50 ANOS
1976 • 2026
UEM celebrando 50 anos do nome Eduardo Mondlane: um olhar para o passado para perspectivar o futuro

PanAfrican Archaeological Association

PAN-AFRICAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION FOR PREHISTORY AND THE RELATED STUDIES

Uncovering Archaeology and African Heritage Without Borders

PANAF 17th Congress

UEM - MAPUTO
MOZAMBIQUE

26th – 31st JULY, 2026

PROGRAM and ABSTRACT BOOK

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The 17th Congress of the PanAfrican Archaeological Association for Prehistory and Related Studies (PANAF 2026) is the outcome of a collective endeavor founded upon academic cooperation, institutional solidarity, and a shared commitment to advancing archaeological research, heritage conservation, and interdisciplinary scholarship in Africa and beyond.

The Local Organizing Committee (LOC) expresses its profound gratitude to the institutions and organizations whose generous support made this Congress possible and whose contributions have significantly strengthened its scientific, educational, and inclusive dimensions.

Our deepest appreciation is extended to the Gerda Henkel Foundation, whose support enabled the participation of key African scholars and contributed substantially to the hospitality and catering arrangements of the Congress. We are equally indebted to the Wenner-Gren Foundation, whose main objective was to facilitate the participation of keynote speakers and delegates from the Portuguese speaking African countries (PALOP), thereby enriching the diversity and international character of the scientific programme.

We gratefully acknowledge the Heinrich-Barth-Institute for supporting the educational activities associated with the Congress, and Helico for authorizing the use of the symbolic image of the Maputo-Katembe Bridge, which has become a powerful visual representation of the intellectual and cultural connections fostered by PANAF 2026.

Our sincere appreciation is extended to our partners in Portugal for supporting the participation of one of the Congress keynote speakers. We further recognize the invaluable contribution of Gorongosa National Park, whose support improved the facilities of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FLCS) Museum of Archaeology and the conference venues at Eduardo Mondlane University, creating a lasting legacy for future general academic initiatives.

We are equally grateful to the University of Cambridge for its support in the restoration and enhancement of the FLCS Museum of Archaeology, and to UTU for providing congress materials, including notebooks and pens for all participants.

Special recognition is due to Terrascopy and the British Institute in Eastern Africa (BIEA) for supporting the Student Session, thereby promoting the participation and professional development of emerging scholars and the next generation of African archaeologists. Our appreciation is further extended to the Slave Wreck Project (SWP) for supporting the production of the Congress Programme and Abstract Book, and to the African World Heritage Fund (AWHF) for enabling the participation of additional African delegates and reinforcing the inclusive and PanAfrican character of the Congress.

The Congress has also benefited significantly from the contributions of all registered participants, whose registration fees supported essential financial needs and services important for the successful implementation of PANAF 2026.

The LOC wishes to express its sincere gratitude to its members, mostly of them collaborating in the FLCS Museum of Archaeology, whose dedication, professionalism, and tireless efforts over the years transformed a shared vision into a successful international scientific gathering.

We are equally indebted to the International Scientific Committee (ISC) to the success of the event, ensuring the scientific rigor, academic quality and interdisciplinary excellence.

Special thanks also to Diogo de Oliveira for having organized and monitored the PANAF Website for dissemination of information among its members and conference participants, in collaboration with Eduardo Mondlane University.

Our sincere appreciation is also extended to the PanAfrican Archaeological Association Council (PAA Council), under the leardership of Ibrahima Thiaw, for its continuous guidance, strategic support, and unwavering commitment throughout the preparation and implementation of PANAF 2026. It has been an honour to witness the work ethic of the PAA Secretary General, Iddir Amara in handling all instructions for the outcomes of all meetings and communicating all stakeholders. We also wish to extend our gratitude to Freda Nkirote, Treasurer of the PanAfrican Archaeological Association for her assistance in managing the online registration platform, overseeing the collection of registration fees, and coordinating the enrolment of participants on behalf of the Mozambican host institution.

Finally, we express our deepest gratitude to the President of the PanAfrican Archaeological Association, Elgidius Ichumbaki, whose leadership and steadfast dedication to the advancement of African archaeology have been instrumental in strengthening scholarly cooperation and promoting an inclusive and dynamic PanAfrican archaeological community.

To all institutions, partners, sponsors, colleagues, volunteers, and participants who contributed their expertise, resources, and enthusiasm to this Congress, we offer our sincere appreciation. Your support has not only ensured the success of PANAF 2026 but has also reaffirmed the enduring importance of collaboration and shared responsibility in advancing the study, preservation, and celebration of Africa's rich archaeological and cultural heritage.

The Local Organizing Committee gratefully acknowledges your invaluable contribution to the success of PANAF 2026.

Message from the Rector of Eduardo Mondlane University,

Prof. Dr. Manuel Guilherme Júnior

It is with great honour, enthusiasm, and a profound sense of institutional responsibility that Eduardo Mondlane University welcomes the **17th Congress of the PanAfrican Archaeological Association for Prehistory and Related Studies (PANAF 2026)**, taking place in Maputo, Mozambique, from 26 to 31 July 2026.

As we commemorate the 50th anniversary of our institution, we also reflect on its historical transformation, including the change of its name from the former colonial-era Lourenço Marques University to the present-day Eduardo Mondlane University, named in honour of the first president of the Mozambican liberation movement, Dr Eduardo Mondlane.

This event represents a historic milestone not only for our university, but also for Mozambique and the wider African scientific community. For the first time, the PANAF Congress is being hosted in a Portuguese African speaking country, creating an exceptional opportunity to strengthen dialogue and cooperation among archaeologists, heritage professionals, paleoanthropologists, and scholars from diverse linguistic, cultural, and academic backgrounds.

Under the theme **Discovering African Archaeology and Heritage without Borders,** the Congress invites us to reflect on the need to overcome geographical, linguistic, administrative, and disciplinary barriers that continue to challenge the production and circulation of knowledge across the continent. It also reaffirms the importance of collaborative and interdisciplinary approaches to understanding Africa's past and addressing contemporary challenges related to heritage preservation, sustainable development, and cultural identity. Eduardo Mondlane University is particularly honored to host an outstanding group of internationally renowned scholars and professionals whose contributions have shaped archaeological and heritage research in Africa and beyond. Their presence, together with that of participants from across the globe, enriches the scientific significance of this gathering and reinforces its PanAfrican spirit.

On behalf of Eduardo Mondlane University, I extend my sincere appreciation to the PanAfrican Archaeological Association, the International Scientific Committee, the Local Organizing Committee, partner institutions, sponsors, and all those whose dedication has made this Congress possible.

I warmly welcome all participants and wish them a productive and rewarding stay in Mozambique.

Welcome to Eduardo Mondlane University, welcome to Maputo, and welcome to Mozambique.

PAA EXECUTIVE BOARD

PAA Council President
Ibrahima Thiaw
University Cheikh Anta Diop of Dakar, Senegal.

President of the PAA
Elgidius Ichumbaki
University of Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania

PAA Secretary
Iddir Amara
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PAA Treasury
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Dean Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences
President of the PANAF organizing Commission

Carlito Companhia
Deputy Dean Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences for Investigation and Extension

Sandra Manuel
Head Department of Archaeology and Anthropology, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

The 17th Congress of the PanAfrican Archaeological Association for Prehistory and Related Studies (PANAF 2026) is hosted by the Department of Archaeology and Anthropology (DAA) within the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at Eduardo Mondlane University, Mozambique. The Department serves as the host institution and was responsible for the overall coordination, administration, and management of the resources allocated for the successful implementation of the Congress and the effective participation of delegates from across Africa and the wider international community. A substantial contribution to the successful organization of the Congress was provided by an array of undergraduate student collaborators, whose commitment extended beyond operational and logistical support to encompass active participation in the restoration, curation, and enhancement of the Faculty Museum of Archaeology. Their efforts contributed significantly to strengthening the museum's capacity to showcase and disseminate the outcomes of more than five decades of archaeological research conducted by Eduardo Mondlane University. Their efforts have contributed to the presentation of over five decades of archaeological research undertaken by Eduardo Mondlane University, thereby strengthening the educational and heritage dimensions of the Congress.

The Local Organizing Committee brings together professionals with extensive experience in archaeological research, anthropological fieldwork, heritage management, and academic administration. Their expertise and commitment have been instrumental in ensuring the high quality and effective delivery of the Congress programme.

The work of the Local Organizing Committee was further strengthened by the support of the International Scientific Committee, composed of distinguished scholars with internationally recognized expertise in archaeology, history, and biocultural heritage. Their guidance provided the foundation for the development of a robust scientific programme and ensured the high academic standards reflected in the papers, panel sessions, and thematic discussions presented during the Congress.

The evaluation and selection of papers followed a rigorous peer-review process based on internationally accepted academic criteria. Particular attention was given to contributions that promote interdisciplinary perspectives, integrated approaches to cultural and natural heritage management, community engagement and co-creation, and the role of heritage in sustainable development.

The Congress keynote speakers represent some of the leading voices in African archaeology and related multidisciplinary fields. Their scholarly contributions and professional achievements have significantly advanced archaeological research, heritage conservation, and academic collaboration across the African continent and beyond.

The successful organization of PANAF 2026 has also benefited from the continuous support and collaboration of the PanAfrican Archaeological Association Council, including its President, Treasurer, and Executive Board members, whose regular engagement, guidance, and institutional support have been invaluable throughout the planning and implementation process.

PANAF LOCAL ORGANIZING COMMITTEE (LOC)

Solange Macamo

Chair of the LOC
Department of Archaeology and Anthropology and Director Museum of Archaeology, Eduardo Mondlane University

Décio Muianga
Secretary
Eduardo Mondlane University

Hilário Madiquida

Chair of the Local Scientific Committee
Department of Archaeology and Anthropology, Coordinator of the project Biocultural Heritage and New Heritage Industries in Mozambique, Eduardo Mondlane University

Diogo Oliveira

Organizing Secretary
William & Mary University, United States of America

Arti Chandra

Administration coordinator
Department of Archaeology and Anthropology, Eduardo Mondlane University

Mussa Raja

Fund Raising coordinator
Department of Archaeology and Anthropology, Eduardo Mondlane University,
Director Archaeology and Heritage Management Course

Sofia Fonseca

Fundraising planner
Secretary-General of ICOMOS International Cultural Tourism Committee

Cézar Mahumane

Student Session organizers
Department of Archaeology and Anthropology and Director of Mozambique Island Center for Archaeological Investigation and Resources, Eduardo Mondlane University

Énio Tembe

Communication & Image Curator
Department of Archaeology and Anthropology, Eduardo Mondlane University

Hamido Atuia, Miguel Raimundo, Pedro Moiane, Osvaldo Marrame, João Senda, Silva Mutombene, Agostinho José, Varsil Marcos Cossa, Amanda Fafitine, Ester Lourenço, Judite Nhanombe, Filipe Alage

Collaborators at the Museum of Archaeology,
Eduardo Mondlane University

INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

President
Ibrahima Thiaw
University Cheikh Anta Diop of Dakar, Senegal.

Scientific Advisors
Paul Lane
Coordinator. Director of the MAEASaM project, University of Cambridge, United Kingdom

Eugénia Rodrigues
Centre for History, School of Arts and Humanities, University of Lisbon, Portugal

Gilbert Pwiti
Sol Plaatje University, South Africa

Nuno Bicho
ICArEHB, University of Algarve, Portugal

Luiz Oosterbeek
Polytechnic Institute of Tomar, Portugal

Susana Carvalho
Director Paleo primate Gorongosa project in Mozambique, University of Oxford, United Kingdom

Walter Rossa
University of Coimbra, Portugal

Albino Jopela
Department of Archaeology and Anthropology, Eduardo Mondlane University.
Director of the African World Heritage Fund

SCIENTIFIC STEERING COMMITTEE

Abigail Moffett
Coordinator. Director of the project Entangled materiality and new global histories from southern Africa, *University of Cambridge, United Kingdom*

Anneli Ekblom
Advisor. Director of the project *Biocultural Heritage and New Heritage Industries in Mozambique*, *Uppsala University, Sweden*

Elena Taylor Skosey-LaLonde
Planner,
ICArEHB, Universidade do Algarve, Portugal

PANAF INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE COLLABORATORS

Alda Costa

Eduardo Mondlane University

Alda Saúte Saíde

Maputo Pedagogical University, Mozambique

Ana Martins

University of Évora, Portugal

Inês Raimundo

Eduardo Mondlane University

José Adalima

Director of the MA course in Anthropology, Eduardo Mondlane University

Hamilton Matsimbe

Department of Archaeology and Anthropology, Eduardo Mondlane University

Celso Simbine

Department of Archaeology and Anthropology, Eduardo Mondlane University

Marílio Wane

Institute for Socio Cultural Investigation at the Ministry of Education and Culture, Mozambique

Isequiel Alcolete

University of Lúrio, Mozambique

SPECIAL PANEL SESSION TRIBUTE PROFESSOR PAUL SINCLAIR

Paul Lane, Anneli Ekblom, Alinah Segoby, George Abungo, Gilbert Pwiti, Chantal Radimilahy, Felix Chami,Hilário Madiquida, Solange Macamo

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Thin Section Slides

PAST
ALL FROM ONE

UTU ARCHAEOLOGY
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UNIVERSIDADE EDUARDO MONDLANE

PanAfrican Archaeological Association

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
Department of Archaeology

McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research

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Wenner-Gren Foundation

HEINRICH-BARTH-INSTITUTE association for Archaeology and Environmental History of Africa
in cooperation with the UNIVERSITY OF COLOGNE, Institute for Prehistoric Archaeology, African Research Unit

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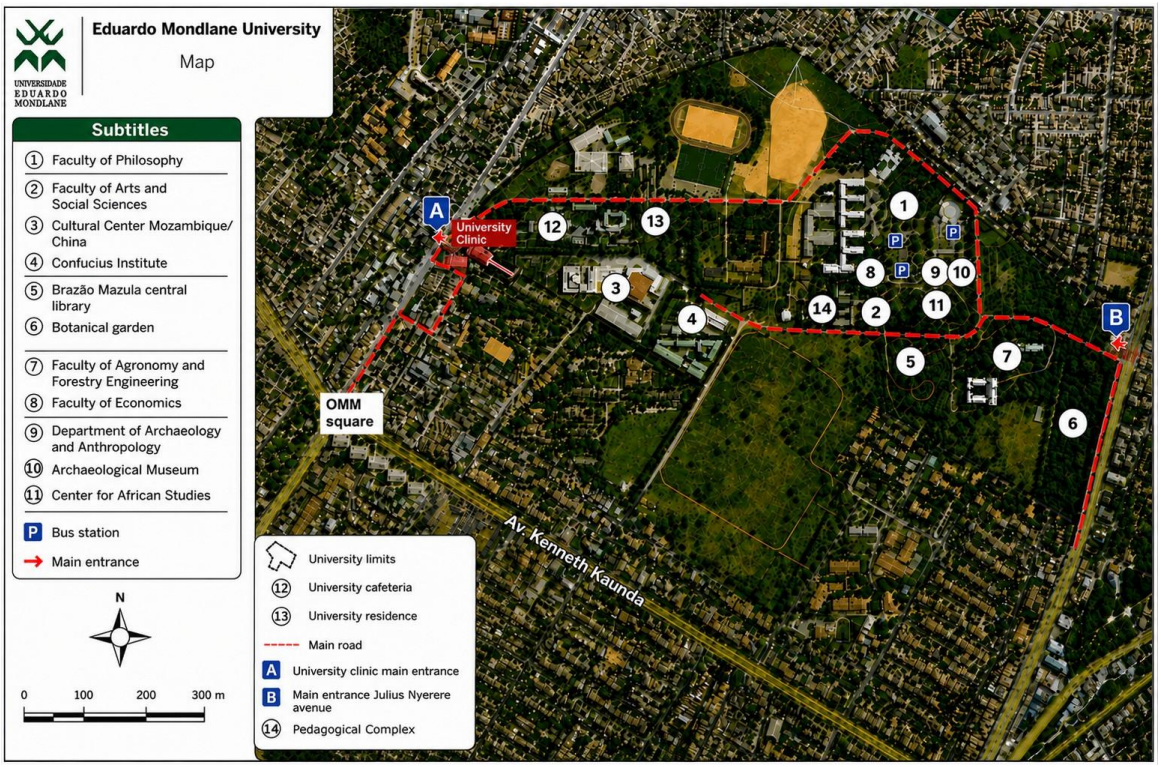
Eduardo Mondlane University Campus Map



Maputo City Map

PLENARY KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Dr Ricardo T. Duarte is Professor Emeritus of Archaeology at Eduardo Mondlane University and a co-founder of its Department of Archaeology and Anthropology. He conducted the pioneering archaeological excavations at the Iron Age sites of Massingir, Mozambique, which yielded some of the earliest evidence for the presence of domesticated cattle in the country. His research has been instrumental in identifying and documenting significant Iron Age archaeological sites in Mozambique, including the University Campus site and Mavita, associated with the Matola and Gokomere ceramic traditions, respectively.

Dr Duarte was also the first Mozambican archaeologist to specialize in the maritime history and archaeology of the western Indian Ocean, with particular emphasis on the origins and development of Swahili civilisation. His research has extended across the East African region through collaborative initiatives, notably the Urban Origins Project, funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida/SAREC).

Following Mozambique's independence, he became the inaugural National Director of the former Museums and Antiquities Service and has continued to provide technical and scientific support to the Ministry of Culture in the preservation, management, and protection of underwater cultural heritage. He founded the Mozambique Island Archaeological and Research Centre (CAIRIM) under the auspices of Eduardo Mondlane University, with financial support from the Swedish National Heritage Board (SNHB) and the Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation of the United States Embassy, in collaboration with UNESCO Maputo.

For several decades, Dr Duarte has played a pivotal role in training successive generations of Mozambican archaeologists and has authored numerous scholarly publications on the archaeology, cultural heritage, and historical development of Mozambique

Prof. Webber Ndoro is an internationally recognised heritage professional from Zimbabwe whose career has made substantial contributions to archaeological heritage management and cultural heritage conservation in Africa and beyond. He has held academic appointments at the University of Bergen (Norway), the University of Zimbabwe, and the University of Cape Town (South Africa), where he serves as an Honorary Professor.

From 1998 to 2007, Professor Ndoro served as Programme Coordinator of the Africa 2009 Programme at ICCROM, contributing significantly to heritage conservation capacity-building across the African continent. Between 2008 and 2017, he was Executive Director of the African World Heritage Fund (AWHF), before returning to ICCROM as Director-General from 2018 to 2023. Since 2024, he has served as Director of the Heritage Centre in the Islamic World at ICESCO. Professor Ndoro has published extensively on African heritage conservation and management. His major publications include Your Monument, Our Shrine: The Preservation of Great Zimbabwe (ICCROM, 2005), Managing Heritage in Africa: Who Cares? (Routledge, 2018), and Cultural Heritage Management in Africa: The Heritage of the Colonized (Routledge, 2022), among numerous scholarly articles and edited volumes.

Prof. Dr Erika Gonzalez serves as Vice-President of the International Union of Prehistoric and Protohistoric Sciences (UISPP) and is Director of Documenta, Brazil. She is a social anthropologist, archaeologist, and historian whose research integrates heritage studies, community engagement, and emerging digital technologies.

She is currently a Full Researcher at the University of Coimbra, affiliated with the Centre for Geography and Spatial Planning (CGEO) and the Instituto Terra e Memória, where she coordinates interdisciplinary research projects focused on artificial intelligence, community-based heritage hubs, and anticipatory governance.

Professor Gonzalez is also a member of the UNESCO-MOST BRIDGES Governing Council and the UNESCO/IPT Chair Advisory Board. Her scholarly and professional activities are particularly centred on heritage initiatives across Portuguese-speaking African countries (PALOP) and Brazil, fostering international cooperation in heritage preservation, sustainability, and community development.

Professor Sarah Wűrz is Professor of Archaeology in the School of Geography, Archaeology and Environmental Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand and is affiliated with the Centre of Excellence for Early Sapiens Behaviour at the University of Bergen.

She directs the archaeological excavations and long-term research programme at the Klasies River Main Site on South Africa's Tsitsikamma Coast, one of the world's most significant Middle Stone Age localities for investigating the origins and behavioural evolution of Homo sapiens. Her research focuses on Middle Stone Age archaeology, particularly lithic technologies and behavioural complexity over the past 120,000 years, providing critical insights into early human cognition and technological innovation.

Professor Wurz's interdisciplinary background in music science and psychology informs her investigations into the evolutionary origins of uniquely human behaviour and cognition. In addition to her academic research, she has made significant contributions to archaeological heritage management, having previously held professional positions at Iziko Museums of South Africa and the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA).

Professor Emeritus Pierre de Maret is Professor Emeritus of Archaeology and Social Anthropology and Honorary Rector of the Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB), Belgium. Throughout his distinguished academic career, he has undertaken extensive archaeological fieldwork across Central Africa, making major contributions to the understanding of African prehistory, early metallurgy, and the development of complex societies.

His archaeological investigations include major excavations in the Upemba Depression and research on the origins of the Kingdom of Kongo in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as pioneering work on the Early Iron Age in Cameroon, including investigations at the internationally renowned Shum Laka rock shelter.

Professor de Maret has supervised numerous doctoral candidates, many of whom have

become leading archaeologists across Africa. He served as President of the Society of Africanist Archaeologists (1994–1996) and was a member of the Permanent Council of the PanAfrican Archaeological Association (PANAF) from 1995 to 2005.

To strengthen the teaching and internationalisation of African archaeology in Europe, he established and coordinated the International Certificate in African Archaeology in Brussels (1984–1999), bringing together scholars from more than twenty universities worldwide.

In recognition of his outstanding scholarly achievements and contributions to African archaeology, King Albert II of Belgium conferred upon him the hereditary title of Baron in 2004. He has also received several honorary doctorates and is a member of the Royal Academy of Belgium.

PANAF Student Day

July 26th, 2026

General Information

Dr Elena Skosey-LaLonde, Cézar Mahumane, Diogo Oliveira, Celso Simbine

About the Student Day

The Student Day at PANAF 2026 aims to empower the next generation of Africanist archaeologists by fostering professional development, interdisciplinary engagement, and community-centered research. Anchored in the conference theme — *"Discovering African Archaeology and Heritage Without Borders"* — this initiative invites students to explore the dynamic intersections of science, heritage, and collaboration across the continent.

Held on July 26th, at Eduardo Mondlane University Campus, the day before the main conference, Student Day offers a curated program of workshops, panels, and interactive sessions designed to equip participants with practical skills and intellectual inspiration. Four thematic pillars will guide the day:

- Professional Development: Students will work in small groups with volunteer mentors to refine CVs, craft cover letters, and build digital profiles (LinkedIn, ResearchGate), preparing them for academic and professional opportunities.
- Funding Futures: Wenner-Gren Foundation officers will lead a discussion on navigating funding landscapes, demystifying application processes, and building sustainable research trajectories.
- Archaeological Science: Students will engage with researchers applying interdisciplinary methods in Mozambique, gaining exposure to scientific techniques and collaborative fieldwork models that are reshaping African archaeology.
- Cultural Heritage & Community-Based Research: A panel of practitioners from across Africa will share insights into community-engaged research, highlighting challenges, successes, and strategies for meaningful collaboration.

Student Day is not a standalone event, but rather a stepping stone from which participants will be encouraged to engage fully in the main conference, contributing to sessions and informal exchanges. By investing in students as active contributors to African archaeology, PAA 2026 affirms its commitment to inclusive, borderless scholarship that reflects the continent's diversity and dynamism.

PROGRAM

SUNDAY, July 26

Room	Complexo Pedagógico da UEM	
Time	**Description**	**Participants**
08:00 – 09:00	Registration	All

Student Session 1 – Funding Your Future				
Time	**Workshop Title**	**Presenter**	**Room**	**Participants**
09:00-12:00	Wenner-Gren Foundation Workshop	•Danilyn Rutherford – President of the Foundation • Chip Colwell – Program Director for Public Anthropology	01	All
12:00-13:30	**Lunch Break**			
Student Session 2 – Professional Development Workshop - Early Career				
Time	**Workshop Title**	**Presenter**	**Room**	**Participants**
13:30-16:30	Early Career Writing Workshop	**Matthew Davis** - Deputy Director of the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, University of Cambridge	01	PhD and MA Student • Early Career Researcher
Student Session 3 – Professional Development Workshop – Undergrad Students				
Time	**Workshop Title**	**Presenter**	**Room**	**Participants**
13:30-16:30	Academic Writing for Students	1. Elena Skosey-LaLonde 2. Kathryn Ranhorn 3. Yonatan Sahle 4. Humphrey Nyambiya 5. Chafim Braga	02	Undergraduate Students
MAEAsAM Workshop				
Time	**Workshop Title**	**Presenter**	**Room**	**Participants**
09:00-12:00	Constructing heritage databases: a case study of the Arches platform	MAEAsAM Workshop	03	All
16:30-18:30	Welcome reception			

MONDAY, July 27

Room Amphitheater 2501 & 2502	
07:00-08:30	Registration of Congress Participants
Official Opening Ceremony Plenary Session	
08:30-09:20	Welcome Message
PAA President	
09:20-09:35	Prof. Elgidius Ichumbaki
Opening speech by the Rector of Eduardo Mondlane University with an introduction by the LOC Chair and the Faculty Director of Arts and Social Sciences	
09:35-10:35	Prof. Solange Macamo Prof. Samuel Quive Prof. Manuel Guilherme Júnior
Keynote Session	
10:35-11:20	Dr. Ricardo Texeira Duarte Building identities in Southern África: the role of archaeologists
11:20-12:05	Professor Pierre De Maret The PANAF Congress at 80. Sharing 50 years of Personal Memories
12:05-12:35	Coffee Break
Sessions (all Sessions at the University Eduardo Mondlane Main Campus, School of Communications and Arts-ECA/Pedagogical Complex)	

Rooms 1–5

Time	Room 1	Room 2	Room 3	Room 4	Room 5
12:35 - 12:45	**Organisers Intro**				
12:45 - 13:00	7: Tracing Uganda's archaeology and Heritage: Research across disciplinary, societal, and administrative boundaries	9: Cultural roots for food future: Reviving Indigenous Knowledge and Environmental Stewardship Across Africa	14: Archaeologies of Coexistence: Humans, Animals, and Environmental Change Across Sub-Saharan Africa	15: Creative community engagement practices in African Archaeology	58: Social Identities in Archaeology Session
13:00 - 13:15					
13:15 - 13:30					
13:30 - 13:45	**Questions and Answers (Q&A)**				
13:45 - 14:00	Session 7 cont.	Session 9 cont.	Session 14 cont.	Session 15 cont.	Session 58 cont.
14:00 - 14:15					
14:15 - 14:30					
14:30 - 14:45	**Questions and Answers (Q&A)**				
14:45 - 16:15	**Lunch Break**				

MONDAY, July 27 (cont.) — Rooms 6–9

Time	Room 6	Room 7	Room 8	Room 9
07:00 - 08:30	**Registration of Congress Participants**			
08:30 - 09:20	**Welcome Message**			
09:20 - 09:35	**Prof. Elgidius Ichumbaki**			
09:35 - 10:35	**Prof. Solange Macamo Prof. Samuel Quive Prof. Manuel Guilherme Júnior**			
10:35 - 11:20	**Dr. Ricardo Texeira Duarte Building identities in Southern África: the role of archaeologists**			
11:20 - 12:05	**Professor Pierre De Maret The PANAF Congress at 80. Sharing 50 years of Personal Memories**			
12:05 - 12:35	**Coffee Break**			
12:35 - 12:45	**Organisers Intro**			
12:45 - 13:00	59: Mortuary Archaeology in Africa: Current Approaches and Ethical Dimensions	60: Memories of climate change from multidisciplinary archives	61: Archival clutter and custodianship: rethinking African epistemologies of keeping	63: Observations et conjectures sur les systèmes de défenses endogènes en Afrique de l'Ouest
13:00 - 13:15				
13:15 - 13:30				
13:30 - 13:45	**Questions and Answers (Q&A)**			
13:45 - 14:00	Session 59 cont.	Session 60 cont.	Session 61 cont.	Session 63 cont.
14:00 - 14:15				
14:15 - 14:30				
14:30 - 14:45	**Questions and Answers (Q&A)**			
14:45 - 16:15	**Lunch Break**			

	Room **Amphitheater 2501 & 2502**
	Roundtable • Tribute to Professor Paul Sinclair
16:15-18:15	Professor Paul Lane, Professor Alinah Segobye, Professor Felix Chami, Professor Gilbert Pwiti, Professor Anneli Ekblom, Prof. Hilário Madiquida, Professor Chantal Radimilah and Prof. Solange Macamo

