 ; Villamur & Delafosse 1904 : 215), qui fut le premier à leur consacrer des écrits, émet l'hypothèse d'une origine étrangère, notamment celle de peuples du bassin méditerranéen, en se fondant sur la monumentalité et la perfection des bâtiments. Ruelle (1905 : 671), quant à lui, s'appuie sur les imperfections constatées pour défendre une origine purement locale. En effet, ce dernier estime que les portes étaient trop étroites pour être l'œuvre d'Occidentaux. Il a également émis des doutes sur l'arrivée de ces derniers dans ces contrées de l'hinterland avant le XVIIIe siècle. Labouret (1931), un peu plus tard, abandonne cette approche purement visuelle des constructions et recueille des sources orales sur l'histoire du peuplement et les pratiques culturelles et cultuelles ; il fait un inventaire des sites et pratique même des fouilles archéologiques[1]. Il confirme ainsi l'origine purement locale. En comparant les vestiges archéologiques mis au jour aux objets ethnographiques de la région, il attribue aux Koulango la paternité des ruines. La reconnaissance des sites entamée par Labouret est poursuivie par Savonnet (1986) qui l'étend sur le nord de la Côte d'Ivoire, établit ensuite une typologie des enceintes et structures et les inscrit dans une analyse spatiale. Ses examens ont aussi porté sur les relations particulières que les populations locales entretiennent alors (fin XIXe siècle) avec ces sites. S'il ne remet pas en cause l'ancienneté des Koulango dans l'espace qu'occupent les ruines en pierre, thèse défendue par Labouret, il met cependant en doute la pertinence de la conclusion qu'il en tire et qui fait des Koulango les bâtisseurs de ces ruines (Savonnet 1986 : 78-79). Cet appel à la prudence n'a pas été pris en compte par Père (1992 ; 2004) qui attribue aux Kaamba la paternité de ces bâtisses. En effet, les Kaamba forment un autre peuple qui revendique une antériorité par rapport aux Koulango sur ce qui est appelé aujourd'hui le pays lobi. Selon eux, leurs ancêtres auraient construits les enceintes et structures en pierre afin de les protéger contre les bêtes féroces.

Le bon état de conservation du site des ruines de Loropéni a cristallisé certains débats notamment sur la fonction de ces vestiges. Par exemple, l'enceinte a parfois été décrite comme une geôle d'esclaves affectés à la recherche de l'or (Guilhem & Hébert 1961). Les véritables investigations archéologiques n'ont commencé qu'en 2008 pour compléter le dossier de candidature du site des ruines de Loropéni en vue de son inscription sur la liste du patrimoine mondial de l'UNESCO (Kiéthéga 2008). Le faciès du matériel archéologique témoigne d'une origine locale du site et d'une fonction d'habitat. Au moins deux

[1] Le site fouillé par Labouret n'a jamais été retrouvé sur le terrain car le nom de la localité où se sont déroulés les travaux ne correspond à aucun lieu connu des populations locales. De même, aucune des pièces décrites dans sa publication ne nous sont parvenues. Nous ne disposons que des illustrations qui sont, cependant, relativement précises.

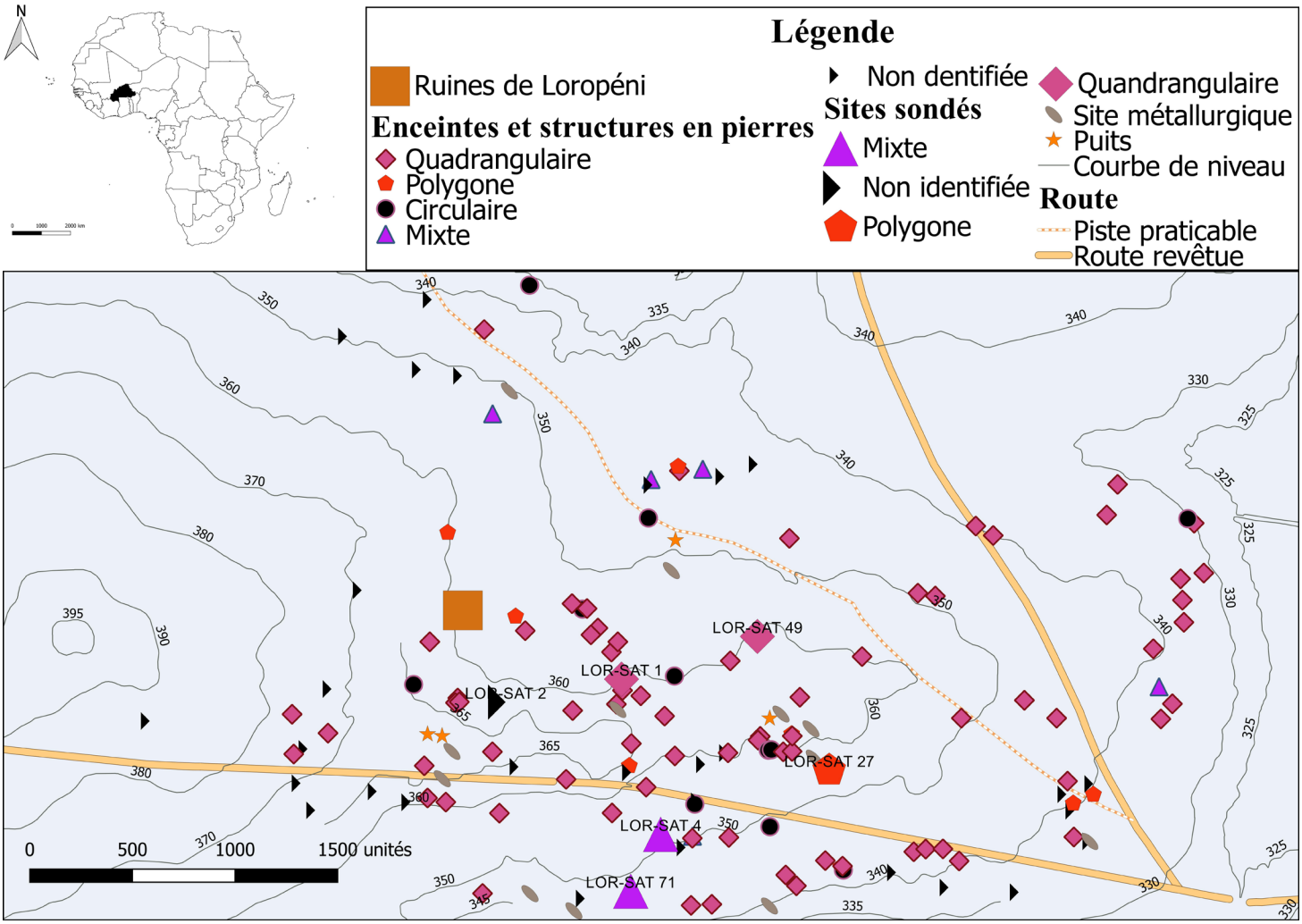

Figure 1 : Carte des sites périphériques des ruines de Loropéni.

niveaux d'occupation ont été identifiés. Les datations au radiocarbone situent l'occupation de l'enceinte entre le XIe et le XVIIIe siècle, c'est-à-dire à la période de l'essor du commerce à longue distance entre les États sahéliens au nord et les régions de savane et pré-forestières au sud (Kiéthéga 2008 ; Koté 2008 et 2013 ; Simporé 2008).

À l'inverse, les enceintes et structures de taille modeste n'ont que peu retenu l'attention des chercheurs et n'ont guère pris de place dans les discours des populations locales. Pourtant, elles sont les plus nombreuses dans le paysage et leur étude est donc indispensable pour accéder à une meilleure connaissance de cette civilisation, comme l'indiquait déjà Koté (2008 : 118) à propos du site des ruines de Loropéni. C'est pourquoi nous leur consacrons nos travaux dans le cadre d'une recherche doctorale afin, d'une part, de mieux les caractériser et d'identifier leurs éventuelles relations avec la grande enceinte des ruines de Loropéni et, d'autre part, de rassembler des données supplémentaires permettant de mieux appréhender le contexte historique de leur développement. Le présent article expose des résultats partiels de nos recherches en cours.

Prospection et cartographie des sites

La reconnaissance des sites archéologiques a concerné une zone d'un rayon moyen de 2 kilomètres autour du site des ruines de Loropéni. Elle a eu pour objectif un recensement le plus exhaustif possible des sites archéologiques par le biais des prospections pédestres. Notre centre d'intérêt étant les enceintes et structures en pierre, leur description a fait l'objet d'une attention particulière.

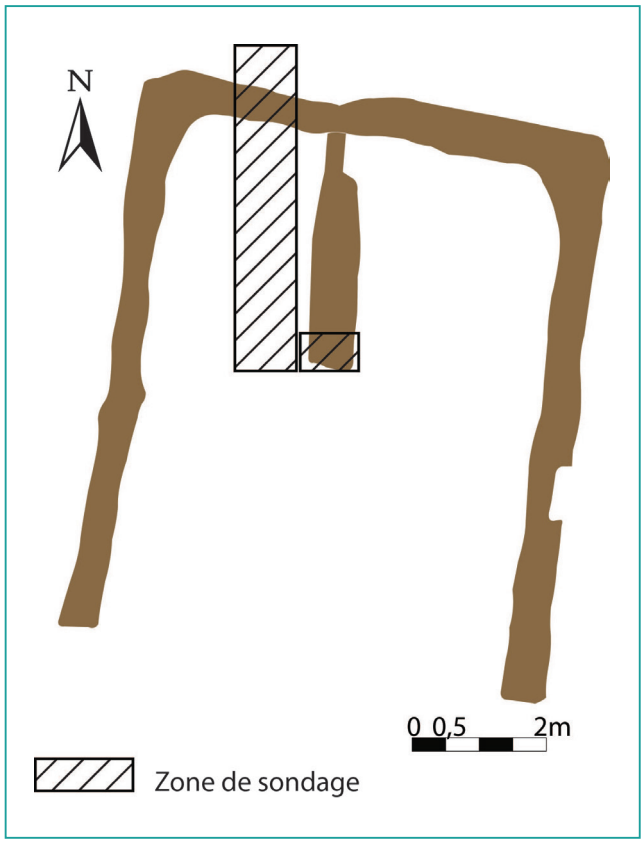

Figure 2 : Plan masse du site Lor-Sat 1.

Le travail a permis de recenser au total 135 enceintes et structures en pierres, 14 sites de réduction de minerai de fer et 5 puits vraisemblablement d'extraction de minerai de fer.

Parmi les enceintes et structures en pierre, nous avons constaté une grande diversité tant dans les formes que dans les dimensions. Nos prédécesseurs avaient identifié des formes circulaires, quadrangulaires et mixtes (combinaison d'éléments de forme circulaire et quadrangulaire). La forme de nombreux sites n'a pu être distinguée, manifestement en raison du processus d'effondrement de l'édifice (Delafosse 1902 ; Labouret 1931 ; Savonnet 1986 ; Ramaeykers 1996). Durant nos prospections, nous avons identifié de nouvelles formes : des polygones faits de la juxtaposition/agencement de plusieurs formes quadrangulaires et des formes en « U » (quadrangulaires dépourvues d'une de leurs faces). Toutefois, elles restent à préciser par des relevés de plan. La superficie des sites est comprise entre 4 m^2 et plus de 600 m^2. Les murs sont fortement dégradés et ne conservent que quelques assises de pierres excédant rarement un mètre de haut. À l'intérieur de ces enceintes, l'accumulation des couches d'occupation forment des stratigraphies de hauteurs variables.

Les sites de métallurgie du fer se présentent sous la forme d'amas de scories éparses ou en petits monticules. On y trouve souvent des fragments de tuyères et de parois de fourneaux. Deux sites disposent encore de bases de fourneaux en place. Quant aux puits, ils sont de formes circulaires plus ou moins régulières, creusées dans la croûte latéritique au sommet de collines ferrugineuses.

À la suite des travaux d'inventaire, six enceintes et structures ont été choisies pour des investigations archéologiques.

Résultats des fouilles

Les enceintes et structures en pierres ont été enregistrées sous le code Lor-Sat (Lor pour Loropéni et Sat pour satellite) suivi d'un chiffre qui correspond simplement à l'ordre de recensement. Les six sites ont été investigués : Lor-Sat 1, Lor-Sat 2; Lor-Sat 4; Lor-Sat 49, Lor-Sat 27 et Lor-Sat 71.

Lor-Sat 1

Ce site est une structure en « U » (un quadrangulaire dont le côté sud est ouvert) situé à environ 500 m au sud-est du site des ruines de Loropéni. La structure mesure 8 m de long et 5 m de large. Un mur de partition nord-sud de 3 m divise l'édifice en deux compartiments presqu'égaux. Les murs, dont la hauteur varie entre 40 et 80 cm, ont conservé jusqu'à cinq assises de pierres. Ils sont en double parement avec du remplissage fait de blocs plus petits. L'intérieur de l'édifice présente un monticule de hauteur inégale d'environ 30 cm de haut dans le compartiment situé à l'est et de 70 cm dans celui de l'ouest. C'est dans ce dernier qu'un sondage de 5 m^2 a été pratiqué. La stratigraphie y est très homogène. Après une couche d'humus d'environ 10 cm d'épaisseur, tout le sédiment est argilo-gravillonneux de couleur ocre. Le site est pauvre en artéfacts, seuls 23 petits tessons érodés et 3 charbons de bois ont été récoltés. Quatre murs ont été mis au jour dans la partie sud du sondage qui correspond à la limite du mur de partition. Ces murs semblent fermer le côté sud du compartiment.

Lor-Sat 2

Ce site est situé à 500 m au sud-ouest des ruines de Loropéni. Il se présente sous la forme d'un tertre

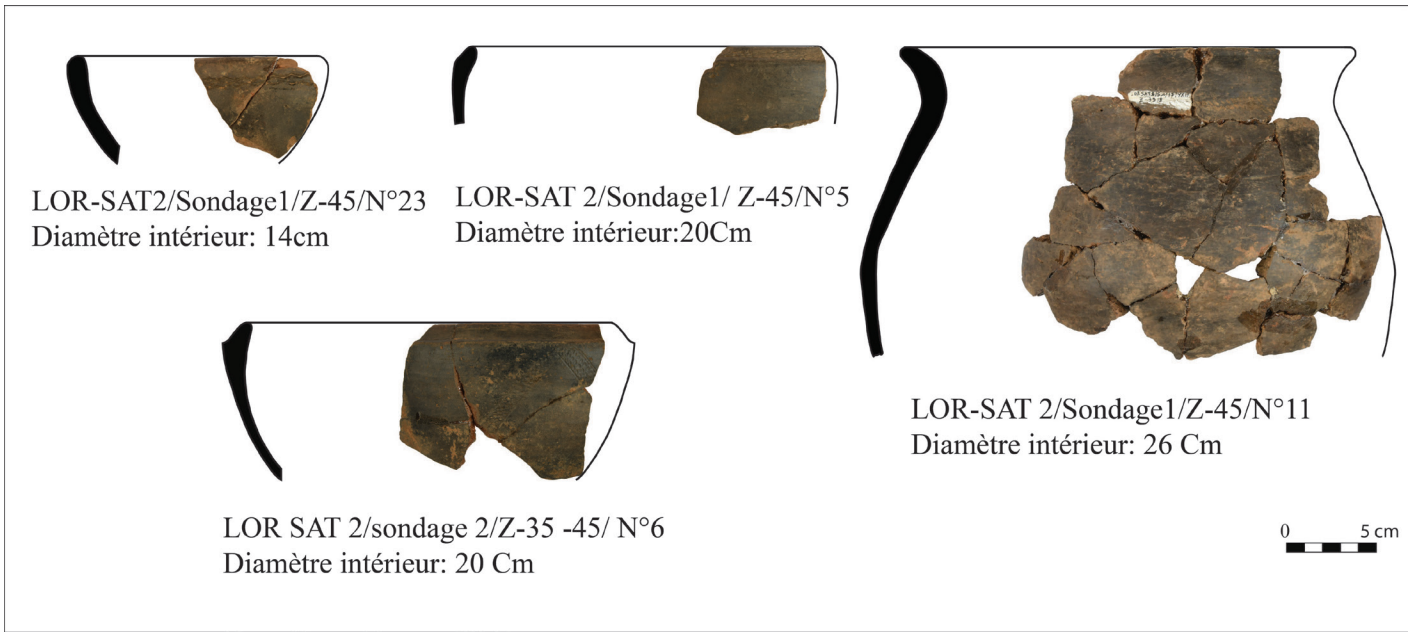

Figure 3 : Éléments de céramiques du site Lor-Sat 2.

d'environ 1 ha. Un dépotoir a été repéré au nord et des affleurements de murs rectilignes au sud-est du tertre. Le couvert végétal est relativement dense et dominé dans sa partie centrale par des épineux. Deux sondages de 1 et 2 m^2 y ont été effectués, respectivement sur le dépotoir et au centre du tertre sous les épineux. Sur le dépotoir, le sondage d'une profondeur de 65 cm a révélé plusieurs couches de sédiments cendreux. Le matériel archéologique recueilli à différentes profondeurs se compose de tessons de céramique, outils de broyage, scories de fer et restes fauniques.

