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EDITORIAL

Dear Readership,

Volume 91 is the first with Liza Gijanto in charge of the English contributions that comprise three of the four papers for this volume. The history of the last five centuries in West Africa is best covered in this volume with three papers from Benin, Ghana, and Senegal. The fourth article is on Somalia in the much earlier period of the first centuries of our era.

As part of his doctoral research on caravan routes, commercial networks and urbanization in the Karimama-Banikoara area, Mardjoua, in partnership with Gosselain and N'Dah, reports on fieldwork conducted in the winter of 2017-2018 in northern Benin. Their starting point is a lesser-known 19th century caravan route along which salt, fabric, and horses were traded. The route extended from the locality of Karimama to the trading town of Banikoara which in turn was connected to much more prominent commercial routes. Their research consisted of oral history interviews and archaeological survey. Mardjoua made test pits at the sites of Bankoru, Gaa guru and Nawordu-Bansu. At Banikoara, demographic expansion and modern development of infrastructure inevitably led to mitigation and salvage work at the site; thus, one challenge he faced was to assess the extent to which urban archaeology was feasible. Various archaeological deposits were identified and four habitation loci were subject to test pit survey. The analysis of the finds and continued field work will provide crucial information on the economic and political history as well as on the history of population in the Karimama-Banikoara area.

Reid and Amartey report on their investigations along the Pra River in Ghana from 2015-2017. The work involved survey and excavations as part of the larger Central Region Project (CRP) initiated by Christopher DeCorse. The CRP began at Elmina with an emphasis on the impact of intense Afro-European interactions as part of the broader Atlantic trade in the region. The work reported here expands the geographical scope of this project, incorporating the Pra River. Amartey directed archaeological excavation at the sites of Wawase and Supomu

Island while Reid undertook a large survey using high-resolution multispectral satellite imagery combined with topographical maps in order to identify potential archaeological sites in densely vegetated areas. Their research expands our understanding of settlement and trade in the region prior to and immediately after the Atlantic trade.

Kroot, Gokee, and Machiels discuss their recent excavations at the Yoru Moussou *tata* in southern Senegal. This work was undertaken as part of the Bandafassi Regional Archaeological Projects. Yoru Moussou was constructed in the late nineteenth century when the region was subject to increased violence. Kroot and his colleagues interpret the site as a response to aggression from neighbours and the threat of the Atlantic slave trade by the Malinke communities along the Upper Gambia River. Their work includes mapping, surface collection, and limited excavations paired with oral history interviews. Though oral histories suggest people occupied the site for several years, the authors found no evidence of occupation beyond debitage and a single ceramic sherd likely dating to before the *tata*'s construction. They note that even though the fortification architecturally resembles others in the region, it does not have residential areas despite the site's large size (0.57 ha). They suggest that the materials used for housing may have been more ephemeral or taken for reuse after the site was no longer needed. Alternatively, it may have been used as a place of retreat to hide from attacking forces rather than a permanent settlement.

Our final contribution is from de Torres Rodrigues, González-Ruibal, Kleinitz, Rodriguez, Barrio and Jama reporting on their recent project in Somalia. Their work on the cairn field of Heis includes extensive mapping efforts and preliminary excavations in advance of possible harbour construction in the area. One stated goal of this project was to catalog all tumuli and complete some excavation. The team identified and mapped 302 tumuli. Of the handful excavated, tomb 153 proved to be the most representative of the site as a whole. The tomb had been

looted, exhibiting poor preservation. Despite this, a wide array of materials found including 25 inlays that may have been from a casket dating to 1st century AD. Based on artefacts from this tumulus in addition to surface materials across the site, this confirms a degree of integration between the Merotic Kingdom and the Somaliland coast. Also, the recovery of artifacts dating from the 1st to the 3rd century AD provides an alternate chronology for the necropolis.

At the end of this editorial we want to draw your attention to the new submission deadlines: all pieces for consideration for the June 2020 volume should be submitted by April 1st and October 1st for the December 2020 volume. We are also rethinking the submission process in order to maximize the time between submission and publication.

Finally, we express our thanks to Elisabeth Hildebrand for her follow-up and much appreciated support, as well as to Nadine Devleeschouwer for the French revisions and the Publications Service of the Royal Museum for Central Africa for the layout and copy-editing. A special word of thanks goes to the various colleagues who ensured the online publication on the SAfA website over the years.

Liza Gijanto

Els Cornelissen



ÉDITORIAL

Chers lectrices et lecteurs,

Ce numéro 91 est le premier pour lequel Liza Gijanto est responsable des contributions en anglais, c'est-à-dire de trois des quatre textes de ce volume. L'histoire des cinq derniers siècles en Afrique de l'Ouest est ici particulièrement bien couverte, avec trois articles en provenance du Bénin, du Ghana et du Sénégal. Le quatrième traite de la Somalie à une période beaucoup plus ancienne, celle des premiers siècles de notre ère.

Dans le cadre de ses recherches doctorales sur les routes caravanières, les réseaux commerciaux et l'urbanisation dans la région de Karimama-Banikoara, Mardjoua, avec Gosselain et N'Dah nous livrent le compte-rendu du travail de terrain qu'ils ont mené durant l'hiver 2017-2018 dans le Nord du Bénin. Leur point de départ est une route caravanière mineure du XIX^e siècle, connue, et le long de laquelle se vendaient sel, étoffes et chevaux. La route partait de la localité de Karimama pour rejoindre la ville commerciale de Banikoara laquelle était reliée à des routes commerciales beaucoup plus importantes. Leur recherche a consisté en interviews à propos de l'histoire et en prospection et sondages archéologiques, plus particulièrement à Bankoru, Gaa guru et Nawordu-Bansu. À Banikoara, l'expansion démographique et le développement d'infrastructures conduisent inévitablement à l'archéologie préventive ; le défi consiste ici à évaluer dans quelle mesure une archéologie urbaine est réalisable. Divers sites archéologiques ont été identifiés et des sondages ont été effectués sur quatre sites d'habitat. L'analyse des découvertes et la poursuite du travail de terrain fourniront des informations cruciales sur l'histoire économique et politique, ainsi que sur l'histoire du peuplement dans la région Karimama-Banikoara.

Reid et Amartey rendent quant à eux compte de leurs investigations le long du fleuve Pra au Ghana en 2015-2017. Leur travail comportait une prospection et des fouilles qui faisaient partie d'un projet plus large, le Central Region Project (CRP), lancé par Chris-

topher DeCorse. Le CRP a commencé à Elmina, en mettant l'accent sur l'impact d'intenses interactions afro-européennes qui faisaient partie d'un commerce atlantique plus étendu dans la région. Le travail relaté ici élargit le champ géographique de ce projet en y incluant le fleuve Pra. Amartey a dirigé les fouilles archéologiques sur les sites de Wawase et l'île Supomu, tandis que Reid a entrepris une large prospection en utilisant l'image satellite multispectrale à haute définition combinée à des cartes topographiques, afin d'identifier des sites archéologiques potentiels dans des régions à végétation dense. Leur recherche accroît notre compréhension du peuplement et du commerce dans la région, avant et après la traite transatlantique.

Kroot, Gokee et Machiels examinent leurs fouilles récentes au *tata* de Yoru Moussou, dans le Sénégal méridional. Ce travail a été entrepris en tant que partie des Bandafassi Regional Archaeological Projects. Yoru Moussou a été construit à la fin du XIX^e siècle, quand la région était exposée à une violence accrue. Kroot et ses collègues interprètent le site comme une réponse à l'agression par des voisins et à la menace que constituait la traite transatlantique par les communautés malinke le long du cours supérieur du fleuve Gambie. Leur travail inclut la cartographie, la collecte en surface et des fouilles limitées accompagnées d'interviews sur l'histoire orale. Bien que des histoires locales suggèrent que le site a été occupé pendant plusieurs années, les auteurs n'ont pas trouvé de preuve d'occupation en dehors de traces de débitage et d'un unique tessou de céramique datant apparemment d'avant la construction du *tata*. Ils notent que, même si du point de vue architectural la fortification ressemble à celle d'autres de la région, elle ne présente pas d'aires résidentielles en dépit de l'étendue du site (0,57 ha). Ils suggèrent que les matériaux utilisés pour les logements pourraient avoir été plus éphémères ou bien avoir été réutilisés une fois que le site n'était plus utile. Sinon, le lien pourrait avoir été employé comme refuge où se cacher des forces attaquantes, plutôt que comme village permanent.

Nous présentons par ailleurs un article de Torres Rodrigues, González-Ruibal, Kleinitz, Rodriguez, Barrio et Jama de Somalie. Leur travail sur le cairn de Heis relate leurs efforts de cartographie extensive et leurs fouilles préliminaires avant la construction potentielle d'un port dans cette zone. Un objectif proclamé de ce projet était de cataloguer tous les tumuli et d'achever certaines fouilles. L'équipe a identifié et cartographié 302 tumuli. Sur les quelques tombes fouillées, elle 153 s'avéra la plus représentative du site tout entier. La tombe a été pillée et montre un état de conservation médiocre. En dépit de cela, une large gamme de matériels a été trouvée, parmi lesquels 25 incrustations qui pourraient provenir d'un coffret datant du I^{er} siècle après J.-C. Les artefacts de ce tumulus, auxquels s'ajoutent les matériaux de surface répandus à travers le site, confirment un certain degré d'intégration entre le Royaume méroïtique et la côte du Somaliland. De plus, la récupération d'artefacts datant du I^{er} au III^e siècle après J.-C. fournit une autre chronologie possible pour cette nécropole.

Pour terminer cet éditorial, nous souhaitons attirer votre attention sur les nouveaux délais pour proposer vos textes ; ils devront tous être soumis à approbation avant le 1^{er} avril pour le volume de juin 2020 et avant le 1^{er} octobre pour le volume de décembre 2020. Nous reconsidérons ainsi le processus en vue d'optimiser la période entre la soumission et la publication.

Enfin, nous remercions Elisabeth Hildebrand pour le suivi et pour son aide très appréciée, ainsi que Nadine Devleeschouwer pour la relecture en français et le service des Publications du Musée royal de l'Afrique centrale pour la mise en page et l'édition. Nous tenons également à remercier les collègues qui, ces dernières années, ont assuré la mise en ligne du bulletin sur le site internet de la Société.

Liza Gijanto

Els Cornelissen

■ Bénin

Recherches archéologiques à Banikoara et à Kantoro (Nord-Bénin) : rapport de la campagne de recherche menée entre décembre 2017 et mars 2018

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Introduction

Nous présentons ici les résultats préliminaires d'une campagne de recherche archéologique et historique menée durant l'hiver 2017-2018 au Nord-Bénin. Les travaux de terrain, qui comportent essentiellement des enquêtes orales, des prospections et des sondages archéologiques, ont été effectués entre le 18 décembre 2017 et le 4 mars 2018. Ce travail prolonge les recherches réalisées dans la région par le Projet ERC « *Crossroads of Empire* » (Haour 2018) et s'inscrit dans le cadre de la recherche doctorale de Barpougouni Mardjoua qui porte sur le commerce caravanier, les voies commerciales, les caravansérails et l'étude des espaces d'habitation dans le secteur Karimama-Banikoara au Nord-Bénin (Figure 1).

L'espace occupé par les communes de Karimama et de Banikoara témoigne d'un peuplement complexe, qui voit se côtoyer une dizaine de groupes socioculturels, par-

mi lesquels les plus importants en nombre sont les Baatombu, les Gulmanceba, les Zarma-Dendi et les Peuls. Les origines et l'ancienneté de ces populations restent mal connues, mais les sources orales et les quelques travaux historiques menés dans la région s'accordent en général pour désigner les Gulmanceba (langue gur) et les Tyenga (langue mande) comme « premiers occupants ».

Si les différentes populations témoignent souvent chacune d'une conscience identitaire et historique qui leur est propre, elles n'en partagent pas moins les mêmes modes de vie, les mêmes cultures matérielles et la même langue (à l'exception notoire des Peuls). De ce point de vue, l'un des enjeux de la recherche consiste à identifier des « marqueurs matériels » propres à certains groupes (et tout particulièrement ceux dont la présence dans la zone serait la plus ancienne), afin d'approcher, via l'archéologie, l'épineux problème du peuplement. Il faut souligner ici que la pression foncière qui se fait sentir dans la région depuis quelques décennies exacerbe les expressions identitaires et la question brûlante de l'autochtonie, souvent pensée comme un trait indiscutable du passé. Dans ce contexte, il peut se révéler scientifiquement hasardeux et potentiellement dangereux de suivre le canevas et les référents historiques offerts par la tradition orale en légitimant (ou en délégitimant) l'antériorité d'un groupe par rapport à l'autre. Plutôt que de focaliser les recherches sur les dynamiques de peuplement – pratique courante des travaux qui croisent archéologie, histoire et anthropologie –, nous avons préféré nous intéresser à d'autres aspects du passé et notamment aux questions connexes du commerce caravanier et du développement urbain.