TUESDAY, JULY 28

Rooms 1–5

Time	Room 1	Room 2	Room 3	Room 4	Room 5
08:00 - 09:00	**Registration**				
09:00 - 09:45	**Keynote Speaker Dr Webber Ndoro Archaeology in Africa as Heritage**				
09:45 - 10:00	**Coffee Break**				
10:00 - 10:10	**Organisers Intro**				
10:10 - 10:25	41:Sudan Prehistory from African Perspectives: Discoveries, Challenges, and Future Prospects	5:African landscapes and geospatial technologies	12:Reconstructing Africa's Past Using Genetic, Archaeological, and Interdisciplinary Perspectives	13:Archaeology and Heritage Studies in West Africa: Trends, Perspectives and the Way Forward	16: Archaeology and Paleoenvironment of North Africa
10:25 - 10:40					
10:40 - 10:55					
10:55 - 11:10					
11:10 - 11:25					
11:25 - 11:40					
11:40 - 11:55	**Questions and Answers (Q&A)**				
11:55 - 12:10	Session 41 cont.	Session 5 cont.	Session 12 cont.	Session 13 cont.	Session 16 cont.
12:10 - 12:25					
12:25 - 12:40					
12:40 - 12:55					
12:55 - 13:10					
13:10 - 13:25					
13:25 - 13:40	**Questions and Answers (Q&A)**				
13:40 - 13:55			Session 12 cont.	Session 13 cont.	Session 16 cont.
13:55 - 14:10					
14:10 - 15:40	**Lunch Break**				
15:40 - 15:55		. 69: Roundtable: Repositioning Built Heritage in African Archaeology: critical reflections and practical solutions	Session 12 cont.	Session 13 cont.	Session 16 cont.
15:55 - 16:10					
16:10 - 16:25					
16:25 - 16:40					
16:40 - 16:55					
16:55 - 17:10					
17:10 - 17:25	**Coffee Break**				
17:25 - 17:40					
17:40 - 17:55					
18:55 - 19:10					
19:10 - 19:25					
19:25 - 19:40	**Questions and Answers (Q&A)**				
19:40 - 19:55					

TUESDAY, July 28 (cont.) — Rooms 6–9

Time	Room 6	Room 7	Room 8	Room 9
08:00 - 09:00	**Registration**			
09:00 - 09:45	**Keynote Speaker Dr Webber Ndoro Archaeology in Africa as Heritage**			
09:45 - 10:00	**Coffee Break**			
10:00 - 10:10	**Organisers Intro**			
10:10 - 10:25	33: Transition from the Later Stone Age to the Early Farming Communities in Africa: Rethinking the Roles of Hunter-Gatherers and Farmers	38: Rethinking African Archaeology and Heritage Management: Practices and Research	70: Teaching Heritage and Teaching Through Heritage: Challenges and Good Practices in Higher Education	64: Ancient textile production (Weaving and indigo dyeing) and challenges of preserving ancestral knowledge in West Africa
10:25 - 10:40				
10:40 - 10:55				
10:55 - 11:10				
11:10 - 11:25				
11:25 - 11:40				
11:40 - 11:55	**Questions and Answers (Q&A)**			
11:55 - 12:10	Session 33 cont.	Session 38 cont.	Session 70 cont.	Session 64 cont.
12:10 - 12:25				
12:25 - 12:40				
12:40 - 12:55				
12:55 - 13:10				
13:10 - 13:25				
13:25 - 13:40	**Questions and Answers (Q&A)**			
13:40 - 13:55		Session 38 cont.	Session 70 cont.	Session 64 cont.
13:55 - 14:10				
14:10 - 15:40	**Lunch Break**			
15:40 - 15:55				Session 64 cont.
15:55 - 16:10				
16:10 - 16:25				
16:25 - 16:40				
16:40 - 16:55				
16:55 - 17:10	**Coffee Break**			
17:10 -17:25				
17:40 - 17:55				
18:55 - 19:10				
19:10 - 19:25				
19:25 - 19:40				

WEDNESDAY, JULY 29

Rooms 1–5

Time	Room 1	Room 2	Room 3	Room 4	Room 5
08:00 - 09:00	**Registration**				
09:00 - 09:45	**Keynote Speaker Dr Érika Gonzalez Archaeology as Anticipatory Science: Integrating AI, Community Knowledge, and Sustainability**				
09:45 - 10:00	**Coffee Break**				
10:00 - 10:10	**Organisers Intro**				
10:10 - 10:25	1: New trends in African Archaeology over the last 10,000 years	3: The emergence of Swahili communities in East Africa: Interactions between coast, Hinterland and the Indian Ocean world	4: Discovering African Archaeology and Heritage with Borders: Novel Approaches, Perspectives, and Interpretations on African Linear Earthworks	6:The role of digital heritage databases in shaping policy, improving site managemen, and enhancing decision-making for heritage preservation	8: Exhibitions and Education in West African Museums: Challenges and Innovations
10:25 - 10:40					
10:40 - 10:55					
10:55 - 11:10					
11:10 - 11:25	**Questions and Answers (Q&A)**				
11:25 - 11:40	Session 1 cont.	Session 3 cont.	Session 4 cont.	Session 6 cont.	Session 8 cont.
11:40 - 11:55	**Coffee Break**				
11:55 - 12:10	Session 1 cont.	Session 3 cont.	Session 4 cont.	Session 6 cont.	Session 8 cont.
12:10 - 12:25					
12:25 - 12:40					
12:40 - 12:55	**Questions and Answers (Q&A)**				
12:55 - 13:10	Session 1 cont.	Session 3 cont.	Session 4 cont.	Session 6 cont.	Session 8 cont.
13:10 - 13:25					
13:25 - 14:55	**Lunch Break**				
14:55 - 15:10		Session 3 cont.			Session 8 cont.
15:10 - 15:25	39: Archaeological Heritage & Development in Africa: Case Studies		44: Bioarchaeological Connections Across the Continent	68: Museology and museological practices in Africa	
15:25 - 15:40					
15:40 - 15:55					
15:55 - 16:10			Questions and Answers (Q&A)		
16:10 - 16:25	Session 39 cont.				
16:25 - 16:40					
16:40 - 16:55	Session 39 cont.		Session 44 cont.	Session 68 cont.	
16:55 - 17:10					
17:10 - 17:25					
17:25 - 17:40	**Questions and Answers (Q&A)**				
17:40 - 17:55	Session 39 cont.				
17:55 - 18:10					
18:10 - 18:25	**Questions and Answers (Q&A)**				
18:25 - 18:40	**Coffee Break**				
18:40 - 18:55					
18:55 - 19:10					
19:10 - 19:25					

WEDNESDAY, July 29 (cont.) — Rooms 6–9

Time	Room 6	Room 7	Room 8	Room 9
08:00 - 09:00	**Registration**			
09:00 - 09:45	**Keynote Speaker Dr Érika Gonzalez Archaeology as Anticipatory Science: Integrating AI, Community Knowledge, and Sustainability**			
09:45 - 10:00	**Coffee Break**			
10:00 - 10:10	**Organisers Intro**			
10:10 - 10:25	18: Current directions in eastern African Middle and Late Pleistocene Archaeology	19: 79 years after Nairobi – revisioning the Middle and Later Stone Age in sub-Saharan Africa	2: Beyond the Colonial Shipwreck: Envisioning a Transformative African Maritime Archaeology	32: Digital Data Collection in African Archaeology: Tools, Practices, and Future Directions
10:25 - 10:40				
10:40 - 10:55				
10:55 - 11:10				
11:10 - 11:25	**Questions and Answers (Q&A)**			
11:25 - 11:40	Session 18 cont.	Session 19 cont.	Session 2 cont.	Session 32 cont.
11:40 - 11:55	**Coffee Break**			
11:55 - 12:10	Session 18 cont.	Session 19 cont.	Session 2 cont.	Session 32 cont.
12:10 - 12:25				
12:25 - 12:40				
12:40 - 12:55	**Questions and Answers (Q&A)**			
12:55 - 13:10	Session 18 cont.	Session 19 cont.	Session 2 cont.	Session 32 cont.
13:10 - 13:25				
13:25 - 14:55	**Lunch Break**			
14:55 - 15:10		Session 19 cont.	Session 2 cont.	Session 32 cont.
15:10 - 15:25	52: Stone Age Places: Thinking, Moving, Making Meaning. Rethinking how early humans inhabited and imagined their worlds			
15:25 - 15:40				
15:40 - 15:55			Session 2 cont.	
15:55 - 16:10				
16:10 - 16:25			Session 2 cont.	
16:25 - 16:40	**Coffee Break**			
16:40 - 16:55	Session 52 cont.		Session 2 cont.	
16:55 - 17:10				
17:10 - 17:25				
17:25 - 17:40	**Questions and Answers (Q&A)**			
17:40 - 17:55	**Coffee Break**			
17:55 - 18:10				
18:10 - 18:25				
18:25 - 18:40				
18:40 - 18:55				
18:55 - 19:10				
19:10 - 19:25				

THURSDAY, JULY 30

Rooms 1–5

Time	Room 1	Room 2	Room 3	Room 4	Room 5
08:00 - 09:00	**Registration**				
09:00 - 09:45	**Keynote Speaker Professor Sarah Wurz Discovering the origins of modern humans in Africa**				
09:45 - 10:00	**Coffee Break**				
10:00 - 10:10	**Organisers Intro**				
10:10 - 10:25	71: World Heritage Sites in Africa: Past, Present and Future Management Issues	28: Maritime Archaeology of the Slave Trade: Past, present and future perspectives	30: Linking past-present-future through Biocultural Heritage	50: Integrative approaches to the study of human evolution in the southern African Rift Valley	21: Functional Studies in Archaeological Research: Giving Meaning to dead objects
10:25 - 10:40					
10:40 - 10:55					
10:55 - 11:10	**Questions and Answers (Q&A)**				
11:10 - 11:25	Session 71 cont.				Session 21 cont.
11:25 - 11:40		Session 28 cont.	Session 30 cont.		
11:40 - 11:55					
11:55 - 12:10					
12:10 - 12:25					
12:25 - 12:40	**Questions and Answers (Q&A)**				
12:40 - 12:55	**Coffee Break**				
12:55 - 13:10		Session 28 cont.			Session 21 cont.
13:10 - 13:25					
13:25 - 13:40					
13:40 - 13:55					
13:55 - 14:10	**Questions and Answers (Q&A)**				
14:10 - 15:40	**Lunch Break**				
15:40 - 15:55	**Organisers Intro**				
15:55 - 16:10	26: Beyond heterarchy: new approaches to socio-political complexity in Africa	43: Mobility, Technology, and Food Systems in Early Iron Age of Southern Africa	55: Maritimity in Question: Decolonizing Africa's Oceans	56: Dialogues with the Past: Interdisciplinary Approaches to African Rock Art in the 21st Century	22: Contributions of prehistory and archaeology to the sustainability and well-being of African communities
16:10 - 16:25					
16:25 - 16:40					
16:40 - 16:55					
16:55 - 17:10	Session 26 cont.		Session 55 cont.	Session 56 cont.	
17:10 - 17:25	**Questions and Answers (Q&A)**				
17:25 - 17:40	**Coffee Break**				
17:40 - 18:40	**General Session Professor Paul Lane**				

THURSDAY, July 30 (cont.) — Rooms 6–9

Time	Room 6	Room 7	Room 8	Room 9
08:00 - 09:00	**Registration**			
09:00 - 09:45	**Keynote Speaker Professor Sarah Wurz Discovering the origins of modern humans in Africa**			
09:45 - 10:00	**Coffee Break**			
10:00 - 10:10	**Organisers Intro**			
10:10 - 10:25	49: Historical and linguistic sources for the study of the history of Mozambique e	62: The History of Colonialism, Resistance Movements, and the Decolonization Processes in Africa	10: 95 years of the Zimbabwe culture: ruins, reactions, and reimaginations	57: The Malagasy World: Challenges, Prospects, Solidarity
10:25 - 10:40				
10:40 - 10:55				
10:55 - 11:10	**Questions and Answers (Q&A)**			
11:10 - 11:25	Session 49 cont.			
11:25 - 11:40		Session 62 cont.	Session 10 cont.	Session 57 cont.
11:40 - 11:55				
11:55 - 12:10				
12:10 - 12:25				
12:25 - 12:40	**Questions and Answers (Q&A)**			
12:40 - 12:55	**Coffee Break**			
12:55 - 13:10			Session 10 cont.	Session 57 cont.
13:10 - 13:25				
13:25 - 13:40				
13:40 - 13:55				
13:55 - 14:10	**Questions and Answers (Q&A)**			
14:10 - 15:40	**Lunch Break**			
15:40 - 15:55	**Organisers Intro**			
15:55 - 16:10	25: Beyond the frontiers in Palaeoscience: renewing chronological, geoarchaeological, palaeolandscape and paleoenvironment al approaches to the African Pleistocene			
16:10 - 16:25				
16:25 - 16:40				
16:40 - 16:55				
16:55 - 17:10				
17:10 - 17:25	**Questions and Answers (Q&A)**			
17:25 - 17:40	**Coffee Break**			
17:40 - 18:40	**General Session Professor Paul Lane**			

FRIDAY, July 31

Room	**Amphitheater 2501 & 2502**
Time	
08:30-10:30	PAA Businesses Meeting
10:30-11:00	Coffee Break
11:00-12:00	Closing Ceremony
12:00-14:00	Lunch Break
14:00-16:00	Excursion
16:00-20:00	Trip to Ka-Tembe • Gala Dinner at • O Farol Restaurant

OPEN WORKSHOP: CONSTRUCTING HERITAGE DATABASES: A CASE STUDY OF THE ARCHES PLATFORM

Organisers: Stefania Merlo [1], Orhun Uğur[1], Faye Lander[2], Renier van der Merwe[2]

1. McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, University of Cambridge, Downing Street, Cambridge CB2 3ER
2. Department of Geography, Geoinformatics and Meteorology, University of Pretoria, Hatfield, Pretoria

Corresponding organiser: Stefania Merlo (email: sm399@cam.ac.uk)

Duration of Workshop: 4 hrs.

Workshop abstract

This workshop, which will include a mix of theoretical and hands-on practical sessions, will equip its participants with the fundamentals of constructing a heritage database from conceptualisation to implementation. The workshop includes three sub-modules as follows: 1. a deep dive into how data can be structured through an interactive play on CIDOC-CRM ontology - the global standard used as a theoretical and practical tool for information integration in the field of cultural heritage (https://cidoc-crm.org/); 2. familiarisation with the creation and use of controlled vocabularies for heritage management interoperability in a global and regional perspective (i.e. Getty vocabularies, Fish vocabularies, Period), and 3. an overview of heritage database creation, using the example of the Arches platform. Arches is an open-source data management platform that is freely available for organisations worldwide to install, configure and extend in accordance with individual needs and without restrictions on its use; it has been adapted to support the documentation of archaeological landscapes, heritage data and ancillary reference information. The project, Mapping Africa's Endangered Archaeological Sites and Monuments (MAEASaM) will also demonstrate their implementation of Arches for managing data on archaeological heritage across eleven African countries as an example of the advantages and limitations of Arches in handling diverse datasets.

PANAF 2026 SESSIONS

Session1: New trends in African Archaeology over the last 10,000 years

Organisers: Malebogo Mvimi[1], Alemseged Beldados[2]

[1]University of the Witwatersrand,
[2]University of North Carolina, Wilmington

Session Abstract:

The Holocene epoch in African archaeology has been a significant area of research for archaeologists over the past few decades. This research has focused on key topics such as the transition from foraging to farming, the beginnings of early agriculture, human-environment interactions, animal and plant domestication, the emergence of complex societies, trade, and state formations. The goal of the researchers has been to reconstruct the cultural history of people during the early, mid, and late Holocene periods. With this background, this session aims to assess the current state of archaeological research during the Holocene epoch across different regions of the African continent. It will serve as a platform to share advancements in the study of African archaeology, with a particular emphasis on the early, mid, and late Holocene periods. We invite submissions for papers that explore various proactive approaches related to the outlined topics. We strongly encourage studies that incorporate, but are not limited to, ethnoarchaeology, ethnography, zooarchaeology, archaeobotany, isotopic analysis, linguistic archaeology, data science and other relevant methodologies. The session organizers especially welcome research and progress reports from graduate students.

Session 2: Beyond the Colonial Shipwreck: Envisioning a Transformative African Maritime Archaeology

Organizers: Cézar Mahumane[1], Luis Felipe Santos[2], Madicke Geye[3]

[1]Department of Archaeology and Anthropology, Eduardo Mondlane University
[2]Universidade Federal da Bahia (UFBA)
[3]Universidade Cheikh Anta Diop

Session Abstract:

Until recently, maritime archaeological research received little attention from African scholars, due in part to a lack of resources and specific training programs, but also because those few interventions that did occur in the African region typically sought shipwrecks that spoke to colonialist-centered histories and often embodied the extractive and exploitative objectives of salvage. This panel will bring together African, diaspora, and international scholars, who are contributing to an exponential increase in maritime archeological research across Africa – to plot new directions for a more inclusive maritime heritage research and practice It will consider how a less wreck centric paradigm – that draws upon archeological, heritage, archival, and oral history sources – might recover long neglected histories of African seafaring, but also capture the waterway practices that have always played a fundamental role in shaping African economic, political, social,

and cultural life not only along its coasts but throughout its interior. They will also discuss the challenges to overcome in order to achieve a decolonized African maritime archeology that not only recovers neglected pasts but also harnesses heritage work to the task of multi-dimensional transformative empowerment in the present by contributing to local community well-being and finding solutions for securing genuine sustainability for African professional maritime heritage practice.

Session 3: The emergence of Swahili communities in East Africa: interactions between coast, hinterland and the Indian Ocean world

Organizers: Celso Simbine[1], Diogo Oliveira[2]

[1]Department of Archaeology and Anthropology, Eduardo Mondlane University
[2]William & Mary University, United States of America

Session Abstract:

Archaeological research on the east coast of Africa and the Indian Ocean has focused on combining data from archaeological survey and excavation with documentary and ethnographic sources to reconstruct the long-term cultural and ecological history of Swahili communities. This panel aims to reflect on the cultural and historical investigations of the Swahili maritime landscape and to discuss the emergence of diversified lifestyles among Swahili communities on the mainland and the islands of coastal East Africa, with special attention to their cultural practices in private and public spaces. The panel will address several aspects of Swahili life, including (1) connections between peoples of the hinterland to communities along the coast and the wider Indian Ocean world, (2) the dominant material culture typologies and functions (potteries, dhows, houses, mosques, etc.), (3) chronologies, and (4) geographic distribution, to further our understanding the Swhaili coast and its culture of consumption and social significance. This panel will reflect on the material culture of commerce and commercial interactions among Africa, Asia, Europe, and America from AD 800 to AD 1900.

Session 4: Discovering African Archaeology and Heritage *with* Borders: Novel Approaches, Perspectives, and Interpretations on African Linear Earthworks

Organizer: Tomos Llywelyn Evans[1]

[1]Washington University in St. Louis

Session Abstract

African linear earthworks are among the largest historical structures on the African continent and, indeed, the entire world. Yet they remain relatively understudied by archaeologists. Pioneering survey work at monumental linear earthwork enclosure sites, such as the Benin iya and Sungbo's Eredo (Nigeria), suggested them to be complex architectural constructs, combining sophisticated technological skill with elaborate structures of labour mobilization, and focused primarily on their utilitarian functions as structures of physical protection and prestige. Renewed research on earthworks has built on these early studies through the undertaking of rigorous excavations, and via the employment of novel theoretical and methodological approaches. These recent studies contemplate earthworks as polysomic, multiplex monuments, with a multiplicity of functions and

meanings. They foreground the connections between African concepts of socio-political power and cosmological notions in which physical demarcation is intimately associated with spirituality and the need to regulate dangerous esoteric forces. They have also explored practices of memory-making in recalling the specific deities, ancestors, and events inhabiting these linear earthwork landscapes, such as their associated gateways, ditches, roadways, shrines, and sacred groves. Furthermore, technological advancements have led to new innovations in archaeological methods used to study these earthworks, including improvements in radiometric dating, geoarchaeology, GPR, and remote sensing techniques such as LiDAR and photogrammetry. This panel will explore this novel research on linear earthworks, considering their important uses as fortifications, enclosures, monuments, and mnemonic landscapes, while also exploring their implications for understanding past technologies and socio-political and labour relations pertaining to their construction and maintenance.

Session 5: African landscapes and geospatial technologies

Organizers: Lamine Badji[1], Stefania Merlo[2]

[1]Research Unit in Cultural Engineering and Anthropology (URICA) / Fundamental Institute of Black Africa (IFAN)
[2] University of Cambridge, United Kingdom

Session Abstract

The study of archaeological landscapes in Africa is constrained by vast territorial scales, difficult environmental conditions, limited infrastructure, scarce research resources, and ongoing political and security instabilities. These factors hinder long-term investigations of landscape dynamics and contribute to the scarcity of systematic data essential for the sustainable management of Africa's cultural heritage. In response, geospatial technologies are increasingly being embedded in fieldwork, modelling, and data analysis across the continent. Their growing use offers promising avenues for documenting, interpreting, and safeguarding endangered or poorly understood sites and landscapes, helping to develop new spatial-temporal analytical frameworks building on the body of knowledge so far generated using traditional methods. This session invites a collective reflection on how geospatial approaches can advance the study of African archaeological landscapes. It seeks to examine the opportunities, constraints, and methodological innovations associated with these tools, and to highlight research that integrates spatial, environmental, and cultural datasets in context-appropriate ways. By doing so, the panel aims to stimulate dialogue on strategies for enhancing archaeological knowledge and heritage protection across Africa.

Session 6: The role of digital heritage databases in shaping policy, improving site management, and enhancing decision-making for heritage preservation

Organizers: Dana Salamin[1], Omar Paulo Madime[2], Thabo Kgosietsile[3]

[1]University of Cambridge, United Kingdom
[2]Department of Archaeology and Anthropology, Eduardo Mondlane University
[3]University of Pretoria

Session Abstract

Digital heritage documentation is transforming archaeological research across Africa, yet its impact on policy and development planning remains limited. Despite significant advances in spatial

databases, remote sensing, and digital recording systems, cultural heritage is still rarely treated as a priority within national development agendas, where economic growth, infrastructural development, and extractive industries often dominate decision-making. This session critically examines this disconnect and explores how digital heritage data might gain greater traction within policy processes. Drawing on current debates about cultural heritage governance, sustainable development, and the legacies of exclusionary policy frameworks, the session asks when digital documentation can challenge rather than reinforce the marginalization of cultural resources. The session's aim is to consider how digital tools enhance risk assessment, site monitoring and protection, while analyzing the political, institutional, and structural barriers that prevent such data from informing development choices. Central questions include: How can digital documentation be translated into persuasive policy evidence? What institutional reforms are needed for heritage to be recognized as a development asset? In what ways can digital data challenge entrenched exclusions within heritage governance? And how can collaborative, community-centered documentation strengthen stewardship and advocacy? By identifying gaps in existing systems and proposing actionable strategies to integrate heritage into planning and policy, the session invites critical reflection on how digital documentation can reposition cultural heritage as a meaningful component of sustainable development in Africa. We invite papers that address these themes—conceptually, methodologically, or through case studies—and that offer fresh insights into bridging the divide between digital documentation, heritage management, and policy formulation. Key words: Digital heritage databases; Heritage policy and governance; Sustainable development; Decision-making; African archaeology.

Session 7: Tracing Uganda's Archaeology and Heritage: Research across disciplinary, societal, and administrative boundaries

Organizers: Herman Muwonge[1], Catherine Namono[2]

[1]Makerere University, Uganda
[2]University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg

Session Abstract

This session invites papers that explore Uganda's archaeology and heritage as shared national resources that stretch across cultural, environmental, and administrative lines. Although the country carries many cultural divisions, research has progressively revealed deep threads of connection linking communities to a long and varied past. At the same time, researchers often work within colonial administrative boundaries and uneven access to sites, which shape how questions are formed, how knowledge moves, and how communities are engaged. We welcome contributions that show how material culture, landscapes, archives, and oral traditions can help us rethink common heritage, while also reflecting on the practical and ethical challenges of navigating these inherited boundaries. We also encourage papers reflecting on restitution, return, and community response. Recent returns of cultural objects to Uganda revealed a range of reactions: some objects sparked strong stories and memories, while others prompted quieter reflections, uncertainties, or new questions about meaning and custodianship. Research that engages these varied responses, addresses archival gaps, or proposes new ways of caring for heritage is especially welcome.

Session 8: Exhibitions and Education in West African Museums: Challenges and Innovations

Organizers: Daniel Kumah[1], Getrude Eyifa-Dzidzienyo[2], Mark Amenyo-Xa[2], Ishaq Isah Ishaq[4]

[1,2,3]University of Ghana
[4]Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Nigeria

Session Abstract

This session focuses on the evolving role of museums in West Africa, examining how they respond to shifts in audiences, restitution debates, and digital innovation. It centers on how exhibitions, educational programs, and public engagement are being reimagined to reflect local histories and global connections, while addressing sustainability, accessibility, and relevance in rapidly changing contexts. Presenters are encouraged to share case studies on community museums, national museums, and university museums, demonstrating innovative strategies and challenges in curating exhibitions and fostering engagement. The session specifically aims to discuss how West African museums can advance education, enhance accessibility of heritage, and create inclusive cultural futures.

Session 9: Cultural Roots for Food Futures: Reviving Indigenous Knowledge and Environmental Stewardship Across Africa

Organizers: Unified Culture Promotion Foundation

Session Abstract

Africa's food heritage is one of its strongest cultural assets, shaped by indigenous knowledge, local crops, and environmental wisdom. However, rapid modernization, climate change, and the loss of traditional agricultural systems are putting this heritage at risk. Across the continent, many indigenous seeds, plants, and materials once used to produce cultural foods, tools, and crafts are disappearing due to deforestation, land degradation, and poor environmental management. This loss weakens both food security and cultural identity, as communities become more dependent on imported crops and processed foods that disconnect people from their traditions. The paper examines how the decline of environmental resources directly affects Africa's ability to sustain its food cultures and reproduce cultural expressions that rely on natural materials. It argues that reviving indigenous farming practices, traditional cuisine, and environmental conservation is essential for restoring cultural pride, promoting biodiversity, and achieving sustainable development. Through a comparative look across African regions, the study highlights how reconnecting culture, ecology, and food heritage can foster cross-border collaboration and strengthen community resilience. It calls for integrating cultural preservation into food and environmental policies as a pathway to building a united and self-sustaining Africa.

Session 10: 95 years of the Zimbabwe culture: ruins, reactions, and reimaginations

Organizers: Robert T. Nyamushosho[1], Abigail J. Moffett[2]

[1]City University of New York (CUNY), in the United States
[2]University of Cambridge, United Kingdom

Session Abstract

Ninety-five years ago, in her landmark 1931 publication, 'The Zimbabwe culture: ruins and reactions', Gertrude Caton-Thompson gave the world new vocabulary – Zimbabwe culture – for framing one of Africa's most remarkable ancient civilizations renowned in global archaeology for its breathtaking stone-walled monuments (madzimbabwe). More than 200 sites, spread across present-day Zimbabwe, South Africa, Mozambique, and Botswana, testify to its wide reach and enduring significance for understanding Africa's precolonial past. Its most celebrated expression, Great Zimbabwe, remains the largest precolonial urban complex in sub-Saharan Africa, second in scale only to the Egyptian pyramids, and continues to inspire new scholarship, methodologies, and interpretations. The historiography of the Zimbabwe culture is inseparable from the intellectual history of African archaeology. From antiquarian speculation to processual and post-processual approaches, and now into the current decolonial turn, research on the Zimbabwe culture reflects the broader political and theoretical transformations of the discipline. Yet this legacy is also deeply entangled with colonialism: widespread looting and vandalism scattered thousands of objects across European and North American collections, while colonial narratives reframed it's past to serve imperial ideologies. The present moment offers an opportunity to critically revisit these legacies while highlighting innovative research being undertaken today. To mark the 95th anniversary of the coining of the term Zimbabwe culture, and in recognition of Caton-Thompson's enduring contributions to the PanAfrican Archaeological Association, we invite submissions for a special collection of papers. This collection seeks to foster critical dialogue, showcase emerging scholarship, and reimagine the Zimbabwe culture not only as a regional archaeological tradition, but also as part of a broader global conversation in archaeology, heritage, and museum studies.

Session 12: Reconstructing Africa's Past Using Genetic, Archaeological, and Interdisciplinary Perspectives

Organizers: Carina Schlebusch[1], Ezekia Mtetwa[2]

[1] Department of Organismal Biology Evolutionary Biology Centre, Uppsala University
[2]Uppsala University, Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago

Session Abstract

Africa holds the deepest roots of human history. Its unparalleled cultural, archaeological and genetic diversity, offers key insights into the origins, dispersals, and adaptations of our species. In recent decades, advances in ancient DNA, genomics, bioarchaeology and archaeological science have significantly expanded our ability to reconstruct Africa's complex demographic histories and cultural trajectories across the continent, with increasing resolution. However, these approaches often remain constrained within the boundaries of each discipline. This session seeks to bridge genetics, archaeology, linguistics, and paleoenvironmental research to address long-standing questions

regarding migration and admixture, population continuity and replacement, technological and subsistence transitions (including plant and animal domestication), and the impacts of climatic and ecological change through time. We invite contributions that span key phases in Africa's human past – from the emergence of early Homo and the development of behavioural complexity to the Holocene large-scale population movements, biological and cultural adaptations, and inter-regional interactions. We also welcome methodological contributions that showcase innovative applications of genomic, isotopic, or computational tools to reconstruct demographic, ecological, or cultural histories. In particular, we encourage case studies that integrate ancient and/or modern DNA with archaeological evidence that shed light on mobility, diet and social organization. In addition, we invite critical cross-disciplinary discussions on professional ethics, heritage, data governance, equitable partnerships, and capacity-building within African contexts. By bringing together scholars from across Africa and beyond, this session aims to foster interdisciplinary collaboration, strengthen continental research networks, and underscore Africa's central role in shaping our understanding of human evolution and diversity.