Le second sondage a révélé une stratigraphie complexe combinant des couches argilo-gravillonneuses et des poches de cendre. Il a fourni un matériel archéologique abondant composé de tessons de céramique, de restes fauniques et d'un anneau en cuivre ou alliage cuivreux. Des prélèvements de sédiments destinés à la flottation pour des analyses archéobotaniques ont été effectués dans les deux sondages.

Lor-Sat 4

Le site est situé à 1 km au sud des ruines de Loropéni. Il est de forme quadrangulaire avec un alignement de pierres en demi-cercle adossé à la façade est. La structure quadrangulaire dispose de trois à quatre assises de pierres avec un monticule. Un sondage de 2,5 m^2 dans la partie nord-ouest du site a permis de mettre au jour un pan de mur de partition de 6 couches de pierres et un pan d'une plateforme aménagée. Le sédiment est quasiment homogène et constitué d'une argile peu gravillonneuse de couleur jaunâtre avec quelques variations de couleurs et de textures. Des sols aménagés avec de l'argile gravillonneuse damée ont été mis au jour à la base du sondage. Le matériel archéologique se compose de tessons de céramique, de restes fauniques et d'objets métalliques, ainsi que d'un objet en terre cuite dont la nature exacte n'a pas encore été déterminée. Un prélèvement de sédiments destinés à des analyses archéobotaniques a aussi été effectué.

Lor-Sat 49

Ce site est une petite structure quadrangulaire située à environ 1 km à l'est des ruines de Loropéni. Il est orienté nord-est/sud-ouest, et les murs en place atteignent 80 cm de haut. Le comblement intérieur épouse la hauteur des murs, mais il est rehaussé dans la moitié ouest par une termitière. En raison de la petitesse de la structure, les trois quarts de la superficie du site ont été fouillés et des tranchées ont été ouvertes le long des murs du côté extérieur, afin de les dégager jusqu'à la première assise. Les fouilles ont permis de mettre au jour une structure quadrangulaire de 4 x 3 m, qu'un mur de partition subdivise en deux compartiments, l'un à l'est et l'autre à l'ouest. La structure est munie d'une entrée d'environ 50 cm de large

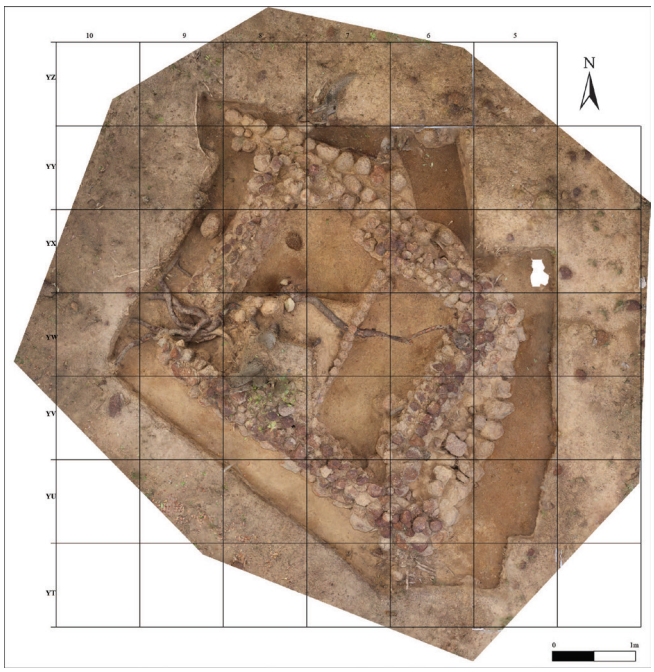

Figure 4 : Ortho-photographie et plan masse des fouilles du site Lor-Sat 49.

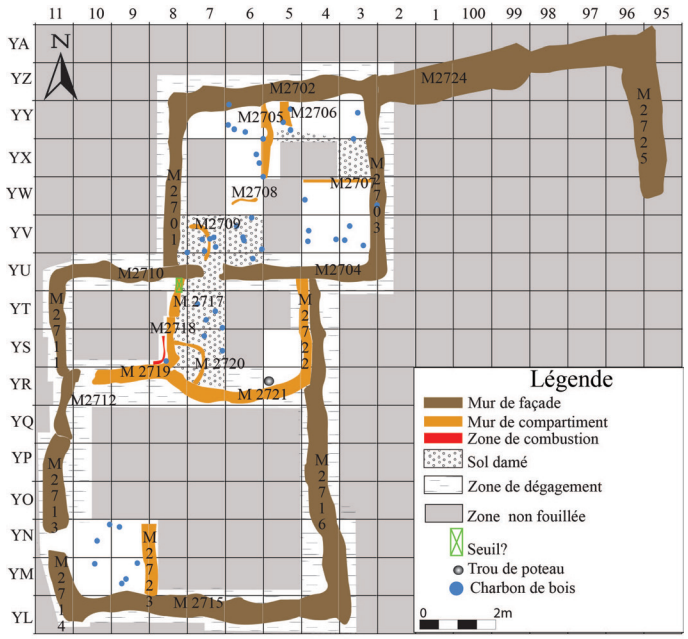

Figure 5 : Plan masse et annotations du site Lor-Sat 27.

à l'angle sud-ouest. Au nord et à l'est du bâtiment, on observe des murs doubles. Ceux situés du côté interne sont stratigraphiquement supérieurs à ceux du côté externe, ce qui suggère qu'il y a eu une reconstruction du bâtiment. L'édifice ne présente pas de fondations. La stratigraphie est quasiment homogène et constituée d'argile gravillonneuse. Un sol aménagé et une zone de combustion ont également été mis au jour à l'intérieur du bâtiment. Le site a révélé un matériel archéologique très limité et uniquement constitué de quelques tessons de céramique et d'une molette en granite.

Lor-Sat 27

Il s'agit d'une structure complexe, située à environ 1,5 km au sud-est du site des ruines de Loropéni, dont les murs en affleurement dessinent une forme assez particulière. Les pans subsistant de ces murs présentent deux à trois assises de pierre. Le comblement intérieur de la structure forme un tertre qui surplombe le sol environnant de 50 cm en moyenne.

Le but ici était d'appréhender le site dans sa globalité. D'une part, le plan d'ensemble du site a été dressé en dégageant les sédiments recouvrant les murs de façades. D'autre part, des sondages ont été faits en différents secteurs du site (au nord, au centre et au sud-ouest). La fouille a donc concerné une surface de 27 m^2. Le plan de la structure révèle un complexe composé de deux bâtiments quadrangulaires (nord et sud) aux façades décalées. On trouve également sur le flanc est du bâtiment nord un mur en forme de « L » qui forme un troisième bâtiment à trois façades. Des murs de cloisons ont aussi été mis au jour dans les zones de sondages. Leur organisation permet d'identifier clairement deux compartiments et quatre portes dont une faisant office d'entrée principale. L'essentiel des murs est constitué d'un double parement de pierres avec du remplissage. Aucune fondation n'est visible. Des sols aménagés en argile gravillonneuse damée, des espaces de rangement, une zone de combustion et un trou de poteau ont été formellement identifiés. Le sédiment est relativement homogène et est dominé par une argile gravillonneuse dont la texture et la couleur varient selon les zones. Le mobilier se compose de tessons de céramique, d'outils de broyage (meules et molettes), d'objets métalliques et de scories.

Lor-Sat 71

Ce site est une enceinte ovalaire située près d'une rivière à 1,5 km au sud du site des ruines de Loropéni. Son axe nord-sud mesure 32 m et son axe est-ouest 26 m. Les

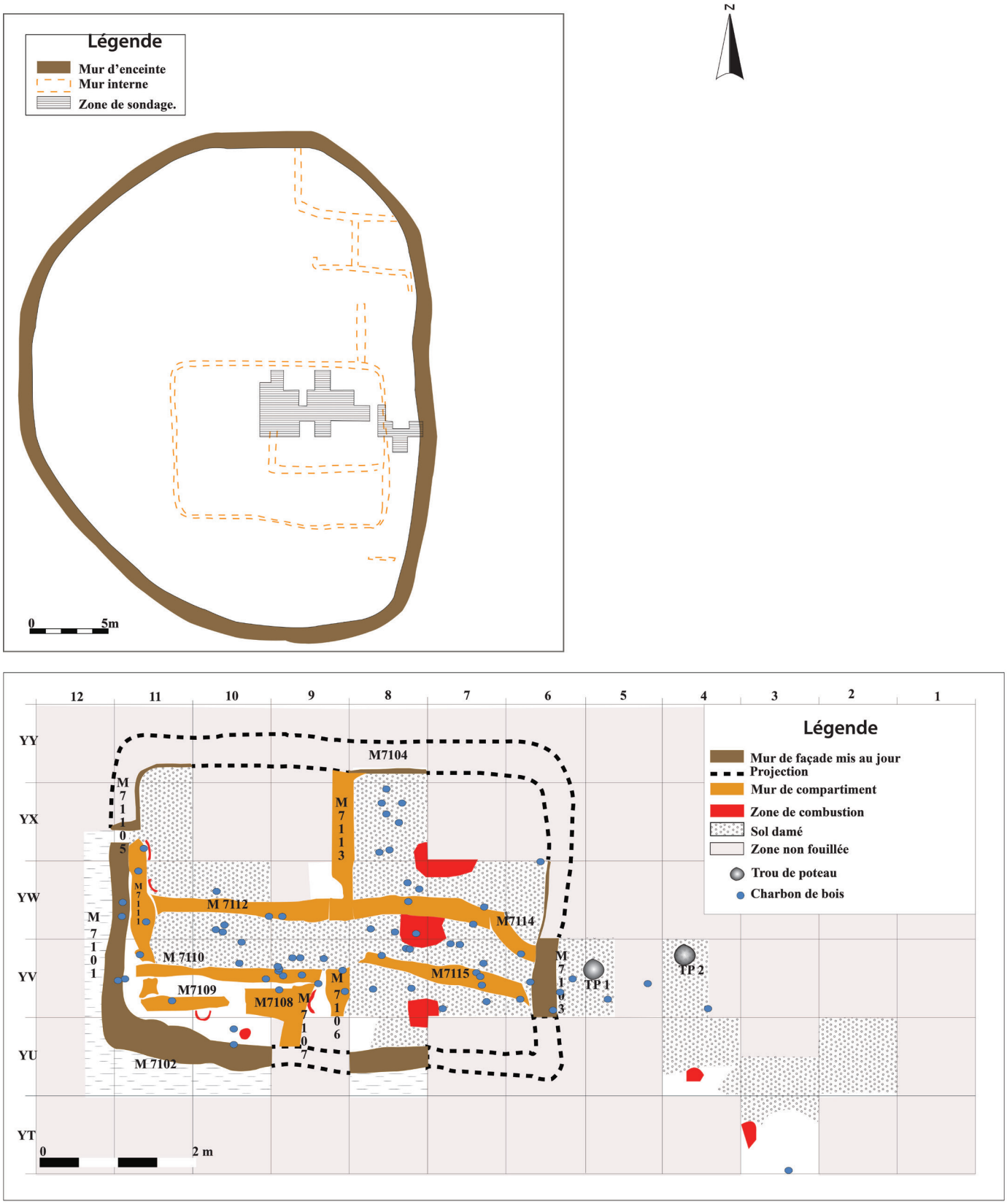

Figure 6 : Plan masse et annotations du site Lor-Sat 71.

murs d'enceinte ont conservé entre 2 et 4 assises de pierres. Le tertre intérieur descend en pente douce d'est en ouest. On observe quelques murs internes au nord et au centre du site, accolés ou isolés des murs d'enceinte. Ceux de la partie centrale dessinent une forme quadrangulaire en surplomb, où 18 m^2 ont été investigués. Les fouilles ont permis de mettre au jour plusieurs structures bâties et du mobilier archéologique. Les structures bâties se composent de murs, de zones de combustions, de sols aménagés et de trous de poteaux. La topographie des murs indique au moins trois niveaux différents sans que l'on puisse, en l'état actuel de l'analyse du bâtiment, déduire l'existence de trois niveaux d'occupation. Les zones de combustion sont des foyers construits en terre ou en pierres ou de simples surfaces de sols rubéfiées. Les sols aménagés sont faits d'une argile peu gravillonneuse damée. Le sédiment argilo-sableux de couleur jaune ou ocre est relativement homogène. Les murs sans fondation comportent un double parement de pierre, parfois dépourvu de remplissage. Certains murs de compartiment n'ont qu'une seule assise.

Le matériel se compose de céramiques, d'objets lithiques (meules, molettes et herminettes) en granite, quartz et silex, d'objets métalliques, de scories de fer et de restes fauniques.

Conclusion

Le site des ruines de Loropéni a été pendant longtemps considéré comme une bâtisse isolée dans le paysage. Cependant, l'inventaire effectué dans ses alentours a révélé une présence marquée de sites archéologiques parmi lesquels les enceintes et structures en pierre sont largement dominantes. Leur existence suscite désormais un changement de regard. En effet, le site des ruines de Loropéni serait un des éléments d'une réalité bien plus complexe que perçue jusqu'ici. Au-delà de la simple présence des sites, leur forte densité de distribution est un indicateur important du dynamisme de ce territoire à l'époque de son occupation. Un autre élément important constaté est une grande variabilité dans la dimension des enceintes et structures en pierres périphériques, qui reste cependant toujours largement inférieure à celle du site des ruines de Loropéni.

Par ailleurs, grâce aux investigations archéologiques, nous constatons que ces sites périphériques ont été des lieux d'habitation. En rapportant cette information à l'ensemble de la périphérie du site des ruines de Loropéni, on pourrait considérer la zone d'études comme un territoire cohérent. La divergence observée dans l'architecture des sites archéologiques pourrait être l'indice d'une différence chronologique ou culturelle. C'est pourquoi la suite de nos travaux sera orientée vers l'étude du schéma d'occupation de l'espace. L'analyse du matériel archéologique, et entre autres de la céramique, devrait nous permettre de vérifier cette piste. De plus, les datations radiocarbones aideront aussi à mieux situer la chronologie de l'occupation spatiale.

Remerciements

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Democratic Republic of the Congo

The BantuFirst Project: 2018 Fieldwork Report from the Kongo Central Province of the Democratic Republic of the Congo

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Introduction

The archaeological and palaeo-environmental field research presented in this paper is part of the BantuFirst project, which is funded by the European Research Council (Consolidator's Grant no. 724275) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program (see project website at http://bantufirst.ugent.be). This five-year (2018-2022) interdisciplinary research program aims at improving our understanding of the appearance of the first villages, the expansion of Bantu speech communities and the spread of iron metallurgy south of the rainforest. It examines how these different phenomena are related to each other and to a changing natural environment. In terms of organization and interdisciplinarity, the BantuFirst project is similar to its forerunner, i.e. the KongoKing research project (2012-2016), also funded by the European Research Council (Starting Grant no. 284126) but rather focusing on the Late Iron Age (LIA) and historical archaeology (see archived project website http://www.kongoking.net and also Bostoen and Brinkman 2018; Clist *et al.* 2013a, b, 2014, 2015, 2018c; Kaumba 2014, 2015; Matonda *et al.* 2014; Nikis and Champion 2014; Nikis and De Putter 2015; Nikis *et al.* 2013). In the first year of the BantuFirst project, one archaeological fieldwork campaign took place from June to August 2018 in the Kinshasa, Kwango, Kwilu and Mai-Ndombe Provinces of the DRC (Seidensticker *et al.* 2018: 23-29) and another from September to November 2018 in the Kongo Central Province of the DRC, on which we report here. The fieldwork in the Kongo Central Province was carried out by Bernard Clist, who led the mission, in close collaboration with Clément Mambu, research assistant from the IMNC, Suzanne Bigohe, a MA student from Kinshasa University, and Isidore Nkanu, who has been our driver and excavation assistant for many years.

Objectives and Research Protocol

The Kongo Central fieldwork campaign aimed at helping to resolve several research questions that are central to the BantuFirst project:

1) Were the first villages on the Atlantic Ocean coastline the result of a north to south coastal expansion that took place in the course of the third millennium BP?

2) What were the relationships between autochthonous hunter-gatherer groups and the earliest village communities, if any?

3) Was there a rise of social complexity in the province during the Early Iron Age (EIA) (cf. Clist *et al.* 2019, forthcoming)?

4) What were the subsistence strategies of the earliest village communities, before and after the advent of iron metallurgy?