Contextes historique et archéologique de la zone d'étude

Presque tous travaux historiques entrepris dans la zone de recherche (Karimama-Banikoara) puisent leur source dans la tradition orale et font la part belle à la problématique du peuplement, qu'il s'agisse de la vallée du fleuve (Bako-Arifari 1989 ; Gado 1980 ; Madiéga 1982) ou du Nord-Borgou (Cornevin 1981 ; Lombard 1965). Outre les problèmes que posent les sources orales du point de vue de l'établissement d'un cadre chronologique ou de l'accès à des faits très anciens, la focalisation sur le peuplement a détourné l'attention d'autres phénomènes historiques.

En 2011, des recherches en archéologie, histoire et anthropologie ont été initiées le long du fleuve Niger et au nord du Borgou dans le cadre du projet de recherche « *Crossroads of Empires* » (2011-2015 ; Haour 2018), suite à l'identification de multiples traces d'occupation ancienne (N'Dah 2006). Les prospections systématiques ont permis d'identifier des centaines de sites le long du fleuve Niger, sur environ 100 km, du côté de la République du Bénin, et les fouilles et sondages effectués sur certains d'entre eux ont conduit à identifier quatre phases d'occupation, sur la base de quelque 120 dates C¹⁴ (Haour 2018).

La première phase d'occupation remonte au premier millénaire avant notre ère et concerne des sites caractérisés par la présence d'objets lithiques et de céramique. La deuxième phase se situe dans la seconde moitié du premier millénaire de notre ère, avec des sites constitués de grandes buttes anthropiques où les traces d'activité métallurgique sont légion. La configuration physique de ces buttes laisse présager une occupation dense. La troisième phase est comprise entre les XI^e et XIV^e siècles. Les sites d'anciens habitats sont caractérisés par la présence de pavements en poterie. La seconde phase d'occupation débute dans la deuxième moitié du XVIII^e siècle, avec des sites souvent désignés comme « *tombo* », « *jeno* » ou « *bansu* » c'est-à-dire « ruines » ou « ancien », rattachés historiquement aux villages actuels.

En ce qui concerne cette dernière phase, il faut souligner que les traditions orales montrent que le développement des communautés villageoises actuelles ne remonte pas au-delà du XVIII^e siècle. Il y a là une convergence intéressante

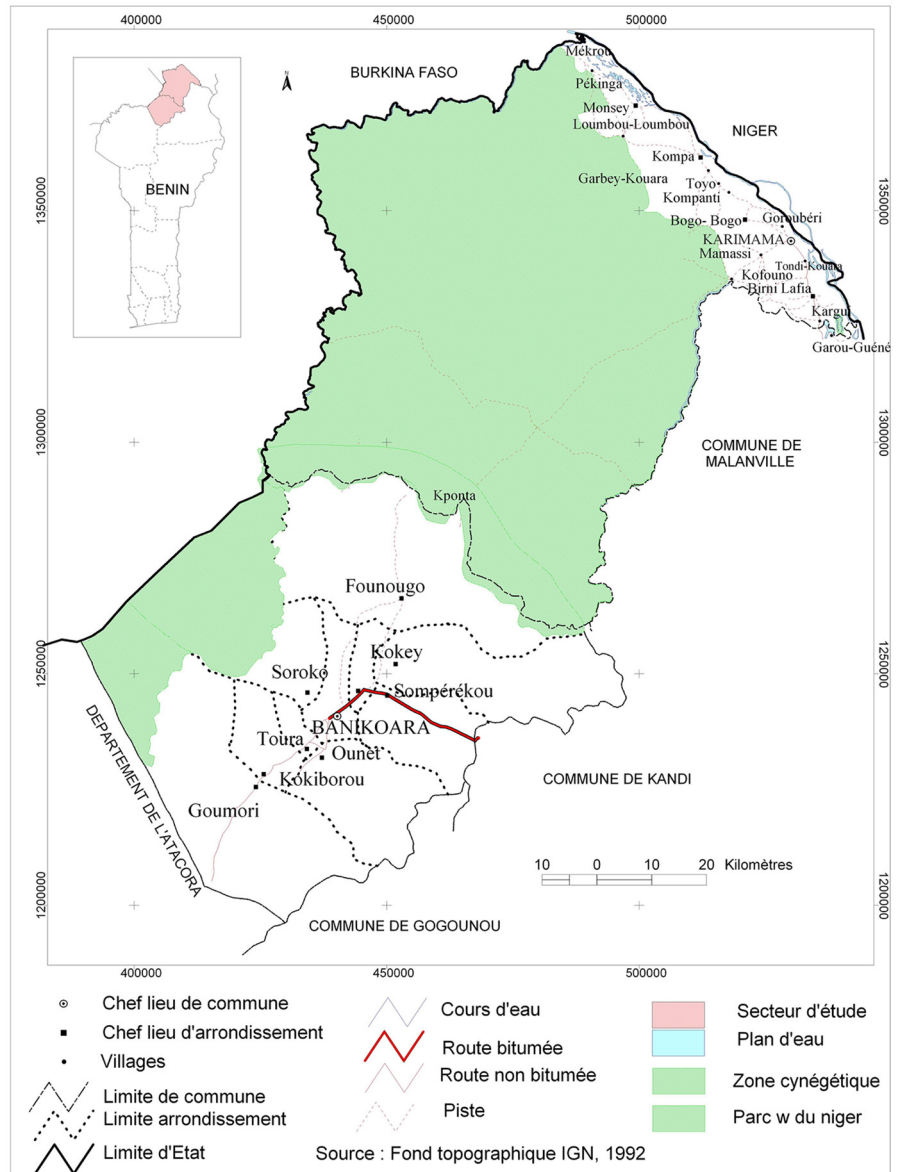


Figure 1 : Situation administrative des communes de Karimama et de Banikoara.

entre l'archéologie et l'histoire orale, qui a été confortée par les sondages archéologiques effectués dans quelques villages modernes. Les données archéologiques révèlent également l'existence d'un hiatus d'occupation entre les XIV^e et XVII^e siècles. Nous ignorons encore si celui-ci reflète un dépeuplement de la région ou un changement dans les stratégies d'implantation des communautés villageoises. Il n'est pas exclu, en effet, que des sites datant de cette période soient implantés dans l'actuelle plaine d'inondation du fleuve ou plus à l'intérieur des terres et qu'ils n'aient pas été identifiés lors des prospections. Quoi qu'il en soit, ce hiatus pose un problème intéressant du point de vue de l'étude des anciens échanges commerciaux.

Plusieurs éléments laissent en effet entendre que la région du Dendi (et du Nord-Borgou) a été impliquée par le passé dans le commerce caravanier à longue distance (Gosselain 2018 ; Gosselain & Haour 2018 ; Gosselain & Smolderen 2018) : présence de populations dendi dans les caravansérails du Borgou et d’Afrique de l’Ouest ; présence, dans la zone de recherche, de patronymes mande d’origine soninke (par ex. Kumate et Traore) associés à la diaspora des marchands wangara (voir aussi Brégand 1998) ; mention par H. Barth (1859 : 639-646) d’une ancienne route empruntée par les commerçants de Sokoto, qui traversait le fleuve non loin de Karimama et se prolongeait vers Salaga ; existence d’anciens ateliers de teinture à l’indigo dans une série de localités du Dendi et du Borgou situées le long d’axes vraisemblablement empruntés par le commerce caravanier (pour une discussion relative à ce critère d’identification, voir Gosselain 2018 ; Gosselain & Haour 2018). Malheureusement, il est difficile de placer ces éléments disparates dans un cadre chronologique précis. Les témoignages indirects d’une implication dans le commerce caravanier macro-régional, que nous récoltons aujourd’hui via les enquêtes historiques et ethnographiques, se rattachent-ils à la phase d’occupation des XI^e-XIV^e siècles ou à celle où se développent les communautés villageoises actuelles, dans la seconde moitié du XVIII^e siècle ? Dans le paysage archéologique régional, l’identification d’anciens caravansérails n’a rien d’évident et il est plus difficile encore d’identifier des pistes caravanières qui ont cessé de fonctionner depuis au moins deux siècles.

Pour tenter de surmonter ce problème – au moins partiellement –, nous avons choisi de partir des faits historiques avérés et de développer une archéologie « à rebours », commençant par les périodes les plus récentes et s’efforçant de remonter dans le temps. Il se fait qu’à la fin du XIX^e siècle, une piste caravanière mineure, le long de laquelle circulaient essentiellement du sel, des étoffes et des chevaux, partait de la localité de Karimama, traversait l’actuel Parc national du W et rejoignait Banikoara, cité caravanière connectée à des voies commerciales beaucoup plus importantes. Nous avons donc décidé de nous focaliser sur ce parcours mettant en relation les régions du Dendi et du Borgou. En combinant des recherches historiques et archéologiques (prospections et sondages), l’objectif est de reconstituer l’itinéraire suivi par les marchands et les différents lieux de halte, d’en évaluer la profondeur historique, de déceler les moyens de reconnaître

un caravansérail en contexte archéologique, d’observer d’éventuelles évolutions dans l’usage des espaces urbains (à Banikoara) et des relations entre le Dendi et le Borgou et, toujours en ce qui concerne Banikoara, de tester les possibilités de réalisation d’une archéologie urbaine (où l’accroissement démographique et le développement des infrastructures posent inévitablement le problème de l’archéologie préventive).

Campagne 2017-2018

Comme signalé plus haut, les recherches archéologiques et historiques ont été menées dans le secteur Karimama-Banikoara au Nord-Bénin. L’objectif est d’inventorier les marqueurs tangibles (caravansérails et autres évidences) associés au commerce caravanier.

En outre, du fait de l’intérêt porté à l’impact du développement urbain et des activités humaines sur les sites archéologiques, certains des sites répertoriés et menacés ont fait l’objet de sondages archéologiques.

Ainsi, pour ce qui est du sous-secteur Banikoara, lequel fait partie de l’ère géopolitique du Borgou, les travaux archéologiques (prospections et sondages archéologiques) ont été menés au lieu-dit Bankoru, à Gaa guru et à Nawordu-Bansu.

Le lieu-dit Bankoru [11°17’52’’N et 2°26’09’’E] est situé, aujourd’hui, dans le quartier Maréworu. Ce lieu historique (le premier habité) est localisé dans le tissu urbain de la ville de Banikoara. L’installation de la fibre optique par la société Bénin Télécom SA en janvier-février 2018, via le creusement d’une tranchée d’environ 1 m de profondeur et 50 cm de largeur, a permis d’observer dans les déblais comme sur les parois de la tranchée des artefacts. Ainsi, la réalisation d’un sondage en un tel lieu met à l’épreuve la pratique de l’archéologie urbaine qui est un axe majeur pour la recherche en cours.

Gaa guru [11°17’89.7’’N et 2°29’8.9’’E] (Figure 2) s’étend sur 2 ha environ et est situé à l’ouest du centre-ville de Banikoara, à 2 km environ. Il est, à la fois, un site d’anciens habitats et un sanctuaire. Des buttes anthropiques dont les surfaces sont jonchées, de-ci et de-là, de tessons de poterie, y furent répertoriées. Gaa guru est l’ancien site qu’auraient occupé les Nam Yango avant de fonder l’actuelle ville de Banikoara. Le développement urbain a atteint ce site et d’énormes dégâts y sont observés. Sa valeur mémorielle est aussi touchée du fait des travaux de construction qui en ont détruit une partie. D’où



Figure 2 :
 À gauche : vue générale du site de Gaa guru,
 À droite : vue générale de la fin du sondage, du sol laté-
 ritique damé couvrant la partie ouest de l'aire du sondage.
 Photos B. Mardjoua, 2018.

l'intérêt d'y exécuter des sondages avant qu'il ne soit trop tard.

Nawordu-Bansu [11°16'39"N et 2°26'17.3"E] (Figure 3) est un vaste site archéologique parsemé de buttes anthropiques sur lesquelles se trouvent des pieds de baobabs (*Adansonia digitata*). La série de buttes anthropiques longe le cours d'eau temporaire, Sabai darou, c'est-à-dire, « la rivière de Sabai ». Situé à 3 km environ au sud du centre-ville de Banikoara, l'espace occupé par le site est déjà loti et abrite aussi des champs. Les activités champêtres sont les principaux facteurs de destruction de ce site où l'exécution des sondages archéologiques s'avère indispensable.