Session 13: Archaeology and Heritage Studies in West Africa: Trends, Perspectives and the Way Forward

Organizers: Daniel Kumah[1], Kodzo Gavua[2], William Gblerkpor[3]

[1,2]University of Ghana
[3]Western Illinois University (WIU),

Session Abstract

This session seeks to critically examine the current state and future directions of archaeology and heritage studies in West Africa. Over the past two decades, scholarship in the region has expanded beyond traditional excavation and survey to embrace interdisciplinary approaches that integrate community collaborations in the area of environmental and developmental matters, archival research, museum practice, digital archaeology, site conservation and heritage tourism development. Presentations will highlight emerging trends such as community based archaeology, biocultural heritage, restitution debates, and the use of innovative technologies in documentation and public engagement. By drawing on case studies from across West Africa including ancient trade centers, shrine economies, colonial heritage sites, and contemporary museum initiatives' the session will provide diverse perspectives on how archaeology informs cultural resource management and heritage policy. Contributors will also address pressing challenges such as site encroachment, mining, climate change, and the politics of restitution, while proposing strategies for sustainable heritage futures. Ultimately, this session aims to foster dialogue among scholars, practitioners, and policymakers on the way forward for archaeology and heritage studies in West Africa. It emphasizes collaborative methodologies, regional networks, and the democratization of heritage knowledge as essential pathways for strengthening the discipline and ensuring its relevance to communities and global scholarship alike.

Session 14: Archaeologies of Coexistence: Humans, Animals, and Environmental Change Across Sub-Saharan Africa

Organizers: Marta Osypinska[1], Piotr Osypinski[2]

[1,2]University of Wrocław

Session Abstract

Contemporary conflicts and instability in the Sahel countries are pushing archaeological teams working there to look for new research areas. Many of them are finding inspiring fields of study in East and Southern Africa, continuing their programmes in completely new contexts. The "northern" perspective, resulting from research experiences in the Sahara or the Nile Valley, sheds new light on the past of other regions of Africa, previously known mainly locally, opening a discussion on the links between different areas of Africa in a new, broader perspective. The central theme of the proposed session is the enduring relationship between humans and animals – a relationship that has shaped communities, migrations and survival strategies for millennia. We encourage archaeologists, zooarchaeologists, bioarchaeologists, ethnoarchaeologists and historians working on both prehistory and historical periods to share their thoughts. We are interested in the earliest human adaptations and hunting specializations of the Paleolithic, the environmental breakthroughs of the Pleistocene and Holocene, pastoral migrations, the migration paths of humans and animals in antiquity, as well as the changes in human-animal and human-environment relationships over the last few hundred years. The scope of research is broad: from analysis of animal and human remains, biomarkers in micro-residues on tools and vessels, isotopic analyses, to artistic creation/rock art, iconography, sculpture, and small-scale art. Of particular interest are interdisciplinary approaches that combine material archaeology with environmental research, zooarchaeology, paleoecology and cultural history. The session aims to create a platform for the exchange of knowledge and experiences between archaeologists from different regions of North-East, East and Sub-Saharan Africa, which will allow for a better understanding of the dynamics of human-animal coexistence, migration and the evolution of communities in a changing environment. We invite researchers representing different eras, regions and methodologies to share their research and inspiring perspectives.

Session 15: Creative community engagement practices in African archaeology

Organizers: Ibrahima Thiaw[1], Lamine Badji[2]

[1,2]Cheikh Anta Diop University of Dakar (UCAD), Senegal
[2]Research Unit in Cultural Engineering and Anthropology (URICA) / Fundamental Institute of Black Africa (IFAN)

Session Abstract

Today, archaeological practice in Africa invites for forms of interactions and engagements with local communities for better appropriation and more digestible consumption of archaeological knowledge. The development of a sovereign African archaeology would necessarily involve 'epistemic disobedience' and creativity rooted in praxis and local modes of meaning making in order to break with methods inherited from colonization. Taking local communities as 'ethical clients' these approaches draw on endogenous knowledge and modes of actions to rethink how archaeological knowledge is produced, disseminated, and consumed. This session proposes to

explore forms of community or public archaeology inspired by endogenous African practices of meaning making, heritage preservation, and/or memorialization. Particular attention will be paid to alternative practices of mediation and circulation of archaeological knowledge, promoting service to communities, co-production of knowledge, and recognition of communities as true partners in research and heritage preservation protocols and processes. The session will pay particular attention to researchers' creativity in developing new narrative approaches (African oral traditions and languages in archaeological practices, involvement of local groups such as griots, use of music or poetry; innovative forms of museum display, curative care in sensitive contexts such as the management of human remains. By bringing together these different perspectives, this session aims to have a lasting impact on field practices for archaeological renewal and decolonial and inclusive heritage preservation, aligned with the local sociocultural realities in Africa.

Session 16: Archaeology and Paleoenvironment of North Africa

Organizers: Yasmina Damouche[1], Alejandra Calderón Ordóñez[2], Amel Chakroun[3], Ilhem Bentaleb[4], Iddir Amara[1], Djillali Hadjouis[1], Kahina Roumane[1]

[1]Laboratory of Archaeology and Paleoenvironment of North Africa (ARPAN), Institute of Archaeology, University of Algiers 2, Algeria

[2]University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (ULPGC), Spain

[3]Université El Manar, Faculté des sciences, Tunis, Tunisie

[4]University of Montpellier, France

Session Abstract

This session aims to explore the interactions between climate change and human dynamics in North Africa since the Late Pleistocene (isotope stage 5). Alternating humid and arid phases have profoundly shaped Saharan, Atlas, and Mediterranean landscapes, influencing settlement patterns, mobility, and adaptive strategies of prehistoric societies. The last interglacial of the Late Pleistocene represents a key period for understanding the environmental dynamics that shaped the Holocene, characterized by warmer and more humid conditions than today. Humid periods facilitated the expansion of lakes and savannas, enabling the settlement of hunter-gatherer communities and later Neolithic agro-pastoralists. In contrast, arid episodes led to territorial reorganization and migrations to more favorable areas, promoting the emergence of diverse cultural facies. This session welcomes interdisciplinary contributions — including archaeology, paleoanthropology, paleoenvironmental studies, geomorphology, sedimentology, biogeochemistry, palynology, and archaeozoology — to improve our understanding of adaptation processes and the evolution of ancient societies across this vast region representing the North African subcontinent.

Session 18: Current directions in eastern African Middle and Late Pleistocene Archaeology

Organizers: Amanuel Beyin[1], Yonatan Sahle[2]

Affiliations:
[1]University of Louisville
[2]University of Cape Town (UCT)

Session Abstract

The Middle and Late Pleistocene (c. 750 – 12 ka) archaeological record of eastern Africa plays a key role in understanding crucial episodes and processes in the cultural and biological evolution of our species: Homo sapiens. Among other things, this time span saw the fluorescence and diversification of technological innovations, ecological niche expansion, and the development of symbolic culture by our lineage, all believed to have been facilitated by increased cognitive capacity. Discoveries from eastern Africa provide valuable insights into these developments. This Session invites contributions from ongoing international and interdisciplinary field projects investigating the Middle and Late Pleistocene archaeology of the region to gauge emergent theoretical and methodological perspectives on data collection, analysis, and interpretation. The aim is to highlight i) current trends in research design (e.g., interdisciplinarities, methodological innovations, and data sharing), ii) major questions driving research, and iii) to celebrate progress being made in all facets of research into the Middle and Late Pleistocene Archaeology of eastern Africa. The session welcomes presentations that focus on results from recent field research projects, revisits of sites/museum collections, chronological and paleoecological contexts relevant to the archaeology of the period, and/or case studies showcasing methodological advances in the broader field.

Session 19: 79 years after Nairobi – revisioning the Middle and Later Stone Age in sub-Saharan Africa

Organizers: Gregor Bader[1], Will Archer[2], Décio Muianga[3]

[1]University of Tubingen
[2]National Museum, Bloemfontein
[3]Department of Archaeology and Anthropology, Eduardo Mondlane University

Session Abstract

Seventy-nine years ago, the landmark 1947 PanAfrican Congress of Prehistory and Related Studies took place in Nairobi. It was the first major international gathering to highlight African prehistory in a global scientific context. In this session, we revisit and reimagine the study of the Middle and Later Stone Ages in sub-Saharan Africa. While the Nairobi Congress was a pivotal moment in the recognition of African prehistory as integral to understanding human origins, it took place at a time when research methodologies such as excavation technique, chronometric dating and other scientific analysis were only about to emerge. This panel brings together new archaeological, paleoenvironmental, and technological perspectives that redefine the temporal, cultural, and geographical contours of these key periods. Contributions engaging with emerging evidence from excavations, chronometric dating, lithic analysis, and environmental reconstruction are invited, as are contributions interrogating interpretive frameworks, terminologies, and the politics of

knowledge production. While the congress in Nairobi was certainly influenced by colonial epistemologies and restricted access for African scholars, we are now shifting towards decolonizing archaeology, offering important new perspectives on human prehistory. By juxtaposing the intellectual ambitions of the 1947 Congress with current methodological and theoretical innovations, the panel aims to foster a renewed vision of the Middle and Later Stone Ages as dynamic, interconnected and locally grounded chapters in the story of human evolution and cultural development.

Session 21: Functional Studies in Archaeological Research: Giving Meaning to dead objects

Organizer: Okopi Ade[1]

[1]University of Jos, Nigeria

Session Abstract

The traditional methods for analyzing and interpreting Prehistoric artefacts stone tools, bone tools, ceramics, etc. has always been techno-morphological analysis, raw material properties and contextual analysis as well as typological classification. However, since Semenov's pioneering use wear research that resulted in his "Prehistoric Technology", this approach has been employed for the analysis and understanding of lithic assemblages and various archaeological artefacts from different parts of the globe. This has significantly improved on the insight gleaned from lithic artefacts bone tools, ceramics, metal objects etc. Use wear analysis is the systematic observation of wear and tear marks on archaeological/experimental tools through the aided and unaided eyes in order to tell the functions of such tools. It is an attempt by the specialist to infer qualitative inferences on artefactual remains on the basis of marked quantitative attributes represented on the artefacts which could have been as a result of natural/cultural factors. The main goal of use wear studies is to infer artefact design and function. This is because traces of use present invaluable clue to the interpretation and understanding of a wide scope of stone tools in the light of their distinct functions and the task they were used to achieve. This session will focus submissions on material studies that employs technological, morphological, typological and functional analyses in the unravelling of the functional relevance/use of prehistoric artefacts.

Session 22: Contributions of prehistory and archaeology to the sustainability and well-being of African communities

Organizers: Luiz Oosterbeek, Djibril Thiam[2], Ziva Domingos[3], Marílio Wane[4]

[1]Polytechnic Institute of Tomar (IPT), Portugal
[2]Université Assane Seck de Ziguinchor (UASZ),
[3]Agostinho Neto University (UAN) Angola
[4]Institute for Social and Cultural Research (ARPAC)

Session Abstract

Prehistoric research conveys a kind of knowledge of the past which is characterized by a rare combination of drivers: the very large time scales; the dealing with often completely different and for most unknown patterns of behavior, beliefs and ecosystems constraints; the building of understandings of the past that are primarily anchored on tangible evidence; the understanding of the unity of Humanity as being structured through its adaptive diversity; the permanent interdisciplinary nature of prehistoric science, from its dawn, two centuries ago. Furthermore, the socialization of prehistoric knowledge starts, also from its onset, with field work, engaging a vast majority of non-scholars (workers, undergraduate students, other volunteers) in the process of building the science data-sets (in surveys, excavations, site finds processing, and beyond). This, in turn, sits at the center of transdisciplinarity, since prehistoric research required, always, the input from other layers of knowledge, even when these were not acknowledged as such. Sustainability concerns facing global and local challenges on the basis of; an understanding of the intertwined relation between human agency and the ecosystems; a valorization of science within a transdisciplinary framework; an integrated approach to different scales of human intervention; an integrated approach to the unity and diversity of humans, not as opposites but as complementary dimensions of a single species, precluding any racist or related divides. Prehistoric research in Africa plays a paramount role in the understanding of the origins and evolution of humans, but it also contributes to enhance the relevance and diversity of precolonial cultural expressions, including insights into African traditions in domains like aesthetics, technology, networking, foresight, philosophical understandings and beyond. All these dimensions are fundamental for sustainability. This session invites contributions that may bring reflections, examples and strategies to evidence the contributions of prehistory and archaeology for sustainability and the wellbeing of African communities.

Session 25: Beyond the frontiers in Palaeoscience: renewing chronological, geoarchaeological, palaeolandscape and palaeoenvironmental approaches to the African Pleistocene

Organizers: Eslem Ben Arous[1], Emuobosa Orijemie[2], Tebogo Makhubela[3], Makarius Itambu[4]

[1]Max Planck Institute for Geoanthropology, Alemanha
[2]University of Ibadan
[3]University of Johannesburg (UJ)
[4]University of Dar es Salaam

Session Abstract

This session explores how recent advances in palaeoscientific methods – geochronology, geoarchaeology, and palaeolandscape approaches – are transforming our ability to explore, interpret, and reconstruct Africa's deep-time record. Over the past decades, innovations in dating techniques, high-resolution palaeolandscape and palaeoenvironmental reconstructions, and new geoarchaeological tools are breaking down long-standing methodological and geographic boundaries. When integrated across diverse African ecoregions (tropical forests, grasslands, savannas, deserts) and a wide range of archaeological contexts (open-air sites, caves, and rock shelters), these approaches have enabled researchers to build increasingly nuanced narratives of human evolution, environmental change, and landscape dynamics across the continent. Focusing on the Middle to Late Pleistocene – a critical period for understanding major episodes of technological and behavioral innovation that occurred during the Early Stone Age (ESA) and Middle Stone Age (MSA) – this session invites contributions that showcase how emerging analytical methods, field techniques, and conceptual models are advancing palaeoscientific research in Africa. We particularly

welcome papers presenting cross-disciplinary case studies that integrate human evolution and palaeoscientific data, including advances in geochronology, geoarchaeology palaeoenvironmental tools, and landscape reconstruction, as well as research from archaeological sequences in underrepresented regions (e.g., western and central Africa).

Session 26: Beyond heterarchy: new approaches to socio-political complexity in Africa

Organizers: Rennan Lemos[1], Abigail Moffett[2], Matthew Davies[3], Robert Nyamushosho[4]

[1]Durham University
[2,3]University of Cambridge, United Kingdom
[4]Queens College, City University of New York

Session Abstract:

In the 25+ years since the seminal publication of "Beyond Chiefdoms", historical and archaeological studies of African socio-political complexity have made broad advances. Embracing various understandings of heterarchy and rejecting simple Neo-evolutionary typologies, Africanist archaeologists working across the continent, have developed a series of exciting regional approaches to social organization, power and agency. Socio-political structures in particular have been re-conceptualised as fluid with competing loci of power and the possibility for rapid transitions between less and more centralized forms. This session will therefore critically interrogate these myriads of socio-political systems, consider their fundamental material conditions, and re-theorize the processes underlying these uniquely complex societies. We challenge contributors to move beyond the superficial use of concepts such as hierarchy and heterarchy. Contributions to this session will range from the mid-Holocene onwards, and we encourage perspectives from the Nile Valley, Horn, Eastern, Central, Southern and West Africa and North Africa, the Sahel and Sahara. We suggest that we may now be at an opportune moment to review and synthesize these innovations and map out future agendas for the study of African "complex" societies in a more inclusive way.

Session 28: Maritime Archaeology of the Slave Trade: Past, present and future perspectives

Organizers: Cézar Mahumane[1], Steve Lubkeman[2], Celso Simbine[3], Gabrielle Miller[4]

[1,3]Department of Archaeology and Anthropology, Eduardo Mondlane University
[2]George Washington University
[4]Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture

Session Abstract:

This session will provide a critical synopsis of recent–and potential–contributions of maritime archaeology to the history of the African slave trade, discussing questions, methods, and theoretical approaches through which maritime archeology might contribute to African and global historiographies from the 15th century onward. Drawing upon ongoing archaeological research carried out across multiple sites, we propose strategies for developing a maritime archeology devoted to recovering a fuller history of the slave trade–both as it was experienced by enslaved Africans and as a process that fundamentally shaped the modern world. We also consider how the maritime archeology of the slave trade can critically engage with the enduring legacies of this past in the present by fostering multiple forms of diversity, by centering stakeholder engagement and public education, by pursuing new models for heritage conservation and protection, and that challenges

maritime archeology itself to re-consider its long neglect of this past and to rethink its role and its responsibilities in the present.

Session 30: Linking past-present-future through Biocultural Heritage

Organizers: Anneli Ekblom[1], Pascoal Gota[2]

[1]Uppsala University
[2]School of Geography, University of Nottingham, United Kingdom

Session Abstract:

Within the field of Biocultural Heritage, methodologies and concepts are developed to learn from past- and present-day examples of low-intensity management of soil, fire, forests, farms, and water. The heritage extension stresses the importance of place-based practices, memory, and knowledge, and allows us to fuse our interests and experiences from both cultural heritage management and biodiversity conservation. In addition, community projects have led to the formation of a fascinating knowledge-practice philosophy in collaboration with academia. Landscape archaeology, soil archaeology, place-based and landscape-scale archaeobotanical and palaeoecological approaches, and remote sensing and spatial analyses are essential methods in this endeavour. We invite researchers to participate in a discussion on methods, concepts and practices of biocultural heritage on the continent.

Session 32: Digital Data Collection in African Archaeology: Tools, Practices, and Future Directions

Organizers: Pamela Ochungo[1], Lamine Badji[2]

[1]Technical University of Kenya
[2]Research Unit in Cultural Engineering and Anthropology (URICA) / Fundamental Institute of Black Africa (IFAN)

Session Abstract:

Archaeological practice across Africa is undergoing a digital transformation, with growing reliance on mobile and web-based platforms for field data collection, management, and dissemination. Traditional paper-based methods, while still common, often limit accuracy, accessibility, and long-term preservation of information. Digital platforms provide new opportunities to capture data in real time, integrate geospatial information, standardize survey approaches, and share results more effectively across institutions and borders. This session invites papers that explore the methods, applications, and challenges of digital data collection in archaeology and heritage management. Contributions may address the use of mobile applications, open-source platforms such as KoboToolbox and ODK, integration with GIS and remote sensing, participatory mapping with communities, or comparative studies of digital versus traditional practices. We particularly welcome case studies from diverse African contexts that highlight how digital tools are shaping archaeological research, heritage preservation, and collaborative knowledge production. The session aims to foster discussion on best practices, capacity building, ethics, and the future of standardized digital data collection in African archaeology.

Session 33: The Dynamic Cultural and Climatic Environments of the Later Stone Age to Early Farming Communities Transition in Holocene Africa

Organizers: Décio Muianga[1], Elena Skosey-LaLonde[2], Martha Kayuni[3], Ana Gomes[2]

[1]Department of Archaeology and Anthropology, Eduardo Mondlane University
[2]ICArEHB, Universidade do Algarve, Portugal
[3]University of Zambia

Session Abstract:

This session will explore the dynamic transition from the Later Stone Age (LSA) to Early/Later Farming Communities during the African Holocene. The focus will be on the interconnected roles of people, tools, animals, plants and paleoenvironments. The session goes beyond linear models of replacement by examining how hunter-gatherers and early agropastoralists interacted, coexisted and adapted within a shared changing ecological and social landscape. Drawing on archaeological evidence from multiple regions of sub-Saharan Africa, the session integrates lithic and ceramic analyses, zooarchaeological, archaeobotanical data, and paleoenvironmental reconstructions to investigate patterns of subsistence, mobility, and technological change. Material records are examined in relation to late Holocene climatic fluctuations, including shifts in rainfall patterns and vegetation zones, which influenced resource availability and human decision-making.

This session employs an interdisciplinary framework that combines archaeology, paleoecology, and theoretical approaches, such as resilience and network theory, to enhance our understanding of processes of interaction and transformation. By focusing on the interactions between human and non-human actors, this session contributes to broader discussions of the development of food production, the diversity of cultural paths, and the adaptive approaches of past African societies. Furthermore, the Western Indian Ocean world and the Great Rift corridors emerge as critical zones where environmental constraints facilitate unique "interfaces" between diverse economic systems. This session concludes that the LSA-EFC transition was characterized by a high degree of resilience and continuity. By synthesizing environmental data with the materiality of daily life, we provide a holistic perspective on how African communities navigated the profound ecological and social thresholds of the Holocene, laying the foundations for the complex social structures of the later Farming Communities.

Session 38: Rethinking African Archaeology and Heritage Management: Practices and Research

Organizer: Abdulmalik Abdulrahman[1]

[1]University of East Anglia

Session Abstract:

There are compelling demands to decolonize archaeological and heritage management practices in Africa. Over the past decades, the continent has witnessed significant and rapid development in archaeological and heritage-related disciplines, increasing contacts and relations between researchers and community members. Curiosity about the outcome and benefit of archaeological

and heritage research increases among many community members. The continuous investigations in Africa support the withdrawal from the colonial-era methodologies to the empowerment of indigenous communities and their narratives. Many of the recent findings of archaeological and heritage research in Africa are contributing to the crucial debates and discussions on global and local issues, including socio-cultural identity, climate change, urban development, evolution, adaptation, politics and conflict resolution. Yet, archaeological and heritage practices in Africa require further input on how archaeological and heritage practices are administered, how they were negotiated with local communities, and made relevant to the African context, how they complement traditional academic approaches, and how the knowledge is produced, generally. This session attracts papers in two dimensions. Firstly, it seeks papers on recent findings on the archaeology and heritage of Africa. Secondly, it calls for intriguing papers on the re-evaluation of archaeology and heritage practices in Africa. As such, scholars in archaeology, heritage, museum studies, anthropology, ethnography, and art history are welcome to submit their outputs to this session.

Session 39: Archaeological Heritage & Development in Africa: Case Studies

Organizer: Solange Macamo, Miguel Raimundo, Filipe Alage[3], Chantal Radimilahy[4]

[1]Department of Archaeology and Anthropology, Eduardo Mondlane University
[2]Collaborator at, Department of Archaeology and Anthropology, Eduardo Mondlane University
[3]LAGriot,
[4]Université d'Antananarivo

Session Abstract :

This session brings together archaeologists and heritage professionals from across Africa and beyond to examine the contributions and challenges of archaeology and heritage management in advancing sustainable development. It will explore how the concept of development has been interpreted and theorized within African contexts, highlighting methodological and practical challenges encountered by archaeologists, heritage scholars, and related researchers. Emphasis is placed on the diverse typologies of archaeological heritage, terrestrial sites, built structures, cultural landscapes, intangible heritage, and submerged resources, which serve as vital archives for scientific research and require effective protection to support community-centered development initiatives. In line with the Nairobi Outcome on Heritage and Authenticity, which recognizes the role of communities in generating and transmitting knowledge, the session welcomes case studies demonstrating how African communities sustain, reinterpret, and mobilize their heritage for social and economic benefit. Development-oriented heritage models will be discussed, including interpretive centers, museums, and community markets. Examples such as the World Heritage Site of Mozambique Island and the Archaeological and Biocultural Park of Chongoene and Xai-Xai, both in Mozambique, illustrate how in situ preservation can directly benefit local populations. The Community Cultural Market operates as an innovative mechanism for empowerment by integrating archaeological knowledge with traditional crafts, cultural revitalization, and income-generation. Persistent gaps are addressed in heritage protection, including misconceptions that frame underwater cultural heritage as “treasure” thereby complicating legal safeguards. Aligned with the UN sustainable development agenda, the session incorporates perspectives on environmental sustainability, social inclusion, economic development, peacebuilding, and resilience in contemporary African societies.

Session 41: Sudan Prehistory from African Perspectives: Discoveries, Challenges, and Future Prospects

Organizers: Azhari Sadig[1], Ahmed Nassr[2]

[1]King Saud University
[2]University of Ha'il, College of Arts, Department of Tourism and Archaeology, Saudi Arabia

Session Abstract:

Sudan lies at the heart of Africa, distinguished by its abundant natural resources and diverse heritage across time. The Nile and the surrounding deserts provided fertile ground for human settlement and environmental adaptation during the Pleistocene and Holocene epochs. More than a century of archaeological research in Sudan has uncovered a unique prehistoric context, closely connected to East and North Africa in many cultural dimensions. Paleolithic sites along the Nile and in the deserts have yielded stratified materials dating back nearly half a million years. Mesolithic and Neolithic sites document the emergence and development of foraging and agro-pastoral communities, marked by distinctive pottery, evidence of food production, and increasingly complex social structures. Bronze Age and Kerma sites reveal the remains of sedentary pastoral-agricultural groups, laying the foundations for the rise of civilization. Archaeological surveys, excavations, and laboratory analyses have yielded a wealth of material for addressing key questions in African archaeology. These findings illuminate the dispersal of early hominin groups out of Africa through Sudan, the expansion of pastoral communities, the emergence of food-producing societies, and the rise of early civilizations during the late prehistoric and protohistoric periods. Sudan's unique cultural heritage currently faces significant challenges, including the impacts of climate change, limited field facilities, and ongoing conflicts. These factors hinder the continuation of research projects and constrain efforts to explore Sudan's broader significance within the African context. Nevertheless, archaeological work remains active, with new field discoveries and laboratory findings emerging on a regular basis. Many critical research questions still await further development, particularly those concerning the design of sustainable research strategies and the establishment of local community awareness and engagement. In this session, we aim to address issues related to Sudan's prehistory within the broader framework of African prehistoric archaeology. Our contribution seeks to underscore the importance of this heritage, highlight the current challenges it faces, and advance plans for its exploration, interpretation, and preservation.

Session 43: Mobility, Technology, and Food Systems in the Early Iron Age of Southern Africa

Organizers: Mica Jones[1], Russell Kapumha[2], Alice Williams[3], Shadreck Chirikure[4]

[1,2,3,4]University of Oxford

Session Abstract:

The Early Iron Age of southern Africa (c. 1st millennium CE) was a period of profound technological, economic, and social transformation. Across the subcontinent, the movement and spread of ironworking, pottery traditions, and food production systems created new networks of interaction and exchange that reshaped landscapes and lifeways. These processes were neither uniform nor linear. Recent advances in dating and geospatial methods, archaeometallurgy, and bioarchaeology

reveal striking regional diversity and innovation. Together, these findings challenge long-standing diffusionist and "package" models of cultural change.
This open session invites papers that explore all dimensions of Early Iron Age life in southern Africa. We welcome contributions addressing:
1) settlement patterns, subsistence, and environmental adaptation;
2) exchange and interaction among farming and foraging groups;
3) the formation of social identities and cultural traditions;
4) new scientific and theoretical approaches to movement, connectivity, and transformation.
We particularly encourage interdisciplinary research integrating archaeological, linguistic, genetic, and historical perspectives, as well as community-based and heritage-focused studies. Comparative papers linking southern Africa to wider sub-Saharan contexts are also welcome. By bringing together diverse evidence and perspectives, the session aims to advance dialogue on the Early Iron Age as a dynamic mosaic of interconnected communities and innovations. In doing so, It highlights the first millennium CE as a foundational era in Africa's deep history of technological creativity, mobility, and social change.

Session 44: Bioarchaeological Connections Across the Continent

Organizers: Robert J. Stark[1], Matthew V. Emery[2]

[1]University of Waterloo; Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology University of Warsaw (PCMA UW)
[2]Binghamton University,

Session Abstract:

The field of bioarchaeology plays a crucial role in understanding the lifestyles and lived experiences of past populations, shaping inferences and findings from archaeological contexts and placing the past within a humanized lens. Approaches to inter-regional connections shaped by archaeological insights are well established. A similar tone has, arguably, not as often been seen from a bioarchaeological perspective, with researchers often unintentionally siloed within their areas of focus which can limit engagement and awareness of broader trends and ongoing research in bioarchaeology across diverse regional, temporal, and methodological contexts. This understandable situation is often pronounced for the continent of Africa given the multifold diversity of landscapes, cultural time depth, and differing research traditions and legacies. This session aims to be an inclusive, continent-wide synthesis of current and future directions in bioarchaeological research across time and space in Africa. This session seeks to include papers dealing with ongoing projects, research syntheses, community engagement, biomolecular methods, and all other facets of bioarchaeological inquiry. Through the consideration of diverse bioarchaeological research spanning the continent, it is hoped that a deeper sense of the broader themes and research currently underway in African bioarchaeology can be further illuminated. This session aims to foster a multi-regional and diachronic approach, bolstering interdisciplinarity and researcher connections, as well as potential routes for future collaboration across diverse and inter-connected African landscapes.

Session 49: Historical and linguistic sources for the study of the history of Mozambique (16th-19th centuries)

Organizers: UEM Department of History

Session Abstract:

The historical period of Mozambique is closely linked to foreign presence, first by Arabs and then by Europeans. The former, around the 9th-10th centuries, marked their presence in the territory that would become modern Mozambique, contributing to its opening up to the outside world and leaving their mark on the economy, religion, linguistics and social organization. The latter initially landed on the Mozambican coast at the end of the 15th century and, in addition to contributing to the opening up of Mozambique to the wider world, also left their mark on the various communities, clans, chiefdoms, kingdoms and empires. This panel aims to discuss historical and linguistic sources on Mozambique, insofar as, in addition to the marks left by foreigners on local languages, they (Arabs and Europeans) recorded their encounters with the natives in writing, although this recording did not take place under ideal conditions. Shipwrecked sailors, navigators, pirates, traders, missionaries and government officials produced a wealth of written evidence that allows us to reconstruct the history of Mozambique from the earliest moments of foreign presence. The panel also intends to consider written sources produced by Africans (e.g. Ajami script) and also to broaden the discussion to include oral histories, as communities throughout Mozambique preserve their memories and stories about the past, albeit with some gaps.