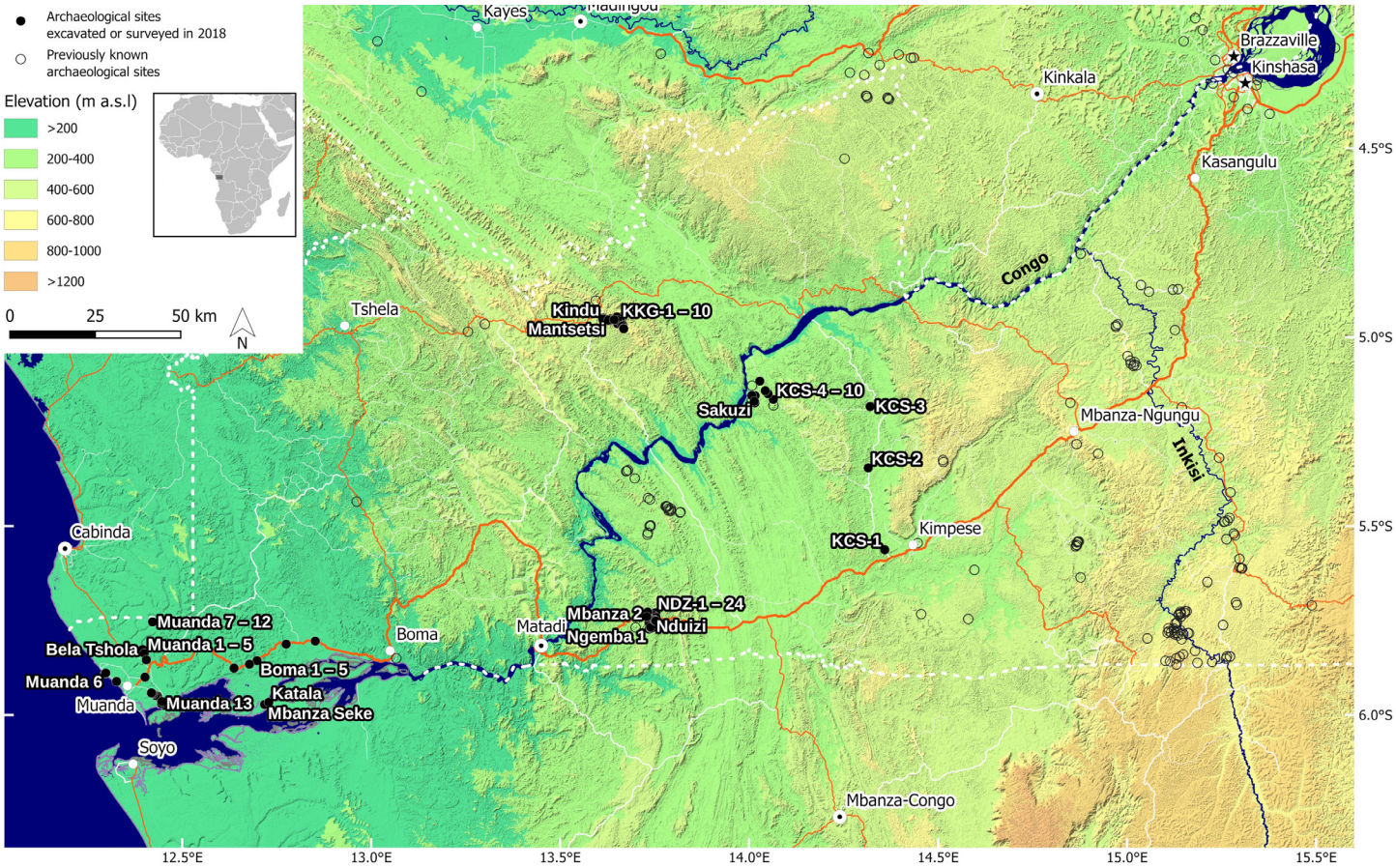

Figure 1: Map of the 2018 finds (black dots) and of the KongoKing project finds (black circles) (map: Dirk Seidensticker).

5) What was the natural environment at the times of the first settlements and what were the types of interaction between man and his environment?

To tackle these questions, the strategy was three-fold:

1) Re-excavate four known sites that had already yielded archaeological evidence for early settlement, i.e. Kindu, Kongo dia Vanga, Mantsetsi, Sakuzi.

2) Survey for new sites and excavate selected ones, especially on the coast and around Kongo dia Vanga, which is situated at some 40 km east of Matadi.

3) Obtain, whenever possible, a deep column of soil from or close to every site, using bulk sampling and augering (*Edelman* auger for mixed soils with a 3 m long tubing), to reconstruct past vegetation relying on the ^{13}C analysis of the Soil Organic Matter as well as phytolith and charcoal identification. In addition, all refuse pits were excavated to enable flotation alongside phytolith and charcoal identification.

Every archaeological site was located using a Garmin GPS Map 64ST with a resolution of three meters. During excavations, we used 10 cm thick spits and recorded all artifacts per square meter. All earth was dry-sieved on 5 and 2.5 mm mesh. Surveyed sites that yielded only recognizable LIA pottery were left untouched, but registered for possible later excavations.

Results

After preparatory works in Kinshasa, the actual fieldwork campaign started on 5 October and lasted until 15 November 2018. We traveled 3267 km in total, excavated ten archaeological sites (six of which were new), registered 73 new sites from different archaeological periods, collected 94 charcoal samples, obtained

73 soil samples from four columns, and singled out seven refuse pits in settlement sites for flotation purposes. A list of sites is presented in Table 1. The fieldwork was successively carried out in four distinct areas of the province: 1) Kibula Catholic Seminar area south of the Congo River; 2) Kinkenge town north of the Congo River and on the eastern slopes of the Mayombe; 3) Kongo dia Vanga village (aka Nduizi today) south of the Congo River and about 40 km east of Matadi, and 4) Muanda on the coast (Figure 1).

Kibula Catholic Seminar (KCS) area (5-11 October 2018)

Ancient-looking pottery and polished stone axes had been collected from the surface around the seminar from the 1950s to the 1970s. In 1984, excavations were carried out on the Sakuzi hilltop at a short distance inland from the Kay Ladio village situated on the Congo River (de Maret and Clist 1985). They yielded Ngovo (Neolithic), Kay Ladio (EIA) and Mbafu (LIA) ceramics. Sakuzi was the only excavated site. Most of the artifacts and contexts were studied and ^{14}C dates obtained and then published together with a basic interpretation of the archaeological material (de Maret 1986, 1990; Gosselain 1988). 34 years later, we went back to Sakuzi to excavate village refuse pits, conduct palaeo-environmental sampling and carry out further surveys on the surrounding hilltops, which were not systematically explored in 1984.

Eleven sites were registered (Table 1, no. 1-11). Of major interest are two sites near to the modern village of Kay Ladio, which yielded Kay Ladio ware (Table 1, no. 6-7). Together with the neighboring Sakuzi hilltop and the KCS-8 site, they provide evidence for concentrations of settlements of Kay Ladio producers, also found around Kinkenge, Nduizi and north-west of Songololo (see below and Clist *et al.* 2019, forthcoming).

In 1984, we studied 15 features at Sakuzi related to an unidentified ceramic group (1 pit), a new 'Sakuzi Group' (4 pits), the Ngovo Group (2 pits) and the Kay Ladio Group (8 pits) (Gosselain 1988). Later, three of the 'Sakuzi Group' features were re-assigned to the Ngovo Group, while the unidentified group was stylistically associated with Imbonga ceramics from the Inner Congo Basin (Clist 2005: 754-755). In 2018, ten more features and a 2 m^2 palaeo-environmental trench were excavated. Meanwhile, ^{14}C dates have been obtained from three 2018 pits with Kay Ladio ware and from one pit with Ngovo ware. The precise dates will be published elsewhere. They tie in with the already established chronology for both ceramic groups. In addition, Mbafu pottery, dated in 2014 to the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries AD (Clist *et al.* 2018d: 248-253), was found on the surface.

Kinkenge (KKG) area (12-19 October 2018)

In 1951, M. Bequaert excavated on the Kindu and Mantsetsi hilltops at a few kilometers from Kinkenge. Clist (1982) analyzed the pottery found during these excavations, Lavachery (1990) the lithics. In order to verify the stratigraphy and to date the various archaeological periods attested (SA, EIA LIA), more excavations were carried out at both sites in 2015 as part of the KongoKing project (Clist *et al.* 2015, 2018a). The 2018 fieldwork aimed at extensively surveying the hilltops between Kindu and Kinkenge and at collecting new palaeo-environmental data. We conducted new excavations at the sites of Kindu and Mantsetsi and discovered ten new sites attesting various archaeological periods (Table 1 no. 15-24).

At Kindu, six trenches of 1 m^2 each were opened. One of them contained LIA pottery and was expanded to 4 m^2. Another one was extended to 2 m^2; it featured a LSA quartz concentration between a depth of 30 to 60 cm, with a higher artifact density (153 per square meter) between -40 and -50 cm. All trenches yielded pottery between the surface and -30 cm. One trench was sampled down to 110 cm for palaeo-environmental studies. A ^{14}C date has been obtained for the LSA quartz concentration. The precise dates will be published elsewhere.

At Mantsetsi, the Kay Ladio Group component could not be dated in 2015 because sheet erosion had removed the pottery-containing layer from the hilltop (Clist *et al.* 2018a: 203-204). However, Bequaert's 1951 field notes mention findings of ancient pottery at another part of the hill, i.e. at the foot of the northern slope. In this area, we opened four aligned trenches of 1 m^2 each in 2018, at distances of 20 meters, starting a first trench at the top of the hill with the fourth trench located 60 meters down the hill. The first trench was expanded to 2 m^2 for palaeo-environmental sampling, as Bequaert's work in 1951 had shown the presence of soils with a depth of circa 2 meters. We found a diffuse quartz component from the surface to a depth of 170 cm, with about five artifacts per square meter, and a quartz concentration from -170 cm

to -200 cm, with a maximum of 97 artifacts/square meter between -190 and -200 cm. Charcoal from the -40/-50 cm, -100/-110 cm and -190/-200 cm spits have been processed for radiocarbon dating. The precise dates will be published elsewhere.

Figure 2: Excavations around the Nduizi village houses, features no. 3 (front, fifth to sixth century cal AD) & no. 4 (back: third to fourth century cal AD) (picture: B. Clist).

Nduizi (NDZ) area (24 October-3 November 2018)

In 1951, M. Bequaert conducted archaeological fieldwork in the surroundings of the village of Kongo dia Vanga – known today as Nduizi, which is situated along the National Road linking Kinshasa and Matadi (Table 1 no. 26). He found polished stone axes as well as Ngovo and Kay Ladio pottery (Clist 1982: 109-114). Our 2018 fieldwork was the first since that time. In the modern village, following on Bequaert's excavations, we could identify some eroded features, sometimes adjacent to house walls or partly covered by a house (Figure 2). We excavated several of them and five pits have been radiocarbon dated. Four of them date back to the EIA, which ties in with the pottery they contain, i.e. Kay Ladio in three of them and Kitala in one of them (Clist *et al.* 2018b: 50, 2019, forthcoming). The precise dates will be published elsewhere.

After completing work at and around Nduizi, we selected two new sites for further excavations, i.e. Mbanza 2 and Ngemba 1.

Mbanza 2 is a large hilltop culminating at 370 m and situated 2 km northwest of Nduizi. This heavily eroded hill yielded evidence for intermittent human occupations from the MSA to the LIA. The Iron Age components are made up of scattered potsherds and a few surface concentrations indicating former pits or still intact pit bottoms. Four such pits have been radiocarbon dated, yielding dates in the EIA. Two of them contain EIA Kay Ladio ware. Two other pits have a pottery type with attributes that differ from Kay Ladio ware, which ties in with our recent hypothesis of growing diversity and complexity during the EIA in the Kongo Central Province (Clist *et al.* 2019, forthcoming). A concentration of Ngovo potsherds, probably the remains of an eroded pit, and several polished stone axes disseminated on the hilltop suggest the presence of a small Neolithic settlement. On the hilltop a 2 m^2 trench was dug down to 110 cm to obtain palaeoenvironmental data.

Ngemba 1 is a low-lying hill south of Nduizi, which is situated along a small dirt road going towards the Angolan border (cf. Table 1, no. 27). Apart from surface-collected Stone Age artifacts, the site has bowl-shaped iron furnaces of 0.7-0.8 m in diameter (Figure 3), similar to the ones found at sites 34, 36, 42 & 47. Two of the furnaces were completely excavated and radiocarbon-dated to the LIA. The precise dates will be published elsewhere. The furnaces are similar in shape, volume and chronology to the ones studied during the KongoKing project at Kazu 6, only 30 km northwest of Ngemba 1 (Clist *et al.* 2018a: 195-197). Together, they bear evidence to this area's importance for iron production during the early days of the Kongo kingdom.

Figure 3: Excavations in a light rain at the Ngemba 1 site, furnace no. 2 (fourteenth to fifteenth century cal AD) (picture: B. Clist).Ngemba 1 site, furnace no. 2 (fourteenth to fifteenth century cal AD) (picture: B. Clist).Ngemba 1 site, furnace no. 2 (fourteenth to fifteenth century cal AD) (picture: B. Clist).

Muanda area (5-14 November 2018)

Ever since a short mission in 1986 (Kanimba Misago 1987), no archaeological fieldwork had been published in the coastal area of the DRC. The main aim of our 2018 fieldwork was to initiate the establishment of a cultural sequence for this part of the country by excavating any pottery-bearing site with well-preserved archaeological contexts. The topography of the coast is quite flat, monotonous, covered by savanna, and devoid of eroded hilltops, which handicap surveys elsewhere in the province. We also conducted systematic interviews with men and especially women in the fields and villages to locate sites. We recorded 27 new sites between Boma and Muanda (Table 1 no. 51-77), of which we excavated two: Muanda 6 and Muanda 13. At two other sites we sampled a profile: Boma 1 and Katala.

Figure 4: Ongoing excavations at the Muanda 6 site, sixth century cal AD (picture: B. Clist).

The site of Muanda 6 consists of a settlement layer at a depth of -40/-50 cm below the surface (Figure 4). Within the ancient village, a shell midden was formed whose eroded summit yielded pottery and mangrove shells on the surface spread over a few square meters. We set up test trenches on the midden and at ten meters to both the north and south of it. We also carried out a 3 m deep coring for palaeo-environmental purposes. The earth excavated from the 1 m^2 test pits was systematically dry-sieved, first with 5 mm sieves and then with 2.5 mm sieves. This way, we could collect evidence of fish (at least four taxons), mammals (to be identified), and crabs between the surface and -50 cm. These are well preserved thanks to the *Tympanotonus fuscatus fuscatus* midden to which were added some shells of eight other species. The summit trench also yielded six small shell beads (diameter ca. 2.5 mm) (3 at 20/-30 cm, 1 at -30/-40 cm, 2 at -40/-50 cm). Two ^{14}C dates were obtained from *Elaeis guineensis* found in the settlement layer of trench 1. Both date back to the EIA, circa 1550 BP. The fabrics, shapes and decoration of the 1054 potsherds obtained from the three square meters excavated are significantly different from those of the contemporary Kay Ladio and Kitala wares found further east. We discovered this new Muanda ware at two other coastal sites: Katala and Muanda 8.

Around Muanda, dozens of onshore oil platforms exist. We surface-collected artifacts from several of them (Table 1, sites no. 58-61, 66-69, 71-76). Muanda 13 (no. 70) is the only one which we excavated after having identified two pits dug from a buried village layer at -20 cm. One of the pits has been radiocarbon dated to the EIA. The pottery style attested at Muanda 13 is different from the one found in Muanda 6, Muanda 8 and Katala, but it has been found at eight other sites (Table 1 no. 56, 64, 66, 69, 72-75).

Katala is a modern village established in the mangroves on the north bank of the Congo River. The profile under the modern village contains pottery of two different types, one located stratigraphically on top of the other: the Muanda style (older) and the Katala style (younger). The Katala style is also found at the Muanda 5 site.

Boma 1 consists of a large borrow pit that was dug for road works between Boma and Muanda. The profiles are 750 cm deep. Isolated Stone Age artifacts were collected in the profiles, buried between -650 cm and -710 cm. We interpret them as coming from several discrete occupation layers stratified there. Concentrated within a 50 cm long section of a profile, at -620 cm, we found 20 densely concentrated artifacts (17 on quartz) suggesting that some areas of the site may still contain interesting stone components in situ.

Conclusion

The new data obtained during our 2018 fieldwork campaign contribute to a better understanding of the emergence of settlements and the start of the Iron Age around 1900 years ago in the Kongo Central Province of the DRC. With regard to the earliest villages predating the advent of iron metallurgy, we found new evidence of Ngovo

pottery at Mbanza 2 and Sakuzi. We excavated new instances of the earliest EIA pottery, i.e. Kay Ladio ware, at Mbanza 2, Nduizi and Sakuzi, with some interesting stylistic peculiarities observed in the pottery of some of the Nduizi pits. On the coast, we identified four different EIA pottery styles, the oldest of which dates back to the 6th century cal AD. At Kindu and Mantsetsi, we unearthed evidence for the LSA. This Stone Age component is possibly contemporaneous with the earliest villages in the area, but this needs to be further examined through in-depth laboratory analysis.