Dans le Dendi, seul le site Kantoro-Jeno (ou Kantoro-Tombo) [11°48'0.94"N, 3°13'49.58"E] (Figure 4) a fait l'objet de sondages archéologiques. Celui-ci se situe à environ 3,5 km au sud-ouest du village actuel de Kantoro et aurait été abandonné dans la seconde moitié du XIX^e siècle en raison de problèmes d'approvisionnement en eau. Quoique Kantoro-Jeno et Kantoro ne se situent pas

directement le long de l'axe caravanier reliant Karimama à Banikoara, leur potentiel du point de vue de l'histoire des échanges commerciaux entre Dendi et Borgou justifie le choix d'y effectuer des sondages. D'une part, Kantoro-Jeno aurait été fondé (comme une série d'autres localités du Dendi) par des Kumate, un segment de population que l'on dit originaire du Mali et qui est assez systématiquement associé aux activités commerciales et religieuses dans le Borgou et à la teinture à l'indigo dans le Dendi (Gosselain 2018 ; Gosselain & Haour 2018). D'autre part, Kantoro-Jeno est le seul site du Dendi explicitement mis en relation avec Banikoara dans les traditions orales. Des Nayango originaires de Banikoara s'y seraient en effet installés peu après sa création, dans des circonstances qui restent floues. Il faut noter néanmoins que ces Nayango ne sont jamais présentés comme des commerçants, mais comme des chasseurs d'éléphants ou des guerriers, particulièrement réputés en matière d'archerie. Enfin, il subsiste en périphérie du site de Kantoro-Jeno les restes d'un atelier de teinture à l'indigo, dont l'intérêt découle à la fois des liens qui unissent l'activité de teinture au com-



Figure 3 : À gauche : vue générale de la fin du sondage à Nawordu-Bansu. À droite : pot entier exhumé au cours du sondage à Nawordu-Bansu. Photos B. Mardjoua, 2018.

merce caravanier et du fait qu'il pourrait être l'un des plus anciens ateliers encore visibles dans la région.

Le protocole de sondage

Les sondages archéologiques ont été réalisés sur 2 m x 1 m à tous les niveaux. Un tamis de 2 mm a été utilisé. Le décapage a été fait par couche artificielle de 10 cm d'épaisseur pour chacun des sondages. Les Figures 2 à 6 sont des illustrations des sites étudiés et des sondages archéologiques exécutés.

Quelques artefacts exhumés au cours des sondages

Nous avons recueilli plusieurs artefacts au cours de l'exécution des sondages. Ce matériel est composé essentiellement de tessons de poterie, de scories, d'ossements, d'objets en fer, de fragments de pipe. Des échantillons de charbon de bois et de sédiments ont été prélevés respectivement pour les datations au C¹⁴ et l'analyse archéobotanique.

En ce qui concerne l'échantillonnage de la poterie sur les sites, tous les tessons avec un diamètre inférieur à 2,5 cm ont été écartés, sauf les bords et les tessons présentant des décors.

Le Tableau 1 fait état, par site, du nombre de tessons de poterie étudiés et de ceux qui ont été écartés.

L'analyse du matériel céramique s'est focalisée sur les types de bords et les décors. Le premier cas d'étude apporte des connaissances sur la morphologie des pots d'où sont issus ces bords étudiés. Le second permet d'apprécier la ressemblance ou dissemblance des techniques de décors.

L'étude du matériel céramique axée sur les types de bords a permis d'identifier 3 types, à savoir : les bords droits, inversés et éversés. À cela s'ajoutent les bords indéterminés. Nous présentons, en guise d'illustration, les



Figure 4 : À gauche : aperçu général du site de Kantoro-Tombo ; en arrière-plan, un des pieds de baobab, espèce végétale dominante sur le site. À droite : pot entier exhumé au cours de l'exécution du sondage II à Kantoro-Tombo.
Photos B. Mardjoua, 2018.

Lieu/Site	Nbre Ø > 2,5 cm (étudiés)	Nbre Ø < 2,5 (écartés)	Total
Kantoro-Jeno (sondage I)	93	155	248
Kantoro-Jeno (sondage II)	157	505	662
Bankoru	71	291	362
Gaa guru	14	184	198
Nawordu-Bansu	716	984	1700
Total	1051	2119	3170

Tableau 1 : Nombre de tessons étudiés (avec un diamètre plus petit que 2,5cm) et de tessons écartés (avec un diamètre plus grand que 2,5 cm) par site.

Code & Site	Niveau : profondeur	Nbre de tessons Ø sup. à 2,5 cm	Nbre de bords	Type de bords			
				Droit	Inversé	Éversé	Indéter- miné
BNK-18-01 (Nawordu-Bansu)	1 : 0-10cm	108	19	01	00	09	09
	2 : 10-20cm	38	06	02	00	04	00
	3 : 20-30cm	18	02	01	01	00	00
	4 : 30-40cm	38	12	00	03	09	00
	5 : 40-50cm	61	10	02	00	08	00
	6 : 50-60cm	48	08	01	03	04	00
	7 : 60-70cm	50	15	00	03	12	00
	8 : 70-80cm	51	23	01	08	13	01
	9 : 80-100cm	86	21	02	04	15	00
	10: 100-120cm	202	42	01	12	28	01
	11: 120-150cm	94	20	03	02	13	02
TOTAL		716	172	14	33	112	13

Tableau 2 : Analyse des types de bords des tessons sur le site de Nawordu-Bansu.

Site	Niv.	Nbre de tessons	Types de décors								
			EL	FSR	TGR	TGR+ P + E	TGR + EL	TGR + E	TGR + EL + P	EL + P	Illis ible
Nawordu -Bansu	1	21		7	13						1
	10	26	3		16	1	1	2	1	1	1
	11	14	1		12						1

Site	Niv.	Nbre de tessons	Types de décors						
			TGR + E	FSR	TGR	E	EL	TGR+ E	Illisible
Kantro- Tombo Sondage I	1	8		3	1		1	1	2
	4	4	1	1	2				
	5	5	1	3		1	1		

Site	Niv.	Nbre de tessons	Types de décors				
			FSR	TGR	E + TGR	E	Illisib le
Kantro- Tombo Sondage II	2	4	3	1		1	
	3	2	1				1
	4	8	3	3		1	1
	5	20	10	6	1		
	6	5	3		2		

Tableau 3 : Répartition des décors par site (Kantro-Tombo & Nawordu-Bansu). Légende des types de décors : E = excision, L = linéaire, FSR = roulette de fibre plate pliée, TGR = roulette de cordelette torsadée, P = poinçonnage. + signifie une combinaison de plusieurs décors sur le tesson.

résultats de l'analyse des types de bords obtenus sur le site de Nawordu-Bansu (Tableau 2).

Il ressort de cette analyse sommaire qu'il existe des similitudes aussi bien pour les formes que pour les décors. À cette étape, en ce qui concerne les décors, nous retenons que la roulette de cordelette torsadée domine dans le matériel céramique du sous-secteur de Banikoara. Quant au matériel issu de Kantro-Tombo, c'est la roulette de fibre plate pliée qui y domine (Tableau 3). Ce qui corrobore plus ou moins les données du projet « *Crossroads of Empires* » (Haour 2018). Dans les travaux ultérieurs, nous consacrerons une étude plus détaillée au matériel céramique.

Conclusion

Au cours des trois mois de la recherche que nous avons menée sur le terrain, nous avons collecté des données orales sur l'histoire du secteur Karimama-Banikoara.

Des sites archéologiques et de divers types ont été aussi inventoriés. Quatre des sites d'anciens habitats ont bénéficié de sondages archéologiques et plusieurs artefacts ont été recueillis. L'analyse approfondie des artefacts ainsi que la poursuite des investigations sur le terrain permettront de contribuer significativement à une meilleure connaissance de l'histoire économique et politique, ainsi qu'à celle du peuplement du secteur Karimama-Banikoara.

Remerciements

Nous voudrions remercier sincèrement tous ceux qui ont contribué, de près ou de loin, à la réalisation des travaux de terrain. Nos sincères remerciements à M. Didier Houénou, alors directeur du Patrimoine culturel, qui nous a délivré une autorisation de recherche. Notre gratitude va également à notre aîné, Dr Nestor Labiyi, pour son assistance durant les travaux. Nos remerciements sont enfin adressés aux coordonnateurs du Projet 2CGU (Prof. Ismaël Toko et Prof. Victor Brunfaut), pour l'appui financier.

Nom(s) et prénom(s)	Âge	Profession	Synthèse des informations recueillies
SABI Gonni (Faro Moso) 61 44 64 40	85 ans environ	Prêtre du site sanctuaire de Bankoru, il est aussi l'un des sages collaborateurs de Nansunon	Il nous a renseignés sur l'emplacement de sites d'anciens habitats et a guidé certaines des prospections. Il est une des personnes ressources à Banikoara (interrogé en janvier, février 2018).
Feu MESSOUNA Alassane (dit Commissaire)	80 ans environ	Menuisier et ancien commissaire du peuple pendant la révolution	Il a manifesté un grand intérêt pour l'histoire et a témoigné de la présence d'un birni. Nous détenons de lui l'emplacement des trois portes d'accès à l'enceinte ainsi que l'essor des routes d'accès coloniales à l'enceinte (interrogé en janvier, février 2018).
BIO Batonu 94 71 85 30	80 ans environ	Griot	Il est pratiquement le griot le plus redouté à Banikoara. Il nous a renseignés sur l'origine et l'histoire des migrations ayant conduit à la formation du « noyau ancien » de Banikoara. Nous détenons de lui aussi l'explication de plusieurs toponymes ainsi que l'histoire du « marché historique » (informateur depuis 2012).
BANDIRI K. Bani 67 91 15 73	65 ans	Enseignant à la retraite	Il nous a renseignés sur la gestion politique de la chefferie et a mis à notre disposition certains de ses documents sur l'histoire de Banikoara.

Sources orales et références citées, personnes interrogées et synthèse des informations recueillies.

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Ghana

Archaeology, GIS, and Remote Sensing near the Pra River, Southern Ghana. Central Region Project update 2015-2017

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Introduction

This paper reports on archaeological investigations along the Pra River in southern Ghana from 2015 until 2017. The work involved two integrated components: focused survey and excavation work at Wawase and Supomu Island (henceforth referred to as Supomu) directed by Samuel Amartey, and a broader pedestrian survey in a series of selected areas near the Pra River directed by Sean Reid. At the sites of Wawase and Supomu, Amartey used excavations, site survey data, surface collections, and documentary sources to track two millennia of social and political changes that occurred in the lower Pra River region. Reid's research broadly examines site distribution and their implications for our understanding of regional history, particularly during the pre-Atlantic era. Reid also explores new methodological techniques of using high-resolution multispectral satellite imagery, integrated with topographical maps, to locate sites in a densely vegetated landscape. Our research is temporally and geographically

complementary, aiming to provide an understanding of social and landscape transformations in the coastal hinterlands of southern Ghana, from the first millennium AD through the mid-twentieth century.

This work is part of the Central Region Project (CRP). Originating from Dr. Christopher DeCorse's work at Elmina, this project seeks to better contextualize the long-term history of the coastal Central Region and its hinterlands. The CRP has examined transformations in the lifeways of people inhabiting the town of Elmina in the context of intense African-European interaction and trade (DeCorse 2001), sacred groves and the development of African polities (Chouin 2009; Spiers 2007), archaeological site survey and excavation on land and underwater (see DeCorse *et al.* 2000; Cook & Spiers 2004; Chouin & DeCorse 2010, Cook, Horlings, & Pietruszka 2016). Our recent work near the Pra River at Supomu, Wawase, and Adiembra has been part of a determined effort to better understand long-term transformations in settlement, technology, and sociopolitical organization in the coastal hinterlands (Figure 1; see also Amartey 2017).

Sociocultural and historical background

The study area is in the Shama District near the border between the Central and Western Regions, Ghana. The people are Fante speakers and part of the Akan ethnolinguistic group of southern Ghana. The paramountcy of the region is located in Shama. Supomu and Yarbiw stools (with their respective subsidiary stools or chieftains) fall under the Shama stool, and these make up the main divisions of the paramountcy. Fishing and farming are the main occupations of the people. Small-scale *galamsey* gold mining activities are also pervasive on and along the Pra River, and they pose a significant threat to the environment and archaeological sites. *Galamsey* operations dig through graves and historical sites in the region because they recover gold artefacts and gold dust. The process of washing the soil and removing gold produces a great deal of pollution that ends up in local waterways like the Pra River.