Session 50: Integrative approaches to the study of human evolution in the southern African Rift Valley

Organizers: Rene Bobe[1], Ester Lourenço[2]

[1] Gorongosa National Park
[2]Collaborator at Department of Archaeology and Anthropology, Eduardo Mondlane University, Gorongosa National Park

Session Abstract:

The Paleo-Primate Project Gorongosa (PPPG) has been conducting fieldwork in Gorongosa National Park since 2016. The project is an international and interdisciplinary initiative that includes professional palaeontologists, archaeologists, speleologists, geologists, primatologists, and geneticists as well as students from Mozambique and other countries, working together to illuminate the evolutionary history of the Gorongosa ecosystem. Our team has been exploring the extensive karstic system of the Cheringoma plateau and has documented more than 100 caves, some of them with archaeological potential. Two of these caves (Conga and Tombo Aphale 5) have been excavated and have provided late Pleistocene to Holocene lithic artefacts and fauna. The team has also discovered 26 new paleontological sites of the Mazamba Formation, with a rich fossil record that includes giant hyraxes, extinct embrithopods, sirenians, ancient crocodilians, and sharks in a rich coastal paleoenvironment. Fossil wood and other paleobotanical remains are also abundant and exquisitely preserved. The chronological placement of these fossils is in progress but preliminary dates span the Miocene epoch. With regard to the modern environments and ecology of the park, we have a special interest in the study of living primates and how they adapt to complex and dynamic landscapes, which are, in some ways, analogous to those in which early hominins evolved.

We are also conducting a long-term taphonomic study of modern bone accumulations in the various Gorongosa landscapes. This session aims to present key results and discussions of these interdisciplinary approaches, whilst celebrating the first decade of the Paleo-Primate Project Gorongosa.

Session 52: Stone Age Places: Thinking, Moving, Making Meaning. Rethinking how early humans inhabited and imagined their worlds

Organizers: Laura Basell[1], Enza Spinapolice[2], Ella Egberts[3], Manuel Will[4]

[1]University of Leicester,
[2]Sapienza Università di Roma
[3]Vrije Universiteit Brussel
[4]Department of Geosciences, Faculty of Science, Eberhard Karls University of Tuebingen, Germany

Session Abstract:

In evolutionary studies, landscape archaeology often focuses on large-scale climatic change or site-specific environmental reconstruction. Methodological advances and improved chronologies have encouraged correlations between environmental and behavioural change. Landscape is frequently a driver or container for cognition, adaptation, and physiology, and though local-scale analyses sometimes reference mobility systems, taskscapes, and niche construction they often lack explicit interpretative frameworks. Research on more recent periods routinely addresses perception, experience, materiality, place-making, and agency, sometimes extending these ideas to nonhuman or more-than-human entities. Such perspectives remain uncommon in deep-time contexts. Although Stone Age geoarchaeology constantly engages with nonhuman organisms (including most hominins), research is still dominated by lithic technology, dispersals, and cognition. Hominin perception, synanthropy, sense of place and experiential dimensions are rarely tackled, and ecological information is often subordinated to “big questions” including innovation, symbolism, or migration. This raises several questions: Are hominin qualia viewed as inaccessible due to assumptions about cognitive limits? Do progressivist narratives inadvertently influence ideas about who can possess a “sense of place?” Does a persistent nature/culture dualism obscure the deep entanglement of hominins, materials, organisms, and landscapes? And do methodological constraints or concerns about scientific credibility inhibit theoretical experimentation?

We invite papers bridging ecological space and experiential place, exploring dynamic, relational, and synanthropic understandings of early landscapes. We encourage novel approaches to Stone Age landscapes, and papers critiquing the relevance of such theory to Stone Age sites. Research from any location, grounded in fieldwork, modelling, or theory are welcome, and we plan a special issue publication.

Session 55: Maritimity in Question: Decolonizing Africa’s Oceans

Organizer: Akshay Sarathi[1]

[1]American University of Sharjah

Session Abstract:

Maritime worlds have long been central to African cultures and societies, yet they are too often framed through Eurocentric categories of seafaring, commerce, empire, or rigid land/sea dichotomies. This session explores African oceans as spaces of connection, belonging, and heritage that transcend colonial, political, and disciplinary borders. This session foregrounds African perspectives, practices, and epistemologies by bringing together scholars working across the continent's littorals and islandscapes from a variety of perspectives. In doing so, we challenge assumptions that African engagement with the sea can be understood primarily through colonial archives, external trade, or imported conceptual and categorical frameworks. Key questions include: what does it mean to practice an archaeology of the sea in Africa without presupposing Western categories of maritimity? How might African Indigenous knowledge, oral traditions, and the lived experiences of maritime communities reshape our interpretations of past seascapes? And how do the legacies of colonial extraction, salvage, and discovery continue to influence both scholarship and heritage practices? Contributors will highlight the value of diverse datasets (zooarchaeological remains, material culture, oral histories, ethnographies of fishing communities, shipbuilding traditions, underwater sites, etc.) while engaging with theoretical approaches from decolonial and heritage studies. By questioning and reframing "maritimity" this session advances a vision of African archaeology and heritage as dynamic and borderless: illustrating how African societies have discovered, conceptualized, and transformed their oceans as integral to the making of social worlds, political economies, and cultural identities across time.

Session 56: Dialogues with the Past: Interdisciplinary Approaches to African Rock Art in the 21st Century

Organizers: Ancila Nhamo[1], Décio Muianga[2], Albino Jopela[3], Benjamin Smith[4]

[1]University of Zimbabwe
[2,3]Department of Archaeology and Anthropology, Eduardo Mondlane University
[4]University of Western Australia

Session Abstract:

African rock art constitutes one of the world's oldest and most diverse artistic traditions, offering an unparalleled archive of human history, symbolic thought, and environmental interaction. From the ancient hunter-gatherer petroglyphs of the Sahara to the intricate San rock paintings of Southern Africa and the historic pastoralist depictions of Eastern Africa, these sites are foundational to understanding the African past. The study of African rock art is currently undergoing a profound transformation with new technologies, theoretical frameworks, and collaborative methodologies opening unprecedented avenues for inquiry. This session aims to capture this dynamic moment by bringing together scholars from diverse fields to showcase the most current and innovative research. The primary aim of this session is to foster a dialogue that is: 1) Interdisciplinary: Integrating archaeology, anthropology, digital humanities, heritage science, chemistry, and Indigenous knowledge. 2) Chronologically Expansive: Exploring art from the deep past to the recent historical period. 3) Methodologically Innovative: Highlighting cutting-edge techniques for analysis, dating, and preservation. 4) Community-Engaged: Emphasizing the role of descendant communities and public outreach. We seek to create a comprehensive engagement and We look forward to a stimulating session that charts the future course of African rock art research.

Session 57: The Malagasy World: Challenges, Prospects, Solidarity

Organizers: Radimilahy Chantal[1], Zoe Crossland[2], Kristina Douglass[3]

[1]University of Antananarivo
[2,3]Columbia University

Session Abstract:

Madagascar has long been a crossroads where Indian Ocean worlds converged. Its archaeological and historical archives offer a dynamic lens onto the social, political, and economic processes that shaped mobility, trade, settlement, and landscape transformation over the past two millennia. Decades of scholarship, across multiple language and academic traditions, have generated a rich but dispersed corpus that now invites renewed synthesis.

As the field reaches a moment of self-reflection, it is timely to ask what questions have animated Madagascar archaeology to date and which new directions are emerging as local researchers, descendant communities, and international collaborators work within shifting political, environmental, and technological contexts. Expanding access to digital collections, advances in paleoenvironmental and biomolecular methods, and renewed commitments to community centered research have begun to bridge divides that once constrained scholarship. At the same time, persistent challenges, including structural inequities, the uneven circulation of knowledge, and the vulnerability of both cultural and ecological heritage, call for deeper intellectual and ethical solidarity. This session takes stock of where the field stands and what lies ahead. By reflecting on past accomplishments and current transformations, we aim to chart the possibilities for a more integrated, inclusive, and forward looking archaeology of Madagascar that remains responsive to the island's diverse histories and grounded in meaningful partnerships for the future.

Session 58: Social Identities in Archaeology Session

Organizer: David Maina Muthegethi, Mercy Kariuki[2]

[1]British Institute in Eastern Africa (BIEA)
[2]Kenyatta University

Session Abstract:

We invite submissions for a session exploring the role of social identities in shaping past societies at the 2026 PANAF Archaeological Conference. Social identities, encompassing gender, ethnicity, race, age, and social status, are critical to understanding human social dynamics. These culturally constructed categories, formed through socialization, dictate behaviours, resource access, and societal roles, as seen in material culture like artifacts, burials, or settlement patterns. Following scholars like Voss, who emphasize social identity reconstruction as a cornerstone of archaeological inquiry, this session will examine how identities influenced historical and prehistoric communities and their implications for contemporary research. We seek papers that address how social identities were constructed, negotiated, or resisted in past societies, and how these dynamics are reflected in the archaeological record. Topics may include intersectionality, identity-based hierarchies, or the impact of cultural norms on resource allocation. We encourage diverse methodological approaches, from material culture analysis to theoretical frameworks that illuminate the interplay between identities and social structures.

Session 59: Mortuary Archaeology in Africa: Current Approaches and Ethical Dimensions

Organizers: Ezekia Mtetwa[1], Karin Scott[2]

[1]Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago EUA
[2]Department of Anthropology and Archaeology. University of South Africa

Session Abstract:

Mortuary archaeology offers a powerful lens through which to explore how the dead have been treated, their perceived agency, and the construction of identities across Africa's diverse cultural landscapes. This session invites contributions that examine mortuary practices, including the varied ways of handling the dead body, the symbolic material culture and funerary architecture associated with these rituals, and bioarchaeological analyses that illuminate mortuary behaviours. We welcome studies of the material culture of death spanning early to recent contexts, as well as papers that engage with the ethical dimensions of mortuary research, such as the treatment of human remains, community consultation, and heritage stewardship. By bringing together archaeologists, bioanthropologists, heritage professionals, and community collaborators, this session aims to foster critical dialogue on both the scientific and ethical responsibilities of mortuary archaeology in African contexts.

Session 60: Memories of climate change from multidisciplinary archives

Organizers: Pascoal Gota[1], Matthew Hannaford[2], Anneli Ekblom[3]

[1]School of Geography, University of Nottingham, United Kingdom
[2]University of Nottingham
[3]Uppasala University

Session Abstract:

How can we construct an archaeology of the experience of living with climate change? In this interdisciplinary session, we combine our archives from soil, pollen, and seeds with written documents and oral history. We move from landscape-scale settlement patterns to local-scale domestic strategies to counter climate variability through mobility, food diversification and social networks. What can we learn from these archaeologies and histories of living with climate change? How is the memory of climate variability institutionalized through ceremonies, heritage and narratives? How do current-day experiences of climate change complement or challenge our understanding of living with climate change and ongoing efforts of climate mitigation, climate adaptation and resilience on the African continent? We invite reflections, empirical examples, and collaborative projects from across the continent in this broad approach to the archaeology of climate change.

Session 61: Archival clutter and custodianship: rethinking African epistemologies of keeping

Organizers: Kgolagano Vena[1], Yola Nzimela[2], Catherine Namono[3]

[1,2,3]University of the Witwatersrand

Session Abstract:

This panel interrogates the multiple ways in which collections in Africa were/are assembled, stored and narrated. It aims to unpack what is preserved, and what is lost through displacement and cluster. Archives have historically been sites of knowledge production and violence: where institutional archives classified and displaced African heritage, and privileged state-centric narratives. However, across Africa, archiving takes multiple forms – oral, material and ecological – through these African notions, we understand archives as broader than state institutions and museums and draw on oral traditions, sacred landscapes, living heritage, architectural forms and practices of renewal and impermanence as archival nuggets that challenge western ideals of permanence and order. We invite papers that unsettle the boundaries between archive collections and clutter and explore alternative ways in which this order and refusal can constitute modes of archival memory, restoration and heritage.

Session 62: The History of Colonialism, Resitance Movements, and the Decolonization Processes in Africa

Organizers: Alda Saúte Saide[1], Hamilton Matsimbe[2], Filipe Pitrosse[3]

[1,3]Pedagogical University of Maputo (UP-Maputo)
[2]Department of Archaeology and Anthropology, Eduardo Mondlane University

Session Abstract:

For a long time, myths and prejudices of all kinds hid the true history of Africa from the world. African societies were considered societies that could not have a history. With the slave trade and colonization, racial stereotypes developed, creating contempt and misunderstanding, so deeply consolidated that they corrupted even the very concepts of historiography. However, since the collapse of colonial empires and the emergence of African independences, for Africans the study of African history is the search for and reaffirmation of an identity through the gathering of the dispersed elements of a collective memory and the search for their heritage to better understand the rapid and numerous political transformations and social conflicts that affect this continent. This (re)valuation is evidenced by the recent discoveries that history and archaeology have accumulated about entire civilizations (Ife, Nok, Rift Valley), as well as the Sudanese empires of West Africa described by Arab geographers: Ghana, Mali, the Kingdom of Timbuktu. For others, the interest in Africa is linked to its wealth in mineral, agricultural, and forestry raw materials. Today, in Africa and the world in general, debates about colonialism, resistance, decolonization/liberation and independence movements are increasingly necessary and central to understanding the multiple dynamics, localized historicities, and diversely rhythmic temporalities of encounters between Africans and with other peoples so distant in time. It is in these complex articulations, between plurality and unity, that this round table intends to reflect on the following:
1) Legacies of the past regarding power, spaces, and territorialities in the construction of identities
2) Reparations and historical justice
3) Epistemic decolonization
4) Colonial borders and national identities, colonialism and the environment
5) The contribution of History to Archaeology and vice versa.

Session 63: Observations et conjectures sur les systèmes de défenses endogènes en Afrique de l'Ouest

Organizers: Agani Simon[1], Saley Moumouni Hama[2], Mahamadou Ibro Souleymane[3], Ndiaye Oumy[4]

[1]Université Abdou Moumouni Niamey Niger
[2]Université Libre de Bruxelles - (ULB)
[3]Solidarités International (Níger)
[4]Cheikh Anta Diop University

Session Abstract :

Les moyens de tenir l'ennemi en dehors du lieu que l'on veut protéger sont trouvés très tôt dans l'histoire régionale ouest-africaine. En effet, la sécurité collective a constamment été un défi. Aujourd'hui, l'histoire de ces systèmes de défenses nous parvient par bribes, à travers les traditions orales, les récits historiques et surtout, par le bais des fouilles archéologiques. Par l'exploitation de cette documentation, des études nous révèlent progressivement les moyens humains et matériels qu'utilisaient les communautés pour se défendre. Grâce aux programmes de recherche, et surtout aux travaux des étudiants, l'état de connaissance sur les systèmes défensifs du passé est de mieux en mieux connu. Ces systèmes de défense endogènes allaient de simples palissades à l'édification des murs en brique, terre cuite précédés de fossé et en pierres sèches. En redécouvrant aujourd'hui les vestiges de ces systèmes de défense, de nombreuses questions se posent tant sur les techniques de mise en place que sur leurs usages, leurs fonctions et leur efficience. Pour ce panel, que nous souhaitons ouvert à toutes et à tous, les communications peuvent s'intéresser à toutes les périodes chronologiques. Elles devront mettre un accent sur la genèse des sites, l'étude des techniques d'édification, symbolisme qui entoure les formes de constructions des structures et leur fonctionnement. Enfin, les communications portant sur la destruction, la conservation et la valorisation actuelle des sites et enceintes fortifiés sont également bienvenues.

Session 64: Ancient textile production (weaving and indigo dyeing) and challenges of preserving ancestral knowledge in West Africa

Organizers: Barpougouni Mardjoua[1], Aisha Babaji Muhammad[2], Gninin Aïcha Desline Touré[3], Nestor Labiyi[4]

[1,] Enseignant-chercheur, Institut Supérieur d'Architecture et d'Urbanisme de Guinée Conakry
[2]Sainsbury Research Unit / University of East Anglia
[3]Félix Houphouët-Boigny University
[4]Institut National des Métiers d'Art, d'Archéologie et de la Culture (INMAAC), UAC/BENIN

Session Abstract:

Although its exact origins remain poorly documented, textile production has been a central feature of West African societies since at least the sixteenth century and continues to hold deep economic, cultural, and symbolic importance. Finished and semi-finished textile goods such as threads, woven strips, and cloth formed a major component of caravan trade networks and played a significant role in regional commerce. Integral to this production chain was indigo dyeing, a practice that shaped not only the quality and value of textiles but also their symbolic meanings. In many communities, indigo-dyed cloths were closely associated with ritual practices and ceremonies linked to spiritual beliefs. These locally developed technologies, however, have largely declined over recent decades, displaced

by the widespread availability of inexpensive imported textiles. Today, the material traces of these once-vibrant industries are limited, often reduced to filled-in dye pits or extensive ash deposits. Their locations frequently align with former caravan routes, highlighting the close relationship between textile production and long-distance trade. In a contemporary context marked by renewed interest in identity and cultural expression, where dress remains one of the most visible markers, the few remaining practitioners who possess comprehensive knowledge of spinning, weaving, and dyeing are experiencing renewed demand. This session invites contributions that explore the distinctive characteristics of ancient textile production across West Africa. By bringing together diverse perspectives, it aims to document endangered ancestral knowledge and provide a holistic understanding of textile practices that have shaped and continue to shape the cultural landscape of the region.

Session 68: Museology and Museological practices in Africa

Organizers: Alda Costa[1], Ana Martins[2], Helena Benjamim[3]

[1]Eduardo Mondlane University
[2]Institute of Contemporary History (IHC) / IN2PAST, University of Evora
[3]National Museum of Archaeology of Benguela (MNAB)

Session Abstract:

Independent Mozambique (1975) assumed responsibilities for the conservation, enhancement and dissemination of its cultural and natural heritage. It created a structure, specific bodies, produced legislation and regulations, integrated associations, established partnerships and regional, continental and international professional networks. In the inherent policies and practices, it prioritized the recovery of African history and culture, which until then had been subordinated or denied, and gave a voice to new social actors. Many actions have taken place notwithstanding the insufficient number of professionals, the gradual reduction of the priority given to culture and heritage in national policies, the difficulties in supervision, the growing lack of resources. As other countries, Mozambique is living in a new context, with worrying repercussions for cultural and natural heritage. The Congress is an opportunity to analyze, exchange experiences, re-evaluate policies and practices followed or to be followed in each country. The topics to be addressed may include, but are not limited to, the following: • Mozambique: archaeological research, collections, museums and the project for a national archaeological museum. • Transdisciplinary approach to cultural and archaeological heritage. • African museums since “What Museums for Africa?” (Benin, Ghana, Togo, ICOM, 1991). • Renovated museums, new museums, museums of the future. The diversity of African museums. • ‘Contested collections. Training schools, centers, courses, projects and professional networks. • Museums in Southern Africa: from the SADCAM/SADCAMM experience to the present day. • Museums in Portuguese-speaking countries and communities (1987 to 2011). •Universities as guardians and managers of cultural and natural heritage.

Session 69: Roundtable: Repositioning Built Heritage in African Archaeology: critical reflections and practical solutions

Organizers: Stefania Merlo[1], Drashti Nakrani[2], Angela Kabiru[3]

[1]McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, University of Cambridge, UK - MAEASaM Project

[2] Department of Archaeology, University of York, UK - MAEASaM Project

[3]British Institute in Eastern Africa, Nairobi, Kenya - MAEASaM Project

Session Abstract:

Built heritage is increasingly recognized as a crucial component of archaeological research in Africa, yet standing buildings remain one of the most contested and least theorized elements within this heritage landscape. This may be due to the prevalence of colonial structures—forts, courthouses, prisons, mission stations, military installations, railway towns, and administrative centers—yet many precolonial societies also left their mark in the landscape, with palaces, walls, mosques, shrines, and tombs found across the continent. The interpretation of this built heritage raises important questions about memory, identity, ownership, and the legacies of colonialism. This session invites papers that critically explore the place of architecture within African archaeology and reflect on the pre-eminence of colonial architectonic forms as built heritage in archaeological and built heritage catalogues. How should archaeologists engage with structures that are materially significant but politically sensitive? What methodologies—archival analysis, architectural recording, community-based research, digital documentation—best support their study? And how do these buildings interact with precolonial and Indigenous cultural landscapes, especially where colonial and local built forms overlap or co-exist? By foregrounding African perspectives and case studies, the session seeks to examine how colonial architecture can be understood not only as evidence of imperial power but also as part of longer histories of settlement, labour, mobility, resistance, and adaptation. Contributors are encouraged to consider how communities reinterpret or repurpose built structures, how national heritage institutions negotiate competing values, and how archaeologists might address the ethical challenges of preserving, transforming, or de-emphasizing colonial-built legacies while giving space to other built heritage forms. Ultimately, the session aims to reposition built heritage—including but not limited to colonial architecture—as an essential dimension of African archaeological inquiry

Session 70: Teaching Heritage and Teaching Through Heritage: Challenges and Good Practices in Higher Education

Organizers: Marcela Maciel Santana[1], Walter Rossa[2]

[1,2]University of Coimbra, Portugal

Session Abstract:

Constant and rapid global transformations have created an urgent need at universities worldwide to update their research themes, educational approaches, and methodologies. This is particularly challenging in the Global South, where societies are more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and resource crises, and where the contradictions and legacies of colonialism persist in the

social, economic, and cultural domains. In this scenario, the training of professionals, technicians, and specialists plays a crucial role, as it involves preparing those who will work in a timeframe where many challenges are not yet fully measurable. In the case of teaching cultural heritage, there is an additional effort. Given its interdisciplinary nature and complexity, the field intersects with issues ranging from environmental damage to migration crises, from the spread of extremist discourse to the emergence of new technologies. Therefore, this session aims to foster a debate on good teaching practices and reflect on how cultural heritage has been addressed in higher education, giving particular attention to: the use of local heritage as a tool to engage the students on the field; experiences in incorporating traditional knowledge into pedagogical practices; approaches to decolonize cultural heritage; and the intersection of cultural heritage with sustainable development. This discussion will open new opportunities for intercultural and interdisciplinary dialogue, recognizing archaeology as a key area within cultural heritage in Africa, while also acknowledging the potential contributions of other disciplines such as territorial planning, tourism, architecture, conservation, history, geography, and other related domains.

Session 71: World Heritage Sites in Africa: Past, Present and Future Management Issues

Organizer: Elgidius B. Ichumbaki[1]

[1]University of Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania

Session Abstract:

World Heritage Sites (WHS) are cultural, natural or nature-culture mixed places that UNESCO has recognized as having Outstanding Universal Value (OUV). As of December 2025, Africa has 98 sites inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List as of OUV under the 1972 Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage. This number, however, is small compared to, for example, Western Europe and North America, which have over 400 and 180 sites, respectively. Further, the management of these few locales is in a dilemma due to, for instance, a lack of technical capacity, funding, political crises, and natural threats such as climate change. This session welcomes papers from academics, WHS managers, practitioners and policymakers to discuss management issues surrounding these WHS. A question for inquiry will be what kinds of natural and anthropogenic threats are facing African WHS, and how can such challenges be sustainably

PRESENTATIONS

Monday, July 27

Session: 7 (Room 1)

7.1. The Archaeology of Dufile Fort for the Last 1000 Years

Asiimwe Raymond

Dufile Fort, a military station established in 1874 by Colonel Charles Gordon along the Albert Nile River banks to control slave trade, has not received academic attention in Uganda's archeological research as it deserves. Historical records often treat Dufile Fort solely within the context of European exploration and colonial occupation. There is a critical need to understand what happened at this site before 1874, how the earlier inhabitants (the Madi) interacted with the colonialists, and the long-term impact of the fort on the local landscape and cultural identity over the past millennium. This research will utilize decolonial archeological theory to document and characterize the archaeological records of Dufile Fort, establish change and continuity in the usage, and identify paleoenvironmental factors that influenced human settlement. The study will employ a mixed research design, using qualitative (archives, interviews) and quantitative (survey and excavation) approaches to answer the objectives.

7.2. Reading the Cultural Landscapes: An Extensive Archaeological Survey in Palabek Counties, Lamwo District, Northern Uganda

Charles Kinyera Okeny

This paper presents the findings of an extensive archaeological survey conducted in the Palabek Cultural Landscapes of Lamwo District, northern Uganda. The study aims to challenge long-standing archaeological assumptions that northern Uganda was historically too arid and inhospitable for continuous human habitation. The research utilized systematic and unsystematic archaeological surveys and excavations across Palabek Kal, Palabek Ogili, and Palabek Gem sub-counties. Data collection included documenting the regional distribution of sites, radiocarbon dating of structural remains, and the analysis of material culture such as lithic and ceramics. Evidence indicates continuous human interaction with the environment from the Later Stone Age through the Iron Age. A significant discovery includes massive dry-stone wall structures in villages such as Pamwa, Orom, and Katungulu Pa Wod Ating. Radiocarbon dating indicates these structures were constructed around 1650 AD (17th century), showing architectural parallels to Thimlich Ohinga in Kenya and Great Zimbabwe. A huge number of new archaeological sites were identified, highlighting the region's high density of unrecorded heritage. The survey demystifies the perceived "archaeological emptiness" of northern Uganda, revealing a complex history of settlement, defense, and cultural resilience. These findings advocate for a shift in Ugandan archaeology toward more regionally balanced research and underscore the potential for cultural tourism in Lamwo District.

7.3. Uncovering the Forgotten Woodcraft of Bunyoro Kitara Kingdom

Herman Muwonge

Woodcraft objects have kept evolving throughout human history and have undergone through changes facilitated by various factors. This paper investigates the largely overlooked tradition of woodcraft in Bunyoro-Kitara Kingdom, a cultural heritage domain overshadowed in scholarship by more prominent political and socio-cultural narratives of the region. Drawing on returned objects from the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology at Cambridge, ethnographic accounts, and material culture analysis, the study reconstructs the roles, techniques and symbolic meanings of woodcraft objects in pre and early colonial Bunyoro. It further examines how political upheavals, colonial interventions and changing economic priorities contributed to the decline and partial disappearance of traditional woodcraft practices. By documenting surviving forms, interviewing contemporary practitioners and analyzing objects in Uganda museum, cultural heritage centers and community settings. This research aims to revive scholarly interest in Bunyoro woodcraft traditions as part of Uganda's broader cultural history.

7.4. Land disputes and cultural landscapes in Uganda: From the "Lost Counties" to Temangalo and Lusanja

Musitwa Brian

Land in Uganda is a physical and legal resource as well as a cultural landscape shaped by long-term processes of settlement, governance, and historical change. This paper examines contested land cases through selected examples, including the postcolonial notion of "lost counties" - Buyaga and Bugangaizi, the Temangalo land transaction, and the Lusanja case. It explores how land laws, customary tenure systems, and state decisions have shaped cultural landscapes over time, and how land disputes emerge within land administration systems where competing claims, procedural ambiguities, and uneven decision-making shape access to land and belonging. From an archaeology and heritage perspective, land is understood as a cultural landscape that preserves traces of past settlement, authority, and territorial organization. The study draws on legal documents, interviews, and case records to examine how land claims are made, negotiated, and contested over time. It shows how law, governance processes, and cultural memory interact within disputed contexts to shape landscapes of identity, belonging, and territorial change in Uganda, contributing to broader discussions on archaeology, heritage, and administrative boundaries.

7.5. Asian Influence on Kisoga Culture and Identity in Eastern Uganda, 1905 to 1912

Nabirye Zaina Lubwama

This paper examines the multi-layered influence of Asian heritage on the Busoga culture. While studies have documented Indian economic activities in Uganda, their influence on the local culture remains understudied. Drawing on archival sources, in-depth interviews, observations and photographs. The paper examines the process of diffusion of cultural, social and economic transformations within Busoga. These transformations have visible legacies in the diverse architectural heritage, worship, linguistic adaptations, ways of dressing and food habits. These occurred during the Indian migration and settlement fostered by the trade in cotton in 1905 and the

construction of the Busoga railway from 1910. Thus, the paper contributes to the understanding of how the Asian presence reshaped the socio-cultural landscape and identity of Busoga.

7.6. Re-tracing the Turkwel in Karamoja: Archaeological investigations of Turkwel sites and its regional and cross-border significance

Ruth Tibesasa, Nik Petek-Sargeant

Uganda's Karamoja district remains one of the least archaeologically investigated regions in East Africa, yet it holds potential for reframing narratives about technological adoption, migration, and cultural transformation across the wider region. This paper will present the preliminary results from a pilot project investigating the Turkwel culture, currently a poorly defined culture that importantly straddles the critical period of iron and farming introduction and spread in the first millennium CE. In particular, the project focuses on sites previously reported by J. Lamphear in the 1970s, which supposedly contain smelting furnaces, agricultural terraces, and rock art. The potential multicomponent nature of the sites can provide further details to the Turkwel culture. Moreover, Turkwel has been linked to the spread of Nilotic speakers into what are now South Sudan, Kenya, and Uganda and the work is an opportunity to critically assess this hypothesis. By relocating and assessing reported sites, mapping their extent, and recovering stratified sequences, the project aims to establish a better understanding of the spread of Turkwel (and Nilotic communities) in the region and to examine how farming and iron technologies were adopted and adapted by drawing on knowledge from better researched areas in the Great Lakes and the Eastern Rift in Kenya. In addition to reflecting on how varied local oral histories related to Turkwel sites, their geographical features, and material remains shape approaches to archaeological investigations, the paper will also discuss potential challenges of cross-boundary research between South Sudan, Kenya, and Uganda, where Turkwel is found.