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Table 1

Number	Site	Latitude S.	Longitude E.	Tentative cultural affiliation
1	KCS-1	5°33'46"	14°21'33"	IA, Fe
2	KCS-2	5°20'46"	14°18'55"	SA, LIA, Fe
3	KCS-3	5°10'58"	14°19'19"	SA
4	KCS-4	5°11'02"	14°19'13"	SA, Fe, IA
5	KCS-5	5°09'53"	14°03'51"	IA
6	KCS-6	5°09'18"	14°00'58"	EIA (KL)
7	KCS-7	5°09'16"	14°00'26"	EIA (KL) + others
8	KCS-8	5°10'25"	14°00'56"	SA, Fe, EIA (KL and others)
9	KCS-9	5°09'00"	14°03'01"	IA
10	KCS-10	5°08'30"	14°02'34"	IA
11	KCS-11	5°06'59"	14°01'42"	IA
12	***Sakuzi***	5°10'11"	14°00'50"	SA, EIA (NG, KL) + others, LIA
13	***Kindu***	4°57'08"	13°36'48"	SA, EIA (KL), LIA
14	***Mantsetsi***	4°57'16"	13°39'20"	SA, EIA (KL), LIA
15	KKG-1	4°57'16"	13°39'20"	IA
16	KKG-2	4°57'19"	13°39'32"	IA
17	KKG-3	4°57'52"	13°39'08"	IA
18	KKG-4	4°56'46"	13°39'01"	IA
19	KKG-5	4°57'20"	13°39'13"	IA
20	KKG-6	4°58'05"	13°39'58"	IA
21	KKG-7	4°58'15"	13°39'53"	IA
22	KKG-8	4°58'36"	13°40'03"	IA
23	KKG-9	4°58'39"	13°40'06"	IA
24	KKG-10	4°57'14"	13°38'35"	SA, EIA, LIA
25	Mbanza 2	5°43'56"	13°43'49"	SA, NG, KL, EIA, PT, LIA
26	***Nduizi***	5°44'30"	13°44'45"	EIA (KL + others), LIA
27	Ngemba 1	5°46'08"	13°44'12"	SA, Fe
28	NDZ-1	5°43'45"	13°45'00"	SA, EIA (NG), PT
29	NDZ-2	5°43'46"	13°45'05"	SA, EIA (NG), PT
30	NDZ-3	5°43'46"	13°45'13"	SA, EIA (NG), PT
31	NDZ-4	NC	NC	LIA
32	NDZ-5	5°44'37"	13°44'49"	SA, LIA
33	NDZ-6	5°44'12"	13°44'52"	PT

34	NDZ-7	5°44’29”	13°45’14”	PT, Fe, EIA (KL)
35	NDZ-8	5°44’51”	13°44’19”	SA, PT
36	NDZ-9	5°44’48”	13°44’20”	Fe
37	NDZ-10	5°44’06”	13°43’40”	EIA (KL), LIA
38	NDZ-11	5°44’03”	13°43’35”	LIA
39	NDZ-12	5°43’50”	13°43’51”	SA (MSA)
40	NDZ-13	5°43’40”	13°43’54”	SA (MSA)
41	NDZ-14	5°46’23”	13°44’08”	SA (MSA , LSA), EIA (KL), LIA
42	NDZ-15	5°45’22”	13°44’08”	SA, EIA (KL), Fe,
43	NDZ-16	5°46’11”	13°44’22”	IA
44	NDZ-17	5°46’13”	13°44’27”	IA
45	NDZ-18	5°46’13”	13°44’30”	SA
46	NDZ-19	5°46’02”	13°44’22”	IA
47	NDZ-20	5°44’55”	13°44’59”	Fe
48	NDZ-21	5°45’00”	13°45’03”	LIA
49	NDZ-22	5°45’03”	13°45’12”	PT
50	NDZ-23	5°44’24”	13°43’46”	LIA
51	Boma 1	5°48’16”	12°51’08”	SA, collected in profile
52	Boma 2	5°48’45”	12°46’31”	SA
53	Boma 3	5°51’23”	12°41’53”	SA
54	Boma 4	5°51’56”	12°40’41”	SA
55	Boma 5	5°52’34”	12°38’14”	SA
56	Mbanza Seke	5°58’20”	12°43’05”	IA
57	Bela Tshola	5°49’36”	12°23’44”	IA
58	Muanda 1	5°53’59”	12°24’06”	SA
59	Muanda 2	5°50’13”	12°23’59”	IA
60	Muanda 3	5°54’41”	12°19’35”	LIA
61	Muanda 4	5°53’27”	12°17’44”	IA
62	Muanda 5	5°45’11”	12°25’17”	IA
63	Muanda 6	5°53’20”	12°17’52”	IA
64	Muanda 7	5°45’13”	12°25’18”	IA
65	Muanda 8	5°51’15”	12°24’19”	IA
66	Muanda 9	5°58’28”	12°27’12”	IA
67	Muanda 10	5°58’06”	12°26’45”	LIA
68	Muanda 11	5°57’56”	12°26’39”	LIA
69	Muanda 12	5°57’47”	12°26’39”	IA
70	Muanda 13	5°58’11”	12°26’43”	LIA
71	Muanda 14	5°57’00”	12°26’05”	SA
72	Muanda 15	5°56’53”	12°25’45”	IA
73	Muanda 16	5°56’39”	12°25’25”	IA
74	Muanda 17	5°56’34”	12°25’14”	IA
75	Muanda 18	5°56’30”	12°25’07”	IA
76	Muanda 19	5°57’51”	12°26’47”	IA
77	Katala	5°57’59”	12°43’45”	IA, collected in Congo River profile

Table 1. Catalog of archaeological sites surveyed and excavated during the 2018 fieldwork in the Kongo Central Province. Old excavated sites are shown in bold italics, new excavated sites in bold. Abbreviations: SA = undifferentiated Stone Age; MSA = Middle Stone Age; LSA = Late Stone Age; EIA = Early Iron Age; LIA = Late Iron Age; IA = undifferentiated Iron Age pottery; KL = Kay Ladio pottery; NG = Ngovo pottery; PT = polished stone tools; Fe = iron-working structure; NC = GPS coordinates unavailable; KCS = Kibula Catholic Seminar area; KKG = Kinkenge area; NDZ = Nduizi area.

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Democratic Republic of the Congo

The BantuFirst Project: 2018 Fieldwork Report from the Kinshasa, Kwango, Kwilu and Mai-Ndombe Provinces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo

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Introduction

The first archaeological fieldwork campaign of the BantuFirst research project (www.bantufirst.ugent.be) was carried out from June to August 2018 in Kinshasa Province, as well as Kwango, Kwilu and Mai-Ndombe Provinces, the three of which formed the single province of Bandundu until 2016. BantuFirst is an interdisciplinary five-year research program funded by the European Research Council (ERC Consolidator's Grant no. 724275) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program. The project's archaeological research focuses on remains of the earliest sedentary and pottery producing communities at the southern margins of the Central African rainforest, where linguists have situated the homeland of the West-Coastal branch of the Bantu language family (Bostoen *et al.* 2015; Grollemund *et al.* 2015). Although the western part of the Bateke plateau in the Republic of Congo did undergo some archaeological research (Pinçon 1984; Kouyoumontzakis *et al.* 1985; Lanfranchi and Pinçon 1988; Pinçon 1990, 1991a; 1991b; Dupré and Pinçon 1997), the former Bandundu Province, which lies immediately to the east, has received little attention from archaeologists (for some rare exceptions see Cornelissen and Livingstone Smith 2015: 11).

History of research

The earliest publication of archaeological finds in the former province of Bandundu (DRC) describes some objects, mostly bifacial points, uncovered during construction in the vicinity of Bandundu town, then called Banningville (Creppe 1935-1936). A letter from 1913, now archived at the Heritage Service of the Royal Museum for Central Africa (RMCA) in Tervuren, reports findings of lithic material at an old Catholic missionary station at Wombali, situated in the Kwango/Kwilu confluence area opposite the town of Bandundu. In 1952 Maurice Bequaert conducted fieldwork in the Kwango region, during which he discovered and studied multiple archaeological sites, most notably Dinga Kitu (formerly Dinga St. Pierre) (Bequaert 1955; Miller 1988: 130-131) and Mukila located in the southern margins of the Bateke plateau (Bequaert 1956a-b). In Mukila, situated on a small hilltop roughly 120 meters above the Wamba River some 250 km east of Kinshasa (Figure 1), Bequaert unearthed both lithics and pottery, but did not provide a detailed account of the stratigraphy and context in which they were found. He published a general outline of his fieldwork, noting excavation of five trenches in and around Mukila, but only gave

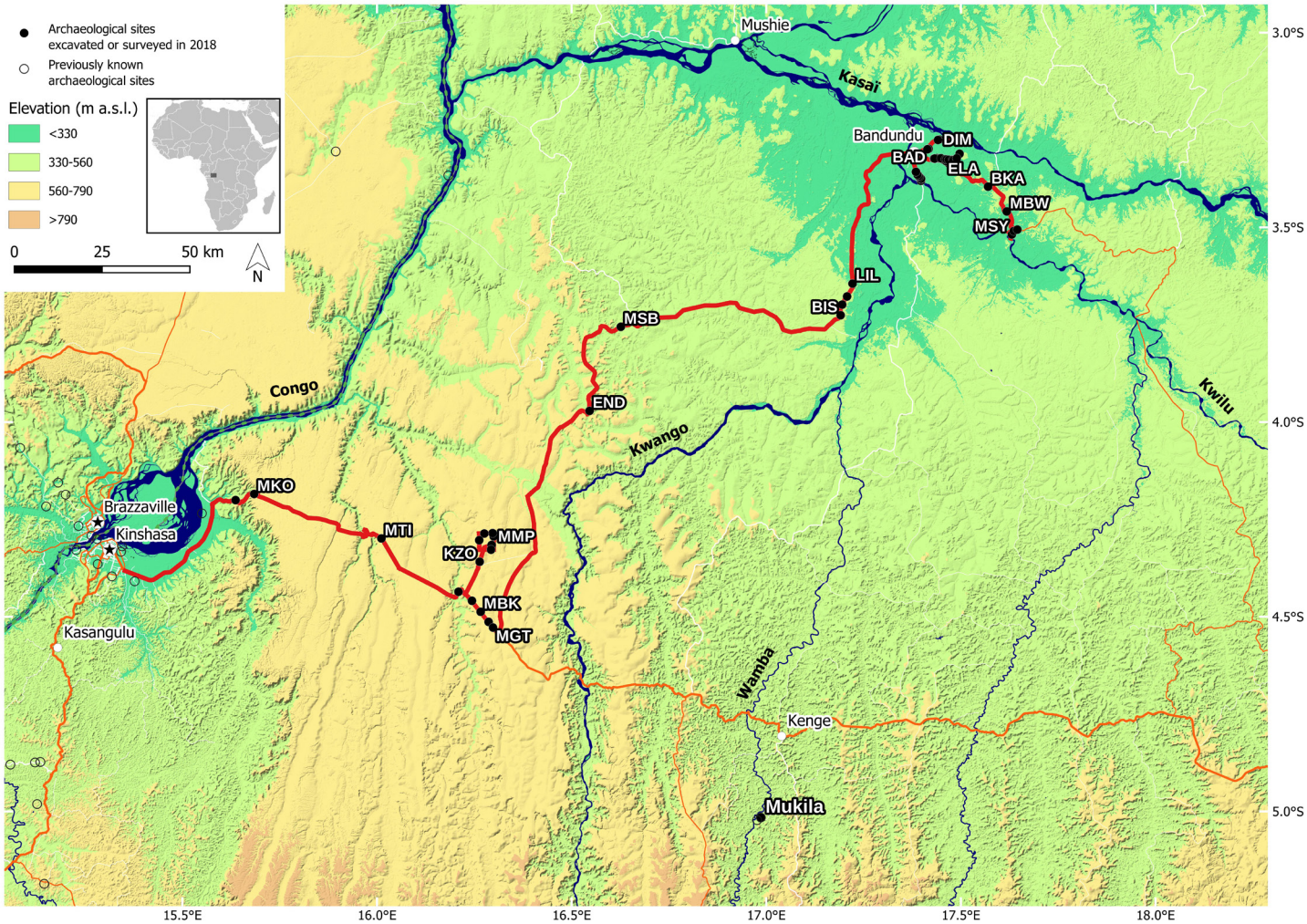

Figure 1: Map of the study area indicating surveyed sites (black dots) and roads (red thick line).

details on one, located near the local school (Bequaert 1956b: 35-37). This trench, 11 x 13 m at the surface, was subdivided into multiple squares and stepped down to reach a depth of almost seven meters. Bequaert referred to the individual squares (ibid.) but never published a general plan of them. Excavation records archived at the RMCA include several photographs and sketches, one of which roughly depicts the school's trench structure. Bequaert's field notes are not precise enough to establish a direct association between the excavation and the small volume of pottery and lithics finds, also stored at the RMCA's Heritage Service. At Mukambo, another hilltop close to Mukila, Bequaert (1955, 1962) also found pottery; part of this assemblage is thought to be from the 17th -18th century AD (Pierot 1987: 226–234; Clist *et al*. 2018, 260–261). In 1984 Pierre de Maret and Bernard Clist conducted excavations at Mashita Mbanza, a site known since the 1930s situated 68 km south of Kikwit in southern Kwilu Province (de Maret and Clist 1985). Pierot (1987) provides an analysis of their finds in his unpublished MA dissertation. In sum, at the start of the BantuFirst project, no published archaeological remains could be securely linked to the earliest sedentary and pottery-producing communities in the environs of the former Bandundu Province.

Objectives of the 2018 fieldwork

From June to August 2018 fieldwork was carried out in the Kinshasa, Kwango, Kwilu and Mai-Ndombe Provinces. Initial excavations focused on the site of Mukila (Kwango Province), ca. 25 kilometres south of the provincial capital Kenge (Figure 1). Later surveys of dirt roads and ad-

jacent villages between Kinshasa and Bandundu assessed the visibility of archaeological remains in the landscape, to identify the possible types of sites to be encountered and to establish contacts with local authorities and communities in this logistically challenging and under-researched region.

Mukila

We decided to start fieldwork at Mukila due to reports of both lithics and pottery. We identified the locations of Bequaert's 1952 trenches *Gite II A* and *Gite II B* (Figure 2) via careful examination of fieldwork archives and interviews with local people. Bequaert's field notes showed one trench southwest of the church and another southwest of an ancient school building. We then conducted two excavations. Our first test trench probed Bequaert's *Gite II A*, southwest of the church (MUK 2018/1010/5), and we added several corings within the area around the church. We relocated *Gite II B* near the surviving school buildings, cored the premises systematically for archaeological indicators, and opened a second trench (MUK 2018/1030/10) near but not adjacent to Bequaert's old excavation (Figure 2 A).

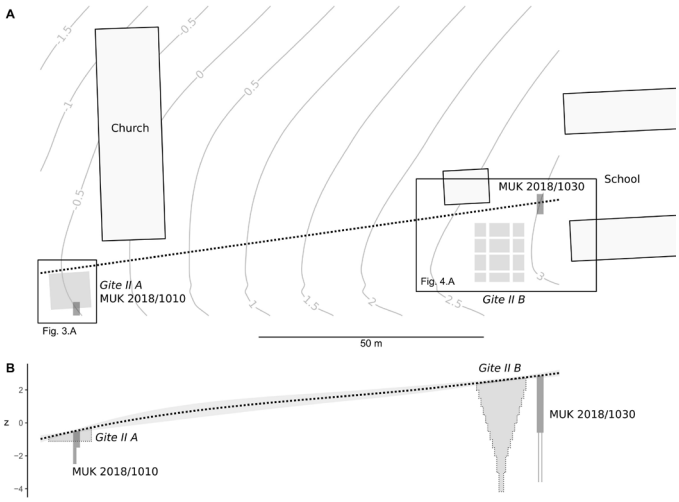

Figure 2: Site map of Mukila (A) showing the trenches of 1952 (light grey) and 2018 (dark grey) and their relation to the local topography (B).