Our historical knowledge of the hinterland region is scanty, despite the relative proximity of important Atlantic-era coastal sites like Komenda and Shama, which both served as nodes of economic and cultural entrée for Europeans during the Atlantic trade (see Henige 1975). The traditions of this area indicate that there is a longstand-

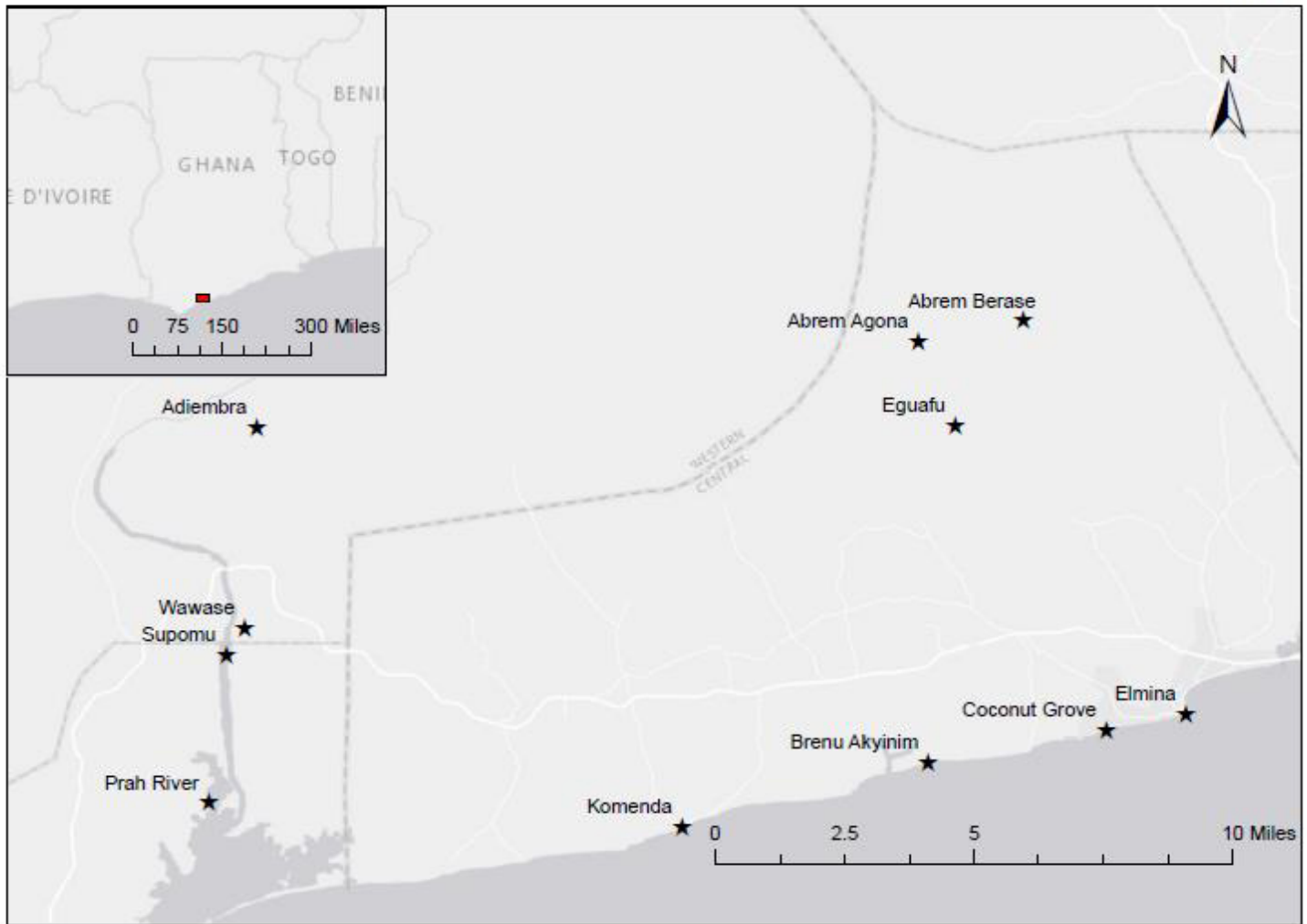


Figure 1: Map of significant sites subjected to archaeological investigation by Central Region. Map S. Reid.

ing relationship with the people of Eguafu (see Chouin 2009:751-752). Like most coastal Fante traditions, the people claim to have migrated from the area of Takyiman in the Brong-Ahafo Region of Ghana. With the Eguafu people, they claim to have settled at a place called Amanfokese, which is said to have been located in the vicinity of Daboase Junction just west of Supomu Dunkwa on the Cape Coast-Takoradi Highway. Amanfokese is said to have been a large settlement sprawling both banks of the Pra River. This supposition can only be interpreted as clusters of settlements borne out by the archaeological survey data.

With fragmentary records and oral histories, Henige (1975) traced some of the Atlantic-era historical dynamics of the region, in particular, the transition of Adom and Jabi into the Supomu and Yarbiw stools. Shama was said to have been under the suzerainty of Yarbiw pol-

ity during the early period of the Atlantic trade (Henige 1975). At the time, Yarbiw was reportedly a small polity whose king lived in the immediate hinterland of Shama. It is unclear whether the contemporary village of Yarbiw is the same seat of the political unit during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Just beyond Yarbiw was the Adom polity, which survived only briefly, yet was supposedly very powerful. In the late seventeenth century, Willem Bosman (1705: 22) described Adom as large polity ruled by five captains, that stretched from the left bank of the Pra River to the Ankobra River in Ahanta country. According to Henige (1975), the settlement at Supomu Island was a remnant of the Adom polity through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Adom fell into historical oblivion after the nineteenth century for reasons that are not clear. Although the people of Supomu Dunkwa claim to be direct descendants of the people of Supomu and Wawase, they hold no historical knowledge of Adom. Some

of the large sites we documented during archaeological survey may also constitute settlements related to Adom and Yarbiw, particularly because the expansion of neighboring Wassa and Fante territories may have been a more recent phenomenon (see Dumett 1998: 44).

Synthesized archaeological knowledge of the region is limited. Oliver Davies (1976) reported surface materials from various localities in the area. The Central Region Project (CRP) has investigated several large sites in the hinterlands of the Central Region of Ghana to the east of the Pra River and surveyed in other portions of the project area. Full details of these surveys have yet to be published, but Reid is integrating this data with his survey work. We are only beginning to understand sequences of ceramic styles and traditions in this region over the past several millennia.

Phase 1: Archaeological research at Supomu and Wawase

Supomu and Wawase are contiguous, abandoned settlements located in and on the east bank of the Pra River, about midway between Shama and Supomu Dunkwa (Figure 1). Supomu is an island in the river, and Wawase is to the northeast, on the floodplains and a low-rise adjacent to the river. Archaeological research on these two sites was aimed at documenting the settlements' histories through the assessment of the lateral and vertical distribution of artefacts across the sites. Mapping, shovel testing, surface collection, and test excavations were employed to assess settlement size and growth, artefact inventories, and stylistic change in the local ceramic assemblage. The research explores the implications of these dimensions in the archaeological record to the sociopolitical history of this locality. A 10-metre grid was established at both sites and used as references for mapping and shovel testing. Surface collection of diagnostic materials was conducted within grids with good surface visibility. At Wawase, three 1x1-metre test excavations were undertaken, and a total of 84 shovel test units were excavated at 10-metre intervals to a depth between 90 and 100 centimetres. Mounds constitute one of the most conspicuous surface features at Wawase. On the island, work was focused on the northern end, where the settlement was located. Since the island has been looted by *galamsey* operators, undisturbed bulks under bamboo patches were targeted for stratigraphically intact deposits. A total of 11 shovel tests pits and four test excavations were excavated. Silting is common in the soil

matrix of the island. The pre-Atlantic horizon mainly occurs between 50-90 centimetres in depth. The soil matrix consists of red to yellowish/buff sandy clay soil that in some instances is mottled and gravelly. The surface horizon includes materials of wider variety dating to the Atlantic period. The assemblage includes trade beads, large quantities of glass and metal fragments, European ceramics, faunal remains, and Atlantic-period ceramics similar to those documented at other sites in the region.

Artefact assemblages from Wawase exhibit a higher degree of variability compared to Supomu. The artefacts from Wawase include microliths and other stone objects, local and imported ceramics, glass, stone, shell, clay beads, local and imported smoking pipes, faunal remains (bone and shell), metal, slag, and daub. All of these materials are not represented at Supomu. There, microliths, shell, clay, and stone beads were not found. No pre-Atlantic deposit was present on the island. The materials from Supomu suggest a seventeenth through nineteenth-century occupation. This observation is not inconsistent with the documentary sources which suggest that the Supomu settlement survived until the third quarter of the nineteenth century (see Henige 1975). In contrast, at Wawase, the distribution of material across the site varies from locus to locus and is indicative of the range of temporal occupations in each respective locus from at least the first millennium AD to the mid-twentieth century. First millennium and early second millennium occupation is restricted to the northwestern plains, slopes, and low-rise. The early Atlantic period occupation appears to have been restricted to the edge of the low-rise to the west. By the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, after Supomu had been abandoned, the Wawase settlement shifted to the entire plains to the south. The locus contains the highest number and most pronounced of the mounds at the site.

Phase 2: Archaeological survey and remote sensing near the Pra

The second component of our work examined the broader landscape around the Pra River to identify and document new archaeological sites, particularly pre-Atlantic and early Atlantic sites. The primary research objective is to better understand long-term changes in settlement patterns, subsistence, and technology in the coast and forest hinterlands of the Western and Central Regions over the past two millennia. Over several months in early 2017, Reid undertook pedestrian survey near Atwereboanda, Adiembra, Be-

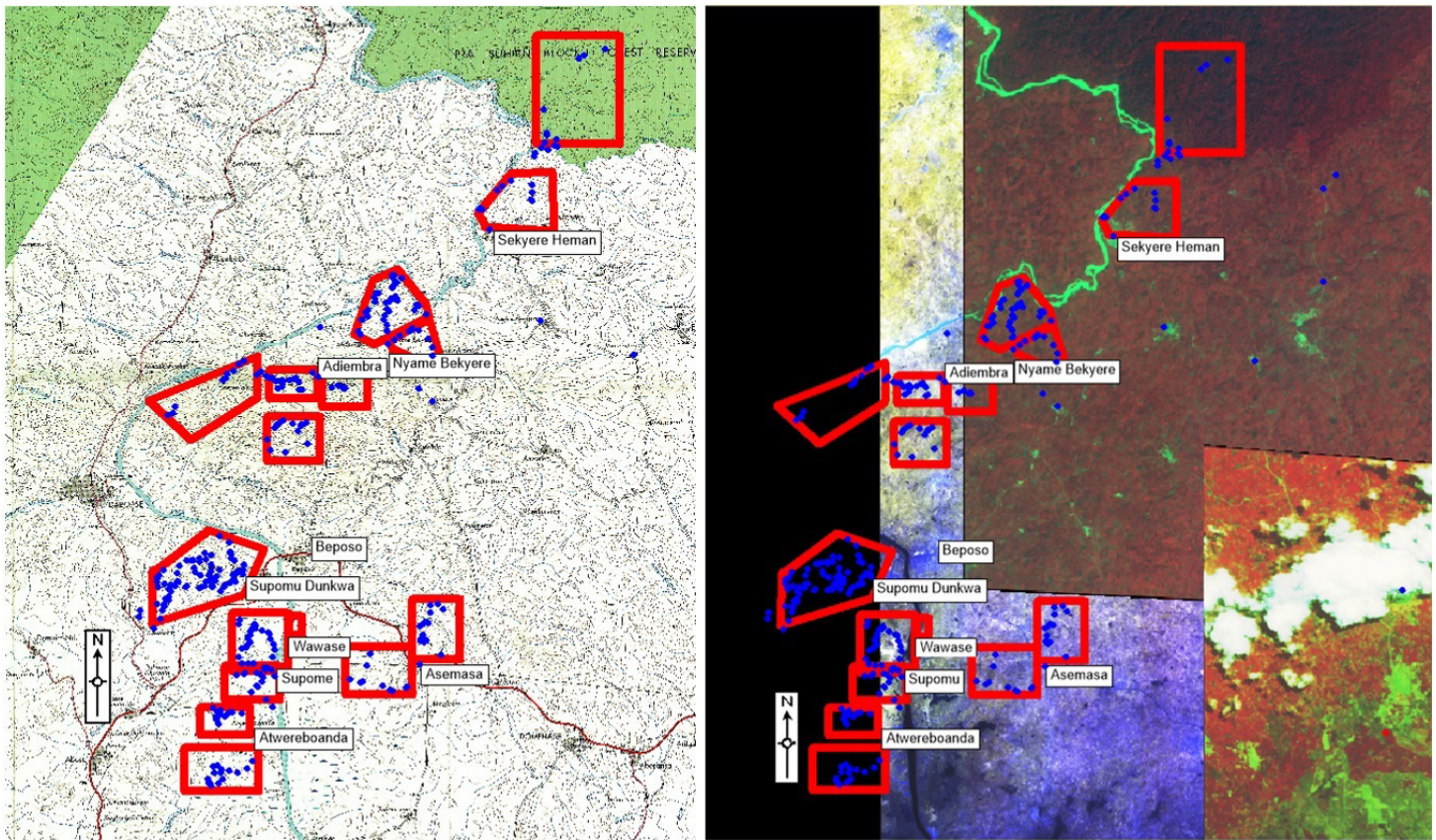


Figure 2: Red polygons indicate survey zones along the Pra River. Scanned and georeferenced topographic maps (left) and very high-resolution multispectral satellite imagery (right) were used to select high priority areas for a pedestrian survey. Blue dots represent some of the various sites located within these survey zones. Satellite imagery courtesy of the Digital-Globe Foundation. Maps S. Reid.