Session: 9 (Room 2)

9.1 A Snail's Tale: Snail Procurement by Contemporary Congo Basin Forest Foragers and Implications for the Archaeological Record

Nicolette M. Edwards, Karen Lupo, Dave Schmitt, Lucien Nguerede

Hunter-gatherers in many parts of the world consume snails and other kinds of invertebrates, including in tropical, non-coastal environments. Among contemporary Congo Basin forest foragers, these food items serve as important sources of protein during certain times of the year when prey accessibility is low, and this was likely true in the past. However, although snails are often reported in the ethnographic record as a common food item for these populations, detailed information on methods of procurement is sparse. This study reports on recently recorded methods used by the Bofi and Aka Forest foragers in the southwestern Central African Republic to procure snails (ngarro in Bofi) for both consumption and trade, as well as some details about foraging rates, dietary impacts, the effect of commodification on the collection of this resource, and potential archaeological correlates. These lines of evidence support why it is important to consider invertebrates, an often-overlooked resource, in the archaeological record of tropical foraging populations past and present. This work further highlights the diversity and complexity of Central African forest forager foodways, helping connect present realities to past materialities.

9.2. The potential of a social approach: method & theory in Africanist archaeologies of food

Shelby Ann Mohrs, Eli Kuto

As in food studies more generally, Africanist archaeologists are increasingly taking an interest in African cuisines. This paper explores the potential of such interest in understanding the diversity and complexity of foodways and identities across time and space on the Continent. The archaeology of food is not only a window into past foodways, but a methodologically rich avenue through which archaeologists might understand the social worlds of the past. The daily interactions surrounding cooking, serving, and eating meals depend on a plethora of factors that reveal essential information about a group's habitus. The material traces of these processes allow us to understand how past peoples conceived of themselves and others. Building on existing methodologies and theoretical approaches that address food production, consumption, distribution, and heritage, we tease apart theoretical frameworks that explicitly address the role of identity and heritage. To do so, we offer perspectives from current projects in Ghana and Zanzibar that demonstrate the value of centering culinary practices in nuanced understandings of past and present peoples. The paper thereby explores the potential of a social approach to the archaeology of food through new theoretical directions and the impact of these approaches on modern social concerns such as food security, food sovereignty and intangible culinary heritage.

9.3. Gendered Indigenous Knowledge and Food Security in Botswana's Smallholder Agri-Food Systems

Thamary Mukuya, Bothepha Mosetlhi, Olaotse Lokwalo Lekone, Girolamo Florentino

Indigenous knowledge systems remain foundational to food security and environmental stewardship across African drylands, where communities continue to draw on their deep reservoirs of indigenous knowledge to guide crop choices, soil management, plant use, as well as socio-economic and climate-responsive farming strategies. Within these systems, gendered knowledge is critical. Women play a leading role in seed conservation, planting calendars, crop management, post-harvest processing, storage, and food preparation, while men traditionally undertake land clearing and ploughing. These divisions, however, are neither fixed nor universal; they are shaped by shifting socio-economic conditions, at times by colonial legacies, land tenure systems, and the increasing mechanization and masculinization of agriculture. Using an ethnographic approach, this study examines gendered roles and knowledge within smallholder farming communities in Ngamiland and the Central Districts of Botswana, tracing how these have evolved, with a particular focus on women's contributions across the agri-food value chain. The study also examines the challenges women face and the opportunities available to them within the local agrifood system. Preliminary findings from Sepopa village in Ngamiland show that women's participation in agriculture significantly exceeds that of men, positioning them as key actors in household and community food security.

9.4. Human responses and adaptation to climate change: an archaeological and ethnobotanical investigation of dithakong site, Northern Cape, South Africa

Thami Tebeka, Gilbert Pwiti

This study explored the complex interrelationships between people and plants in Dithakong, with particular emphasis on the impacts of climate change on plant availability, distribution, and utilization. The study was motivated by a profound interest in dryland ecosystems, and the research

focused on the Batlhaping community, their reliance on plant resources, and their adaptive strategies in response to climatic variability. Employing a qualitative methodological framework, the study integrates archaeological data recovered from the archaeological stone-built site of Dithakong and ethnobotanical approaches to provide a holistic understanding of these dynamics. Ethnobotanical data were collected through direct observations, participant observation, in-depth individual interviews, and Focus Group Discussions while the archaeological evidence for plant use in ancient times was collected from the Dithakong site archaeological excavation reports. This study argues that people and plants have a symbiotic relationship. The study documented eight traditional indigenous food crops, twenty-eight exotic crops, and twenty-one wild plant species utilized for various purposes, including medicinal applications, food, construction, fuelwood, soil enrichment and water divination. These results highlight the deeply symbiotic relationship between the people of Dithakong and their botanical environment. In the face of global climate change, the local community is experiencing rainfall variability and recurrent drought conditions. In response, they have developed adaptive mechanisms such as the exploitation of groundwater sources (sediba), the use of hand pumps, solar drying techniques, rainwater harvesting (RWH), shade-drying, and an array of other water conservation practices.

9.5. The Mankgwanyana Speaks: Co-Curating and Co-Creating Knowledge toward Curatorial Justice

Yola Nzimela

This paper broadly examines curatorial practice of African ritual material culture within museum and related institutional collections in South Africa. Specifically, it focuses on divination material known as libetshu, or Mankgwanyana, heir looms, in the Nicolaas van Warmelo collection, the Ditsong National Museum of Cultural History, Pretoria, South Africa. Although many communities from which ritual objects such as these divination materials originate still revere them as sacred, there is a lack of meaningful inclusion of source communities in curatorial decision-making mainly due to elitist or Eurocentric perspectives on culture due to colonial legacies and/or where curatorial practices reside with Western-trained professionals. Globally and locally, limited accurate archival contextual data about such divination material constrains connecting the objects to source communities. This paper therefore seeks to enhance understanding of libetshu /Mankgwanyana as ritually activated divination material, to encourage appropriate curation that takes cognizance of their spiritual significance for communities that hold them sacred. Through use-wear analysis, semi-structured interviews with traditional practitioners and curators, and a curatorial justice framework, it shows that libetshu / Mankgwanyana are divination materials used in ritual performances, are spiritual and require specific handling and curation. I find that whilst co-curation with source communities and stakeholders is essential, a blanket approach for ritual objects is insufficient as each divination material belongs to different ancestral lineages. These findings highlight the importance of epistemic restitution and demonstrate the effectiveness of a curatorial justice approach that promotes sensitive, respectful, and appropriate curatorial practices cognizant of the integrity of divination materials such as libetshu /Mankgwanyana in collections.

Session: 14 (Room 3)

14.1. Grinding Stones and Plant Processing in the Pastoral Neolithic: Microbotanical Insights from Luxmanda, Tanzania

Celine Kerfant, Carolina Jiménez- Arteaga, Nuria Garcia-Tuset, Giulio Roberto Bartuli

Luxmanda, an open-air site situated in north-central Tanzania and dating to around 3000 BP, has produced remarkable evidence for plant processing practices in the form of a circular feature with multiple lower grinding stones. This discovery provides new insights into the lifeways of Pastoral Neolithic herders and challenges long-held assumptions about high degrees of mobility and narrow subsistence strategies. The lower grinding stones at Luxmanda are too large to have been easily transported. Their presence at Luxmanda raises important questions about the balance between mobility and residential stability among pastoralist communities of the third millennium BP. A program of microbotanical sampling was undertaken during the 2023 and 2024 field seasons as part of the Research on the Archaeology of Pastoralism in Tanzania (RAPT) Project, supported by the National Science Foundation, the National Geographic Society, the Wenner-Gren Foundation, and in collaboration with the ERC-funded project '(Re)Constructing the Archaeology of Mobile Pastoralism (CAMP)'. Stones were dry- and wet-brushed and associated sediments were also collected, with analysis carried out at the Laboratory of Environmental Archaeology of the Universitat Pompeu Fabra (Barcelona). The integration of multi-proxy plant micro-remains analysis, underpinned by a robust modern reference collection, provides a methodological framework for reassessing tool function beyond conventional assumptions. By highlighting the significance of large, immobile grinding installations in combination with detailed residue analysis, this study redefines the role of plant processing in pastoralist economies and places Luxmanda at the forefront of debates concerning Pastoral Neolithic innovation and adaptation in eastern Africa.

14.2. Shell Middens of Southern Mozambique: State of the Art and New Research Perspectives

Judite Artur Nhanombe, Maria João Valente, Solange Macamo, Paul Lane

Southern Mozambique hosts a significant concentration of shell middens, still understudied, dating primarily to the Late Holocene. These sites constitute important evidence of long-term human exploitation of coastal resources within the southwestern margin of the Indian Ocean, recognized since the earliest studies on Iron Age communities in the region. This presentation offers a geographical and chronological overview of known shell middens, mapping their distribution across coastal plains and situating them within the broader context of Later Stone Age occupations in southern Africa and early farming communities, including recently identified areas. We trace the history of archaeological research on these sites, from colonial-era studies conducted by Senna-Martínez to more recent systematic investigations developed through collaboration between the Universities of Cambridge, Algarve, and Eduardo Mondlane. We also discuss the theoretical frameworks that have guided this research over time, highlighting the shift from artefact-based classification toward the interpretation of biocultural landscapes. Building on this review, we present a critical assessment of the current state of the art, identifying persistent gaps, particularly in the taphonomic and paleoenvironmental dimensions of faunal assemblage formation, methodological inconsistencies that limit comparability between sites, and the relative neglect of certain chronological periods. Comparisons with other coastal regions of Eastern and Southern Africa help contextualize these limitations and point to promising analytical directions, such as the application of multi-proxy approaches. Finally, a doctoral research project is introduced as a direct response to these gaps, outlining its main research questions, methodological approach, and expected contributions to advancing knowledge of coastal dynamics in Mozambique.

14.3. Mesowear Analysis and Herding Strategies in the Fynbos Biome of the Southwestern Cape

Louisa Hutten, Deano Stynder

Dental mesowear analysis provides a robust framework for evaluating long term dietary patterns and environmental conditions through the cumulative wear on herbivore molars. Although originally developed for comparative studies of fossil and archaeological assemblages, the method has since been applied across a wide range of taxa, underscoring its value for reconstructing past ecosystems and feeding behaviours. This study applies mesowear analysis to sheep and small wild bovids from the winter rainfall Fynbos biome—an environment defined by strong seasonal variability and shifting grazing opportunities. By examining variation in cusp sharpness and relief, the project explores how ecological conditions may have influenced herbivore diets and, in turn, the dynamics of human–animal interaction. Focusing on assemblages from Kasteelberg, a Later Stone Age herding settlement, and Oudepost, a colonial period outpost, the research aims to assess how sheep dietary signatures relate to broader patterns of resource use, mobility, and early herding strategies in the region. While analysis is ongoing, initial observations from the substantial sheep dental collections at both sites highlight the potential of mesowear to clarify pastoral adaptations and the transitions associated with the emergence of early farming lifeways in the southwestern Cape.

14.4. At the edge of empire: monkeys, mobility, and afro–indian ocean connectivity in roman Africa

Marta Osypiński, Piotr Osypiński

Monkeys kept as exotic pets by wealthy Romans were previously identified exclusively as African species, particularly Barbary macaques, based on a very limited number of known skeletal finds. This interpretation is fundamentally revised by the discovery of more than thirty burials of Indian macaques, dated to the 1st and 2nd centuries CE, in an animal cemetery at the Red Sea port of Berenike in Roman Egypt. Zooarchaeological analysis demonstrates the exceptional status of monkeys within a broader assemblage of buried companion animals, mainly cats and morphologically diverse dogs. Grave goods such as collars and iridescent shells, along with the presence of kittens and piglets buried as companions to the monkeys, point to complex forms of human–animal coexistence shaped by social hierarchy, care, and identity. These pet burial practices reflect a socio-cultural environment in which animals were integral to elite lifestyles and identity formation within the multicultural communities of a Roman imperial port. The Berenike pet cemetery provides the most comprehensive archaeozoological evidence to date for the keeping and significance of exotic pets in the Roman world. Crucially, the identification of Indian macaques constitutes the earliest zooarchaeological evidence for intercontinental connections between Africa and India, and the first material proof of the long-distance movement of live animals as exclusive, elite commodities within Indian Ocean trade networks. By foregrounding monkeys as valued companions and semi-human beings, this paper demonstrates how human–animal coexistence contributed to early Afro–Indian connectivity. Research funded by the National Science Centre, Poland: NCN-2021/43/B/HS3/02749.

14.5. A big pile of waste: Excavations of a dump site by the project HOME in the Nianimaru plain, The Gambia

Martin Chloë, Champion Louis, Chiquet Patricia, Ceesay Hassoum

Recent excavations conducted in the Nianimaru plain (The Gambia) have revealed a substantial refuse deposit containing a rich assemblage of materials, including ceramics, glass fragments, and African smoking pipes. This deposit provides important evidence for interactions between African and European populations and offers new insights through archaeozoological and archaeobotanical analysis. The refuse layer appears to correspond to an important phase of occupation and activity, although its precise dating is still under investigation. A preliminary examination of faunal remains provides some insight into the exploitation of animal resources. The identified fauna is diverse and reflects the community's use of the surrounding terrestrial wildlife, with limited recourse to livestock farming. The sieving process revealed the importance of aquatic resources, particularly catfish, in this community's diet. Archaeobotanical analysis has also yielded significant results. Hundreds of plants remain were recovered, providing a rare glimpse into plant use in the region. The assemblage is dominated by species of African origin, particularly cowpea, pearl millet, and baobab. These remains suggest the importance of local crops and gathered resources in the diet and economy of the population, while also reflecting broader agricultural traditions of West Africa. The refuse deposit overlies three large pits whose original function remains uncertain. However, their stratigraphies and the overlying deposit provides a valuable framework for comparing the various categories of material recovered. This stratigraphic context will allow researchers to refine the chronology of the site and better understand the sequence of activities that produced this remarkable accumulation of material.

14.6. Serengeti of the Early Pastoralists. Searching for the origins of pastoral societies in the plains of East Africa

Piotr Osypiński, Marta Osypińska, Audax Z. Mabulla

Our preliminary survey conducted in August 2024 and the research carried out by Prof. Bower's team at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries indicate the presence of pastoral sites within the Serengeti National Park, both on the Mbalageti River and on the grassy plains around Sametu and Gol Kopies. Studies of these remains will help to better understand the southward migrations and chronology of the spread of the first manufacturing communities in this part of the continent. In our project, we will attempt to verify the long-established thesis about the environmental drivers of these migrations in the Middle Holocene, drawing on our knowledge and experience in researching early pastoralism on the Nile. Modern methodological tools allow us to study domesticated animals, herd structure and utilization (for meat and lifetime benefits, including milk production) much more accurately than before. In these analysis, we will use molecular and genetic analysis – risky, because they have not been used before on materials from East Africa, but offering the possibility of constructing a much better picture than before of early pastoral communities in their non-human dimension. In our search for plant relics, we will look at macro-remains, pollen, and micro-residues on ceramic vessels and on the surface of stone querns. The current presentation, on the eve of the first field research season, aims to present the assumptions of the project financed by the National Science Centre in Poland (UMO-2024/55/D/HS3/01454).

Session: 15 (Room 4)

15.1. Teaching Through Heritage: Integrating Cultural Heritage and Indigenous Knowledge into Health Science Education in Southern Ethiopia

Doelaso Tsegaye Helamo, Solomon Desta Abebe

This study explores the role of cultural heritage as a framework for health science education, emphasizing the integration of traditional healing systems and indigenous environmental management in the Hadiya Zone of southern Ethiopia. This research highlights the potential for locally embedded knowledge systems to enhance context-relevant learning, particularly in rural areas. Community-based surveys and field observations reveal that approximately 35-40% of households use traditional healing practices, including herbal medicine (34%) and spiritual healing (27%), especially in regions with limited access to formal healthcare services. Indigenous environmental management practices, such as protecting spring sources and traditional land-use systems, are utilized by 40-55% of communities, contributing to better public health outcomes. Notably, villages that maintain protected water sources and follow traditional sanitation norms show a 25-40% reduction in waterborne disease incidence compared to neighboring communities without these practices. Building on these findings, the study proposes a heritage-based educational framework that includes field training, community engagement, and systematic documentation of indigenous knowledge in health science curricula. This approach fosters direct interaction between students and local practitioners, enhancing understanding of culturally grounded health systems and the links between environment and health. The study demonstrates that teaching through heritage enriches academic learning and supports the preservation and validation of indigenous knowledge systems within formal education.

15.2. Le savoir-fer des ingénieurs fondeurs du Bélédougou ancien (Sénégal): sidérurgie ancienne et éveil scientifique

Fode Diakho, Adama Athie

Cette communication analyse une expérience innovante de valorisation du patrimoine archéologique à travers une exposition itinérante consacrée à la sidérurgie ancienne du Bélédougou (Sénégal). Elle s'appuie sur la découverte de sites de réduction du fer dans le périmètre minier de Massawa, dans le cadre d'étude d'impact environnemental et social du projet minier de la société Endeavour Mining, SGO. L'exposition était conçue pour valoriser les savoirs endogènes et pour mettre en lumière le rôle possible de l'archéologie dans les nouvelles politiques nationales de renforcement de l'enseignement des sciences et des techniques. Elle met en lumière le potentiel des savoirs archéologiques comme outils de médiation scientifique et comme un dispositif pédagogique et citoyen de lutte contre l'extraversion des savoirs. Elle explore les principes et le mode opératoire de la sidérurgie dans les langues africaines (wolof, malinké, pulaar) afin de favoriser l'appropriation de l'ingénierie ancienne locale à la fois par les publics scolaires et extrascolaires, tout aussi en stimulant la réflexion sur les possibles réadaptations et réactualisations contemporaines de ces savoirs. Cette initiative met aussi en évidence un modèle de partenariat entre le secteur privé, les communautés locales, l'école et l'université et illustre les possibilités qu'offre l'archéologie pour la décolonisation des savoirs à travers le renouvellement des pratiques curatoriales dans le contexte de l'extraction minière et de développement socioéconomique accélérés.

15.3. The Archaeologist, the Griot and, the Musician: Narrating a Difficult Past in Safen and Lebou countries (Senegal)

Ibrahima Thiaw, Lamine Badji, Adama H. Athie, Djideré Baldé

Atlantic history in the Dakar and adjacent regions of Coastal Senegal has long been overshadowed by Gorée Island, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Recently, we recentered our interests on the adjacent mainland in Lebou and Sereer Safen countries to gain insights on how Atlantic history was memorialized and materialized. This research was designed to break with standard research practices rooted in imperial European history and its workbench of concepts, modus operandi, languages and, dissemination strategies that are largely extroverted and generally hardly accessible to local communities. Building on decolonial practices, we have been struggling to avoid re-producing/extending those concepts and practices to make archaeology more relevant to the worldview, needs and concerns of local communities. This paper discusses one such creative strategy that cultivated new decolonial archaeological and heritage practices that blended more coherently with local history making and history consuming approaches. During fieldwork that involved archaeological excavations, survey and, oral interviews, we incorporated a griot and a rapper to help us present our research results to local communities including the youth. Both the griot and the rapper participated actively along with archaeologists in the whole research process and in narrating the results using their arts. The paper discusses the relevance and significance of that performative experiment.

15.4. Participatory archaeology of the funeral practices of the griots of the Sereer Siin region (Senegal)

Lamine Badji, Ibrahima Thiaw

This paper discusses an experiment in co-constructing archaeological knowledge with local communities from Tukar, Senegal. The experiment was designed to break with epistemic colonial practices in African archaeology which have enduring legacies in the present. Our approach was founded on methodological choices, rooted in the social and cultural fabrics and worldviews of the communities we worked with. Research focused on Sereer griot communities from the Siin region, who are musicians and endogamous artisans. Until recently, their bodies were, at death interred in the hollows of baobab. Funerary baobabs populate the Siin region's landscape and are invaluable archives for understanding the materiality of death among the Sereer Siin griots. There is also an intangible which includes festive activities and ritual practices around the baobab. It is argued here that, it is both through its material and immaterial manifestations that we can glean significant insights on this funerary ritual that inform us about the micro-politics of everyday life, status relations, mechanisms of exclusion and symbolic negotiations surrounding death. Working with the custodians of the funerary baobabs rather than on them, we drew on their living memory to build together knowledge enabling us to reconstruct this ancient funerary ritual. With the griot community as an ethical client, we developed along with them an alliance inspired by teranga aesthetic of care and gift-giving that was critical for a genuine co-construction of archaeological knowledge.

15.5. Pluriversal Pasts: Decolonizing Archaeological Practice in Sudan through the Integration of Folklore and Community Epistemologies

Mohamed Bashir

This paper advocates a decolonial approach to archaeological practice in Sudan by systematically integrating folklore and community epistemologies. Traditionally, Sudanese archaeology has been shaped by colonial legacies, Eurocentric frameworks, and the marginalization of local knowledge, resulting in alienated communities and vulnerable heritage sites. Paradoxically, indigenous oral traditions, place names, guardian beliefs, and community custodianship have often served as powerful, albeit informal, protective mechanisms for these sites. Drawing on fieldwork from the Third and Fifth Cataract regions, this study demonstrates how folklore can guide survey and site identification, provide relative chronological markers and functional hypothesis, and serve as vital informal protection for monuments. This integration moves beyond viewing local knowledge as supplementary data, instead recognizing it as a distinct and equally valid epistemology. The paper proposes methodological, institutional, and legislative reforms to empower local communities as active co-producers of knowledge. By embracing pluriversal pasts and local narratives, Sudanese archaeology can foster more inclusive interpretations, counter illicit exploitation, and achieve sustainable, culturally legitimate heritage conservation, ultimately shaping decolonial futures for the Middle Nile Valley and beyond.

15.6. Archaeological Ethnographies of Listening: Stories from Mutanda Site, Eastern Zimbabwe

Njabulo Chipangura

In this talk, I will look at how we might go about doing archaeology in a way that effectively decolonizes it as a disciplinary practice by listening to contemporary communities. My emphasis here will be on mining archaeology in precolonial and contemporary settings with a view of contributing to the documentation of indigenous African gold mining technologies. This will be achieved through an empirical illustration in which I will talk about an archaeological excavation that I undertook at Mutanda cultural precinct in Eastern Zimbabwe and how I drew upon dialogical engagements involving contemporary makorokozas (miners) who are working around this site. Makorokozas are currently practicing mining in ways that may not be so identical to those in the precolonial period but in which they are some kind of relationship and they were telling me what they think that relationship is. In the process, I showed them what I had found in the archaeological record and subsequently eliciting from them their interpretation of the material culture and so it became a social process of knowledge production. I will provide an illustration to an intervention in methodology and in epistemology by showing how archaeological knowledge can be collaboratively produced.

15.7. **Creative Co-creation of Memory: An Awareness-Based Participatory Model for Community Engagement in Heritage Preservation (Lessons from Archaeological Excavations in Iran)**

Mahsa Najafi

This paper responds directly to the call for creative community engagement in African archaeology by presenting an "Awareness-Based Participatory Archaeology" model. Developed through extensive fieldwork at multiple Bronze Age cemeteries in Iran, this model reimagines archaeological practice as co-creating memory with local communities. The model rests on four principles: 1) Transparency and trust-building through hiring labor from all households; 2) Creative mediation of scientific

knowledge—transforming osteological data into ancestral stories through community workshops where villagers named the deceased and reimagined their lives based on evidence; 3) Fostering emotional connection by recalling ancestral ties through local oral traditions; and 4) Inclusivity through active involvement of women and children as agents of memory transmission. A crucial dimension involved confronting local myths about buried treasures. Through continuous dialogue, we demonstrated that human remains and artifacts hold value beyond material wealth—they are the physical legacy of ancestors. Working in sensitive cultural contexts, we developed rituals of care, involving elders in decisions about excavation and reburial. Communities learned that scientific excavation is an act of care, not treasure-hunting, and came to value scientific information embedded in bones as a different kind of treasure. This practice of integrating scientific data with local memory-keeping directly parallels African griot systems, where oral historians preserve collective identity through storytelling. The outcome was a fundamental shift: communities evolved from passive recipients into active defenders of heritage, later reporting newly discovered sites to authorities. This model exemplifies "epistemic disobedience"—breaking with colonial research methods by placing community knowledge at the center of archaeological practice. By adapting this model to African contexts—where griot systems, age-grade societies, and ancestral veneration provide ready-made frameworks—we can create sustainable, community-led preservation networks across the continent.

Session: 58 (Room 5)

58.1. Maroon Mothers, Maternal Moors

Anjali Robinson-Leary

This proposal seeks to complicate our conceptions of what a maroon is and how women maroons safeguarded the livelihood of the Black community. By parsing the archaeological record so as to tease out the complex infrastructures of maroon populations in the Great Dismal Swamp, the present study places domesticity in the center of the analytic it seeks to build out regarding child birthing and tending. Through this analysis, Black maternal health and the contours of child-raising are studied throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and placed into the contemporary discourse surrounding Black maternal health and critiques of social services. I intend to employ historical research methods that include analyzing primary and secondary archival sources while engaging in source criticism in order to cultivate a conceptual analysis that heavily draws upon the tradition of cultural archaeology and the Black Radical Tradition. This work enriches the field’s understanding of maroon home-life meanwhile expanding the conceptual shape household and domestic archaeology can assume when applied to amorphous social conclaves and scission communities.

58.2. Narrating Identity: Digital Storytelling and Oral Traditions in Reconstructing African Archaeology

Eric Thuku Kariuki

Oral traditions are widely used by African societies as signifiers of social identity. While archaeological inquiry has traditionally relied on material culture such as burial practices, settlement organization, and artifacts, they do not directly infer identity. Furthermore, the paper explores the role of digital storytelling as a contemporary extension of oral tradition as the digital layer provides archaeologists with new forms of evidence and engagement, particularly in African contexts where oral knowledge systems remain vital. This paper argues that oral traditions and digital storytelling offer critical, yet underutilized, frameworks for reconstructing and interpreting social identities in African archaeological contexts. This study foregrounds the narrative dimensions embedded in language, oral performance, and digital media as complementary archives of identity formation. Drawing from insights in Linguistic Anthropology and Literary Studies, the paper examines how oral traditions encode markers of gender, age, ethnicity, and status through metaphor, naming practices, and narrative structure. These elements not only reflect social hierarchies but also reveal how identities are negotiated and contested across generations. By integrating these insights with archaeological interpretation, the study proposes a more dynamic, interdisciplinary and culturally grounded reading of the past. Through digital archives such as YouTube, Instagram and TikTok, preserving oral histories, linguistic data, and cultural records. Ultimately, the paper contends that integrating oral and digital narratives into archaeological methodology enriches our understanding of how social identities were constructed, maintained, and resisted, bridging past and present in the study of human societies.

58.3. Land, Power, and Identity: Governance and the Transformation of Social Landscapes on the Swahili Coast

Esther-Faith Noki Maina

Social identities—including class, gender, status, and community affiliation—are often materially embedded within landscapes, architecture, and settlement systems. Along the East African coast, successive external powers reshaped these socio-spatial relationships through changing systems of governance, trade control, and territorial authority. From the late fifteenth century, Portuguese expansion along the Swahili Coast introduced new military and administrative infrastructures that transformed coastal landscapes and reorganized political authority. Fortifications such as Fort Jesus in Mombasa represent more than defensive structures; they constituted material expressions of power through which colonial authority, taxation systems, and control of the Indian Ocean trade were enforced. These architectural interventions reshaped settlement hierarchies and patterns of resource access across coastal towns and their hinterlands. The subsequent dominance of Omani Arab authorities from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries further reorganized coastal urban landscapes and agricultural production systems associated with Swahili stone towns, reinforcing social hierarchies tied to commerce, land use, and regional trade networks. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, British colonial rule intensified these transformations through the spatial reorganization of rural and urban landscapes. Policies of land alienation, the establishment of settler farms, and the creation of administrative centers materially reconfigured land-use systems, settlement patterns, and the built environment, embedding new socio-spatial hierarchies within Kenya's agricultural and settlement landscapes. Drawing on insights from landscape archaeology and political economy, this paper examines how successive governance regimes reshaped land control, settlement organization, and built environments along the Swahili

Coast and its hinterland. The study argues that these interventions produced enduring socio-spatial identities embedded within landscapes, land-use systems, and architectural forms that continue to shape contemporary land relations.

58.4. Beyond Uniform Patriarchy: Reappraising Gendered Rituals and Authority in Kalenjin Pastoralist Societies

Hilda Ronoh

This paper examines how gendered authority is constituted, authorized, and enacted through ritual practices and social institutions in Kalenjin communities, positioning gender as a central organizing principle of power relations in past societies. It treats gender as a socially constructed yet observable identity, manifested in ritual spaces, ceremonial landscapes, and associated material culture. The analysis centers on the performative construction of masculinity and femininity through symbolic objects, ritual actions, and spatial arrangements. Patterns of inclusion, exclusion, and differentiation in ritual contexts reveal how gendered authority is transmitted and negotiated across generations. Challenging traditional ethnographic portrayals of African pastoralist societies as uniformly male-dominated, the study highlights the complex, contrasting, and sometimes parallel roles of women and men in ritual, moral, and governance domains. Drawing on material and spatial evidence, gendered authority illustrates the dynamic construction, negotiation, and enactment of social identities, thereby contributing to broader discourses on gendered power and identity formation in African ethno-archaeology.