Mukila Church (MUK 2018/1010/5)

Southwest of Mukila's church, a semi-regular depression was visible near the estimated location of *Gite II A*. We removed vegetation to determine the exact shape of the structure (Figure 3 A), which was remarkably regular in comparison to surrounding present-day charcoal kilns. We observed a small depression, around 10-20 cm lower than the surface, that extended several meters around a modern kiln. Unlike other depressions, it was aligned almost exactly north-south; ramps 30-40 cm wide reaching towards the center were especially visible in the eastern and southern parts. Comparing the area to Bequaert's field notes and drawings, we inferred that these ramps were the remains of narrow walkways that separated the different squares of his *Gite II A*. After thoroughly documenting the modern surface, including photos for a 3D SfM model, we opened a 3 x 1.5 m trench (MUK 2018/1010/5), cutting partially into the southeast segment of Bequaert's excavation (Figure 3 A). The northern part of the new trench intersected one of the still-visible walkways and exposed both the backfilled parts of *Gite II A* and the supposedly undisturbed archaeological layers immediately south of it. In this way, we could evaluate possible differences in the distribution of finds inside and outside of Bequaert's excavation.

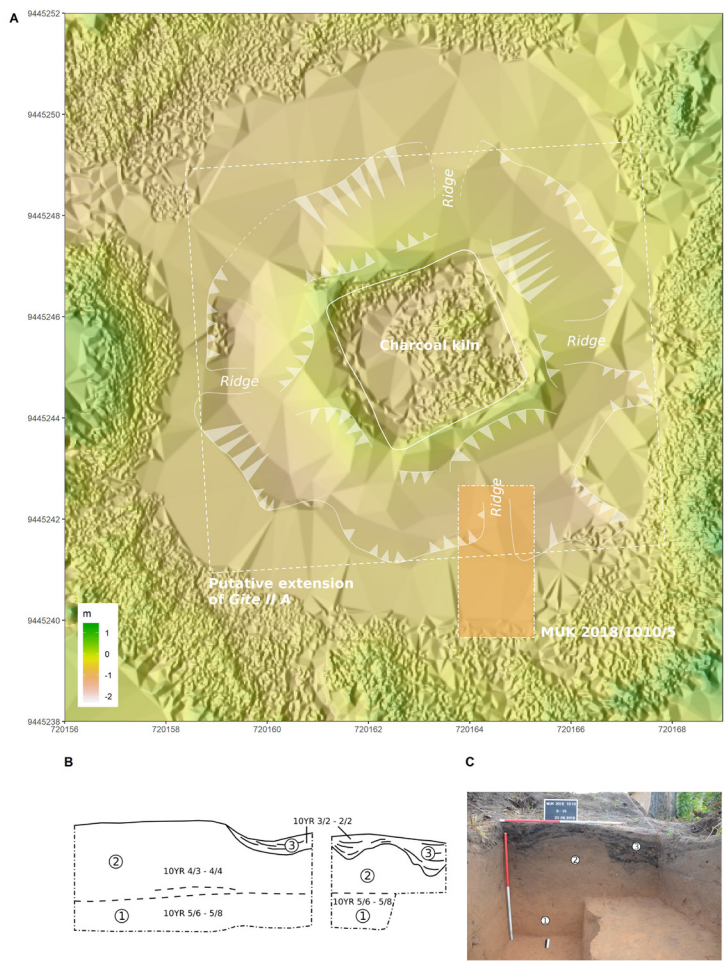

Figure 3: Digital surface model of the Mukila Church site, showing the remains of *Gite II A* and the position of the new trench MUK 2018/1010/5 (A) as well as the western and northern profiles of trench MUK 2018/1010/5 (B-C).

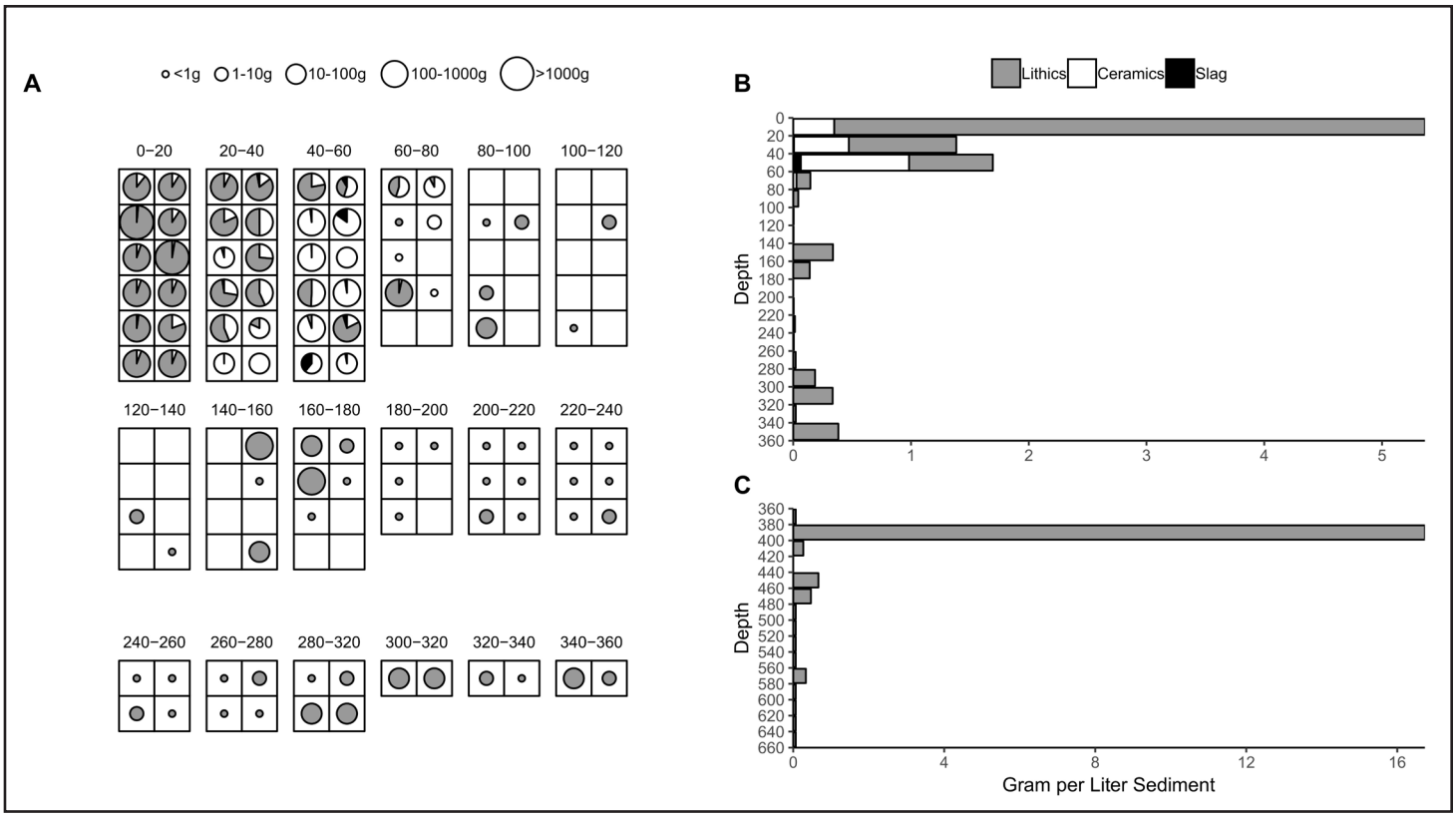

Figure 4: Horizontal (A) and vertical distribution of finds (weight per liter sediment excavated) within trench MUK 2018/1030/10 (B) as well as vertical distribution of finds within the two Edelman cores from squares 1a-b (C). Depth in centimetres below surface.

The eastern half of the trench was excavated to 0.7 m below surface, while the excavation by the more promising western profile reached 1.4 m below surface. The northern profile showed remains of a highly eroded footbridge (Figure 3 B-C). The former shallow digging event only reached a maximum of 0.4 m below surface. A distinct change in sediment colour was evident ~1 m below surface: sands changed from yellowish brown sands to almost completely yellow. The deposits of MUK 2018/1010/5 – loose sand with scant clay and features encountered – could clearly be interpreted as remains of Bequaert's old excavation *Gite II A*. The density of finds declined rapidly in both parts > 50 cm below surface, with no finds recorded below ~1 m. Hence, this could not be the old trench of nearly 7 m in depth reported by Bequaert.

Mukila École (MUK 2018/1030/10)

Photographs of Bequaert's 1952 fieldwork included six single shots forming a panorama. With the help of those images and interviews of locals, we determined the angle from which the photos had been taken and accurately retraced the position of *Gite II B*. The site revealed no depression or other indications for an old trench. Today, latrines cover its location. We assume that this 1952 excavation was refilled immediately due to use of the school grounds. As in the area around the church, we conducted extensive surveys using a 3 m Edelman corer before placing a new trench (MUK 2018/1030/10) northeast of *Gite II B*. Bequaert's panorama showed that backdirt had been placed adjacent to his trench except in the corners. We therefore positioned the new trench as close as possible to Bequaert's, but sufficiently distant to avoid excavating his backfill (Figure 4 A). MUK 2018/1030/10 covered a surface of 1.5 x 4.5 m and was excavated to a depth of 3.6 m. Although we considered it to be a test trench, we still dry-sieved all sediments for small finds. The excavation was conducted in 75 x 75 cm squares and in spits of 20 cm. For reasons of safety and practicability, at 60-cm (three-spit) intervals, the two southernmost squares of the excavated area were stopped so they could be used as steps (Figure 4 B). We excavated a total of 126 squares, but the maximum depth of 3.6 m was only obtained in a

1.5 x 0.75 m area adjacent to the northern profile. There, within the deepest two squares, we extended the sequence by coring further down another three meters, attaining final depths of 6.6 m below surface. The profile and the sediment extracted during the coring were systematically sampled for paleoenvironmental remains. The profile itself revealed no visible stratigraphic markers and had no distinguishable archaeological horizons or layers. The soil is made up of a slightly clayish, yellow sand all the way down.

As there were no visible layers within the profile, all analyses are based on the different amounts of finds within each unit and artificial horizon. The sequence we encountered consists of an upper part that reaches down to a maximum of 60 cm below surface and contains an admixture of pottery and lithics (Figure 4 C-D). During the excavation and sieving we encountered a substantial amount of lithics, including flakes and chips, within the upper spits. Detailed analysis of these lithics will give an idea of the degree of post-depositional admixture and possible presence of modern construction rubble in these spits. Pottery was only found until 80 centimetres below surface and it was most abundant within the third spit (40–60 cm; Figure 4 C). Horizontally, ceramics were concentrated in the south-eastern quadrants of the trench (Figure 4 B). Several distinct fabrics, possibly pointing at different regions of origins, could be observed. Iron slag was only found in very small quantities between 40 cm and 60 cm below surface.

The excavation revealed at least two lithic concentrations within the undisturbed sequence, separated by nearly sterile layers (Figure 4 C). A first concentration was situated between 160–180 cm, and the second 300-360 cm below surface. Within these spits, finds were not evenly distributed but clustered in certain quadrants.

At the bottom of the trench, at 3.6 meters, a small bifacial point was unearthed. Additional core extensions detected lithics all the way to 6.6 meters below surface. The highest density of lithics in comparison to soil volume came from around 380-400 cm below surface (Figure 4 D). With respect to lithic raw material we observed a considerable diversity between different parts of the excavated area. The upper strata yielded lithics from a indurated, homogeneously coloured silcrete, while lithics from the lower assemblages were made of material very heterogeneous in colour.

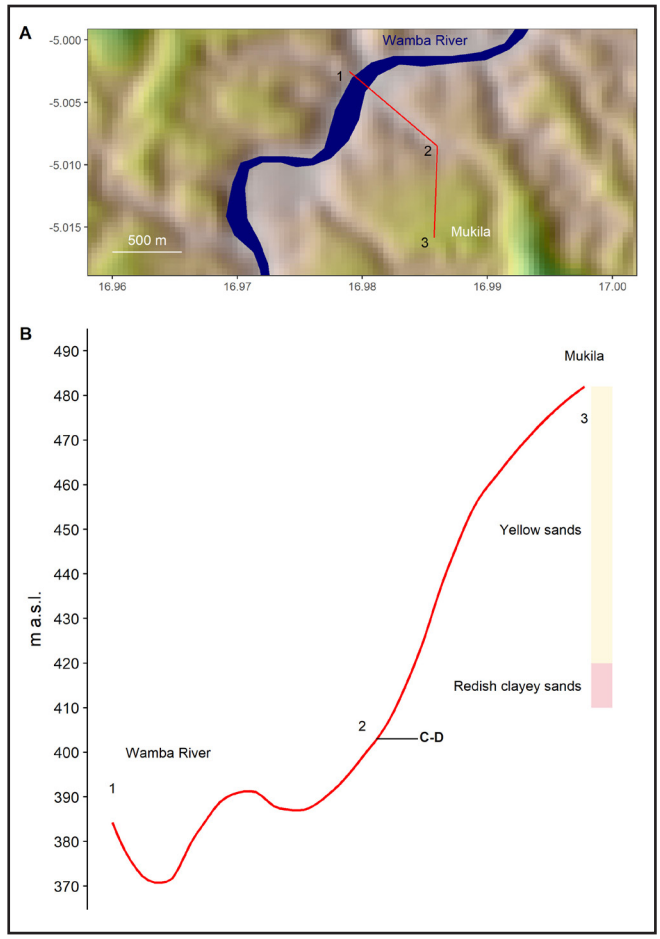

Figure 5. Survey area in relation to site (A) and terrain topography (B) northwards of Mukila and towards the Wamba river. Raw material outcrop boulders were encountered close to a small stream in a valley north of the site.

The raw material of both types of excavated lithics appears visibly similar to local polymorphic silcretes that were also used in the construction of colonial buildings. A survey confirmed that the raw material used in both the ancient tools and the modern buildings occurs locally (Figure 5). To further distinguish raw materials of the excavated lithics, geomorphological and geochemical analysis is necessary.

Surveying Bandundu Ville and its surroundings

We conducted the first-ever detailed survey along the roads from Kinshasa to Mongata, Masia Mbio and Bandundu town, a 400 km-long stretch in between the Congo and Kwango Rivers (Figure 1). In total, we surveyed around eleven hectares in 62 distinct areas, the majority of which is currently used as plots for agriculture. While surveying the surroundings of Bandundu Ville, we could

identify fields suitable for foot survey every few hundred meters. One area distinctly rich in pottery finds included specimens of various stylistic and technological origins. The predominant types of potsherds, presumably of local provenance, have various types of inverted rims. More detailed analysis will be needed to further clarify the chrono-typology of the region's ceramics.

East of Bandundu Ville we located a large borrow pit of roughly 5000 square meters (BAD 2018/1000/13). Numerous stone tools were scattered all over base of the pit and visible in its profiles. A variety of semi-finished but elaborately flaked bifacial points, large amounts of flakes and many chips were visible, sometimes forming small concentrations. Within the three to four-meter-high profiles, especially on the northern side of the pit, lithics were found in situ at almost 45 distinct locations. The assemblage from the walls of this borrow pit contains flakes, tools and possibly a grinding stone. Near a concentration of bifacial points on the bottom of the borrow pit, we extracted a column of nine soil samples from the profile, each counting roughly ten litres.

By examining satellite images, we identified a second borrow pit of more than 2500 square meters (ELA 2018/1000/4). This yielded an even larger quantity of stone tools, both from the base of the pit (especially smaller flakes), and from in situ finds in its walls. Next to several semi-finished bifacial points, large amounts of flakes, chips and some potsherds were scattered on the pits' basal surface. We extracted a column of soil samples for flotation from a roughly four-meter-tall profile. Column sampling revealed a densely packed layer of flakes, all produced from the same raw material, extending through an area ~50 cm in width and two to four cm thick. Due to dry season conditions, the clay-rich hard-baked sediments complicated the retrieval of finds. The variables sizes of the flakes and their dense concentration point towards a single knapping event, whose debris was possibly washed into a small channel. Given the impact angle of the flakes and their shapes, they may have originated from the production of a bifacial point, similar to the ones uncovered in both borrow pits.

On the roads back to Kinshasa from Bandundu, we encountered and surveyed nine additional borrow pits. None of those yielded anything comparable to Bandundu and most of them did not have any finds at all. We faced a similar lack of finds north of Mbankana, within the terrains of a former agro-forest project near Mampu, where we surveyed large areas of agricultural plots without getting any tangible results.

Conclusions

The initial fieldwork within the Kinshasa, Kwango, Kwilu and Mai-Ndombe provinces yielded rich archaeological sites that are worth further exploring. Parts of this under-researched region show huge potential for the region's Late Pleistocene and Holocene archaeology. The sequence of Mukila not only spans these epochs but also yielded rich paleoenvironmental samples for further study of climate history south of the rainforest. In Mukila, the occurrence of stone artefacts and ceramics was also properly contextualized for the first time, which will contribute to a better understanding of the final stages of the Late Stone Age.