beposo, Nyame Bekyere, Supomu-Dunkwa, Adiembra, Beposo, Asemasa, and Sekyere Heman after permission was granted by the traditional chieftaincies and elders of these towns and villages. Previous survey work conducted by the CRP indicates that some hilltops and sacred groves (e.g., Chouin 2009) are either pre-Atlantic settlement sites or otherwise bear material traces of pre-Atlantic activity. Thus, a survey methodology was designed to identify such areas using a combination of scanned and georeferenced topographic maps and high-resolution multispectral satellite imagery (Figure 2). Used in conjunction, the topographic maps and multispectral satellite imagery enabled the quick identification of hilltops, ridges, sacred groves, and other archaeologically relevant vegetation patterns throughout the project area so that they could be investigated via pedestrian survey and test excavation. Reid (2016) used a similar satellite imagery methodology for survey work in Sierra Leone, and the techniques discussed in that work

demonstrate applicability throughout the forested regions of West Africa. Figure 2 shows the 16 survey zones that were selected based on topographic and vegetative characteristics. Reid located nearly 300 sites within these survey zones over the course of several months of pedestrian survey. Further analysis is underway, but the most notable sites fall into four broad categories: (1) surface scatters of ceramics, many of which are on hilltops, (2) grinding slicks on granite outcrops (see Figure 3), (3) iron smelting sites / slag scatters, and (4) sacred groves.

Reid performed test excavations at three sites found during this survey: a grinding slick site (SD520), a hilltop ceramic scatter (SD610), and an iron smelting site (AD31). First, test excavations at SD520 consisting of a 1x1 metre unit adjacent to the grinding slick and six shovel test pits extending west and north dug in 10-centimetre arbitrary levels yielded very few materials. The uppermost levels contained twentieth-century trash, and the lower levels (be-



Figure 3: One of two rock outcrops found in a low lying bamboo grove near Nyame Bekyere, covered in grinding slicks (site designation NB37). The pictured rock features at least 21 long slicks, probably created by people manufacturing or sharpening nyame akuma stone tools. The measuring tape represents 1 metre. Photo S. Reid.



Figure 4: Ground stone bead excavated at AD31 near Adiembra, top (left) and side (right) views. This bead was found at a depth of 70-80 centimetres, below the slag concentration. We identified similar ground stone beads at other hilltop sites with pre-Atlantic or early Atlantic material culture in the region, including SD610 and Wawase Photo S.Reid.

low 50 centimetres) contained charcoal and an occasional undiagnostic eroded sherd or quartz flake. At SD610, a single 1x1-metre unit was excavated on a hilltop where Reid identified eroded local ceramics with pre-Atlantic stylistic affiliations, stone flakes, and a ground stone bead during pedestrian survey. Excavation revealed the depth of archaeological deposits on the hilltop to be quite shallow (<40 centimetres). The large quantity of pre-Atlantic ceramics, small amounts of quartz flakes and debitage, and a stone bead found washing down the hillside probably indicate this hill has deflated or eroded. At the smelting site of AD31, three contiguous 1x1m units were dug as a trench into one of the iron slag mounds. Dense slag, interspersed with eroded local ceramics, charcoal, burnt palm nuts, and pieces of broken furnace extends from the surface to about 70 centimetres. 70-80 centimetres is transitional: the dense slag layer ends and stone flakes are found with increasing frequency. We also recovered a ground stone bead in this level (Figure 4). Beyond 80 centimetres, only stone flakes, heavily eroded ceramics, burnt palm kernels, and charcoal are present, until a depth of about 100 centimetres where cultural deposits end. We recovered numerous charcoal samples for radiocarbon dating that will be available soon. A full description of the excavations and what was recovered is discussed in Reid’s dissertation.

Discussion and conclusion

Remote sensing and archaeological survey data suggest a long-term settlements dynamic along the Pra River from at least the first millennium AD. Initial results of Reid’s survey work have revealed material traces of pre-Atlantic and early Atlantic human activity throughout the region. Many hilltops, ridges, and sacred groves feature eroded ceramics and stone flakes. The ceramics bear a resemblance to those recovered from excavations at sites like Asebu (Nunoo 1957), the Birim Valley (Kiyaga-Mulindwa 1978), Komenda (Calvocoressi 1975), Brenu Akyinim, Coconut Grove, Eguafu, and Elmina (e.g. DeCorse 2001: 116-123; Spiers 2007: 141-170; Spiers 2012: 125-131). Many of the potsherds feature distinctive rims with a ‘ledge’ or ‘collar’, and are like those excavated from earthwork sites in southern Ghana (e.g., Boachie-Ansah 2008). Dense vegetation on fallow land and secondary forest is a hindrance to locating surface deposits. But for those hills that were actively being farmed, the dual processes of clearing vegetation by burning and disturbing the soil for planting revealed buried ceramic sherds and flakes. The unexpectedly high density of grinding slick sites also speaks to the production and maintenance of specialized stone tools, and more broadly to the intense degree of human activity throughout this archaeological landscape in the deep past. Many of these

grinding slicks are found in creek beds where large boulders are exposed, with fewer found on hillsides, flat areas, and inside the tall forest. Pre-Atlantic ceramics coming out of animal burrows and tree falls in sacred forests suggest that these sites may have been inhabited. Reid's data show a long-term and complex human interaction with the landscape and vegetation of this region.

Evidence from Amarty's work at Wawase suggests that the banks of the Pra River were settled by lithic and iron using societies by at least the first millennium AD. The first and early second-millennium assemblage includes stone and shell beads, ceramics, shells, and a few pieces of iron. At that time, the settlement was quite small, extending only a few metres towards the low-rise bordering the right bank of the Pra River. A significant portion of people's diets likely came from local riverine as well as marine resources. This inference is drawn from the number of shells recovered from pre-Atlantic contexts. Shell and stone beads were also recovered from these contexts which suggests that these societies were using items of bodily adornments. The lithics consist mainly of geometric quartz flakes and a few core tools. This assemblage does not fit into a well-defined techno/behavioural phase known from other parts of Ghana or West Africa, such as the Kintampo or Later Stone Age assemblages (see Watson 2017). On the eve of the Atlantic trade, the Wawase settlement appears to have shifted towards the low-rise. A locally made smoking pipe and a few European trade items dating to the early period of the Atlantic trade were recovered from this locus. Supomu on the other hand lacks any pre-contact archaeological horizon.

The archaeological and historical data suggest that the Wawase settlement was continuously occupied from at least the first millennium AD until the mid-twentieth century when it was abandoned. Data from Supomu indicates that the island was occupied during the Atlantic slave trade spanning the seventeenth to the nineteenth century. The timing of the occupation is also consistent with the period of Adom dominance in this part of the Gold Coast. When Supomu was abandoned in the second half of the nineteenth century, we see a flourishing Wawase settlement during the early twentieth century. During this period, Wawase may have profited from the burgeoning gin, rum, and schnapps economy during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This is evident in the large numbers of glass pieces recovered from



Figure 5: Logging along the Pra River near Nyame Bekyere. A spoil mound from *galamsey* operations is visible in the background on the riverbank. Photo S. Reid.

the study dating to the period in question. Wawase was finally abandoned during the third quarter of the twentieth century. The construction of the Cape Coast-Takoradi Highway to the north of the area may have been the foremost reason for the abandonment of Wawase (also see Carr 2001).

Logging and *galamsey* operations are transforming the present landscape near the Pra River (Figure 5). Reid observed active logging in numerous areas in the vicinity of the Pra, and in particular, *Ceiba pentandra* (kapok) trees were being targeted. Small-scale logging was also occurring in the Pra-Suhien Forest reserve during the survey. Old logging roads and sawpits are common in the area, likely dating from the colonial period. *Galamsey* operations are ubiquitous on the river and along the riversides. Locals reported the river being muddy brown since the mid-2000s due to *galamsey*. At Supomu, *galamsey* operations have heavily disturbed and destroyed archaeological contexts including graves. During a visit to Eguafu in late 2016, *galamsey* operations were active. Seventeenth and eighteenth centuries imported European trade materials, local ceramics, and nyame akuma were strewn around in disturbed areas. Fourteen years ago, Kankpeyeng and DeCorse (2004) sounded the alarm at the unmitigated destruction of Ghana's archaeological past due to development and *galamsey* operations. Unfortunately, in parts of the Central and Western regions, it continues unabated.

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Senegal

Yoro Moussou: a Malinké fortified site in southeastern Senegal

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The fortification of Yoro Moussou

This paper examines the *tata* (fortification wall) and associated archaeological remains of Yoro Moussou, an ancestral Malinké site dating to the late nineteenth and/or early twentieth century. The site is located in the upper Gambia River region of southeastern Senegal, with work at the site being part of the broader Bandafassi Regional Archaeological Projects (BRAP). First reported by Mauny (1963: 122), the site lies 5 km west of the Gambia River and 20 km northwest of Kedougou, the largest town in southeastern Senegal (Figure 1). We argue, based on historical and archaeological evidence, that Yoro Moussou was occupied briefly, if at all, during a period of inter-community conflict.

Yoro Moussou sits in a region known historically as (the) Niokolo, a name shared by a local watercourse and a historical Malinké chiefdom (*jamano*). Historical narratives suggest that the region then evolved into what might be termed a shatter zone at the periphery of Mandé polities (Person 1984), Peul theocracies (Harrison 1988), and Atlantic Era statecraft and slave trade (Carpenter 2012: 72-73). Indeed, oral traditions claim that these latter dynamics led to the construction of Yoro Moussou during a period of great violence in the late nineteenth century. The archaeology of this site illustrates how local defensive strategies intersected with social and political dynamics at play in the Malinké communities of the Niokolo during the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries.

Prior archaeological fieldwork in the upper Gambia River region has been limited. Mauny (1963) noted several sites dating from the Paleolithic to the historic period, including Yoro Moussou. More recently, the appearance of commercial gold mining has led to cultural heritage management projects around Mako and Sabodala (e.g., Altschul, Thiaw & Wait 2016), while efforts to inscribe the Bassari Country as a UNESCO World Heritage Cultural Landscape involved a heritage resource inventory around selected Bassari, Bedik, and Peul communities (République du Sénégal 2011), but excluded Malinké settlements. Within this context, BRAP studies how actors within the village-based communities of the upper Gambia River region responded to regional and global social forces and processes of the past millennium, as well as how people from outside of the area who enacted these forces and processes were integrated into the social life of the region.