58.5. Food, Commensality, and Social Hierarchy at Manda Ruins, 9th–12th Century CE

Mercy Muthoni Kariuki

Foodways are central to the production and reproduction of social hierarchy, yet their role in structuring power within Swahili urban settlements remains insufficiently examined. This paper analyzes commensality and consumption practices at Manda Island, a coral island whose limited agricultural capacity necessitated reliance on external provisioning through Indian Ocean trade networks. I argue that ecological constraint did not merely shape subsistence patterns, it created conditions under which access to imported foodstuffs became a differentiated resource, leading to the creation of social identities. Elites converted this unequal access into social distinction through the controlled circulation, storage, and performance of commensal practices. Food was not simply consumed it was staged within specific spatial and social contexts to reinforce hierarchy and regulate inclusion. Drawing on archaeological evidence of imported ceramics, faunal remains, and settlement organization, the paper mobilizes theories of practice and political economy to demonstrate how everyday acts of eating constituted mechanisms of status maintenance. By positioning archaeology as a method for examining materialized power, the study contributes to broader discussions on how consumption operated as an active process of identity formation rather than a passive reflection of trade participation.

58.6. Walls, Mosques and masculinity: How men shaped Gede's Urban world

Wangechi Muchai

Gender archaeology as of recent times have been seen differently and somewhat contrastingly interpreted as varied interests, different theoretical approaches, political views split between acidic and practical archaeology. Archaeology as any other traditional discipline is viewed through the lens of feminist criticism, it has neither been objective or inclusive on the subject gender. The study of gender in archaeology seeks to correct this imbalance by examining both men and women roles and how they contributed to the overall functioning of the society. This paper aims to explore masculinity spaces at Gede City state which was part of the wider Swahili Civilization. The city was established around the 11th century by local communities who blended their culture with Islamic Culture through Indian ocean linkages. Although the city was abandoned after half a millennium, the archaeological evidence shows the city underwent changes which were caused by urbanization, spread of Islamic culture, local, regional and international trade and demographic pressure. All these factors influenced the social organization of Gede that are reflected in the usage of public and private spaces and utilization of materials .This paper, therefore examines how the urbanization process, spread of Islam and intensification of trade influenced the Gede society in how they imagined and negotiated masculinities .This paper applies gender archaeological theories in the case study of The Historical Town and Archaeological Site of Gede (UNESCO 2024) which had a continuous occupation from the tenth century onwards for over six hundred years before it was finally abandoned in the seventeenth century. This site offers a platform for examining how social identities and gender roles were expressed and their implication on material records. Material culture on this site including tools, jewelry, pottery and weapons reveals potential gender roles. The general objective of this study is to explore gender, especially the men&#39's spaces in this site. Gede archaeological site has always been assumed as an androcentric site and by this study we aim to study the gender patterns and come up with clear gender roles from the site. This study recommends that more study methods, such as osteology, should be incorporated in the future while examining gender identities in the archaeological record. This trajectory is insightful, especially in mortuary data analysis. It opens a path of correlating material cultures with the biological sex and social status of individuals hence opening an avenue of understanding how such identities were expressed in material form.

Session: 59 (Room 6)

59.1. From cairns o graves: Transformations in the medieval funerary archaeological record of sedentary communities of the Horn of Africa

Carolina Cornax-Gómez

As Insoll points out, funeral practices sometimes tell us more about the living than about the deceased themselves, shedding light not only on the social characteristics of the death but also on the identity of the communities to which they belonged in life. Thus, the medieval tombs of the Horn of Africa reflect the deep cultural transformations undergone by the region's populations in the first half of the second millennium CE. Various factors influenced these transformations, but one of them had a particular impact and, consequently, brought about the most significant changes observable in the material culture of these populations: the arrival and spread of Islam from the end of the first millennium CE. The aim of this paper is to describe the main transformations in the medieval funerary record of eastern Ethiopia, southern Djibouti, and northern, north-western, and parts of central and eastern Somaliland through the non-invasive analysis a series of case studies. Through

the selected sample, we see how these transformations were not solely the result of Islam, but also of its interaction with factors such as the development of a partial and brief period of sedentarism, the emergence of Islamic state-like political entities, and the persistence of the pre-Islamic cultural substrate. The combination of all these elements will shape a new material funerary world that reflects the Islamization of the region's populations without completely abandoning pre-existing traditions.

59.2. Exploring Emotional, Spiritual, and Ritual Bonds in the Living's Connection with the Dead

Celeste Booth

The South African National Heritage Resources Act (25 of 1999) addresses both archaeological dead (Section 35 of the Act) and graves or burial sites older than 60 years located outside formal cemetery areas (Section 36 of the Act). This legislation outlines procedures for accidental discoveries as well as formal processes for grave relocations. Additional guidance is provided by international, national, provincial, and institutional policies concerning the ethical treatment and handling of human remains. As the archaeological repository for the Eastern Cape Province, the Albany Museum is responsible for safeguarding archaeological burials uncovered during excavations or inadvertently through erosion and development activities. The museum continues to support communities by conducting rescue operations when archaeological burials are discovered and assists families with the relocation of remains resulting from erosion, unintended exposure during development, or spiritual repatriation where a burial site cannot be located. These activities have facilitated an understanding of diverse cultural practices related to the treatment of the deceased, encompassing not only formal discussions but also ritual and spiritual practices conducted during and after exhumation and reburial. Common themes identified include the sensitivity required when dealing with exposed dead and the profound emotional connections communities and families maintain with their ancestors. The presentation will examine several rescue operations and grave relocations undertaken by the museum, highlighting the varied approaches, challenges encountered, and outcomes achieved.

59.3. The social structure of the Kongo Kingdom from the 15th to the 18th century: initial insights from the archaeology of burial and domestic sites

Clist Bernard

This study has been started in 2016 with a presentation at the 23rd SAFA Biennial meeting in Toulouse, followed by a seminar held in 2017 at the Paris (France) Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, and a book published in 2018 "Archéologie des provinces septentrionales du royaume Kongo" co-edited with P. de Maret and K. Bostoen. We combine the results of excavations carried out in the Democratic Republic of Congo and in Angola by three separate teams on towns and villages on the one hand, on cemeteries on the other. Adding to the corpus the excavations of a 15th century cemetery to the south of the Kongo kingdom recently published, we are able to present the most up to date dataset available today about the domestic and funerary spaces of the 15th-18th centuries adding new perspectives about earlier periods.

59.4. Critical Death Studies through Mortuary Archaeology: An Aksumite Case Study (50-400 CE)

Dilpree Singh Basanti

This talk examines what archaeologists investigate when we investigate a mortuary context. This talk derives from the experiences of teaching a cross-cultural death and dying program as a mortuary archaeologist and how students, publics, and non-specialists engage with mortuary contexts. Publics and non-specialist experts today have a difficult time in determining the factors that mold death rite – which arguably also remains unclear to specialists who can really only narrow down the investigative processes. Current practice sees mortuary practice as more strongly connected to the mourners or used to uncover elements of social identity or social organization. While these investigations are very fruitful, they are often not what publics immediately expect when looking at a mortuary context. Religion and belief are often considered the most important parts of death but are difficult to uncover and do not have universal relevance. However, deathways, or the "chain operatoire" of events that a departed and their living communities undergo upon death, emphasize more experiential elements of death – which can be more immediately uncoverable. These also open the potential for mortuary archaeology to examine larger themes. This talk will demonstrate how tracing out the deathways at Aksum's Stelae Park (50-400 CE) produces new histories around themes of inventions of tradition and globalizing processes, rites of care, post-mortem ontology, and the connection between death rite and semiosis in mortuary architecture. More importantly, it also demonstrates how archaeology of death is a remarkably strong approach for death literacy in public conversations of the Global North.

59.5. Démembrement, pratiques funéraires démontrer dans les dolmens de Algérie. Etude de cas.

Naanaa Sehil

Certaines manifestations de la culture matérielle symbolique liées aux rituels funéraires sont évidentes, notamment à travers les diverses méthodes de traitement du corps du défunt et la bio-analyse archéologique. Dans ce cadre, notre étude se base sur un examen des pratiques funéraires anciennes au sein des dolmens de l'Algérie. Plus précisément, nous analysons le processus de démembrement et les sections osseux qui en résultent, découverts dans les dolmens de Beni Messous. Ce phénomène nécessite des analyses anthropologiques afin de déterminer la nature de ces lésions. Plus essayant d'établir un lien avec les inhumations dites secondaires spécifiques aux dolmens de Roknia et de Sila. Nous explorons ce concept à travers sa dimension culturelle et sa persistance en tant que phénomène distinctif.

Session: 60 (Room 7)

60.1. Conversations on Rain: Rain and Politics in the Limpopo Valley and southern Mozambique

Anneli Ekblom

Climate variability is part of the environmental and social history of the Limpopo Valley and southern Mozambique. The paper reviews existing knowledge of past climate variability over the last 1200 years, specifically focusing on the previous four centuries. In southern Mozambique and neighbouring regions, drought and famine are closely linked to power and social control. These patterns can be traced back to pre-colonial times. The paper combines archaeology and written sources to discuss the adaptability of local society to recurring disasters, often combined with

political and social upheavals. New political entities claimed power by incorporating older traditions, rainmaking mediums, and traditions while constantly reinventing the relationship between rain, drought, and political power. In the paper, I provide some examples from written sources of how rainmaking was used to challenge power and influence local regional politics. I also relate this discussion to contemporary debates about the control of land and resources and the erosion of local power and its effects.

60.2. Written evidence of hydro-climatic variability and extremes in Mozambique during the nineteenth century

Matthew Hannaford, David Nash, Bárbara Direito

Rainfall variability and tropical cyclones posed significant challenges across the area occupied by present-day Mozambique during the nineteenth century. As a result, accounts of weather conditions and their impacts upon livelihoods, infrastructure and socio-cultural activities are widely recorded in written sources. This paper draws on collections of colonial government bulletins, monographs, letters, diaries and newspapers from the region, written mainly by Portuguese and British observers, to present reconstructions of rainfall variability and tropical cyclones for Mozambique spanning the nineteenth century. The rainfall index series highlights seven multi-year drought periods that affected large areas of the country during the mid 1820s to early 1830s, mid-late 1840s, late 1850s, early 1860s, mid 1870s, mid 1880s and mid-late 1890s; of these, the droughts of the 1820s/30s, 1860s and 1880s were likely the most severe. Six single-year episodes of country-wide above-average rainfall are also identified from documentary sources, including the rainy seasons of 1854-55, 1860-61, 1878-79, 1888-89, 1890-91 and 1898-99. We also identify 19 probable tropical cyclones affecting mainland Mozambique between 1827 and 1900, most of which were observed in north-central Mozambique. The most severe events appear to have been the cyclones of January 1840, January 1846, February 1854, April 1858, January 1883, and December 1899. We reflect on how written records of past climate variability may be combined with other multidisciplinary archives to enrich our understanding of local and regional histories of climate and society.

60.3. Coastal Heritage and Climate Change in West Africa: Archaeological Approaches to Resilience in Bénin

N'dah Didier, Noudagbé Alougba, Angèle Haour Anne, Clarke Joanne

This paper presents the preliminary findings of a collaborative research project investigating the role of cultural heritage in strengthening climate resilience in Bénin, West Africa. The research focuses on communities along the Atlantic coast, a region characterized by complex historical entanglements and identified as central to the Beninese government's heritage-led tourism development strategy. Local livelihoods are predominantly based on fishing, salt production, and small-scale agriculture. Qualitative interview data indicate a high level of environmental awareness, with 99% of respondents reporting observable impacts such as coastal erosion, sea-level rise, and declining fish stocks. Concurrently, 97% of participants emphasized the significance of cultural and heritage sites. These include sacred spaces, ancestral gathering locations, and sites of collective memory, all of which play an active role in shaping community interpretations of and responses to environmental change. In this context, heritage emerges not solely as a cultural asset, but as a practical resource contributing to resilience-building processes. The paper further develops these arguments by discussing the exhibitions we have curated at the Université d'Abomey-Calavi and our findings from archaeological excavations. Together, these approaches contribute to the development of an "archaeology of lived experience" in relation to climate change, offering insights into how

communities negotiate environmental transformations over time. Situated within a broader UK–Canada-funded research programme, CLARE, that is focused on climate resilience and adaptation—rather than heritage per se—this project also provides novel perspectives on climate mitigation and adaptation strategies within the African context.

60.4. Materials, material culture, and the experience of climate change: Making sense and making meaning through archaeology, archives, and oral histories

Nik Petek-Sargeant

This paper intends to build on the idea of a materially tangible climate change or long-term weather change and how with local communities we can make it visible and apparent, and how to utilize it to deliver usable pasts and applied archaeologies. Combining archaeological research, community co-production, ethnography, archival and museum collections research, and (paleo)ecological data, the paper reflects on how these methods work together to elicit modern-day experiences of climate and environmental change, natural and man-made disasters; how talking about specific plants and resources, their history, and cultural significance make gradual changes visible; and how research results, material remains, and landscape features make great memory devices and narrative anchors to tell climate stories. The paper specifically looks at the work done in collaboration with Kenya's Ilchamus community in Baringo, and how a detailed historical, archaeological, ethnographic, and (paleo)ecological record enabled discussions on the experiences of climate change, its visibility in the landscape and the community's history. It shows how we can start make sense of migrations, changes in habitation and food production practices, material culture, and provide tangibility to oral histories that relate to shifts in climate and the environment. Moreover, we utilized cultural values around food production, herding, and associated material practices to start discussions on the experienced impact of climate change today, the potential farming of sorghum and millet, and to address a sense of loss of material culture. Through sustained community engagement the project contributed to the invigoration of a climate discussion and identity at a time of rapid change.

60.5. The 'engineering' of famine in the 19th century Mozambique

Pascoal Gota, Mattheu Hannaford

This paper presents the memories of climate change in the 19th century Mozambique through the lens of extreme hydroclimate events from multidisciplinary archives. It maps droughts and related natural hazards and examines instances where such events were exploited as a commodity. Focusing on droughts, we examine the entanglement of agricultural policies and climate variability to demonstrate the engineering of famine in various parts of Mozambique. By mapping these events, we show how structural processes exploited food shortages and agricultural crises. While many hydroclimate events were recorded and droughts were frequent, hotspot analysis reveals that structural economic factors, rather than just environmental, were fundamental in propelling famine and its engineering. Furthermore, we analyze contemporary accounts from Inhambane province to highlight memories of droughts and strategies local communities use through local knowledge and heritage practices to adapt to related extreme events in their local food systems. In a similar vein to research on 20th century colonial famines elsewhere in Africa, we argue against environmentally deterministic analysis of historical famines, emphasizing that human agency and structural processes shaped agricultural systems and food availability that led to food shortages, famines and related crises. We also argue that local knowledge and heritage practices can inform alternative adaptation strategies to droughts. Ultimately, the paper raises awareness on similar processes that might occur

one the expansion of agricultural frontiers and how to think with local communities and the use of local knowledge to design sustainable solutions on food sovereignty, local crops and local food security systems amidst contemporary climate change.

60.6. Leveraging Indigenous Knowledge for Climate Resilience and Sustainability through Africa's Rain-Making Technology: A Historical and Contemporary Analysis

Philip Onyekachukwu Egbule

Africa faces severe challenges from climate change, with much of the population relying on rain-fed agriculture for survival. Indigenous knowledge systems, particularly Africa's rain-making technology, offer valuable, culturally embedded solutions for managing these environmental threats. Historically, rainmaking practices, rooted in religious and cultural traditions, have helped African communities address water shortages and ensure agricultural productivity. This paper explores the significance of rainmaking across various African regions, examining its contributions to climate resilience and sustainability. By analyzing case studies, the paper highlights how indigenous rain-making technologies have historically influenced meteorological conditions, especially during droughts and planting seasons. It argues for integrating these traditional practices into contemporary climate adaptation strategies, calling for the decolonization of climate science and the recognition of indigenous knowledge as a critical component in climate resilience. Furthermore, the paper addresses misconceptions surrounding African traditional practices, advocating for collaboration between Western science and indigenous wisdom. Such integration promises a holistic approach to managing natural resources and building resilience in African communities. The socio-economic impacts of climate change in Sub-Saharan Africa further underscore the need for a broader, interdisciplinary approach to climate adaptation. Ultimately, this paper proposes that leveraging indigenous knowledge systems alongside modern science offers a path toward sustainable development in Africa. By re-evaluating and incorporating Africa's rich traditional knowledge, African researchers can forge innovative, context-sensitive solutions for climate resilience and environmental protection.

60.7. Characterization and Grading of Selected Indigenous Natural Frankincense Products in Pastoral and Agropastoral Regions of Ethiopia

Aytolgn A. Melese, Sisay F. Asfaw, Tekleyohannes B. Tesfu, Duarte M. Neiva

Frankincense is a natural oleo-gum resin obtained from several Boswellia trees and has been used since the first century BC. It is widely referenced in the Bible, and used in Ayruvedic, Islamic (Unani) & Chines traditional medicines. It plays an important role in supporting the spiritual, cultural, and socioeconomic livelihoods of communities across East Africa. Frankincense is considered heaven's gift and is known as etan in Ethiopia. Although Ethiopia is the leading global exporter of frankincense, its market is still regulated by traditional grading criteria such as size, color, collection area and amount of impurities. There is knowledge gap in characterizing both quantitative & qualitative variations among commercial grades of frankincense and corresponding collection area. The objective of this study was to analyze the chemical profiles of hydrodistilled essential oils extracted from various commercial grades & harvest locations. The essential oils were extracted using hydrodistillation with Clevenger apparatus and their chemical composition was identified using GC-MS. Essential oil yield and chemical composition were similar across commercial grades; however, there was a substantial variation among collection locations. The major compounds identified in the essential oils were: α-pinene (21.97%) and α-thujene (13.63%) in Afar; octyl acetate

(38.69-54.49%) in samples from Humera, Assosa and Metema; α-thujene (24.14%) and α-pinene (16.14%) in Shire; terpinen-4-ol (29.63%) & α-pinene (24.54%) in South Omo & α-pinene (46.53-69.99%) in Borena and Jigjiga frankincense samples. The results revealed no substantial qualitative or quantitative differences among grades, with octyl acetate identified as dominant component; nevertheless, substantial variation was observed among various harvesting locations. The economic value of frankincense essential oil is around eleven times that of raw resin. It is important to revise the commercial grading system to reflect chemical composition and promote value added processing of both black and white frankincense, rather than relying mainly on raw resin exports.

60.8. Local Initiatives and Gender Mainstreaming in Environment Challenge in Lake Niassa Partial Reserve of Mozambique

Gelito Inácio Franco Sululu, Celina Eugénio Bahule, Rajaabo Momade Cimalawoonga

With the project called Youth Led Ocean Protect, funded by Stellenbosch University of Cape Town, South Africa and Sustainable Ocean Alliance, we have already restored more than 200 hectares devastated by major tropical cyclones (recovery of lowlands for agricultural production and environmental management), creation of community agendas for the sustainable use of land and other natural resources, Mapping and micro-zoning of community lands, creation and formalisation of natural resource management committees, creation of agro-livestock associations (inclusion of marginalised women, girls and young people in the creation of self-employment through agricultural production and job creation through the green economy), sensitising communities on planting trees and mangroves in areas devastated by major tropical cyclones as a way of mitigating landslides or erosion, raising community awareness on retreating from flood-prone and landslide-prone areas, raising community awareness on collecting plastic bags from the aquatic and terrestrial environment, including gender in decision-making on the sustainable use of land and other natural resources, and intensifying the practice of conservation agriculture to contribute to the fight against hunger, chronic malnutrition and poverty. Our activities are being carried out in the villages of Ngoo, Chia, Mbueca and Mala in the Partial Reserve of Lake Niassa, Mozambique.

60.9. Adapting to Change: Pastoralism and Environmental Dynamics in Zimbabwe's Drylands

Malon Muronzi

This paper examines the long-term dynamics of pastoralism in Zimbabwe's drylands, focusing on the interplay between climate variability, land use, and subsistence practices. Through an interdisciplinary approach combining archaeology, paleoenvironmental studies, and ethnography, we investigate the emergence and intensification of pastoralism in the region, highlighting the strategies used by communities to adapt to changing environmental conditions. Our case study from the Matobo Hills, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, reveals a complex history of human-environment interactions, with evidence of pastoralism dating back to the Early Iron Age. The study shows that pastoralists in this region employed various strategies to cope with environmental stress, including mobility, diversification of livestock, and manipulation of water resources. These adaptations allowed communities to maintain resilience in the face of climate variability, but also had significant impacts on the landscape, leading to changes in vegetation cover and soil degradation. Our findings have important implications for contemporary sustainable development policies in Zimbabwe's drylands, highlighting the need to incorporate traditional ecological knowledge and adaptive management practices into modern conservation efforts. By examining the longterm dynamics of

pastoralism in Zimbabwe's drylands, we can better understand the complex relationships between people, climate, and landscape, informing strategies for sustainable futures in African drylands.

60.10. Adaptation and Coping Mechanisms to Urbanisation and Land Use Change in Selected Residential Areas of the Lusaka Urban District.

Steriah Monica Simooya, Matilda Kanyampa Kumbwa, Pauline Namakau Monde

Many cities across the globe have undergone rapid urban expansion, with some Sub-Saharan African cities still expanding. Zambia's semi-arid Lusaka city has been urbanising rapidly, reshaping human-environment interactions, transforming land use as a socio-ecological process with profound implications for urban residents' vulnerability and resilience. This study investigates how Lusaka's urban residents in selected residential areas adapt and cope with accelerating environmental and landscape changes, such as peri-urban agricultural conversion, population growth, water scarcity, and land-use change, within a dryland context. Using Remotely Sensed Imagery and researcher-administered questionnaires, we examine how Lusaka urban residents perceive and respond to land-use change not merely as a physical transition but as a driver of livelihood changes. Findings reveal different coping and adaptation strategies away from rain-fed agriculture, from modifying housing materials and intensifying informal groundwater extraction to diversifying income sources. These adaptations, however, increase long-term vulnerability as infrastructure deficits and fragmented governance often limit transformative resilience. Using global long-term adaptation themes from dryland systems, we show that Lusaka urban residents parallel agrarian and pastoral societies in negotiating a balance between immediate livelihoods and sustained adaptive capacity, inherently demonstrating feedbacks between household decision-making and landscape dynamics. We recommend inclusive dryland management that incorporates local coping strategies into formal urban planning, supports non-agricultural urban livelihood transitions without eroding social safety nets, and further aligns urban land-use policy with climate-resilient infrastructure. Our study contributes to the growing need to reframe urban dryland transformation as a coupled socio-ecological process, where livelihood adaptation success relies on bridging remote sensing evidence with lived experiences of urban vulnerability and everyday resilience.

Session: 61 (Room 8)

61.1. Assembling natural history collections as material culture: how East African cultural knowledge shaped scientific collecting at the Natural History Museum

Charlotte Wood

Many specimens in the London Natural History Museum's (NHM) African mammals' collection were objects of significant cultural value to communities in East Africa. Using these specimens, this paper argues that East African material cultures were essential to scientific collecting. The contributions of African individuals to these collections, however, have been obscured by the long-standing classification of specimens as natural objects. Arranging specimens beyond dualistic nature-culture frameworks remains a challenge. This paper examines 1,674 African mammal specimens in the NHM, collected between 1814 and 1965, as forms of material culture. It shows how game reserves, big-game hunting, and museum displays codified an elite hunting culture. By naturalising these collections, museums reinforced colonial systems of conservation that privileged big game hunting,

while restricting other uses of animal materials. Yet traces African cultural practices abound in these specimens. Animal materials circulated between game departments, museums, and local communities. Specimens from western Kenya, for example, illustrate how collectors relied on knowledge associated with artefacts such as buffalo shields, monkey fur, and warthog tusks. The cultural value attached to these different species could shape how they were collected and managed by the game department. A material culture perspective on collections emphasises these fluid boundaries between specimens, trophies, cultural objects, living animals, and raw materials. This paper concludes by considering how collections might be reassembled as forms of material culture to acknowledge the contributions of East African knowledge and cultural practices to science.

61.2. Bridging Borders: Transboundary Heritage and Collaborative Archaeology in the East African Community

Florine Kipkenei

The East African Community (EAC) presents a compelling framework for investigating cross-border histories, archives, and material cultures, highlighting the ongoing legacies of colonial boundaries and the challenges of regional collaboration. Heritage research spanning Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, South Sudan, and the DRC offers unique insights into how historical, archaeological, and archival practices both reflect and shape social, political, and cultural identities across national borders. Drawing on constructivist and postcolonial theoretical perspectives, this paper examines how inclusive and participatory approaches can address institutional fragmentation and structural inequities in the study of shared cultural landscapes. Specific EAC heritage initiatives, including collaborative museum exhibitions, community-based preservation projects, and archival digitization efforts are analyzed to illustrate effective strategies for transboundary cooperation. Methods such as joint permitting, shared curation, capacity building, and research networks are highlighted as critical mechanisms for fostering regional knowledge exchange and sustainable heritage management. The study argues that transboundary heritage work in the EAC not only advances academic understanding but also strengthens cultural diplomacy, equity, and community engagement. Ultimately, this research underscores the potential of collaborative approaches to bridge historical divides, promote shared identities, and support the ethical preservation of Africa's diverse cultural and material legacies.

61.3. Stratified Clutter: Authority and Accumulation in the Archive

Kgolagano Vena, Yola Nzimela, Catherine Namono

Archives are rarely neutral. They preserve field notes, tracings, photographs, catalogues, and correspondence that underpin knowledge production, yet the materials themselves are shaped by colonial, historical, social, and institutional influences. Many collections are acquired through donation or transfer, reflecting both donors' intentions and institutional legacies; some objects are deeply personal or of limited immediate research value. Such clutter exposes entangled relationships, inherited practices, and the ways archival accumulation can perpetuate hegemonic structures, selectively preserving records deemed "important" according to dominant cultural, political, and social orders while rendering others invisible. Drawing on two case studies from the

Rock Art Research Institute (RARI) archives and our curatorial engagement, we consider stratified clutter as a methodological lens: its patterns reveal historical collection priorities, highlight gaps in provenance and interpretation, and expose the power relations embedded in knowledge production. Through introspection of our archives and analysis of clutter, we rethink inherited archives from a decolonial perspective, which challenges Eurocentric and hierarchical frameworks and constitutes a critical intervention: it questions archival practices, authority, and provenance, addresses inequities in conventional archiving, and turns disorder into a productive tool for understanding the complex human and historical relations embedded in the archive

61.4. Reincarcerating the 'Martyrs' Through Their 'Objects': Interrogating Multi-layered Violence at the DITSONG National Museum of Cultural History (DNMCH)

Motsane G. Seabela, Sipho Mabunda

The paper seeks to highlight and dissect the multiple histories embedded in both the site that is now the DITSONG National Museum of Cultural History (DNMCH) and the 'objects' that have been removed from their places of origin and are currently locked up in the anthropology collection storeroom. We argue that the 'collection', storage, and 'preservation' of 'objects' linked to African chiefs and kings, such as Maleboho of Bahananwa and Nyabela of the Ndzundza people who were imprisoned in the late 1800s at the Pretoria Central Prison (now the DNMCH) for resisting colonial rule, serve as a recapturing and reimprisonment of those leaders. We will also demonstrate that the neglect of a comprehensive historical overview in museum narratives, including the buildings and 'objects' in their 'care', perpetuates inherited obsessions and colonial attitudes that prioritize the preservation of primarily the tangible fabric. Lastly, drawing on Françoise Vergès' (2024) concept of 'Absolute Disorder,' we will highlight and propose curatorial approaches, that we have been applying, some of which have been in collaboration with knowledge holders towards the reclamation and resuscitation of African epistemologies.

61.5. The Mankgwanyana Speaks: Co-Curating and Co-Creating Knowledge toward Curatorial Justice

Yola Nzimela

This paper broadly examines curatorial practice of African ritual material culture within museum and related institutional collections in South Africa. Specifically, it focuses on divination material known as libetshu, or Mankgwanyana, heir looms, in the Nicolaas van Warmelo collection, the Ditsong National Museum of Cultural History, Pretoria, South Africa. Although many communities from which ritual objects such as these divination materials originate still revere them as sacred, there is a lack of meaningful inclusion of source communities in curatorial decision-making mainly due to elitist or Eurocentric perspectives on culture due to colonial legacies and/or where curatorial practices reside with Western-trained professionals. Globally and locally, limited accurate archival contextual data about such divination material constrains connecting the objects to source communities. This paper therefore seeks to enhance understanding of libetshu /Mankgwanyana as ritually activated divination material, to encourage appropriate curation that takes cognizance of their spiritual significance for communities that hold them sacred. Through use-wear analysis, semi-structured interviews with traditional practitioners and curators, and a curatorial justice framework, it shows that libetshu / Mankgwanyana are divination materials used in ritual performances, are spiritual and require specific handling and curation. I find that whilst co-curation with source communities and stakeholders is essential, a blanket approach for ritual objects is insufficient as

each divination material belongs to different ancestral lineages. These findings highlight the importance of epistemic restitution and demonstrate the effectiveness of a curatorial justice approach that promotes sensitive, respectful, and appropriate curatorial practices cognizant of the integrity of divination materials such as libetshu /Mankgwanyana in collections.