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Somalia

Medieval Archaeology in Somaliland: the 2018 Field Season of the Incipit-CSIC Project

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Introduction

The Incipit-CSIC Archaeological Mission in Somaliland was launched in 2015 to study the role of trade networks that connected the Horn of Africa with the broader world, and how these economic and cultural interactions led to the development of complex societies and states which were key factors in the history of the Horn from Antiquity to the 19th century. Directed by the Institute of Heritage Sciences of the Spanish National Research Council (Incipit-CSIC) and in collaboration with the Department of Archaeology of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism of Somaliland, the Incipit-CSIC Archaeological Mission has visited and studied about 30 relevant archaeological and historical sites in western, central and northeast Somaliland, and has documented hundreds of minor places – mostly cairns – throughout the country since its beginning (González-Ruibal *et al.* 2017, González-Ruibal *et al.* forthcoming, Torres *et al.* 2017) . The 2018 campaign has focused on the area to the north of Borama in the Awdal region, where a number of medieval sites,the so-called Sultanate of Adal, (15th-16th centuries) have been documented.

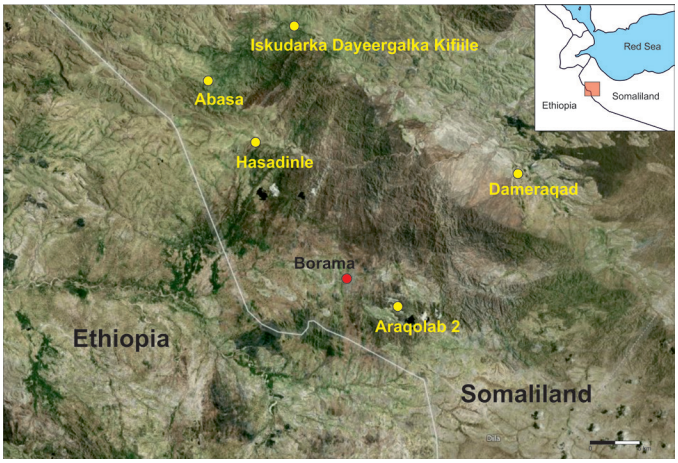

Figure 1: Location of the medieval sites surveyed during the 2018 field season

The existence of medieval sites in western Somaliland was first discovered in the mid-19th century, when Richard Burton described some ruined settlements on his way to Harar (Burton 1894 [1854]: 139, 146). Some of these sites have been revisited and described since the 1930s (Curle 1937, Huntingford 1978, Fauvelle-Aymar *et al.* 2011a). Yet published information is still scarce, consisting of brief descriptions of the sites and collected materials. At the time of the 2018 campaign, 5 of these medieval sites had been documented. Three were published by Alexander Curle (1937) and Neville Chittick (1976), while another was analyzed by the members of the Department of Archaeology of Somaliland but remained unpublished. The fifth was completely unknown before this survey. The CSIC-Incipit work consisted of surveys used to map the sites through drone flights and GPS references, the collection of archaeological materials and the photographing of the most relevant structures in each place. Only in Abasa, the largest site studied during this campaign, was a test pit made in the main mosque of the town to elucidate the existence of previous mosques under the building.

Of the five sites documented during the 2018 field season, four can be classified as towns or villages while the fifth one (Dameraqad) has been interpreted as a religious centre with several mosques and graveyards scattered around one kilometer. The sizes of the settlements (see Figure 2) vary, from around 150 houses in

Name	Extension	Number of houses (aprox.)	Mosques documented	Cemeteries documented	Comments	References
Abasa	43 Ha	150+	2	2	Large building (stronghold?) to the west	(Curle 1937, Chittick 1979, Fauvelle-Aymar 2011a)
Hasandile	10 Ha	50-60	1	No located		Curle 1937
Iskudarka Dayeergalka Kifiile	0,3 Ha	10-15	1	No located	Also known as Abasa 2	Unpublished
Araqolab 2	0,4 Ha	6-8	1	1	Named "2" to differentiate it from another Araqolab found by Alexander Curle in the 1930's	Unpublished
Dameraqad	12 Ha	10-15	6	1	Religious centre, cluster of buildings surrounded by a cemetery and scattered tombs and mosques	(Curle 1937)

Figure 2: Summary of information for the sites surveyed during the 2018 campaign.

Abasa to 6-8 in Aroqolab 2. Regardless of these differences in size, all the sites present remarkable similarities in their physical emplacement, building appearance and material culture. With the exception of Dameraqad, all the sites are located close to a wadi but not immediately by the bank of the river. This location close to alluvial plains, often abandoned meanders which still retain enough humidity to be cultivated, could point to the pre-eminence of agriculture in these sites, against the widespread interpretation of all medieval towns in Somaliland as trade centres. The houses are generally located on the slopes of small hills and surrounded by ravines or small wadis, which could be a protective measure, especially considering the almost permanent state of aggression between the Christian kingdom of Abyssinia and the Sultanate of Adal.

A great uniformity is evident through the appearance of the sites, which have an identical system of construction. Only minor differences can be observed in the size of houses, the type of stones used and the care given to the construction of buildings

With the exception of the Iskudarka Dayeergalka Kifiile site, many lack traces of urbanism; the houses are often scattered along the landscape. This, however, does not imply a lack of spatial ordering: mosques, cemeteries and the topographic position of the sites probably organized the space, and some of the empty spaces between houses were presumably public areas – market places, or squares. Houses are rectangular or square, between 20 to 40 square meters and feature clear partition walls, illustrating two or three rooms per house. The walls are made of well-laid flat stones of medium size, bound with mud. The state of preservation of the structures is variable, with some of them in pristine condition and still standing more than two meters tall while others are much more eroded with just about 50 cm of the walls remaining. There are no significant differences in the size and quality of the houses among the different sites, with the buildings of small settlements on Aroqolab 2 being as carefully built as those of big towns such as Abasa. Only Iskudarka Dayeergalka Kifiile shows an evidently poorer construction technique, although this could also be explained by the lack of stone quality in the area.

Mosques are the most significant buildings on all the settlements, where the larger sites often feature more than one mosque. They are built using the same construction technique as the rest of the buildings, square or rectangular in shape, featuring square mirhabs and in some cases perimeter walls surrounding the building. Larger mosques such as those of Abasa and Hasadinle possess circular, square or cruciform pillars, which were used to support the presumably flat roof. Neither minarets nor minbars have been documented in any of the mosques, indicating a difference with the examples from the Somaliland coasts as the 16th century mosques of Zeila have

this feature. In fact, the mosques documented in the Adwal region seem to have more direct parallels with the Harar region (Fauvelle-Aymar and Hirsch 2011b: 35, 37), which is logical considering both regions were closely linked and were part of the core of the Adal Sultanate. In the largest surveyed site, Abassa – the only settlement that could be considered a proper town – two mosques were identified. The biggest one, measuring 18 x 17 meters, featured twelve cruciform or circular columns and an arched mirhab described by Burton in 1854 (1894 [1854]: 146) and photographed by Curle in the 1930s (1937: plate III). This is considered the main mosque of the settlement although its position is peripheral, at the eastern outskirts of the site. A small – 2 x 2 meters –test pit dug in the centre of the mosque showed that the mosque was built ex novo on a purposely levelled rock floor, probably implying that it was built in a latter period in the history of the town, when the central area was already full of buildings and the new mosque had to be erected in a peripheral position. During the 2018 campaign a second, smaller mosque was documented. It is located at the easternmost area of the town, with a slightly different architectural style. The existence of this second building could be related to the existence of neighbourhood mosques common in Islamic settlements, or could give service to a community following a specific Islamic tradition or school.

Figure 3: View of the main mosque of Abasa, featuring circular and cruciform pillars

Aside from the mosques, there is no further evidence of other public, non-domestic buildings in the sites. The only exception has been documented in Abasa, where a big building built with big boulders was documented to the westernmost side of the settlement, placed on a rocky outcrop. The building had dimensions of 15 x 4 meters and a rectangular shape oriented east-west, with two adjacent rooms protruding to the north.

The entrance is to the east side of the building, accented by a long, slightly curved alley running north-south built with big flat boulders that present a certain monumentality. It is difficult to interpret the functionality of this building. The size, the construction technique, the big boulders used for the walls and gate and the distribution of the rooms suggest that this building was a common house. Yet the monumentality of the building could point to a military use. However, this interpretation does not consider the site's isolation as it is separated by the river and in a flat area. This building could have been a civil administration, either the house of a local sheikh, a trade control post or a prison, or maybe a mix of all these different functions.

Figure 4: Entrance to the large building of unknown function in Abasa

Graveyards were located in three of the settlements, and it is evident that they also existed in the other two although they could not be located due to lack of time. Surprisingly, cemeteries show less uniformity than houses, although the most widespread type of grave corresponds to square or rectangular cists defined by plain slabs (sometimes two of them lying parallel), which have been found in all the sites where graveyards were documented. In some occasions these cist structures have two or three small stelae marking the grave. Other types of burials have also been documented: two simple stelae at both sides of the grave; a line of slabs defining one of the sides of the tomb; or even small cairns with stelae on the

top; all of them follow Muslim burial conventions. Without excavations it is problematic to determine if these differences can be explained by changes through time or if they are related to various Muslim traditions or ethnic groups. That could be the case of some cairns – a typical nomad burial –found in Abasa or Dameraqad, which could be explained by the presence of people from these communities in or around the settlements.

Figure 5: Cist graves arranged in rows at Aroqolab 2

Material culture

Cultural uniformity is also evident in the material culture found, especially the local pottery which shows high standardization in terms of technique, shapes and decorations. Three main types seem recurrent: open bowls with the rim slightly thickened, globular vessels with a short straight neck and spherical-like pieces with an almost horizontal, flat rim. Handles are abundant and diverse, featuring either horizontal, curved handles with oval sections or smaller vertical handles with circular sections. The bases found are all ringed. Decoration is usually scarce and limited to the neck or the upper part of the rim. It usually consists of incised simple designs (series of parallel horizontal or oblique lines). Only in very few cases were other types of decorations present, as nail incisions or clay appliqués. Unlike other areas of the Horn of Africa as the 16th century kingdom of Abyssinia (Torres 2017), there is no distinction between fine wares and coarse wares. As is common in the medieval settlements in Somaliland, steatite objects appear in a wide range of types: fragments of plates, beads and round stones which could be interpreted as game pieces. Other types of lithic tools are less frequent; with the exception of Hasadinle where a sample of flint pieces have been collected, including an arrowhead and several scrapers evidencing a high level of knapping skills. Rotatory querns and hand stones have been found in all the sites.

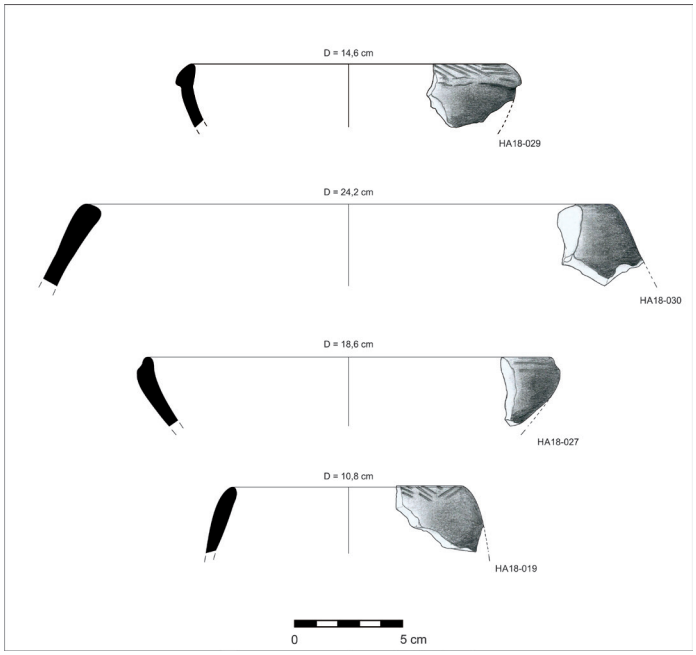

Figure 6: Local medieval pottery found at Hasadinle

Quite surprisingly, imported materials are very scarce in all the settlements, contrary to other sites surveyed in previous campaigns. In Abasa only five pieces of imported pottery were collected, consisting of two small pieces of celadon, a fragment of blue and white glazed pottery and two unglazed, wheel-made fragments with a characteristic whitish paste and incised and punctuated decoration. Leaving aside the celadon pieces, all the other fragments point to a Persian origin, with a generic chronology between the 15th and the 17th centuries. In the rest of the sites, the evidence of trade is even scantier: in those which yielded this type of materials they consisted of very small and eroded fragments of celadon or green glazed Specke pottery, or non-diagnostic wheel-made pottery which in this period always has a foreign origin. In Hasadinle, two fragments of polished pottery from northern Ethiopia have been collected, a type of ceramic so far very scarce in the archaeological record, although its presence shouldn't be a surprise considering the proximity and long relationship between the Christian kingdom of Ethiopia and the Sultanate of Adal, and the numerous raids conducted by both parties in rival territory. The

sample of trade-related pieces is completed with cowries which are abundant in all the places and two small fragments of glass found in Abasa and Dameraqad.

Conclusions

The sites documented in 2018 and those studied in previous years show a high level of homogeneity that illustrate shared cultural identity. At this stage of research it is difficult to discern if this homogeneity corresponds to a specific group. The study of the material culture of the Sultanate of Adal is still in its early stages, as is the relationship of these urban dwellers with the nomads that occupied wide areas of the region during the medieval period. Regarding the chronology, all the studied sites seem to be abandoned by the late 16th–early 17th centuries, with no post-17th century materials found in any of them. This widespread abandonment is likely explained by the collapse of the Sultanate of Adal in the late 16th century, which seems to have caused a general dismantling of the urban network that allowed the development of the trade routes and the redistribution of goods and commodities. The sites are unlikely older than the 13th–14th centuries, the moment in which the first written references describing the Muslim principalities appear.

Agriculture seems to have been the main activity of the sites surveyed during 2018. The position of the settlements close to cultivation fields but slightly away from the main routes, the scarcity of imported materials, the abundance of querns and other implements such as bored stones used as weights for digging sticks reinforce this interpretation. The agricultural orientation of many medieval sites enriches the vision of the economy of the Sultanate of Adal and helps to explain the military expansion of the kingdom, difficult to understand without a densely populated territory which provided levies, food and implements for the armies of the sultanate. It also introduces an interesting factor of territorial analysis, as a clear hierarchy of settlements arise, explaining the position of many sites in the region.

The relatively short life of these medieval sites does not necessarily imply statism. Although the surveys have been necessarily brief, some data point to the expansion of these settlements through time, probably due to a progressive increase in their population. This can be hinted at in places like Hasadinle or Iskudarka Dayeergalka Kifiile, where there is a core area of densely occupied space – usually around the mosque – and more scattered houses in the outskirts of the village, possibly built later as the population grew and the central area was full of buildings. The same can be said about the main mosque at Abasa, whose peripheral position could be explained by the lack of space in the central area of the town as it increased its size. A similar interpretation could be given to the existence of two cemeteries in Abasa, maybe related to the growth of the population. As with the temporal span of the sites, this urban evolution can only be confirmed or rebutted by systematic excavations in several of these sites.

One of the most interesting finds of the 2018 campaign has been documentation of Dameraqad as a religious centre. Although such religious centres are relatively common in the Islamic world and deeply rooted into the religious beliefs of the Somali (Lewis 1998), Dameraqad is currently the only one documented archaeologically whose occupation ended shortly after the collapse of the Adal sultanate and therefore has not been disturbed by current religious activities. The gathering of mosques and burials mark this place as a pilgrimage hub, maybe related to the Arab missionary activities among the Somali that took place from the 13th century onwards. The existence of nomadic structures in the site – including an elaborate mosque – could indicate this process of conversion and would explain the position of Dameraqad in a pass, an unusual place for a medieval site as we have seen before.

The 2018 campaign in western Somaliland confirms the importance of the occupation in this region during the medieval period; but also shows how incomplete our knowledge of its characteristics is. The focus on a small area has allowed a new insight about aspects such as settlement hierarchies, economical activities and spatial organization within the sites, enriching our understanding of the social and cultural patterns upon which the Sultanate of Adal was built. The increasing variety of sites discovered in recent years – religious centres, fortresses, caravan stations – is untangling the complexity of a state whose control of the territory and the different communities living in it seems to have been much more sophisticated than commonly assumed.

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Sudan

Archaeological Survey for Tethering Stones in the Western Third Cataract Desert (Sudan)

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Introduction

Tethering stones are stone artifacts with a groove or notches at their short axes. On average they are about 30-45 cm long and weigh about 20 kg; however some are > 100 kg in weight, with lengths exceeding 1.1-1.3 m. The term *grooved stone* is accurate for purely descriptive purposes, but the term *tethering stone* has been chosen because the groove is thought to have been used to hold a rope in order to restrain either domesticated or wild animals (Pachur 1991:14). The tethering stones are a widespread phenomenon in northern Sudan and in the oasis of the Libyan and Egyptian Sahara implying that the use of these stones for hunting techniques was prevalent throughout the Holocene.