Previous scholarly and historical reports of *tatas*

Archaeologists have noted the presence of *tatas* throughout West Africa. Many analyses date *tatas* to the seventeenth-nineteenth centuries and describe them as defensive structures for protection against attacks by Islamic revival states, European colonial forces, and other political and economic associations participating in collective violence associated with the Atlantic System. As pointed out by MacDonald (2012: 345), these fortifications are quite variable in construction technique and scale. For example, the *tata* of Sikasso, Mali was a crenulated structure standing to a height of 6 m and surrounding a 90 ha city. The village of Gwollu in Ghana (Swanepoel 2005: 275) included ditch systems in front of walls to stop cav-

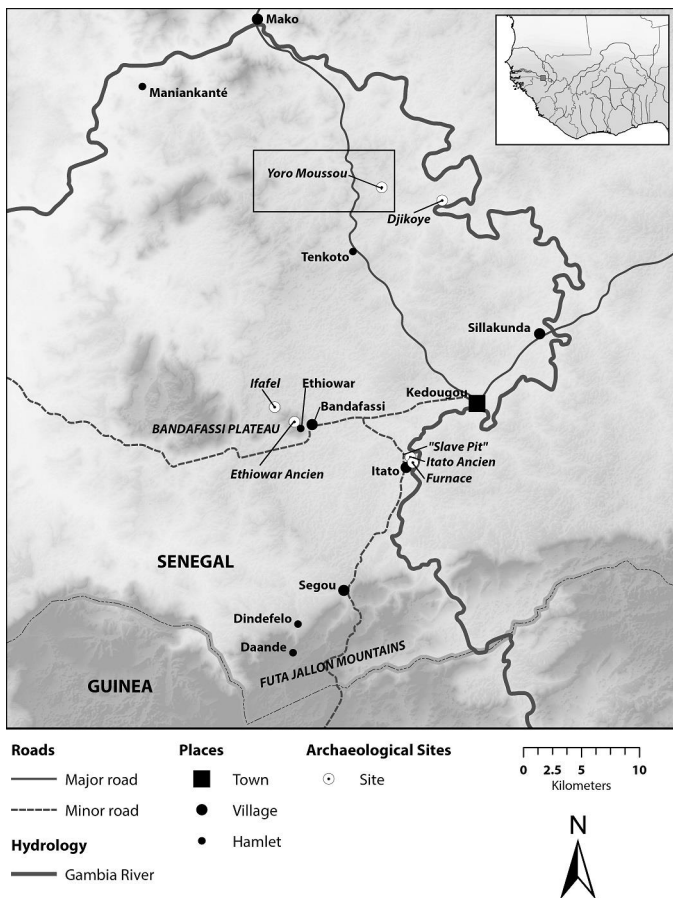


Figure 1: Location of the Bandafassi Regional Archaeological Project study area, Yoro Moussou outline. Map C. Gokee.

alry. DeCorse (2012) has identified a number of methods of fortification beyond the building of walls, including the usage of thorny thickets and rows of trees or the placement of sites on hilltops and in rugged terrain (see also Swanepoel 2005: 272-275).

Historically, *tatas* were extensively recorded by French colonial officials and travelers who visited West Africa in the nineteenth century. For example, Frédéric Carrère, president of the French imperial court, wrote in his description of the villages of the Senegambia, ‘Every village is surrounded by a *tata* to defend the village from approaching enemies in every direction.’ (Carrère & Holle 1855: 145; authors’ translation) In the village of Nétéboulou, in Senegal, the *tata* only protected the houses belonging to a man who Rançon (1894: 18-19) describes as the village chief. Ancelle (1886: 101, 312) observed walls to a height of 4-5 m in the villages of Boulébané and Sansanding in present-day Mali. General Louis Faidherbe,

governor of the French colony of Senegal in 1852-1860 and 1863-1865, observed fortifications at the towns of Mourgoula (Brosselard-Faidherbe & Ancelle 1881: 16) and Bafoulabe, Mali (Brosselard-Faidherbe & Ancelle 1885: 14). In the latter case, Faidherbe described an incident wherein a French military official, in order to put an end to a farmland dispute, offered to aid in the building of a *tata* around the village in exchange for local acceptance of his official partition of the disputed farmland.

More recently Meillassoux (1966: 29) described and/or published colonial era maps generated by French officials for the *tatas* of Goubanko, Médina, Mourgoula, Niantanso, Koumakhana, Fatafi, Koubotoko, Noya, Guignagué, Siékokoto, Koundian, Ouassoulo, Almany Samory, and Bahé located near Kita, Mali, one region from which Malinké communities in the Upper Gambia region trace their ancestry. He explains, ‘The majority of these *tatas*, built by local chiefs or by the villagers themselves, protected almost every village against bandits who wanted to capture slaves or against neighboring armies who had similar intentions’ (Meillassoux 1966: 30; authors’ translation).

How one makes sense of such a vast and variable category of architectural features is indeed a challenge. Connah (2000) argued for the untapped potential of the physical documentation and archaeological and historical contextualization of these sites for theory building in archaeology. *Tatas* are not merely a passive reflection of a general social context of intercommunity violence. The contextual analysis of *tatas* in recent years has helped us to understand such things as the distribution of power between polities and across regions (Usman 2004), the social structure of political power (MacDonald 2012), the development of political hierarchies and large-scale social formations (DeCorse 2012), and the ways in which political and economic entrepreneurs used violence in furtherance of their ambitions (Swanepoel 2005). In this vein, we consider Yoro Moussou as both an active response to aggression between communities and a manifestation of collective action among Malinké communities in the upper Gambia River region.

Historical accounts of Yoro Moussou

The historical accounts of Yoro Moussou collected and published during the 1960s are vague, describing a heavily eroded fortification (Mauny 1963: 122) or a fortified Malinké settlement said to have been partially inhabited by

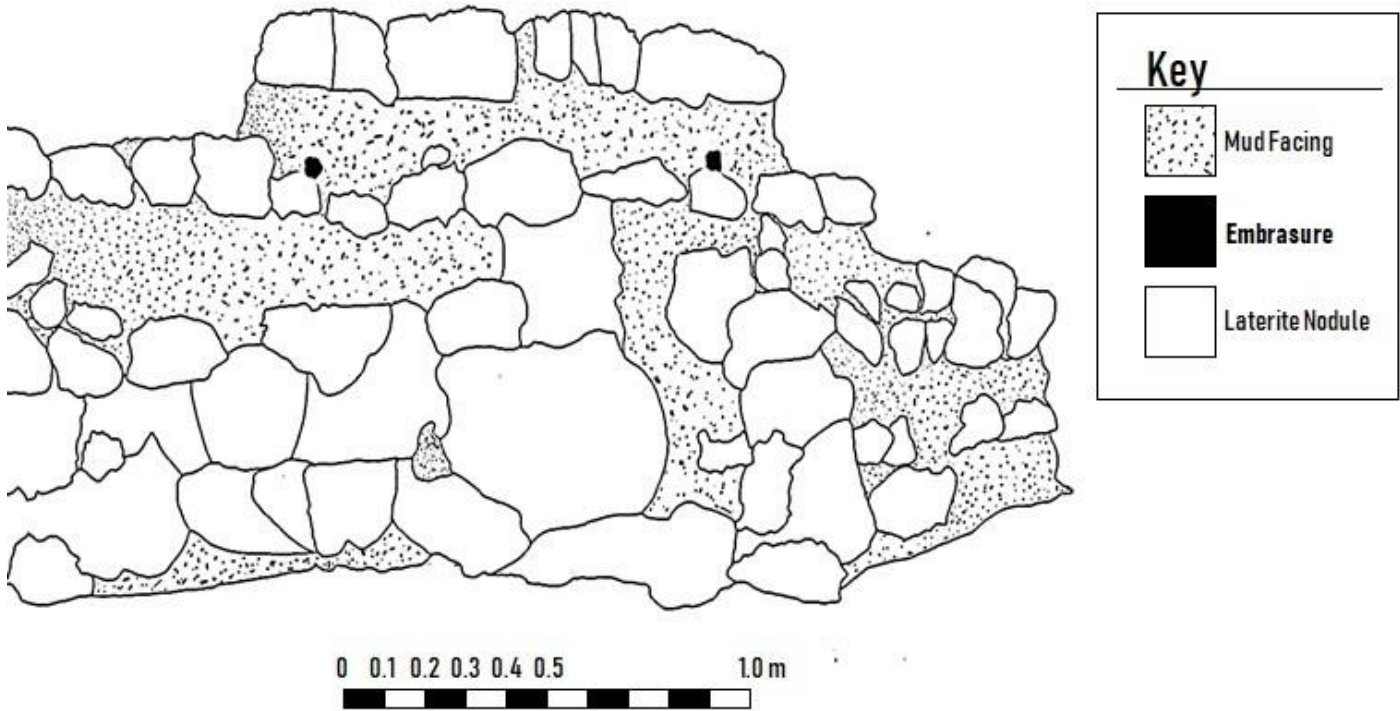


Figure 2: Interior of western bastion north wall at Yoro Moussou, facing north. Drawing C. Machiels.

Bedik refugees fleeing the forces of Alfa Yaya Diallo, a Peul political and military leader from Futa Jallon (Ferry 1967: 130). Alongside our archaeological work at the site, we also held conversations with descendent community members from Malinké villages in the region, including two semi-formal group interviews with prominent older men from the village of Tenkoto. Additionally, we had informal interviews and conversations with local colleagues and inhabitants.

The story of the origins of Yoro Moussou, consistently told by multiple individuals, describes a battle between the Malinké inhabitants of the nearby village of Maniankanté and Peul forces led by Alfa Yaya. Although no specific year is attributed to the battle, it likely dates to around the turn of the twentieth century when the forces of Alfa Yaya are known to have expanded into the broader region (Ferry 1967: 129). Maniankanté was, at the time, the seat of the Keita chiefs of the Niokolo. The Malinké and Peul forces met for battle and when the warriors were face to face, a Malinké woman told the men of her camp that she would sing a song and walk toward the Peul, assuming she would be shot and killed. She told them not to fire until she stopped singing and fell to the ground dead. She walked and sang and when she fell the Malinké attacked, gaining the advantage over the Peul who fled.

After that battle, the inhabitants of Maniankanté built the fortification of Yoro Moussou to house the women and children of their settlement. Local colleagues described the walls as being 4-5 m tall with embrasures. One informant stated that ‘the Malinké stayed at the site of Yoro Moussou for many years, with the fortification being abandoned after the Peul threat seemed to pass.’ The inhabitants of Yoro Moussou then returned to their home village or constructed new settlements. While this account provides details about historical actors and the specific context of the site’s construction, which would be difficult to reconstruct via the archaeological record, it also leaves out many details of the broader social impact of Yoro Moussou. It is clear from these histories that Yoro Moussou represents a novel social formation and one that is historically contingent in comparison to the more durable social structures of Malinké communities in the region. Thus, understanding the specifics of the intersection of defensive strategies and community structures at Yoro Moussou through the archaeological record can further our understanding of the power of the predatory landscapes of the later Atlantic Era to transform societies, as well as the potential resilience of political and economic structures in the face of these pressures.

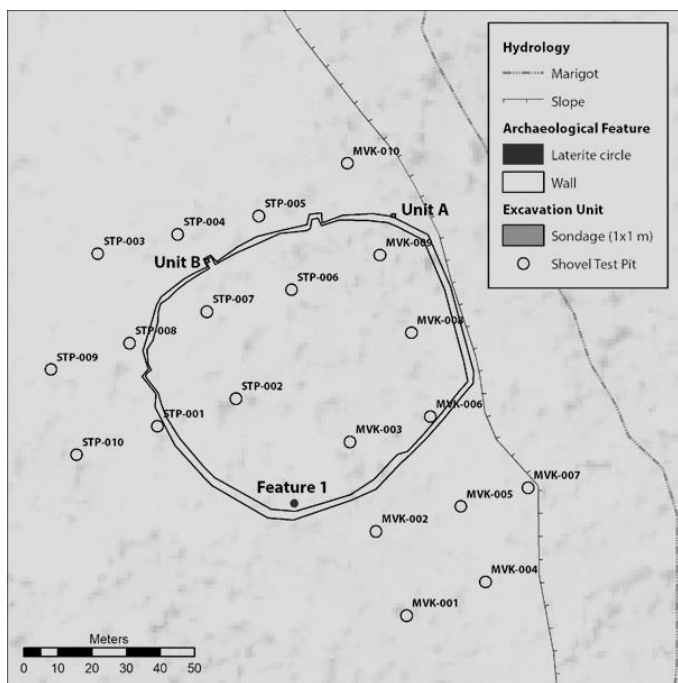


Figure 3: Map of Yoro Moussou, with shovel test-pits, excavation units, and architectural remains. Drawing C. Gokee.