Session : 63 (Room 9)

63.1. Dispositifs de défenses endogènes dans les monts Alantika durant les 19ème-20ème siècles (nord-Cameroun)

Mezop.T. Noumissing Alice Lucie

Au XIXème siècle, le processus d'islamisation par des jihad peuls et l'expansion du Califat de Sokoto vont largement bouleverser le paysage politique, économique et socio-culturel du Nord-Cameroun en général et du bassin du Faro en particulier. Pour faire face à des menaces permanentes, les Koma des monts Alantika ont mis en place des systèmes de défenses adaptés à leurs réalités sociopolitiques et environnementales. Cette étude qui intègre à la fois les données archéologiques, les traditions orales et les travaux historiographiques analyse les dispositifs de défense élaborés par les communautés des massifs des Alantika. Elle rend compte du rôle central des villages perchés à l'accessibilité restreinte et les fortifications en pierre, de même que les systèmes de terrasse et de murs, lesquels participent conjointement à des logiques défensives et à l'organisation de l'espace agraire. A ces logiques défensives, on peut associer des pratiques de repli vers les sommets, l'emploi temporaire d'abri sous roche comme refuge, ainsi que des formes de mobilisation communautaire en cas d'insécurité ou d'attaque. Grâce à ces mécanismes, les Koma ont pu résister aux pressions extérieures et conserver une relative autonomie politique dans la Haute vallée de la Bénoué.

63.2. Nioro du Rip fortifié : entre archéologie des conflits et histoire de la résistance au 19iéme siècle

Oumy Ndiaye

L'abolition de la traite transatlantique des esclaves et le début du commerce légitime à partir du 19ième siècle est marquée par le développement des cultures rentes qui apportent de profonds changements dans l'architecture politique sociale et économique dans l'espace sénégambien. Partout en Afrique on assiste à la montée en puissance des mouvements religieux islamiques qui remettent en cause la souveraineté des aristocraties locales. Les nombreux conflits qui en résultent au moment où se met en place le système colonial fragilisent les mouvements de résistance à la colonisation. Ces processus ont longtemps été abordés à travers l'étude des sources documentaires et un peu plus timidement par les traditions orales. Cette communication l'approche sous l'angle de l'archéologie et de la culture matérielle. Mes travaux sur les Tata de Maba Diakhou Ba à Nioro du Rip m'ont permis de mettre à jour des objets et des structures qui rendent compte de la matérialité de la vie quotidienne sur un site et centre névralgique de l'exercice et de la pratique du pouvoir politique et religieux islamique au 19ième siècle. À partir de ces données, j'analyse les stratégies de défense, de résistance, mais aussi, la vie quotidienne à partir d'un site défensif ou Tata occupé par le jihadiste Maba Diakhou Bâ à l'orée du nouvel ordre mondial du commerce dit légitime et de la colonisation.

63.3. Les fortifications, un nouveau paradigme de lutte contre le terrorisme dans les opérations militaires au Sahel

Souleymane Mahamadou Ibro, Simon Agani

L'émergence puis le développement de l'insécurité dans le Sahel devient préoccupant. La zone des trois frontières est devenue une zone rouge, que les États centraux peinent à contrôler du fait de la fréquence des attaques terroristes menées par des groupes terroristes (Boko Haram, al-Qaïda, Daesh /Etat Islamique au Sahel). Aux attaques des groupes terroristes, s'ajoutent d'autres activités criminelles se développent concomitamment : les trafics de drogue, d'armes à feu, de biens culturels, la traite de personnes. Cette étude vise à analyser les limites des réponses militaires conventionnelles face au terrorisme au Sahel et à explorer des stratégies sécuritaires alternatives, notamment la pertinence des fortifications comme dispositif militaire de protection pour les États confrontés au terrorisme. La présente étude se fonde sur une approche théorique mobilisant des analyses documentaires de la littérature existante sur la sécurité, le terrorisme et l'histoire militaire dans la région sahélienne. Les résultats de cette recherche soulignent que, face à cette situation, les armes à feu, les avions de chasse et toutes les stratégies et méthodes de modernes ont connu des limites en raison de la mutation et de la multiplication des groupes terroristes.

63.4. Archéologie et peuplement des cuvettes des collines du birrimien inférieur (Houndé, région du Gwiriko, Burkina Faso)

Théophile Zagre, Pon Jean-Baptiste Coulibaly

Les collines du birrimien inférieur résultent de l'activité tectonique depuis le Précambrien C. On en distingue deux (02) types de birrimien : le birrimien inférieur et le birrimien supérieur. Nos recherches archéologiques ont porté sur la partie du birrimien inférieur. Elle se présente sous forme de chaine de colline et déchiquetée par l'érosion. Les cuvettes des collines sont fertiles et offrent beaucoup de potentialités naturelles qui sont des facteurs attractifs pour l'homme. Dans l'historiographie les collines ont été utilisées comme des barrières naturelles et d'excellents refuges contre les razzias des voisins belliqueux. La question centrale qui guide nos recherches est de comprendre la dynamique de l'occupation dans cette espace. La méthode de la prospection ciblée des flancs des collines et des rives des cours d'eau, nous a permis de mettre au jour des sites archéologiques datant de l'âge de la pierre à la période de la production du fer. La typologie des sites est variée : des sites d'industrie lithique, des abris sous roche, des grottes, des cupules sur des cuirasses ferrugineuses, des buttes anthropiques et des ateliers de réduction du minerai de fer. Des buttes anthropiques et des bases de fourneaux ont été sondées par stratigraphie artificielle. Les datations absolues attestent d'une occupation depuis le Ier siècle. Ces données repoussent largement nos connaissances sur les bornes chronologiques du peuplement de la zone qui étaient situées au IXe siècle par les sources écrites.

63.5. Les fortifications en terre du Niger et du nord ivoirien, si lointaines, si proches : implantation spatiale, fonctions et rapport avec d'autres sites archéologiques

Yeo Arouna, Agani Simon

La Côte d'Ivoire et le Niger se trouvent respectivement au centre-sud et au nord-est de l'Afrique de l'Ouest. Ils partagent avec le Burkina Faso, situé entre eux, une partie de leurs frontières. Si la Côte d'Ivoire bénéficie d'une pluviométrie et d'une végétation abondantes, le Niger est quant à lui, aride.

Malgré ces différences climatiques, les communautés qui y ont vécu il y a de cela quelques siècles, ont bâti des fortifications en terre. Les restes de ces structures mettent en évidence les périodes troubles s'étendant du XVe au XIXe siècle mais aussi les savoirs et les savoir-faire des communautés à utiliser des matériaux naturels en architecture. Après des études individuelles et isolées, deux archéologues font une analyse comparative afin de mettre en relief, les points communs mais aussi les différences entre les fortifications en terre construites par le Sénoufo, le Malinké et les Peuhl du nord de la Côte d'Ivoire et celles édifiées par les Yoruba du Niger. Ils ont, pour ce faire, construit leur argumentation à partir des recherches documentaires, des observations de terrain et des enquêtes orales. Ils ont, par la suite, successivement analysé l'implantation topographique des fortifications, leur architecture, leurs fonctions, leurs systèmes de défense et aussi leur rapport avec d'autres sites archéologiques. Les résultats révèlent que, les fortifications présentent des caractéristiques communes du point de vue de leur implantation topographique, leur architecture, leur fonction ainsi que leur système de défense malgré leur éloignement géographique. En revanche, leur rapport avec d'autres sites, révèle une différence significative.

Tuesday, July 28

Session: 41 (Room 1)

41.1. Pedagogical Approaches to Teaching African Prehistory: An Undergraduate Case Study in Sudanese Universities

Ahmed Nassr, Azhari M. Sadig

African archaeology has experienced remarkable growth in recent decades, driven by an expanding range of archaeological discoveries, an increasing volume of scholarly publications, and the continual refinement of descriptive and classificatory terminology. In response to these developments, specialized archaeology departments have sought to prepare graduates who are capable of contributing meaningfully to both fieldwork and academic research in African archaeology, while also fulfilling national learning outcomes. Despite these efforts, several persistent challenges hinder the attainment of these goals. These include the rapid and ongoing evolution of research in African prehistoric archaeology, the need to align academic training with the expectations of local and regional job markets, and the continued absence of a unified African archaeological school of thought. This study examines current pedagogical approaches to teaching African prehistoric archaeology in Sudanese universities, with particular emphasis on the role of fieldwork training in equipping undergraduate students for research and professional practice within specialized institutions in Sudan and across Africa. The study also identifies key obstacles that impede the development of a cohesive African archaeological school of thought, drawing insights from the Sudanese academic experience. Finally, it proposes a structured framework for addressing these challenges and advocates for the establishment of a unified African pedagogical model for teaching African prehistoric archaeology one that integrates robust theoretical foundations with comprehensive practical training.

41.2. Digital methods as grounded archaeology: reflections on the integration of legacy and remote sensing data for the documentation and monitoring of heritage sites in Sudan

Altohamy Abulgasim, Stefania Merlo

This paper presents a self-critical perspective on digital archaeology in Sudan, advocating for approaches that are reflexive, locally grounded, and shaped by those working within these landscapes. It reflects on the evolving use of remote sensing by the MAEASaM project, tracing a trajectory from the integration of legacy datasets to the adoption of satellite-based documentation. Our work began with the digitization and reconciliation of archival records, many of which were shaped by earlier expeditions, uneven documentation practices, and externally driven research priorities. Critically engaging with this legacy has been essential for understanding both the potential and the inherent biases embedded within current digital frameworks. Working across Darfur, Kordofan, the River Nile State, the Blue Nile, and the Northern State, we have employed remote sensing to identify and monitor archaeological sites, particularly in regions where field access is restricted. While these methods have significantly expanded the scope of documentation, they have also revealed important limitations. The outbreak of war in Sudan in early 2024 has introduced further constraints, effectively halting all planned ground verification activities. The absence of systematic ground-truthing raises ongoing concerns regarding accuracy, interpretation, and the potential detachment of archaeological knowledge from on-the-ground realities. In response, our work has increasingly prioritized capacity building. Through workshops and training initiatives, we have collaborated with Sudanese scholars and heritage professionals to develop expertise in GIS, remote sensing, and digital documentation. These efforts aim not only to transfer technical skills, but also to shift authority over data production and interpretation toward local stakeholders.

41.3. Paleolithic discoveries on the western periphery of the Red Sea (Agig district of the Sudan): Implications for tracking hominin habitat and dispersal routes out of Africa

Amanuel Beyin, Ahmed Nassr, Parth R. Chauhan

Coastal and near-coastal landscapes are believed to have offered hominins access to diverse resource bases, including marine, terrestrial and in between. Its proximity to the fossil-rich East African Rift region makes the western periphery of the Red Sea an ideal area to search for evidence of hominin engagement with coastal landscapes. Unfortunately, the region has seen little Stone Age-focused research in the past, hindering informed assessments of early human settlement history there. Since 2017, our team conducted successive fieldwork in the Agig district of the Sudanese Red Sea region, primarily focusing on near-coastal plains. The team documented numerous surface scatters of stone artifacts characteristic of the Acheulean and Middle Stone Age technocomplexes. Acheulean technology (believed to have existed c. 1.75 million – 200,000 years ago) suggests that the region was inhabited by members of Homo erectus, while the Middle Stone Age artifacts indicate occupation by members of our lineage, Homo sapiens. These discoveries broaden our understanding of the range of environments hominins occupied in Africa prior to and during their expansion into the neighboring regions, such as the Levant and Arabian Peninsula. This paper discusses the landscape settings of the archaeological occurrences in the study area, and the inferred climatic and ecological conditions that may have promoted hominin habitation.

41.4. A Mosaic of Technologies: Chronological and Lithic Evidence for Late Middle Pleistocene Population Dynamics in Sudanese Nubia

Miroslaw Masojć, Ahmed Nassr

We synthesize stratigraphic, chronological, and technological evidence for Middle Pleistocene hominin activity in Sudanese Nubia (northeastern Africa), focusing on the EDAR region, Sai Island, and the Bayuda Desert (BP177). In a region characterized by a scarce fossil record, lithic assemblages and their associated chronologies provide the primary basis for reconstructing hominin population dynamics. We evaluate whether the observed variability in Acheulean, Sangoan, and Nubian Levallois (Middle Stone Age, MSA) assemblages dated between ca. 400 and 100 ka reflects sequential cultural replacement or temporal overlap among distinct technological systems. The EDAR 7 sequence documents a large-flake Acheulean industry tentatively dated to MIS 13–11 (≥400 ka), representing the oldest securely dated Middle Pleistocene occupation in the eastern Sahara. At EDAR 135, Acheulean horizons dated to ca. 220–140 ka (MIS 7–6) demonstrate the persistence of large cutting tool traditions into the late Middle Pleistocene. Interstratified Acheulean and Sangoan assemblages on Sai Island, broadly attributed to MIS 9–7, indicate substantial chronological overlap and argue against a simple linear technological succession. At BP177 in the Bayuda Desert, early Nubian Levallois assemblages associated with a thermoluminescence age of 322 ± 106 ka (terminus post quem) suggest that MSA reduction systems were established in the region during the late Middle Pleistocene. Taken together, these data demonstrate that three major technological systems—Acheulean, Sangoan, and early MSA overlapped temporally in northeastern Sudan. Rather than reflecting abrupt replacement, this pattern supports a model of technological mosaic structured by ecological variability, mobility strategies, and demographic complexity.

41.5. Nubian Levallois Technology in Sudan: Historical Foundations, Recent Discoveries, and Unresolved Questions

Osman Khaleel, Sol Sánchez-Dehesa, Nuno Bicho

Sudan holds a foundational position in Palaeolithic lithic studies. The term 'Nubian' originated from the Combined Prehistoric Expedition's rescue archaeology along the Sudanese and Egyptian Nile prior to the Aswan High Dam flooding, where a distinctive form of Levallois point core reduction was first systematically defined. This technology was later recognised as part of a broader Afro-Arabian Nubian Technocomplex, whose distribution has been linked to both Levantine corridor and southern Red Sea dispersal routes out of Africa, placing Sudan at the center of debates on early hominin dispersal. Recent fieldwork at Sai Island, the Dongola Reach, the Bayuda Desert, the Eastern Desert, and the Kerma region has produced assemblages with well-represented Nubian Levallois components associated with OSL age estimates extending well beyond its previously assumed MIS 5 boundary into MIS 3 and possibly MIS 2. New discoveries from the Kerma area further expand the known geographic and contextual range of this reduction strategy within Sudan, while revealing considerable variability in its technological expression across different raw material environments. This paper reviews Sudan's contribution to the Nubian debate from its CPE origins to the present, examining how the Sudanese record informs current understanding of Nubian technological definition, chronological extent, and geographic distribution. Sudanese Nubian sites represent an irreplaceable component of African prehistoric heritage, and we highlight the urgent challenges that ongoing conflict, climate pressures, and limited field infrastructure pose to their documentation, preservation, and community engagement.

41.6. Museum Collections as Research Laboratories: Reassessing Late Prehistoric Ceramics from Kadero at the Poznań Archaeological Museum

Sharif Sawod Hussein, Wafa

This paper reassesses late prehistoric ceramic assemblages from Kadero, central Sudan, curated in the Poznań Archaeological Museum, to evaluate the research potential of Heritage Museum collections within contemporary prehistoric archaeology. Excavated between 1972 and 2003, the materials have primarily been studied through typological and chronological approaches. Their technological dimensions, however, remain insufficiently explored. Drawing on the chaîne opératoire framework and theories of technological style, this study analyzes pottery production as a socially embedded practice. Systematic macroscopic examination and non-destructive analytical methods were employed to reconstruct key stages of manufacture, including raw material selection, paste preparation, forming techniques, surface treatment, and decorative motifs. The results indicate both continuity and variability in ceramic practices across the Late Mesolithic and Early Neolithic, suggesting gradual technological transformation rather than abrupt cultural rupture. Patterns in technical choices and decorative grammar point to stable learning networks alongside localized innovation within Middle Nile communities. By generating new data exclusively from curated material, this study demonstrates that museum collections function as active research laboratories. The reassessment of the Kadero assemblage highlights the epistemological value of collections-based research and underscores the role of institutions such as the Poznań Archaeological Museum in advancing knowledge on late prehistoric Sudan.

41.7. Between banks of the Nile: Animal Offerings in burials from the Late Meroitic to Early Makuria periods at the Dongola Reach, Sudan

Urszula Iwaszczuk, Ewa Czyżewska-Zalewska

Animal remains are frequently discovered in graves in the Dongola Reach (between 3rd and 4th Nile Cataracts) of Sudan, yet their analysis has been rare. Archeozoological research at sepulchral tumuli sites dating to the Early Makurian Period (4th-6th centuries AD), was conducted as part of the Early Makuria Research Project (EMRP), led by Professor Mahmoud El-Tayeb, from 2005 to 2017. The cemeteries are primarily located on the right bank of the Nile. The only site on the left bank is Tanqasi, which was excavated as part of the EMRP from 2018 to 2024. Tanqasi features a wider range of chronological burials compared to the other analyzed cemeteries, with interments dating from the late Meroitic period to the Early Makurian period. P. Shinnie conducted the first excavations at the site in the 1950s, and Professor W. Godlewski started further excavations in the early 21st century. However, only a limited number of graves have been explored. The initial archaeozoological studies were focused solely on materials from Tnq. 87, which was excavated by W. Godlewski. Subsequent excavations within EMRP have revealed a variety of burial types. To date, animal remains from nine graves have been thoroughly analyzed. Although preservation of the remains is generally poor, the collection exhibits significant diversity and differs from that of other cemeteries. Unfortunately, ongoing conflicts have halted further excavation and analytical work; however, photographic documentation of the remains enables preliminary analysis. This presentation highlights the unique characteristics of the Tanqasi materials within a chronological and regional context.

41.8. Reptiles in Nubian Rock Drawings: Iconography, Environment, and Cultural Significance

Yahia Fadl Tahir

Rock art in Nubia preserves a rich corpus of animal representations, yet reptiles have received limited scholarly attention. This study examines the depiction of reptiles in Nubian rock drawings, focusing on their typology, spatial distribution, and cultural significance. The analysis is based on fieldwork conducted in the El Ga'ab Depression, Third Cataract region and El Sikkot region combined with previously published data. A morphological and stylistic approach is employed to identify reptile species, including snakes, crocodiles, and lizards, while spatial analysis explores their relationship to environmental features such as the Nile and paleochannels. The results indicate that crocodile representations are strongly associated with riverine contexts, whereas snake motifs occur in both naturalistic and abstract forms across diverse settings. Lizard representations appear to function as indicators of arid environmental conditions and may also reflect their role as a subsistence resource, suggesting practices of human capture and consumption. These depictions reflect not only the ecological presence of reptiles in the ancient Nubian landscape but also their symbolic roles, potentially linked to concepts of danger, protection, and fertility. Variations in style and context suggest possible chronological and cultural differences in their representation. This study demonstrates that reptile imagery constitutes an important but overlooked component of Nubian rock art and offers new insights into human–environment interaction and symbolic expression in the region.

41.9. Environmental Change in Neolithic Central Sudan Based on Faunal Evidence: Was the Impact of Human Activities a Possible Explanation for it?

Zainab Abdalgglil Mohammed Albashir

Central Sudan constitutes a key transitional zone within the Central Nile region, where Holocene climatic fluctuations shaped heterogeneous landscapes. Despite a rich Neolithic record, zooarchaeological evidence has largely been interpreted site by site, with few attempts to integrate datasets from multiple sites to reconstruct regional variability. This study addresses this gap through a comparative analysis of faunal assemblages from 15 Neolithic sites along both banks of the Nile, at varying distances from the river. Sites were divided into Early and Late Neolithic, and taxa classified by habitat preference into Humid, Savanna, Semi-desert, Desert, and Wide-range categories. During the Early Neolithic, a coherent humid belt extended along the Nile floodplain, embedded within a broad savanna mosaic. Semi-desert conditions occurred along a gradual inland transition, particularly toward the Butana, reflecting stable environmental differences between the Nile and interior zones. In the Late Neolithic, humid environments contracted sharply and persisted mainly in Nile-associated contexts, whereas inland areas show near disappearance of sustained wet conditions. Savanna systems remained dominant but became ecologically narrower and more drought-stressed, with reduced faunal diversity and greater emphasis on dry-adapted taxa. Semi-desert conditions became more clearly articulated inland, yet evidence for fully developed desert ecosystems remains limited. Overall, the faunal evidence indicates that Neolithic communities in Central Sudan adapted their subsistence strategies to spatially and temporally variable conditions, responding to contractions of humid zones, expansion of semi-desert areas, and localized water limitations along the Nile and inland landscapes.

Session: 5 (Room 2)

5.1. An Automated Remote Sensing Tool for Heritage Monitoring Using Machine Learning

Ahmed Mahmoud

Archaeological sites worldwide are increasingly threatened by human activities and environmental processes, placing growing pressure on heritage managers. In Africa, these challenges are particularly acute due to the large number of sites, many in remote or inaccessible areas, combined with limited monitoring capacity. Rapid urban expansion, agricultural intensification, and climate-related hazards further increase the need for efficient, scalable monitoring solutions. Recent advances in remote sensing and cloud-based computing have enabled the development of the Machine Learning Automated Change Detection (MLACD) tool within Google Earth Engine. This tool applies machine learning algorithms to sequential Sentinel-2 satellite imagery to automatically detect and classify landscape changes. It generates a range of outputs, including land cover classifications, change detection maps, time-series visualisations, and summary statistics. By integrating these outputs with spatial datasets of known archaeological sites, the tool facilitates the rapid identification of disturbances and emerging threats. Designed with accessibility in mind, the MLACD tool features a user-friendly interface suitable for users with limited coding experience, supported by training materials in English and Arabic. It is openly available via the EAMENA GitHub repository, promoting wider uptake. The tool is currently being tested in African countries where the MAEASaM project operates, as part of a broader heritage monitoring framework under development. It has been successfully applied to monitor heritage sites in Sudan's 5th Cataract area. Overall, it offers a practical, scalable approach to strengthening heritage monitoring and supporting more informed, timely decision-making.

5.2. Geography, Geoscience, and the Great Dismal Maroon

Anjali Robinson-Leary

This proposal expands the conceptual shape of African landscapes by including those Africanized landscapes cultivated by the victims of transatlantic human trafficking and their descendants. In its advocacy for centering geographic methodologies, this approach excavates the PanAfrican legacy of human-land interactions. As its first example, it centers diasporicized Africans in the early Americas, specifically in the Great Dismal Swamp. Although Daniel O. Sayers' A Desolate Place for a Defiant People does endeavor to interrogate the historical soils of the swamp, this pioneering project whose intent was never "to fully survey and test-excavate a given archaeological site" centered its analysis on the social use of ancient material culture by historical people, namely maroons and enslaved laborers and its role in the development of a new mode of production, the Praxis Mode, as termed by Sayers. This study makes its intervention by calling attention to the geographic and geoscientific empirical data gap of the Great Dismal Swamp left in the wake of the monumental study and simultaneously discusses a glaring methodological gap in the usage of geographic information system technologies in the archaeological investigation of maroon and mattonage sites. Drawing on a dataset of 15 archaeological and historical studies that discuss the Great Dismal Swamp its maroons during a period of 1607 and 1865, this project codes for the methodological descriptors of geography, geomorphology, geophysics, magnetometry, and similar fields. It then analyzes the usage of geoscientific methods in investigating the Swamp for effectiveness. Simultaneously, this study also codes for the same descriptors along a set of 25 archaeological studies of maroon and marronage sites throughout the Americas and cross-references these findings with existing scholarship on the disparities in GIS technology across the world, to expose the utter disparity in technological equipment. Taking stock of the issue at hand, I use these findings to begin developing a framework that centers earth sciences in the archaeological analysis of maroon inquiries.

5.3. From remote sensing to spatial analysis: optimizing the inventory and understanding of tumuli complexes in Senegal

Assane Ndiaye, Nicolas Serge Elisé Sagna, Lamine Badji, and Ibrahima Thiaw

The central-western part of Senegal is home to some of the most impressive tumular archaeological landscapes in West Africa, with numerous earthen mounds spread over an area of 32,000 km2. Monitoring the preservation and integrity of these sites is challenging due to their vast extent and exposure to multiple threats, including infrastructure development, urban expansion, agriculture, and erosion. Digital geospatial technologies provide effective, non-intrusive tools for improving site inventory, supporting long-term preservation, and enhancing understanding of the landscape. This paper presents a novel archaeometric approach that integrates remote sensing with drone-assisted pedestrian surveys and enables systematic mapping of tumuli while simultaneously assessing anthropogenic threats. The multiscalar spatial analysis, made possible by systematic mapping, has yielded critical information on site morphologies, spatial distributions, and site integrity in relation to anthropogenic activities. The study, developed as part of the Mapping Africa's Endangered Archaeological Sites and Monuments (MAEASaM) project in Senegal, provides the foundations for an improved system of heritage management and a deeper understanding of this endangered archaeological landscape.

5.4. A Contribuição dos Sistemas de Informação Geográfica (SIG) na Gestão do Património e Planeamento Urbano em Moçambique: Estudos de Caso da Ilha de Moçambique

Blaunde João Blaunde

As vastas e dinâmicas paisagens africanas apresentam desafios únicos para a gestão do património cultural e o planeamento urbano sustentável. Este trabalho explora o papel transformador das tecnologias geoespaciais, com foco particular nos Sistemas de Informação Geográfica (SIG), na documentação, interpretação e salvaguarda do património em Moçambique. Através de estudos de caso na Ilha de Moçambique, Património Mundial da UNESCO, demonstra-se como o SIG foi sido aplicado na elaboração de Cartas de Risco. O estudo destaca a integração de dados espaciais para uma compreensão holística das dinâmicas territoriais e dos impactos das alterações das condtruções. Será apresentada metodologia que permitiu identificar e monitorizar construções em risco, otimizar a monitoria física, sublinhando a relevância do SIG como ferramenta essencial para a tomada de decisões informadas e a proteção do património africano.

5.5. Shovel Test Pits as a Methodological Pathfinder: Identifying and Claiming Social Space in Lower Akinyele, Southwestern Nigeria

Boluwaji D Ajayi

This paper examines how a systematic shovel test pit (STP) survey, integrated with geospatial analysis, can illuminate how rural inhabitants claimed and organized social space on a dynamic frontier. Drawing on doctoral research conducted in Lower Akinyele, Oyo State, Nigeria, the study investigates everyday life between the eighteenth and twentieth centuries in a landscape situated between the nineteenth-century military centers of Ijaye and Ibadan. Although STPs are typically used solely as site-discovery mechanisms, this project repurposes them as a methodological pathfinder for higher-resolution spatial analysis. Using a controlled STP grid, the distribution of

ceramics and other cultural materials is mapped to identify discrete artifact concentrations and probable household clusters that remain completely invisible on the modern surface. In this light, the paper presents results identifying subsurface signatures that demonstrate how inhabitants claimed, modified, and organized domestic space. The findings challenge narratives that privilege urban centers as the primary analytical locus of social complexity and encourage a more serious consideration of how rural lives foreground their agency and negotiate their daily life on the margins of empire.

5.6. Approche Intégrée par SIG, Photogrammétrie et 3D de l'Occupation Socio-Spatiale autour du Site Archéométallurgique de Séfunwuanta (Xe-XVIIe siècle)

Honoré Mawutin Adokin

Situé au centre-sud du Bénin, le site de Séfunwuanta (Xe–XVIIe siècle) fait partie des premiers à avoir suscité très tôt l'intérêt des chercheurs. Cette communication présente une approche intégrée combinant prospection archéologique, SIG, photogrammétrie et modélisation 3D pour l'étude et la proposition de stratégies de conservation du site. Les prospections ont permis un géoréférencement systématique des données d'occupation spatiale collectées, ainsi que l'élaboration de cartographies précises. L'analyse spatiale et la reconstitution 3D ont mis en évidence les dynamiques d'occupation et les interactions socio-spatiales. Parallèlement, la numérisation des artefacts, notamment des céramiques, a permis d'analyser leurs caractéristiques morpho-fonctionnelles. Cette démarche souligne l'apport des technologies numériques dans la compréhension des pratiques culturelles, en particulier celles liées à la production du fer, et ouvre de nouvelles perspectives pour la valorisation du patrimoine archéologique.

5.7. Implementing open-source GIS for heritage management: skills, adoption, and the limits of the technical fix

John Lavender, Ally Ussi Ally, Mwamvita Sollo

Geospatial databases are indispensable tools for site protection and advocacy, yet they remain lacking across much of the continent, often assumed to be beyond the reach of under-resourced heritage institutions. This paper presents a methodological overview of the ongoing implementation of a QGIS-based geospatial database developed for the Zanzibar Department of Museums and Antiquities (DoMA) as part of the MAEASaM project. The database integrates a selection of data about the gazetted and World Heritage sites across the archipelago with satellite imagery, environmental data, and administrative boundaries, providing DoMA with a single platform for visualizing, analyzing, and communicating Zanzibar's heritage. A central aim of this paper is to demonstrate how relatively simple and affordable geospatial infrastructure, built entirely on open-source software, can be successfully deployed in contexts where resources are limited. Alongside the technical setup, the paper reflects on the dynamics of adoption observed in the early months of implementation. Emerging digital skills gaps shaped the rollout in unexpected ways: younger, less experienced staff proved more digitally native and were disproportionately able to engage with the system, raising important questions about intergenerational knowledge transfer within heritage institutions during the process of digitization. To date, the majority of engagement has focused on familiarization and cataloguing rather than active monitoring or management tasks, reflecting both the tool's novelty and the sustained training and support identified as a key prerequisite for independent use. The paper discusses these findings as a starting point for thinking about what meaningful capacity-building looks like in similar contexts across Africa.