Tethering stones attracted the attention of researchers in the Sahara because of their potential to be used as palaeoenvironmental and palaeoeconomic indicators for both prehistoric and historic sites. This paper will present the results of archaeological survey of tethering stones for the first time in the Third Cataract Region in northern Sudan.

Previous archaeological reports of tethering stones by region

In the Egyptian and Libyan Sahara, tethering stones were first reported in Egypt between Kufra, Gebel Dalma and the western slope of Gilf Kebir (Pachur 1982). Tethering stones can also be found embedded in sediments of the large Wadi Wassa alluvial fan on the eastern edge of Gilf Kebir. The largest known concentration of tethering stones was found on Farafra and on the dune of Abu Muharik, where 149 tethering stones were recorded; three to four tethering stones regularly occur in shallow karst hollows where sparse vegetation still provides food for gazelles.

In the Sudanese Sahara, in the eastern Burg et Tuyur south Selima oasis in northern Sudan, 14 tethering stones weighing 12-18 kg are scattered over an area of about 80 x 100 m at the transition between the sandy alluvial plain and sandstone plateau. Two other tethering stones were found at the foot of the Burg et Tuyur ridge, beneath the rock engraving of a bovine (Newbold and Shaw 1928). In the Wadi Fesh numerous tethering stones were found on lake carbonates of which the top was dated to 3805 BP. Tethering stones were also found in west and south Wadi Howar (Pachur 1991). In the El Ga'ab depression, at the western Dongola reach, more than 500 tethering stones were reported on the edge of Khors and lakes (Tahir 2014). In the El Golied area along the western Nile, five tethering stones were reported on the edge of the El Golied plain (Hamdeen 2017).

Along the northwest prolongation of the Lagyia Arbain valley at north-western Sudan, Gabriel (1986) counted more than 19 tethering stones over a 48 m stretch. North of Nukheila south of Lagyia a tethering stone was found in the immediate vicinity of a pottery vessel. Thermoluminescence dating of the ceramic yielded an age of 7880-7415 BP. Peroschi *et al.* (2014) reported many tethering stones during their survey around the massif of Jebel Uweinat with other stones structures, such as tumuli, stone alignments and fireplaces.

Along the Nile, more than 370 tethering stones were reported by the SARS AGE concession in the Fourth Cataract Region. These are mostly between 30-60 cm long, and oval rectangular or irregular in shape. They typically weigh 8-25 kg (Gabriel 2012: 83-90). According to Lohwasser (2013) tethering stones were reported in Wadi Abu Dom situated south of the Fourth Cataract Re-

gion. In central Sudan, at the site 10-U-19 at the el-Salha area south of Omdurman a tethering stone also was found (Usai and Salvatori 2002).

Outside of Africa, tethering stones also were reported from the Mushash Hudruj region in southeastern Jordan, possibly as part of a trap. This animal trap contains a large grooved stone that was found alongside a wall crossing the Wadi. The elongated rock is grooved in the middle, and a rope was fixed firmly around the groove. The other end of the rope was tied to create a slipknot; the loop would tighten if the rope were pulled by an animal (Tarawneh *et al.* 2012). In Oman many tethering stones were reported and dated to the seventh millennium BC (El-Mahi, 2007).

Rock art evidence

Rock art scenes in the Sahara and the Nile Valley present animals attached by tethering stones. In southwestern Messak Settafet (southwest Libya), Jelinek (1985) reports that in Wadi Tilizahren three bulls (*Bubalus antiquuus*) are depicted attached to a tethering stone. Also in Messak Settafet, Castiglioni and Negro (1986: 200) publish observations from Wadi Geddis: a figure showing a buffalo with a stone attached to its right hind leg and also tied by means of a pole. In Karkur Talh area at the Uweinat mountain, Rhotert (1952) reported a naturalistic depiction of an ostrich with flapping wings and one leg attached to a roundish object that might be a tethering stone. Allard-Huard (1983) describes rock engravings from Upper Egypt depicting a giraffe and a bovid (equid?) attached to a stone, and examples taken from the Saoura valley showing an oryx and an unidentifiable bovid. In Wadi Gorgod and the Third Nile Cataract Region in northern Sudan, many rock art scenes were reported that present animals trapped alive with stones (Allard-Huard 1993, Hamdeen 2017, Abdeen 2018). Outside of Africa, another example is a rock carving from Gebel Tubaik/Kilwa (southwest Jordan) described by Rhotert (1938). Here a bull, superimposed on an older pair of ibex, has a line running from its left hind leg to a small semi-circle that could be intended to depict a tethering stone.

Suggested functions for tethering stones

In his report of 40 tethering stones that he found in the Libyan Desert, Ziegert (1978) suggested that these stones may have been used in hut building.

Pachur (1982) suggested that the stones functioned as a fetter for grazing animals, especially cattle; the animals were still able to move around, but were prevented from straying.

Jelinek (1985) published pictures from Tel Isaghan in the Maessek Settafet, Fezzan, that include three bulls *Bubalus antiquus* who are attached to tethering stones. All three bulls have short, forward-curving horns, and their right foreleg is tied to a stone. For Jelinek the leg in the trap shows that these are trapped wild animals. His assumption that these are wild animals is entirely based on the function ascribed to the stones. For Jelinek, the strange position of one figure's head in relation to the bull's mouth indicates a familiarity beyond that between hunter and game and this scene suggests domestication.

Gabriel (1986, 2012) suggests that tethering stones from both prehistoric and historic times may have served as anchor-points for fastening ropes in mining and pasture activities as well as on ancient settlement sites to fix tents, or perhaps to affix traps, to prevent captured animals from escaping and to tether domesticated animals to keep them near campsites or huts. The trapping and anchoring function is also mentioned elsewhere (Lutz and Lutz 1993; Le Quellec 1990 and Morel 1982).

Archaeological fieldwork results

The archaeological survey was carried out in the wadis situated on the western bank of the Nile in the northern part of the Third Cataract Region in northern Sudan. Special attention was paid to palaeo-environmental data (e.g. palaeochannels) and the prehistoric archaeological record, for instance the widely distributed tethering stones (Hamdeen 2017), dating to the Holocene period. However, during fieldwork, the most abundant archaeological remains turned out to be petroglyphs, spread across a vast area and dating to prehistoric and historic periods. In the course of the survey, besides rock art, various archaeological sites were recorded, a Palaeolithic workshop containing an Acheulean handaxe, Levallois and Mousterian points, a small stone structure with a wadi wall (80x30x70 cm) of unknown age, a scatter of pottery sherds that are Neolithic as well as of Christian era. Generally, fifty tethering stones were recorded in four areas in the western Third Cataract Region: south of Wadi Gorgod, in Wadi Gorgod itself, in the Tondi paleochannel, and in the Koya palaeochannel. This paper will only present the results of the

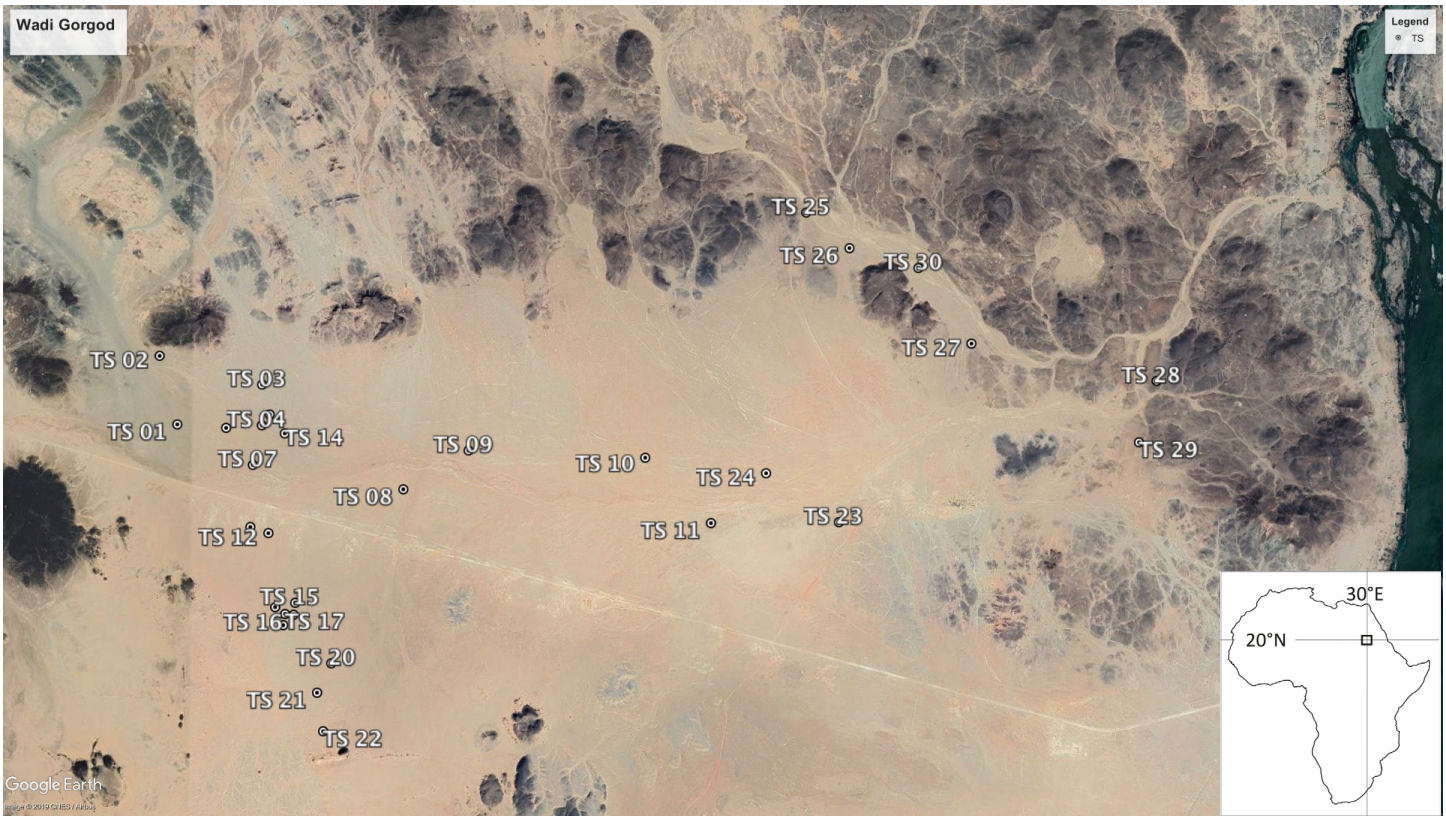

Figure 1: a + b: Situation and map of the study area of Wadi Gorgod.

Figure 2: a, b and c. Tethering stones from the area south of Wadi Gorgod

Figure 2: d and e. Tethering stones from Wadi Gorgod.

area south of Wadi Gorgod and Wadi Gorgod itself, about 17 km west of the Nile. Thirty-five tethering stones were reported from this area in and on the edges of the khors and wadis (Figures 1-2, Table 1).

Experimental archaeology results

Experimental archaeology has been explained as a science, defined as a 'controllable imitative experiment to replicate past phenomena, in order to generate and test hypotheses to provide or enhance analogies for archaeological interpretation' (Mathieu 2002:1). Experimental archaeology is relevant across all time periods, embracing diverse sub-specialities from zooarchaeology to landscape approaches, and encompasses all aspects of archaeological endeavour from strictly empirical studies to theoretical reconstructions. It is not something that 'occurs' at the end of an archaeological study simply to test hypotheses put forth by post-excavation specialists. To limit experimental archaeology to just a science omits the number of wide-ranging studies that have been conducted in its name (Mathieu 2002: 2).

Experimental archaeology tests aimed to reduce and constrain animal movement by a tethering trap. These test were carried out in a variety of environments (desert, semi- desert and savannah), and also on many species of domesticated animals (camel, cow, horse, donkey, goat, sheep, dog, cat, duck and chicken). The tests included traps with various weights: < 1 kg, 3 kg, 5 kg, 7 kg, 10 kg, 10-20 kg, 20-50 kg and > 50 kg. Preliminary results (Table 2) show a direct relationship between the size of the stone and the size of the animal in terms of trap efficacy in constraining animal movement. Anatomy of legs and life patterns are another defining factor for catching animals; for instance, ducks and chickens required a different type and quality of rope to catch them.

Discussion

As reviewed earlier, tethering stones are found over a large area in the Sahara and Nile regions. They were reported on the edges of water courses such as palaeochannels, wadis, water drainages, waterholes and Khors. The location of these stones, and their depictions in rock art, are both consistent with the hypothesis that they were used as animal traps.

Chronologically, Pachur (1991) presented many dates for sites that yielded tethering stones in the Sahara and these go back to 7,500 years ago south of Laquia Arbain. Other dates are for Maadi near Cairo (5170 BP), Farafra (7075-6885 BP), Selima oasis (4925 BP), Fezzan (6410 BP) and Wadi Howar (5115 BP). Faunal remains and rock art from the Libyan desert area and Third Cataract Region on the Nile, indicate that elephant, giraffe, hippopotamus, antelope, gazelles, buffalo, rhino and other savannah fauna were present, which date back to the early, middle and late Holocene.

Regarding the alternative hypothesis of hut building, Pachur (1991) is of the opinion that the stones are not useful for building because they were found far outside settlements and are not depicted as such in rock art. He subscribes to the hypothesis that tethering stones were used as hunting or as a fetter for grazing animals.

No	Coordinates	Length cm	Width cm	Weight kg	Type of Rock
TS 01	20°08'.927 N 30°24'.945 E- Alt. 253 m	40	25	15	Sandstone
TS 02	20°09'.358 N 30°24'.823 E- Alt. 247 m	30	27	8	Sand stone
TS 03	20°09'. 172 N 30°25'.169 E- Alt. 251 m	43	20	12	Sand stone
TS 04	20°08'. 917 N 30°25'.509 E- Alt. 246 m	20	16	7	Sand stone
TS 05	20°08'. 903 N 30°25'.271 E- Alt. 239 m	35	17	8	Sand stone
TS 06	20°08'. 984 N 30°25'.561 E- Alt. 242 m	30	14	10	Sand stone
TS 07	20°08'. 670 N 30°25'.451 E- Alt. 257 m	30	20	9	Sand stone
TS 08	20°08'. 675 N 30°25'.451 E- Alt. 249 m	45	30	22	Basalt
TS 09	20°08'. 423 N 30°25'.588 E- Alt. 241 m	30	18	7	Basalt
TS 10	20°08'. 410 N 30°25'.281 E- Alt. 243 m	50	33	20	Ferruginous sandstone
TS 11	20°08'. 414 N 30°25'.269 E- Alt. 241 m	34	21	17	Sand stone
TS 12	20°08'. 284 N 30°25'.437 E- Alt. 249 m	36	25	15	Sand stone
TS 13	20°08'. 245 N 30°25'.557 E- Alt. 241 m	40	18	10	Sand stone
TS 14	20°07'. 865 N 30°25'.662 E- Alt. 244 m	30	17	9	Ferruginous sandstone
TS 15	20°07'. 772 N 30°25'.719 E- Alt. 244 m	29	23	11	Sand stone

TS 16	20°07'. 738 N 30°25'.727 E- Alt. 248 m	50	15	20	Sand stone
TS 17	20°07'. 743 N 30°25'.671 E- Alt. 245 m	40	20	16	Sand stone
TS 18	20°07'. 695 N 30°25'.670 E- Alt. 246 m	27	14	6	Sand stone
TS 19	20°07'. 674 N 30°25'.659 E- Alt. 246 m	35	30	19	Sand stone
TS 20	20°07'. 610 N 30°25'.625 E- Alt. 242 m	40	17	15	Sand stone
TS 21	20°07'. 615 N 30°25'.616 E- Alt. 244 m	34	18	14	Basalt
TS 22	20°07'. 576 N 30°25'.589 E- Alt. 244 m	47	19	20	Sand stone
TS 23	20°07'. 563 N 30°25'.581 E- Alt. 246 m	30	22	14	Ferruginous sandstone
TS 24	20°07'. 579 N 30°25'.570 E- Alt. 252 m	60	14	19	Ferruginous sandstone
TS 25	20°07'. 608 N 30°25'.494 E- Alt. 248 m	36	26	20	Sand stone
TS 26	20°07'. 616 N 30°25'.486 E- Alt. 244 m	61	13	13	Sand stone
TS 27	20°07'. 641 N 30°25'.490 E- Alt. 242 m	40	24	15	Sand stone
TS 28	20°07'. 645 N 30°25'.494 E- Alt. 240 m	38	14	11	Sand stone
TS 29	20°07'. 636 N 30°25'.508 E- Alt. 240 m	40	20	10	Sand stone
TS 30	20°08'. 610 N 30°25'.781 E- Alt. 238 m	43	22	14	Sand stone

Table 1: List of tethering stones in the study area with length (cm), width (cm), weight (kg) and rock type.