Archaeological investigations at Yoro Moussou

Because of the details of the histories associated with Yoro Moussou, specifically the temporary nature of the habitation of the settlement, our documentation of the site focused on describing the life cycle of the fortification. We began by using a Nikon digital total station to collect 3D points along the visible portions of the fortification wall and the corners of a single flat circular foundation (Feature 1) made of laterite blocks located inside the *tata*. We then took systematic photographs of several upright and collapsed wall sections, which were then traced in illustration software to study construction techniques (Figure 2). Our results reveal that the fortification has an oval shape, measuring 88.1 m east-west and 74.6 m north-south, and enclosing an area of 0.57 ha (Figure 3). Notably, two bastions guard the northern portion of the wall (Figure 4). Although much of the wall has collapsed into a low line of laterite blocks and clay-rich sediment, there are several sections still standing to a height of 1.5 m. Based on the number of laterite blocks collapsed from the wall, it is unlikely that the wall stood much higher than this at the time of construction.

Our study of space within and beyond the fortification walls involved systematic surface collection and



Figure 4: Excavations of bastion interior, Unit B, facing northeast. Photo C. Gokee.

shovel test-pits. BRAP team members began by walking transects at 10 m intervals across the site, placing pin flags next to any artifacts visible on the surface. We then marked these spots with hand-held GPS and scoured them for additional surface finds. In this way we identified two discrete artifact clusters. The first was a small concentration of pottery sherds, likely derived from a single thick-walled, undecorated, brown bodied vessel. These were found inside the fortification wall adjacent to Feature 1. The second was a cluster of knapped stone debitage which was eroding out of the mud plaster exterior of the fortification wall. Given this paucity of surface finds, we also dug a series of shovel test-pits at 25 m intervals across the site. Although these test-pits identified two layers of deposition – a surface deposit of gray silty loam (5-10 cm in depth) and a substratum of orange clay – they yielded no artifacts beyond a single lithic flake.

Finally, we opened two excavation units (1 x 1 m) to better elucidate the construction and collapse of the fortification wall. These included one unit on a collapsed section of the wall (Unit A) and a second unit inside the western bastion (Unit B) (see Figure 4). Neither test unit exceeded a depth of 20 cm, nor yielded any artifacts. They did, however, confirm that the wall was built as a stack of laterite nodules without any significant foundation work.

The wall was then plastered with an exterior coat of fine-grained mud. We interpret a series of round openings, measuring some 5 cm in diameter, as embrasures.

Discussion

The archaeology of Yoro Moussou aligns well with local histories in some respects, yet diverges from them in others. Local Malinké colleagues reported that people lived at Yoro Moussou for many years. However, no artifacts or other evidence of human occupation were recovered at the site, apart from the clusters of knapped stone debitage, which was likely a redeposition from a much earlier off-site occupation, and ceramic sherds from a single vessel. If people did stay at the site for many years, then we could expect far more evidence of anthropogenic accumulation. The fortification at Yoro Moussou architecturally has a great deal in common with *tatas* throughout the region, typically described as surrounding residential sites. However, at Yoro Moussou there were no signs of housing inside or adjacent to the wall, with only a single small architectural feature visible on the surface of the site. The scale of the fortification clearly indicates a great amount of labor and resources devoted to building the wall. The low intensity of domestic activity at the site is, therefore, surprising.

A number of factors could account for this unusual depositional history. There are two possible explanations for the lack of sufficient laterite nodules to construct a 1.5 m high wall, let alone the 4-5 m height claimed by local colleagues: (1) materials from the site were taken for reuse or (2) construction of the wall was never completed. The latter of these explanations seems unlikely as the fortification was faced with mud. This suggests that the structure was either complete or close to completion. However, it is possible that the laterite nodules were faced with mud as they were stacked.

There are also two possible explanations for the lack of significant anthropogenic deposits at the site. It is possible that the *tata* of Yoro Moussou was built as a fortification to retreat into in case of attack or that the site was intended to be inhabited, but, for whatever reason, was not. The fortification at Yoro Moussou seems to have been an outdated defensive structure designed for the last political threat, rather than the future threat of French colonial occupation. Indeed, the regional dominance of Futa Jallon was short-lived. The French government, which had previously supported Alfa Yaya, quickly turned on him using a variety of colonial occupation methods, which

circumvented the need for sustained large-scale military combat in order to assert control over the Niokolo (Harrison 1988: 68-90). Given the broader geopolitical and chronological context surrounding Yoro Moussou, it is likely that the shifting political economy in southeastern Senegal during the later Atlantic Era may be the ultimate cause of the lack of occupation at the site.

The other interesting aspect of the fortification at Yoro Moussou, as compared to other defensive features in the local area and broader region, is the scale of it. The *tata* of Yoro Moussou is one of two known possible fortifications within ancestral Malinké sites in the BRAP study area. The other site containing such a structure is the 1.8 ha village of Djikoye, widely designated as the first Malinké settlement in the region. Local histories describe chiefly power within the Malinké communities of the Niokolo as cycling between Djikoye and Maniankanté (Balicki 1972). Within Djikoye is a central precinct containing three baobab trees and foundations of residential structures, surrounded by a low and heavily eroded earthen berm approximately 30 m in diameter, possibly representing a *tata*. Such a settlement structure manifests a status hierarchy, as is common within Mandé communities throughout West Africa (Jansen 1996).

There are several notable differences between the defensive structures of Djikoye and Yoro Moussou. The fortification wall at Yoro Moussou is significantly larger, with more labor-intensive construction methods. The higher level of investment in construction and the larger scale of the Yoro Moussou *tata* seems to reflect a social difference in the role of defensive architecture at the two sites. Local histories describe the fortification of Yoro Moussou as serving two vulnerable populations within the landscapes of the Atlantic Era: women and children. Additionally, unlike the earthen berm at Djikoye, which only surrounded a select few in the center of a much larger settlement, the substantial walls of Yoro Moussou served the entire population of the site. Thus, the earlier *tata* of Djikoye manifested clear and unequal social differentiation, while the brief life of the wall of Yoro Moussou showed a seeming unity and equality across the community in a time of great stress and risk. Local histories report that this moment was indeed fleeting, with populations leaving the site when they felt the threat of Peul attack had passed, thus ending the social experiment through the re-institution of earlier social relations that underpinned a hierarchical political economy.

Acknowledgements

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Somalia

Excavation of a first century AD tomb in Heis (Somaliland): evincing long-distance trade contacts

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Introduction

The cairn field of Heis (also referred as Hais or Xiis) is situated on the eastern Somaliland coast close to the village of the same name (Figure 1). The site lies at the foot of Majilin Hill, a steep, long escarpment about 145 metres high that runs north-south parallel to the coast and then turns to the east. There it is cut by the El Usbale wadi, around whose mouth a sandy slightly elevated plain is located, in which most of the archaeological remains are

found (Figure 2). In front of the northern side of Majilin Hill lies a small island which constitutes a prominent geographical feature used as a landmark by sailors throughout history. Although identified as a relevant archaeological site as early as the nineteenth century (Révoil 1882) and widely recognized as one of the trading stations described by the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* (first century AD) (Tomber 2012), the site had been virtually unexplored until 2018, when a Spanish archaeological team from the Institute of Heritage Sciences of the Spanish National Research Council (Incipit-CSIC) started systematic research at the site. In this article we present the results of the excavation in one of the looted tombs, which provides evidence of long-distance trade with the Mediterranean, the Nile Valley, the Middle East and India.

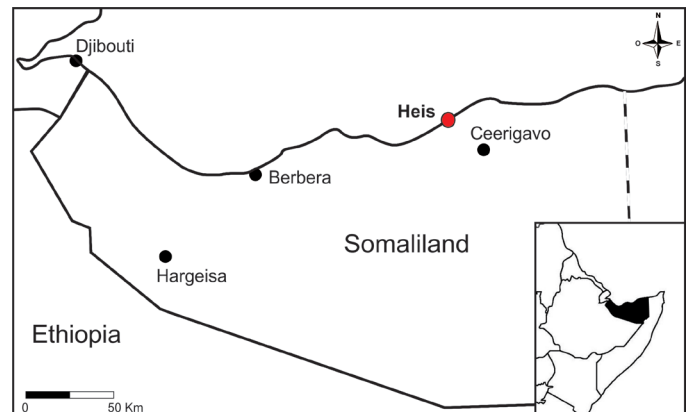


Figure 1: Location of Heis in Somaliland.
Map: J. de Torres.

Previous excavations

The site of Heis was accidentally discovered in 1881 by Georges Révoil, a French traveller who took shelter in this small village during a storm while travelling along the Somali coast. Révoil found a group of ancient cairns in the surroundings of the village. Recognizing their importance, he excavated three of them and donated the collected objects to the Musée de l'Homme in Paris (Révoil 1882). This important find – Révoil correctly identified Terra Sigillata pottery and related the site to one of the trading stops described in the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* – was surprisingly overlooked by researchers until 1975, when the site was briefly visited by Neville Chittick during a survey along the coast of Somalia (Chittick 1979). Chittick's survey and excavation of one looted tu-

mulus yielded Roman glass from the fourth century AD and other materials dated from the second to the fifth centuries AD, but his next campaigns focused on the important trading post of Ras Hafun (Chittick 1980; Smith & Wright 1988), and Heis was not studied again until 2018.

In the 1980s several studies of Révoil's materials in the Musée de l'Homme were conducted (Stern 1986; Desanges 1992), and in 1993 a comprehensive study of the historical context and the characteristics of the objects was published (Desanges *et al.* 1993). The latter included chemical analyses of some of the glass finds as well as a thorough list of parallels for the objects. Most of the glass vessels were dated to the first century AD and are pieces of great quality. Some connections could be established with objects found at Meroitic sites in the Nile valley. However, and despite the authors' efforts, little in the way of contextualization could be provided, apart from describing the site as a large cairn field. No photographs of the site have been ever published, with the exception of a view of the island from Majilin Hill (Chittick 1979: 274).

This situation changed in 2017 when the Spanish Archaeological Project in Somaliland decided to survey the site to assess its archaeological potential and the feasibility of conducting fieldwork at the site. This short survey, which took place in March 2018, confirmed the extraordinary interest of Heis, gathering archaeological materials similar to those found by Révoil and producing the first map of the site through the combination of Google Earth images and drone flights. More than two hundred tumuli were mapped, and a new site on the top of Majilin Hill was identified. The results of this survey as well as news about the possible construction of a harbour at the site made evident the need for in-depth archaeological research at Heis, and therefore a full mapping and excavation field campaign was undertaken in early 2019.

The 2019 campaign

The 2019 field campaign in Heis had three main objectives: the identification and cataloguing of all tumuli in the main cairn field (Figure 2), the excavation of several tombs and the survey of nearby areas with lesser concentrations of tumuli and other structures. A total of 302 tumuli were identified and mapped through a combination of surveys, GPS georeferencing, and drone flights. They were catalogued according to their general structure, main architectural features and state of preservation. The struc-

tures are distributed unevenly across the site: the majority (65%) of the total are located in the plain around the main mouth of the El Usbale wadi, with the other 12% located along a secondary mouth of this wadi immediately to the east. The rest of the tumuli are distributed along the shoreline on the slopes of Majilin Hill, with a small concentration at the head of the beach opposite the island.



Figure 2: View of the main cairn field from Majilin Hill. Photo M. A. Franco.

During the cataloguing of the cairn field, 80 of the structures yielded archaeological materials on their surface, most of them consisting of fragments of green glazed ceramic sherds and fragments of amphorae of Parthian provenance, although glass sherds were also relatively common. In 10 tombs, glass and stone (carnelian and agate) beads were documented. In general, the amount of materials around the tumuli and across the site was small. There was only one exception: the central-southern part of the cemetery where materials were very numerous, including Terra Sigillata and Indian Red Polished Ware (IRPW), Roman amphorae, millefiori fragments, and glass decorated inlays similar to those found by Georges Révoil in 1881 (Figure 3). Although many of the fragments – especially the containers – appear at some distance from the tombs, many others are clearly related to funerary structures, which in this area are significantly more eroded than in the rest of the site. Chronologically, all these materials very consistently date to between the first and third centuries AD. The amount of materials in the central-southern area led to the excavation of one of these tombs (Tomb 153), which has provided the most interesting set of materials documented so far in the site.

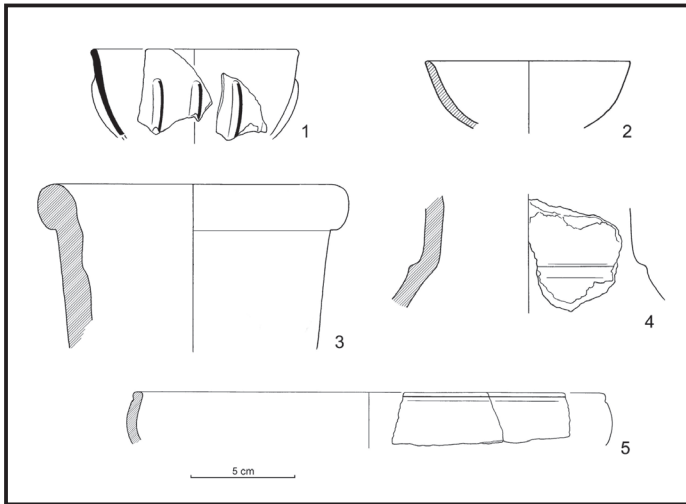


Figure 3: A sample of finds from surface survey in Heis: 1. Roman ribbed-bowl, 2. Italian terra sigillata, 3. Dressel 2-4 amphora from Central Italy, 4. Parthian glazed ware, 5. Indian Red Polished Ware (IRPW). Drawings A. Rodríguez.

In addition to Tomb 153 – which is described in detail below – three other tombs were excavated during the 2019 field season. They were selected due to their good state of preservation (Tombs 75 and 120) or in the case of Tomb 49 – a stone ring – to determine if they actually corresponded to a grave or to another type of structure. Tomb 75 consisted of a small circular cairn of 3 metres in diameter with a ring of large stones at its base. The excavation of the tomb recorded an adult individual, east-west orientated, without any grave goods but with evidence of a sophisticated burial practice, which included a wooden structure covering the body and a layer of shells piled over it. A second cairn excavated in the same area – Tomb 120 – contained a sub-adult individual who was buried with a necklace of bronze and glass beads and a Roman glass jar (Figure 4). This tomb presented evidence of a different burial practice, with a layer of whitish, very compacted sand sealing the grave, which might have been mixed with gypsum. Finally, one of the stone rings documented throughout the site was also excavated (Tomb 49), documenting the remains of two individuals – an adult and a child – who were buried without grave goods. These tombs are the first intact ones to be excavated with a sound archaeological methodology – those excavated by Revóil and Chittick had been looted – and have shown a surprising variety of practices and techniques, a variation that can also be appreciated in the fourth excavated grave, Tomb 153.



Figure 4: Tomb 120. Photo M. A. Franco.

Tomb 153

The fourth tomb excavated during the 2019 field season – Tomb 153 – is located in the south-eastern side of the main cairn field, close to the slope of Majilin Hill and near the only significant concentration of surface materials found in Heis. It was identified during the preliminary survey in 2018 as an important tomb based on the materials collected on the surface – green glazed Parthian pottery, fragments of amphorae, sherds of Roman glass ribbed bowls as well as millefiori and glass inlays – and considered a priority objective for the 2019 campaign. The tomb showed clear evidence of having been looted and it was in a very poor state of preservation. It seems have originally consisted of a rectangular pit measuring 2.5 by 1.2 metres, oriented north-south and delimited by flat slabs of medium size (Figure 5). The pit was surrounded by a ring of stones of medium size, now lost for part of the perimeter, marking a circular structure of 6 metres in diameter. The tomb was surrounded by other poorly preserved structures, which have been eroded by torrents flowing from the slope of Majilin Hill.

As expected, once the excavation started it became evident that the tomb had been looted long ago. This activity impacted the northern portion less than the southern portion of the structure which was severely disturbed. The infilling of the pit had been drastically altered, and it was impossible to determine the original stratigraphy of the grave. Surprisingly, human remains were also absent with the exception of five small bone fragments with a maximum length of 3 centimetres, one of which could

be identified as a phalanx. Archaeological materials, on the contrary, were very abundant although again severely disturbed and mixed, to the extent that pieces of the same object were found separated by a depth of one metre. In some cases, the materials showed evidence of having been affected by fire, although given the level of disturbance of the grave it is not possible to determine in which context this process took place. The tomb was significantly deeper than the other three, reaching 1.5 metres of depth.

The materials recovered at Tomb 153 are extremely varied and in a way provide a summary of the sample gathered in the site of Heis as a whole (Figure 6). They are also strikingly similar to those found by Révoil in 1881. As mentioned above, they are heavily fragmented and therefore it has been impossible to identify the exact number of objects originally buried in the grave. At least ten different objects have been identified so far based on the analysis of the different types and shapes. Glass fragments are the most abundant material, belonging to both monochrome and polychrome vessels as well as inlays of different types. The monochrome examples correspond to at least three different objects, and are highly fragmented. In the sample, a Roman ribbed bowl (see Figure 6, object 6) could be identified, which dates between the first century BC and the first century AD (Desanges *et al.* 1993: 53). Along with the monochrome glass, numerous fragments of at least two different polychrome, millefiori bowls were identified (see Figure 6, object 4). These are relatively common finds both during our surveys and in the Révoil collection (Desanges *et al.* 1993: 47-51). According to Stern (1986: 29), the production of this type of millefiori or mosaic glass seems to have ceased about mid-first century AD in Europe but its production continued into at least the end of the first century in Egypt.

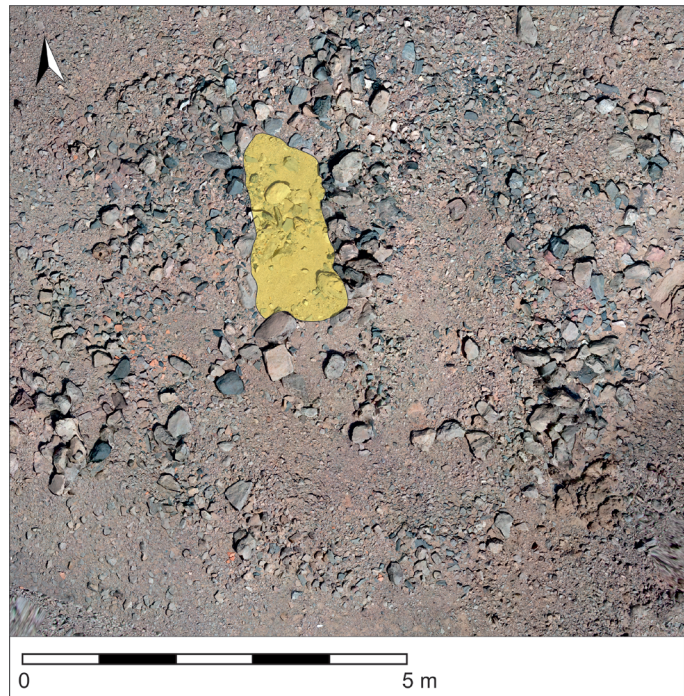


Figure 5: Orthophoto of Tomb 153, showing the position of the grave pit. Orthophoto and graphics M. A. Franco and J. de Torres.

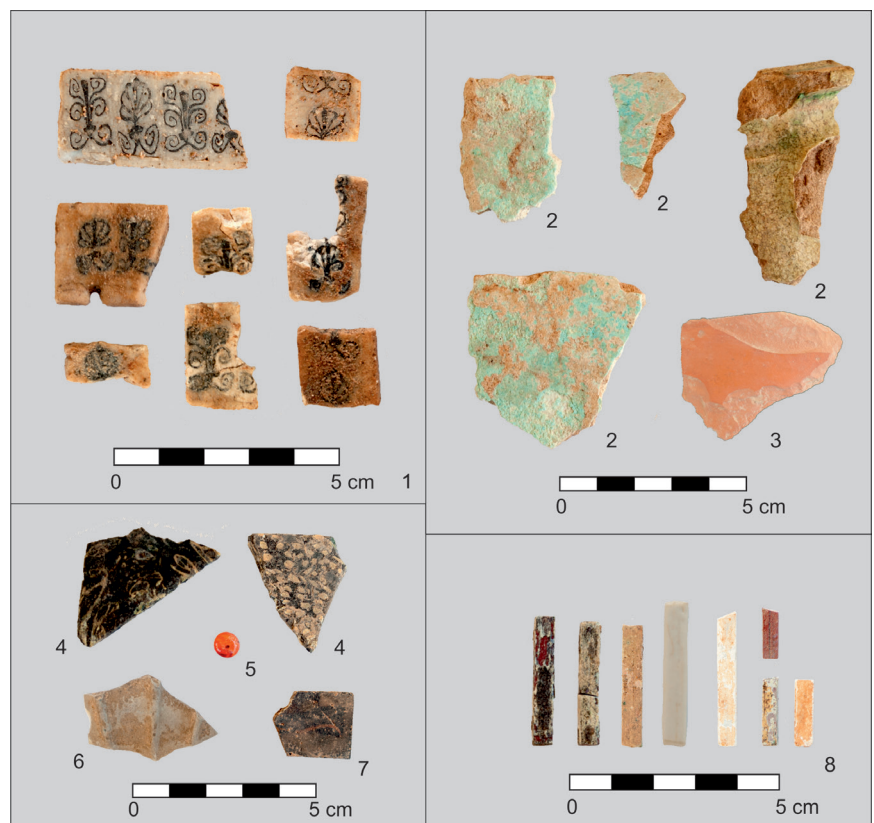


Figure 6: Sample of materials recovered from Tomb 153: 1. Stripes of inlays, 2. Green glazed pottery, 3. IRPW sherd, 4. Millefiori, 5. Carnelian bead, 6. Ribbed bowl, 7. Opaque black inlay, 8. Inlay bars. Photos M. A. Franco, plate: J. de Torres.

The most important set of glass objects documented in the tomb are a group of twenty-five inlays – bars or rectangular strips – which were possibly decorating a box or casket. Twelve of them (see Figure 6, object 8) are bars measuring about 3 millimetres in width and 4 centimetres in length when intact; they are mostly white (9) and also include red (2) in colour or are decorated with a pattern of red and black flowers (1). The other 13 pieces (see Figure 6, object 1) are nearly identical with strips of white opaque glass decorated with floral mosaics consisting of volutes and palmettes outlined in opaque black glass. The only exception is a black opaque square piece with a very faded orange or red line inlaid inside (see Figure 6, object 7). All these inlays clearly belong to the same object and are similar to those found by Révoil (Desanges *et al.* 1993: 34-35, 44-45). Regarding the chronology and comparisons, the only close parallel found so far for these pieces comes from one of the royal tombs of Meröe (Dunham 1957: 127, fig. 83, plate LXIX) and is dated to the mid-first century AD (Desanges *et al.* 1993: 34; Wenig 1978: 17), a chronology that coincides with that of the ribbed bowl and the millefiori mentioned above.

After glass, pottery is the most common type of materials in the tomb and it is similarly fragmented. At least four different pieces have been documented so far: 1) a small, green glazed vessel with a plain outward rim, straight neck and the imprint of a handle (see Figure 6, object 2), which most probably is of Parthian origin; 2) the remains of an amphora of unknown provenance; 3) the base of a unglazed, wheel-made small bowl; and 4) several sherds of an Indian Red Polished Ware (IRPW) vessel (see Figure 6, object 3). The sample of materials from Tomb 153 also includes a carnelian bead (see Figure 6, object 5) very similar to those found in Révoil's collection (Desanges *et al.* 1993: 58) and an unidentified fragment of iron. While these items lack a chronology as precise as the glass described above, they are all consistent with a first century AD date.

Conclusions

The second Incipit-CSIC field season in the cemetery has provided a range of results that lay the foundation for further research in the coming field seasons. First, all structures and archaeological areas at the site were com-

prehensively mapped and documented in preparation for a systematic study of the site. Second, the first reliable information regarding the range of funerary traditions and practices of the inhabitants of Somaliland during the first centuries of the first millennium AD was gathered. Third, our knowledge of the type of materials imported to the coast of Somaliland during this period has increased, confirming and complementing the previous information from Georges Révoil's collection. Although the archaeological materials are still under study, they show well-consolidated commercial links with the eastern and western Mediterranean, the Parthian Empire, and India.

One of the most interesting outcomes of this campaign has been the confirmation of some degree of integration between the commercial circuits of the Meroitic kingdom and the Somaliland coast. They manifest the capacity of the nomadic communities of Somaliland to acquire prestige objects, whose quality is akin to objects found in the royal burials of Meröe. Some of the containers recovered during the surveys and currently under study could have actually been made in the Nile valley, as suggested by Neville Chittick in 1976 (1979: 274). If this is confirmed, a more intense and direct commerce between both regions could also be considered, with the Red Sea as the natural trading route path for these commodities and goods. The chronology of our finds seems to span the first and third centuries AD, in contrast to the later date suggested by Chittick (1979: 274) for some of his findings. This might reveal a new, or alternate chronology for different parts of the necropolis. Further field seasons will hopefully clarify this and expand our knowledge on trading networks, burial practices and the material, social, and ideological background of the communities that put Heis on the maps of Antiquity (first to fifth centuries AD).

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