	Weight of trapping stone							
	1 kg	**3kg**	**5 kg**	**10kg**	**10-20 kg**	**20- 50kg**	**< 50 kg**	
Type of animals	**Camel**	RAM	RAM	RAM	RAM	RAM	RAM	RAM
	Cow	RAM	RAM	RAM	RAM	RAM	RAM	RAM
	Horse	RAM	RAM	RAM	RAM	RAM	RAM	RAM
	Donkey	RAM	RAM	RAM	RAM	RAM	RAM	CAM
	Goat	RAM	RAM	RAM	RAM	RAM	CAM	CAM
	Sheep	RAM	RAM	RAM	RAM	RAM	CAM	CAM
	Dog	RAM	RAM	RAM	CAM	CAM	CAM	CAM
	Cat	RAM	CAM	CAM	CAM	CAM	CAM	CAM
	Duck	RAM	CAM	CAM	CAM	CAM	CAM	CAM
	Chicken	CAM	CAM	CAM	CAM	CAM	CAM	CAM

Table 2: Results of experiments. RAM is reduced animal movement and CAM is crippling animal movement due to the use of trapping stones for ten animal species.

The technique of tethering stones as a hunting method appears during the early Holocene. It does not seem to have been intended to kill animals but rather to slow down their movement, allowing humans to trap the animal alive. The capturing of animals alive may have played an important role in the taming of African fauna that were never fully domesticated (such as Barbary sheep), or initial stages of domestication of African cattle and wild ass. Later on after large polities and empires formed, the trade of animals developed between ancient Sudan and other civilizations like Egypt and Rome, where displays of living, exotic animals such as elephants, giraffes, gazelles, and lions, were particularly appreciated. This trade may have begun during the Egyptian Old Kingdom and may been maintained for millennia into the Islamic period (Hamdeen 2017).

One of the most important sources on Egyptian Pharaoh kings receiving live animals as Nubian booty comes from the temple of Beit el-Wali, located about 50 km south of Aswan and 300 m northwest of the big Roman temple of Talmis-Kalabsha. The temple was built by Ramses II and cut in the rocky slope of the south bank of one dry wadi with its front to the northeast (Ricke *et al.* 1967: 1).

The wall painting on the south entrance wall depicts Ramses II receiving the Nubian booty arranged in two registers. There are panoramic reliefs of Nubians presenting eggs, followed by Nubians bringing live animals, ivory tusks and products of their land (Ricke *et al*.1967: 12). The live animals include giraffe, lion, leopard, gazelle and ostrich, judging from the physical characteristics and aggressive behaviours depicted for some of the animals. Making traps with tethering stones in order to cripple the animal allows the hunter to either kill or capture the wild animal alive and tame it.

During his excavation in the early Khartoum site Arkell found thirty one pieces of net sinkers. He described them all as short sausage-shaped sandstone objects with rounded ends. Longitudinally, they were often somewhat flattened, perhaps because they were made originally from flat pieces of sandstone or sandstone grinders. Their essential characteristic is a groove around the midsection, which varies in depth (1-3 mm), and length (5-28 mm). These objects are regarded as sinkers or weights for fishing nets (Arkell 1949: 68-69).

Hamdeen (2015) notes there are similarities in design purpose between these fish sinkers and tethering stones. Fish sinkers are used as weights in fishing nets, with the weight, groove and rope working together to catch fish. Tethering stones also depend on the combined action of the weight, groove and rope to catch animals. During an archaeological survey in the El Ga'ab basin, small tethering stones (10 cm/0.5 kg) were reported near fish remains. This is in agreement with Wendorf (1968) who mentions that the economy of Abkan people depended on fishing with stone traps. This is an indication that early Holocene people developed a similar use of stones in hunting and fishing techniques (Hamdeen 2017).

Conclusion

Integrated archaeological and experimental studies of tethering stones have shown that weight-groove-rope technologies were important for multiple subsistence spheres (hunting, trapping, and fishing), and remained relevant in capturing wild animals for trade until recent times. Future research should probe the origins of these technologies in the early Holocene or even Late Pleistocene times. Tracking changes in the forms and designs, and also in the size and nature of target animals, may provide a new window into aspects of human social life and human/animal interactions.

Acknowledgments

I would to thank NCAM (National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums) in Sudan who gave permission for archaeological survey in the western Third Cataract Region. Special thanks to Prof. Ali Osman Mohamed Salih (Director of El Mahas Archaeological Project, Dept. of Archaeology, University of Khartoum) for providing comments, and also to Prof. Yahia Fadl Tahir (Director of El Ga'ab Project), Dr. Mohammed Alfatih Hayati, and Ats. Osman Khaleel (Dept. of Archaeology, University of Khartoum) Ats. Amel Atyia (NCAM inspector) and Ats. Fatima Idris (Dept. of Archaeology, University of Shandi) for helping me in the archaeological survey in the western Third Cataract Region. Finally, I also thank the drivers Mudather Abdelhameed and El Nour Ahmed.

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SOCIETY OF AFRICANIST ARCHAEOLOGISTS

25th Biennial Meeting: African Archaeology – 20:20 Vision for the Future

First circular and Call for symposia

It is with great pleasure that we announce that the 25th SAfA conference will take place in Europe at St Hugh's College, University of Oxford, United Kingdom, from 21 to 24 September 2020.

Call for symposia

As SAfA celebrates its 25th biennial conference and approaches the 50th anniversary of the 1971 meeting in Urbana, Illinois, that ultimately led to its creation, we wish to look to the long term and solicit symposium proposals that explore the future of African archaeology in as holistic a way as possible. In emphasizing this theme of a 20:20 vision for the discipline, we wish to enhance the ways in which the theory and practice of African archaeology and its methods, procedures, and ethical underpinnings can support the priorities of the peoples of Africa and the Diaspora. At the same time, we look forward to suggestions from SAfA's members for symposia that explore some of the key challenges confronting Africa's inhabitants and their heritage, including:

- the management, valorization, and interpretation of cultural heritage;

- the role of archaeology and of archaeological heritage in facilitating sustainable development and resilient societies;

- the improved understanding of the long-term relationships between people and the environments, climates, and disease regimes within which they live now and in the past; and

- ethical, social justice, and humanitarian issues arising from the legacies of earlier forms of archaeological practice concerning the continent and its peoples.

We are also keen to encourage symposium organizers to highlight the creative potential of collaboration with – and insights from – colleagues in related disciplines, such as anthropology, genetics, geography, history, and palaeoanthropology. Such sessions may wish to focus on:

- advances in specific methodological or theoretical fields of research;

- novel insights into the histories of particular regions or periods of the African

- past;

- research results from specific ongoing or recently completed field projects; or

- the exploration of connections and the comparison of historical trajectories between different regions of Africa

One of SAfA's highest priorities is to integrate scholars at all career stages and from all backgrounds into a single thriving intellectual community. We therefore strongly encourage symposium organizers to pursue contributions from a diverse range of colleagues, including postdoctoral researchers, students and others. Ahead of the launch of the conference website, the Symposium Proposal Form can be obtained from the Organizing Committee at safa2020@arch.ox.ac.uk

Podium vs poster presentations

When proposing a symposium please choose between podium and poster formats. Both formats have equal status. To encourage attendance at poster symposia, they will be scheduled in dedicated time slots free from competing podium-based symposia and other conference events. In the event of difficulties in printing posters at home before

arrival at the conference, please contact the Organizing Committee, which will endeavour to find suitable printing options in Oxford.

Roles

To maximize participation in the conference, please note the following limits on authorship at SAfA 2020:

1) Each participant may be a lead author for one presentation, whether in a podium or a poster session;

2) Participants with one lead authorship may also be listed as co-authors on a maximum of two other presentations (podium- and/or poster-based);

3) Participants who are not lead authors may be listed as co-authors on a maximum of three presentations (podium- and/or poster-based).

Organizing a symposium, chairing a session and acting as a session discussant do not count as authorship roles.

Important preparation dates

1 November 2019	Symposium proposals due
15 November 2019	Symposium decisions announced
31 December 2019	Abstracts due
1 February 2020	Abstract decisions announced
15 February 2020	Registration opens
1 May 2020	Deadline for Early Bird Registration payment

Student Day

The SAfA 2020 Student Day will take place at St Hugh's College on Sunday 20 September 2020. Its activities will be co-ordinated by the Student Members of the SAfA Executive: Tomos Evans, Sol Sanchez-Dehesa and Mncedisi Siteleke. Student members of SAfA with enquiries or ideas regarding the Student Day should contact the co-ordinators at safa2020studentday@gmail.com

Workshops before and after the main conference

It will be possible – at no extra cost for hiring the relevant meeting room – to organize small workshops on specific themes on either Sunday 20 September or Friday 25 September. Anyone wishing to arrange such a workshop should notify the Organizing Committee before 1 December 2019 so that it can do everything possible to help facilitate the arrangements. Costs for refreshments/lunch will, however, have to be met by the workshop's organizers and participants. Please bear in mind when thinking of arranging such workshops that the Student Day will take place on Sunday 20 September with local post-conference excursions following the conference on Friday 25 September.

Contact information

The conference website is currently under construction. Its launch will be announced via the SAfA listserve. The Organizing Committee's email address is safa2020@arch.ox.ac.uk

We look forward to seeing you next September in Oxford!

With best wishes,

The SAfA 2020 Organizing Committee

Peter Mitchell (University of Oxford, Organizing Secretary)
Tunde Babalola (University of Cambridge)
Nick Barton (University of Oxford)
Shadreck Chirikure (University of Oxford/University of Cape Town)
Matt Davies (University College London)
Sam Derbyshire (University of Oxford)
Anne Haour (University of East Anglia)
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Chris Wingfield (University of East Anglia)
Stephanie Wynne-Jones (University of York)

SOCIÉTÉ DES ARCHÉOLOGUES AFRICANISTES

XXVe Rencontre biennale : une vision parfaite (2020) pour l'avenir de l'archéologie africaine

Première circulaire et Appel à contributions

C'est avec grand plaisir que nous annonçons que la prochaine conférence de la SAfA aura lieu en Europe à **St. Hugh's College, Université d'Oxford, Royaume-Uni**, du **21 au 24 septembre 2020**.

Appel à contributions

Alors que la SAfA célèbre sa 25e conférence biennale et approche du 50e anniversaire de la réunion de 1971 à Urbana, Illinois, qui aboutit à sa création, nous souhaitons regarder à long terme. Nous sollicitons donc des propositions de sessions qui explorent l'avenir de l'archéologie africaine de manière aussi holistique que possible. En mettant l'accent sur ce thème d'une vision parfaite de la discipline, nous souhaitons améliorer la façon dont la théorie et la pratique de l'archéologie africaine et ses méthodes, procédures et codes déontologiques peuvent soutenir les priorités des communautés africaines et de la diaspora. En même temps, nous attendons avec intérêt les suggestions des membres de la SAfA de sessions qui exploreront certains des principaux défis auxquels le patrimoine et les habitants du continent africain sont confrontés, notamment :

- la conservation, la valorisation et l'interprétation du patrimoine culturel ;
- le rôle que l'archéologie et le patrimoine archéologique ont à jouer pour faciliter le développement durable et l'existence de sociétés résilientes ;
- une amélioration dans la compréhension des relations à long terme entre les communautés et les environnements, climats et régimes de maladie dans lesquelles les communautés vivent actuellement, et vécurent jadis ;
- les questions d'éthique, de justice sociale et humanitaire qui ressortent de l'héritage de pratiques archéologiques maintenant démodées à l'égard du continent et de ses peuples.

Nous souhaitons également encourager les organisateurs de sessions à souligner le potentiel créatif de la collaboration avec des collègues de disciplines apparentées, telles que l'anthropologie, la génétique, la géographie, l'histoire et la paléoanthropologie, et les idées qui peuvent en ressortir. Ces sessions pourront se concentrer sur :

- les progrès dans des domaines de recherche méthodologiques ou théoriques spécifiques ;
- de nouvelles perspectives sur l'histoire de régions ou de périodes particulières du passé africain ;
- les résultats de projets de terrain spécifiques en cours ou récemment terminés ; ou
- l'exploration des liens entre différentes régions d'Afrique et la comparaison de leurs trajectoires historiques.

L'une des plus hautes priorités de la SAfA est l'intégration de chercheurs à différentes étapes de leur carrière dans une unique et solide communauté intellectuelle. Par conséquent, nous encourageons vivement tous les organisateurs de sessions à favoriser activement les contributions collectives, associant des post-doctorants, des étudiants et d'autres membres de la SAfA.

Pour obtenir un « Formulaire de proposition de session », veuillez contacter le Comité d'Organisation : safa2020@arch.ox.ac.uk

Format des présentations : communication *vs.* poster

Les candidats seront invités à choisir entre les formats c'est-à-dire entre une conférence ou un poster. Les deux formats ont un statut égal ! Pour garantir une bonne visibilité lors des séances « poster », celles-ci seront programmées en des plages horaires spécifiques, sans autres séances ou événements concurrents. Pour les participants qui n'ont pas accès à une imprimante grand format dans leur établissement, le Comité d'Organisation tâchera de trouver des options d'impression à Oxford.

Contraintes

Nous vous prions de respecter les limites suivantes en ce qui concerne le nombre de participations comme auteur à la SAfA 2020 ; ceci a pour but de maximiser le nombre d'orateurs :

1) Chaque participant peut être auteur principal pour une seule présentation (qu'il s'agisse d'une communication ou d'un poster) ;

2) Les participants qui sont l'auteur principal d'une présentation peuvent être co-auteurs de maximum deux autres présentations (communication ou poster) ;

3) Les participants qui ne sont pas auteurs principaux d'une présentation peuvent être co-auteurs de maximum trois présentations (communication ou poster).

L'organisation d'une session, la présidence d'une session ou la participation à une session/table ronde en tant que membre ne compte pas comme rôle d'auteur.

Quelques dates importantes

1er novembre 2019 : date limite de soumission des propositions de session

15 novembre 2019 : annonce des décisions des sessions retenues

31 décembre 2019 : date limite de soumission des résumés

1er février 2020 : annonce des décisions quant aux résumés retenus

15 février 2020 : ouverture des inscriptions

1er mai 2020 : date limite pour le paiement des frais d'inscription à tarif réduit

La Journée des Étudiants (« *Student Day* »)

La Journée des Étudiants durant la SAfA 2020 aura lieu le dimanche 20 septembre 2020 à St. Hugh's College. Ses activités seront coordonnées par les membres étudiants du Comité executif de la SAfA : Tomos Evans, Sol Sanchez-Dehesa et Mncedisi Siteleke. Les membres étudiants de SAfA ayant des questions ou des idées concernant la Journée des Étudiants peuvent contacter directement les coordonnateurs : safa2020studentday@gmail.com

Séminaires avant et après le colloque SAfA

Les rencontres de la SAfA offrent également aux petits groupes de membres la possibilité de tenir des ateliers auxiliaires un jour avant ou après la conférence principale, c'est-à-dire dimanche 20 septembre ou vendredi 25 septembre. Si vous souhaitez organiser un tel atelier, veuillez communiquer votre intérêt au Comité d'Organisation avant le 1er décembre 2019.

Nous ferons des investigations en votre nom en ce qui concerne la disponibilité des espaces, et nous ferons tout notre possible pour en faciliter l'organisation. La location de la salle sera gratuite, mais tous les autres coûts (pauses-café, déjeuner) devront être financés par les participants aux ateliers et non par la SAfA. Lors de vos planifications, n'oubliez pas que la Journée des Étudiants aura lieu le dimanche 20 septembre, et que les excursions locales (détails à suivre) auront lieu le vendredi 25 septembre.

Informations de contact

Le site web de la conférence est en construction ; sa mise en service sera annoncée via la liste mail de la SAfA. L'adresse électronique du Comité d'Organisation est safa2020@arch.ox.ac.uk

Nous espérons vous voir nombreux en septembre prochain à Oxford !

Avec nos sentiments les meilleurs,
Le Comité d'organisation de la SAfA 2020

Peter Mitchell (Université de Oxford, Secrétaire général du Comité d'Organisation)
Tunde Babalola (Université de Cambridge)
Nick Barton (Université d'Oxford)
Shadreck Chirikure (Université d'Oxford/Université de Cape Town)
Matt Davies (University College London)
Sam Derbyshire (Université d'Oxford)
Anne Haour (Université d'East Anglia)
Jane Humphris (Institut britannique en Afrique orientale/Université de Cambridge)
Rachel King (University College London)
Paul Lane (Université de Cambridge/Université d'Uppsala)
Julia Lee Thorp (Université d'Oxford)
Kevin MacDonald (University College London)
Simon Underdown (Oxford Brookes University)
Chris Wingfield (Université d'East Anglia)
Stephanie Wynne-Jones (Université de York)