5.8. Worlds Within Worlds: Considering African Landscape Scale through a 4D Exploration of Mwanampambe Cave

Laura Basell, Abdullah Khamis Ali, Mark Horton, Chami, Maximillian Felix

This paper presents the first high specification 4D survey of Mwanampambe Cave on Unguja and considers its wider implications for geospatial research on African archaeological landscapes. Although the session emphasizes large territorial scales that often define African landscape studies, this paper uses a single cave to challenge our assumptions about what constitutes a landscape and how scale should be understood. Mwanampambe operates as a microcosm of broader cultural and ecological processes, revealing worlds within worlds that are no less significant for being spatially contained. The study demonstrates that landscapes are relational, multi-scalar, and shaped by diverse ways of knowing. The project integrates advanced geospatial technologies with archaeological, ecological, and heritage-based approaches in order to complement earlier investigations and to assess the potential for further geoarchaeological work within the cave. As the research progressed, its scope expanded to include indigenous perspectives and local heritage priorities, demonstrating the value of interdisciplinary and multi-stakeholder collaboration. The resulting 4D model not only refines understandings of the dynamic character of African sacred groves and traditional sacred places through time, but also shows how detailed spatial documentation can support sustainable landscape management and ecological security in a period of increasing deforestation. In doing so, the paper highlights the importance of fine-scale, place-based studies for advancing geospatial heritage practice across Africa.

5.9. Beyond Access: Deep Learning Approaches to Funerary Landscapes in Egypt's Eastern Desert

Mariusz Gwiazda

This paper explores the potential of geospatial technologies, with a particular emphasis on deep learning, for investigating archaeological landscapes in environmentally and politically constrained regions of Africa. The case study focuses on the funerary landscape of Blemmyan Berenike town, located in Egypt's Eastern Desert, an area characterized limited accessibility, and contemporary security restrictions due to its location within a military border zone near the Egyptian–Sudanese frontier. Parts of the archaeological site remain inaccessible as they are occupied by modern military installations, significantly limiting the scope of traditional field-based research. This study integrates high-resolution satellite imagery, GIS-based spatial analysis, and deep learning–assisted object detection to identify and map funerary features across the desert landscape. Our algorithm uses was trained to recognize burial structures, enabling the detection of hundreds of graves without direct ground access. This approach provides a safe and effective alternative to systematic pedestrian survey, particularly in border regions and other sensitive or hazardous contexts. The resulting dataset forms the basis for advanced spatial analysis, including visibility and intervisibility studies, which shed light on the intentional placement of tombs in visually prominent locations. These patterns reveal shared cultural principles governing the construction of a human-made funerary landscape and highlight the relationships between the living community, their ancestors, and the surrounding terrain. By demonstrating how deep learning can expand archaeological inquiry, this paper argues for the broader applicability of such methods across African landscapes. The proposed workflow offers a replicable and context-appropriate model for documenting archaeological heritage.

5.10. Variability in Graffiti Production in the Valley of the Quarries: The Last Carter Graffiti and New Evidence for Repeated Missions of Butehamun and His Workforce

Muhammad Ragab

This paper examines a cluster of late New Kingdom and early Third Intermediate Period (1100–1000 BC) graffiti in the Valley of the Quarries (Vallée des Carrières, VdC) in Western Thebes as evidence for mobility, place-making, and inscriptional networking within the Theban necropolis in Luxor, Egypt. Drawing on a 2025 systematic survey of the VdC, which documented over 150 previously unknown graffiti and relocated the remaining unpublished inscriptions recorded by Howard Carter, it focuses on a Y-shaped side valley containing twenty-two graffiti, including the last six Carter graffiti on the Theban Mountain. These texts preserve a concentrated record of repeated visits by high-ranking necropolis officials associated with royal scribes Butehamun and, later, his son Ankhefenamun in the late Twentieth and early Twenty-First Dynasties. Rather than treating them as isolated epigraphic traces, this paper approaches them as spatially embedded acts of marking within a restricted and symbolically charged landscape. Their clustering and sequential accumulation reveal how informal writing practices mapped movement, commemorated presence, and materialized relationships of authority, memory, and affiliation in the post-Ramesside necropolis. In particular, “follower graffiti” and the repeated use of the same rock surfaces suggest that inscription functioned not only as individual self-presentation but also as participation in a localized network of social belonging. By situating the VdC corpus within broader discussions of graffiti across Egypt, the paper argues that non-monumental inscriptions can illuminate micro-regional mobility and institutional connectivity even in ostensibly local settings. It also highlights the value of integrating survey, GIS-based spatial analysis, and prosopography in reconstructing inscriptional landscapes across disciplinary and regional boundaries.

5.11. Assessing the accuracy of archaeological inventories based on postcolonial maps: case of the Martin and Becker Inventory

Nicolas S. E. Sisset Sagna, Lamine Badji, Assane Ndiaye, Ibrahima Thiaw

The critical evaluation of archaeological inventories compiled from colonial maps is now a major methodological challenge for the reliability of heritage databases. This paper focuses on the analysis of the spatial and documentary accuracy of the inventory compiled by Victor Martin and Charles Becker between 1970 and 1984, which established the reference cartographic synthesis of protohistoric sites and monuments in Senegal. We compare their information on the location of archaeological sites within the Senegambian region with data derived from a rigorous georeferencing protocol. Cross-referencing this historical data with GPS surveys, recent field observations, and spatial and statistical analyses enables us to quantify spatial discrepancies (absolute and relative errors), identify instances of approximate cartographic transposition, and highlight the structural biases inherent in colonial surveying practices, notably the selection of points of interest, cartographic generalization, and political-administrative constraints. The results of MAEASaM's assessment highlight the need to revise certain inventoried sites and to explicitly incorporate margins of error into the databases archaeospatials, and to develop a standardized protocol for the critical audit of inventories based on historical sources. This paper seeks to propose a methodological framework combining archaeology, geomatics and the history of cartographic practices to strengthen the scientific validity of inherited inventories.

5.12. Towards a biography of Thaba-Bosiu

Nthabiseng Mokoena-Mokhali, Justine Wintjes

The mountain presently known as Thaba-Bosiu is located 20km east of Maseru, Lesotho, facing the plains of the Free State in South Africa to the west, and the high Maloti to the east. Thaba-Bosiu ('the night mountain') is closely associated with Morena e Moholo Moshoeshoe I, who established his capital on its flat summit in 1824 and reigned from there until his death in 1870. As the birthplace of the Basotho nation, it is a powerful symbol of nation-building, social cohesion, resistance and resilience. Its story is closely entangled with the life of Moshoeshoe and his ongoing symbolic power in contemporary Lesotho politics and nationalism. In Basotho literary metaphor, a mountain has come to symbolize the origin of settlement and villages as well family and community structures. However, the mountain has an agency and deeper history of its own. We propose to approach it as a biographical subject with a more complex identity, within a broader project seeking to develop the concept of 'site biography' as an investigative approach and genre of science writing inspired by object biography. We examine the long durée of how people have shaped Thaba-Bosiu and how it has shaped human experience, to explore and map its layered life in a deeper and wider time-frame, from the Later Stone Age to contemporary times. As a candidate for World Heritage Site status, our study enriches understanding of what Thaba-Bosiu is, and what makes it worthy of protection as a place of global significance.

5.13. Where to Look? A Scalable Land Cover Visibility Index for Archaeological Survey Planning in African Landscapes: A Case Study from the MAEASaM Project

Pamela Ochungo, Nicolas Sagna, Opuada Uranta, Jessica Bates

Remote sensing-based archaeological surveys across Africa's 30 million square kilometers face a fundamental challenge: variable land cover that alternately obscures or reveals surface cultural materials. While remote sensing has revolutionized archaeological prospection, no standardized framework exists to quantify where visual survey methods are likely to succeed or fail at continental scales. This paper presents a scalable, open-source visibility index derived from an extensive NDVI dataset developed by the MAEASaM (Mapping Africa's Endangered Archaeological Sites and Monuments) project across 13 African countries in combination with the MODIS MCD12Q1 V061 land cover data and implemented in Google Earth Engine. IGBP land cover classes (International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme classification) are grouped into four visibility categories: Obscuring, High NDVI Visible, Highly Visible, and Partial, based on their impact on archaeological surface visibility. The visibility index is derived from multi-temporal NDVI inventories (2000–2022), including mean annual, monthly, and seasonal composites. NDVI values were classified using quantile classification in QGIS, and the highest quantile corresponding to persistently green areas was selected and combined through overlay with obscuring areas derived from the land cover dataset.

5.14. Integrated documentation of remote sensing and legacy data: the case study of the MAEASaM-NMMZ collaboration in Zimbabwe

Renier van der Merwe, Faye Lander, Fionna Huggins, Godhi Bvocho

Zimbabwe is renowned for its monumental architecture or its monumental architecture, particularly at sites such as Great Zimbabwe, Khami, and Naletele. Heritage management efforts within the country have largely focused on these prominent sites in terms of conservation, monitoring, and

protection. However, like many others, even these high-profile sites face ongoing challenges related to limited capacity and resources needed to effectively implement and sustain such programmes. The use of remote sensing methods—especially through freely accessible tools such as Google Earth™ and the visual analysis of satellite imagery—offers a cost-effective and efficient alternative for documenting both known and previously unrecorded heritage sites. These approaches also enable coverage of wider and less intensively studied areas, revealing a broader range of archaeological traditions that might otherwise remain overlooked. This paper presents the results of current work on the digitization and documentation of sites in Zimbabwe using visual remote sensing techniques alongside the integration of analogue site reports, mostly derived from published literature, to supplement existing records of Zimbabwe's archaeological heritage, held at the National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe (NMMZ). The work is based on a collaboration between the Mapping Africa's Endangered Archaeological Sites and Monuments project and NMMZ, whose mandate, among others, is to ensure the preservation of immovable cultural heritage. It reflects on some of the practical challenges for implementing remote sensing techniques and critically examines the importance of combining multiple sources of documentation for heritage management purposes.

5.14 From Soil Chemistry to Satellite Imagery: Detecting Mobile Pastoral Settlements in the Turkana Basin, Kenya

Stefano Biagetti, Abel Ruiz-Giralt, Antonios Koutroumpas

Mobile pastoral communities remain underrepresented in the archaeological record due to the ephemeral nature of their campsites, which often leave limited material remains and lack permanent structures. Addressing this challenge requires methodological approaches capable of detecting subtle and short-lived occupation traces. Within this context, the ERC-funded project CAMP (ERC-CoG-2022 No 101088842) develops a geo-ethnoarchaeological approach to the study of ancient pastoralism, grounded in the observation and analysis of present-day pastoral practices. The first stage of the study involved systematic sediment sampling in a number of contemporary pastoral settlements in the Loreamatet area of the Turkana Basin (Kenya). These samples were analyzed using portable X-ray fluorescence (pXRF) in order to characterize their elemental composition. The resulting geochemical data were then processed through Compositional Data Analysis, allowing the identification of elemental enrichments associated with livestock penning, dung accumulation, and other forms of anthropogenic deposition. In a second stage, these geochemically characterized samples were used as a reference framework to explore their detectability through satellite imagery. Rather than establishing a direct spectral–geochemical correspondence, a machine learning model was trained on multispectral satellite data to detect statistical patterns within the spectral feature space that discriminate anthropogenically enriched soils from the natural soil background. Using WorldView-3 imagery, these geochemical footprints generate a consistent statistical signal that can be detected from orbit. The results demonstrate that by using sediment samples from contemporary pastoral settlements as ground truth, it is possible to train models capable of recognizing spectral geochemical patterns at the landscape scale from high-resolution satellite imagery. This approach provides a tool to better understand current pastoral landscapes, revealing the spatial organization and intensity of mobile settlements. By studying these modern patterns, the method allows the development of general models and hypotheses that can inform the reconstruction and interpretation of ancient pastoral landscapes.

5.15. Investigating settlements dynamics in Central Senegal and The Gambia through systematic pedestrian surveys and GIS analysis (Project HOME)

Yanis Boussehaba, Hassoum Ceesay, Matar Ndiaye, Salif Timéra

The Senegambian megalithic phenomenon comprises nearly 2,000 recorded sites dating from the early 2nd millennium CE. These monuments, mainly concentrated between the Saloum River and The Gambia watercourse, have attracted archaeological interest for over a century. However, this attention has been almost exclusively focused on funerary monuments, while other aspects such as settlement patterns remain poorly understood. Despite the work in the region, available data on settlements remain fragmentary. In response to this gap and the significant potential of the area, the project “HOME” aims to document the diversity and the evolution of ancient Senegambian dwellings during the 2nd millennium CE. This objective led to conduct field campaigns in the central Senegambia Wanar and Niani areas combining pedestrian survey, GIS analysis, and oral interviews with local communities. In the latter, nearly 300 archaeological traces were recorded, including habitation sites, evidence of metallurgical activities, and new concentrations of funerary monuments. Integrating these results within a landscape archaeology framework provides a relevant approach to analyzing the spatial organization of human occupations. This paper presents preliminary data from the 2025 campaign, which open new perspectives for understanding territorial organization in central Senegambia during the 1st and 2nd millennium C.

Session: 12 (Room 3)

12.1. Line(age)s of Perspective: Shared Metaphors of Descent Across Disciplines in Early Africa

Alirageh Barreh

The concept of descent structures knowledge production across historical linguistics, archaeology, and genetics in ways that are rarely made explicit. In the study of early Africa, these three fields have coalesced into something approaching a methodological consensus, sharing not only datasets and conclusions but the deeper conceptual architecture through which relatedness and inheritance are imagined. This paper interrogates that shared architecture, arguing that descent functions as a traveling metaphor whose movements between disciplines carry theoretical commitments. In historical linguistics, the language of descent predates computational methods by centuries: “daughter” languages, family trees, and genealogical branching were already organizing assumptions of the comparative method long before Bayesian phylogenetic modeling formalized them. The recent convergence of linguistic and population-genetic frameworks intensifies these commitments, raising questions about what is borrowed when disciplines share models. Archaeology's processualist moment attempted to disentangle culture-historical reasoning from biological analogy, and post-processualist critique further destabilized evolutionary frameworks, yet descent-based logics have proven remarkably resilient, returning in new idioms through ancient DNA studies and phylogenetic approaches to material culture. Reading these disciplinary histories together, this paper asks what kinds of difference the descent metaphor is capable of distinguishing; the implications for reconstructing early African pasts are both methodological and political.

12.2. Rethinking human AMY1 copy number evolution in light of demographic history

Andrea Soler i Núñez, Concetta Burgarella, Torsten Günther, Carina Schlebusch

Dietary change has long been considered a major selective force in human evolution. The invention of agriculture over the past ~10,000 years is arguably the largest dietary shift in recent times, and it caused a significant reduction in food diversity, as agriculturalist societies relied on fewer number of domesticated plant species. Dietary starch consumption increased, and it accounts for up to 70% of the caloric intake of modern agricultural diets. Increased copy number of the salivary amylase gene (AMY1), which is partly responsible for starch digestion, is widely cited as an adaptation to starch-rich agricultural diets. However, much of the supporting evidence derives from limited geographic sampling and analyses that do not fully account for shared ancestry. Here, we combine new estimates from 390 individuals across 30 Sub-Saharan African populations with published data from up to 1,307 individuals worldwide and re-evaluate AMY1 evolution using ancestry-aware, phylogenetically informed models. Across Africa, AMY1 copy number shows no consistent association with agriculture. Globally, differences between agriculturalists and non-agriculturalists are modest and largely explained by shared ancestry. Lastly, tests of phylogenetic signal indicate baseline differences in AMY1 copy number between African and non-African populations, pointing at deep evolutionary processes shaping present-day variation. These results challenge the long-standing “agriculture hypothesis” and put forward demographic history, rather than subsistence strategy, as the primary driver of AMY1 copy number evolution worldwide.

12.3. Languages and genes on the edges of the Bantu expansion: a forager perspective

Anne-Maria Fehn, Artem Kasianov, Jorge Rocha

In this talk, we use genes and languages to investigate early interactions between Bantu-speaking migrants and resident communities in southern Africa. When the first Bantu speakers approached the southern tip of the continent around 1,500 years ago, they encountered foragers and pastoralists speaking languages of the Kx’a, Tuu and Khoe-Kwadi families. While the contributions of these groups to the genetic and linguistic profiles of southern African Bantu speakers have been the subject of various studies, less attention has been paid to the influence of the migrants on resident communities. We here focus on forager communities in order to assess their patterns of interaction with the Bantu-speaking communities they encountered. To this end, we quantify Bantu loanwords in well-documented Kx’a, Tuu and Khoe-Kwadi languages for which dictionaries are available and assess their origins as well as semantic connotations. The findings from the linguistic analysis will then be discussed in the context of the available genetic data which provides valuable insights into patterns and dates of admixture. Specifically, we will quantify Bantu admixture in individual forager communities and identify the most likely donor populations. Furthermore, we will show how genetic variants providing resistance to infectious disease might have spread from Bantu-speakers into resident communities. Our results show a diverse scope of interactions, ranging from the highly admixed Khoe hunter-gatherers from the northern Kalahari Basin fringe which display around 50% of Bantu ancestry to the linguistically diverse foraging communities of the central Kalahari Basin who were only peripherally affected by the Bantu migrations.

12.4. CAAPA2: A diverse reference panel for improved genotype imputation in underrepresented populations

Caitlin Uren, Dayna Croock, Simon Gravel, Brenna Henn

Genomic research has become central to reconstructing Africa's deep demographic and cultural histories, yet its potential is limited by the underrepresentation of African populations in widely used reference panels. Resources such as the 1000 Genomes Project, African Genome Resource, and TOPMed have advanced the field, but they capture only a fraction of Africa's extensive genetic diversity. This limits the resolution with which we can investigate key interdisciplinary questions relating to migration, admixture, subsistence transitions, and population continuity across archaeological and historical timescales. The Consortium on Asthma in African Ancestry Populations in the Americas (CAAPA) has developed CAAPA2, an expanded reference panel comprising ~1,000 new high coverage whole genome sequences from across sub–Saharan Africa, integrated with genomic data from ~1,100 individuals of African and Indigenous descent from the America's, and data from other global populations totally ~3500 individuals. This reference panel captures a broad range of African ancestry variation and offers a valuable resource for improving genotype imputation in studies that integrate genetic, archaeological, linguistic, and paleoenvironmental evidence. We evaluated the performance of CAAPA2 by imputing genotyping array data from African and African descended populations and benchmarking accuracy against whole genome sequencing from the same individuals. CAAPA2 improved imputation accuracy across diverse populations compared to existing panels, particularly in regions informative for reconstructing demographic structure, mobility, and population interactions. These results highlight the importance of Africa centered genomic resources for interdisciplinary reconstructions of the continent's past. By enabling higher resolution analysis of ancestry, mobility, adaptation, and cultural change, CAAPA2 strengthens the methodological foundations needed to integrate genomic evidence with broader archaeological and historical narratives.

12.5. Ancient DNA insights into the expansion of Bantu-speaking populations

Carina Schlebusch

The expansion of Bantu-speaking populations during the Late Holocene represents one of the most transformative demographic processes in African prehistory, fundamentally reshaping the archaeological, linguistic, and biological landscapes of Africa. Using a comprehensive genomic dataset comprising newly generated genome-wide data from over 1,500 present-day Bantu speakers across sub-equatorial Africa, together with ancient DNA from Late Iron Age individuals in southern and south-central Africa, we reconstruct key aspects of this expansion. Our results provide strong genetic support for a large-scale demic expansion originating in west-central Africa and proceeding through serial founder events as populations moved eastward and southward. Patterns of decreasing genetic diversity with distance from the inferred homeland, together with spatially explicit modelling, support migration routes that traversed the Congo rainforest and identify present-day Zambia and the western Democratic Republic of Congo as important zones of interaction. Genetic evidence further reveals substantial region-specific admixture with local forager and pastoralist groups, indicating that population movement was accompanied by sustained interaction rather than wholesale replacement. Ancient DNA from Late Iron Age contexts in southern Africa shows a high degree of genetic continuity with present-day Bantu-speaking populations, supporting archaeological models of local population persistence since the Late Iron Age, while more heterogeneous genetic signals in Zambia point to its role as a demographic crossroads. Together, these findings demonstrate how genomic data can refine archaeological interpretations of migration, interaction, and continuity, and highlight the importance of integrating genetic evidence with archeological data when reconstructing sub-equatorial Africa's Iron Age past.

12.6. Reconstructing genetic evolution requires reconstructing culture and mobility

Cecilia Padilla-Iglesias

Understanding genetic change through time and space in Africa requires reconstructing local systems of mobility, marriage, and social organization, rather than treating genes as the outcome of demography or selection alone. Drawing on recent work with two Central African hunter-gatherer populations, I show that similarly low levels of homozygosity can be maintained under contrasting demographic and social conditions. In one region, strict exogamy norms combined with high lifetime mobility reduces local relatedness; in the other, more flexible exogamy norms are offset by longer male mate-search distances, producing comparable genetic outcomes but different spatial clustering of relatives. These findings show that patterns of genetic diversity emerge from interactions among demography, mobility, and culture. They also demonstrate that even modest increases in background homozygosity can carry reproductive costs, highlighting the adaptive significance of strategies that limit relatedness. More broadly, this case study illustrates why reconstructing Africa's population history requires integrating genomics with ethnography, demography, archaeology, and mobility data. I conclude by highlighting practical avenues for doing so, including ethnographically informed models of mate exchange and mobility, and archaeological proxies for settlement dynamics. These approaches are essential not only for reconstructing African population history, but for understanding the processes that shaped human evolution across the continent.

12.7. Mitochondrial Heteroplasmy Reflects Maternal Lineage and Demographic History in Southern African Populations

Dayna Croock

Africa preserves the deepest record of human genetic diversity, yet reconstructions of its demographic history typically rely on mitochondrial haplogroups while overlooking heteroplasmy the coexistence of multiple mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) variants within individuals. The evolutionary relevance of heteroplasmy therefore remains poorly understood, particularly in southern Africa, where maternal lineages show exceptional genetic diversity. We analyzed heteroplasmic and homoplasmic mtDNA variation in two southern African cohorts including individuals with KhoeSan and non-KhoeSan African ancestry. By modelling variant counts per individual and relating them to mitochondrial ancestry, we show that within-individual variation is primarily shaped by lineage history rather than age or technical factors. KhoeSan-associated haplogroups such as L0d exhibit elevated homoplasmic diversity consistent with deep divergence times. In contrast, other African lineages such as L0a1 show increased heteroplasmy, including lineage-restricted insertion variants likely reflecting demographic expansions and genetic drift. Haplogroup L3 ancestral to all non-African populations — displays reduced homoplasmic diversity, consistent with bottlenecks associated with major dispersal events. These findings demonstrate that heteroplasmy retains signals of demographic history, including divergence, expansion, and bottlenecks, and therefore represents an underutilized layer of population genetic variation beyond traditional haplogroup analysis. More broadly, our results show that within-individual mitochondrial diversity can provide high-resolution insight into population processes shaping African genetic variation and can refine reconstructions of human demographic history across the continent.

12.8. Reconstructing the Bantu expansion through an individual-based simulation integrating genomic and linguistic evolution

Francesco Giannelli, Marco Gargano, Harald Hammarström, Carina Schlebusch

The expansion of Bantu-speaking populations across sub-equatorial Africa represents one of the most significant demographic and cultural processes in the history of the African continent. Previous studies have combined linguistic, archaeological, and genomic evidence to reconstruct possible migration routes, yet the dynamics and directionality of this expansion remain debated. Here we present an individual-based, forward simulation framework implemented in a dynamic, spatially explicit landscape to reconstruct the spread of Bantu-speaking populations over the last ~5,000 years. Our model jointly simulates demographic processes, genome-wide genetic variation, and linguistic evolution across a two-dimensional environment that incorporates environmental changes through time. Simulation outcomes are compared with empirical data derived from previously published genome-wide SNP datasets of modern and ancient African populations, together with lexical diversity data from Bantu languages compiled from existing linguistic databases. Using this framework, we explicitly test alternative demographic scenarios of expansions, evaluating which models best reproduce the observed spatial distributions of both genetic and linguistic diversity. Preliminary simulations successfully reproduce key empirical patterns, including isolation-by-distance in genetic variation and a strong correlation between genetic and linguistic differentiation across populations. These results support the idea that linguistic diversification largely reflects underlying population history while also highlighting cases where linguistic divergence does not perfectly track genetic differentiation. More broadly, this framework provides a new approach for integrating genomic and linguistic evolution in spatially explicit simulations.

12.9. Reconstructing Activity Areas in Agro-Pastoral Settlements: A Phytolith-Based Spatial Approach from Ethnographic Contexts in Botswana

Giulio Roberto Bartuli, Keelie S. Rix, Abel Ruiz-Giralt, Stefano Biagetti

Plant use in pastoral settlements is a key aspect in southern African archaeology, providing crucial insights into subsistence and daily practices. In these contexts, plant resources play a central role not only as livestock fodder but also in diet, domestic practices, construction, fuel use, and landscape management. However, their archaeological visibility is often limited due to poor preservation of macrobotanical remains in open-air sites, making microbotanical proxies such as phytoliths particularly valuable. Within this framework, the spatial organization of plant-related activities represents a specific analytical dimension, investigated through phytolith distribution to identify activity areas and interpret site formation processes. This paper presents preliminary results of an ongoing research project investigating the potential of integrating microbotanical and geochemical approaches to explore spatial patterning in agro-pastoral settings in Botswana. The study forms part of the ERC-funded CAMP Project, which compares ethnographic inhabited, abandoned, and archaeological agro-pastoral sites to assess how activity areas and patterns of site use can be identified across temporal scales. Focusing on the ethnographic setting as a reference framework, this study is based on a selection of sediment samples taken at approximately 4-metre intervals from a higher-resolution sampling scheme. Quantitative phytolith analysis underpins the construction of spatial distributions, which are integrated with geochemical data generated within the same project. Spatial variability in phytolith concentrations provides a robust basis for characterizing activity areas associated with livestock penning, dung accumulation, plant processing, and domestic practices, highlighting the potential of phytolith analysis as a tool for reconstructing spatial organization in agro-pastoral contexts.

12.10. Using African dog genomics to reconstruct human mobility, admixture, and subsistence transitions

Grace Kennedy

"Reconstructing Africa's past requires integrating genetic, archaeological, and anthropological evidence to address gaps in the historical record. While human genomic studies have provided important insights into migration and admixture, uneven sampling and preservation constraints continue to limit fine-scale reconstructions. Domestic dogs (Canis familiaris), as long-term human companions, offer a complementary proxy for tracing patterns of human mobility, interaction, and cultural change. Here, we analyze genome-wide variation in a pilot dataset of some South African dog genomes alongside comparative datasets from across the continents to investigate regional patterns of movement and admixture. Using genotype data, we apply allele frequency and haplotype-based approaches, including pairwise differentiation and multidimensional scaling of identity-by-state distances, to characterize genetic structure. These analyses reveal spatially structured variation that parallels geographic and cultural boundaries, as well as admixture signals consistent with historical population contact. By situating these genomic patterns within archaeological and anthropological frameworks, we explore how canine population histories reflect major transitions in human subsistence, including the spread of pastoralism and shifts in settlement systems. While preliminary, these findings highlight the potential of commensal species to inform reconstructions of Africa's past, particularly in regions where direct human genetic evidence remains limited, and underscore the value of interdisciplinary approaches to studying human-animal co-evolution.".

12.1!. Sheep, Mobility, and Migration: Reassessing Livestock Introduction in Southern Africa

Humphrey Nyambiya, Liteboho Senyane

This contribution re-examines the introduction of domestic sheep into southern Africa while addressing the challenge of distinguishing herder and hunter-gatherer material culture in the archaeological record. It interrogates evidentiary foundations linking caprine remains and subsistence artefacts such as lithic, ceramics, and bone tools to narratives of migration, identity, and authorship. Focusing on Western Cape assemblages within a wider regional framework, it asks what zooarchaeological and technological evidence can indicate demic migration, and what patterns reflect adoption, exchange, or interaction. Sheep and artefacts have often been used as proxies for herding populations, but variability, taxonomic uncertainty, and exchange complicate such interpretations. Revisiting early caprine remains and technological analysis of bone tools, the study evaluates isolated finds, low-frequency specimens, and mixed assemblages used in migration models. Attention is given to regional asynchrony and uneven uptake, suggesting livestock introduction was staggered and context-specific. Zooarchaeology establishes presence but not acquisition or management, while age profiles, pathologies, and butchery patterns inform herd management but not migration scale. Isotopic analysis reveals mobility and landscape use, while technological approaches such as chaîne opératoire and bone debitage analysis illuminate production, transmission, and possible identity markers. These datasets, while useful, operate at different scales and do not necessarily converge thereby limiting migration inference.

12.12. Resolving African Maternal History Using Complete mtDNA Genomes

Imke Lankheet

Africa harbors the richest diversity of mitochondrial DNA lineages, reflecting its central role in human evolutionary history. Early studies of mtDNA variation provided the first genetic evidence for the African origin of modern humans. With complete mitochondrial genome sequencing, we can now reconstruct maternal lineages with high resolution, yet large parts of the continent remain underrepresented. Using a newly developed long-range sequencing assay, we generated 1,176 complete mitochondrial genomes from 13 countries across sub-Saharan Africa, focusing on previously understudied regions. We combined these with over 3,600 publicly available African mitogenomes to produce a comprehensive dataset and updated overview of maternal genetic diversity across the continent. We contextualized this diversity with autosomal structure and information on major human expansions, integrating archaeological and linguistic evidence. Our analysis suggests a demographic expansion of Niger-Congo speakers around 17 thousand years ago (kya), followed by a second expansion associated with Bantu-speaking groups around 6 kya. We identify haplogroup L3e as a key marker of this early Bantu expansion, tracking its spread across sub-Saharan Africa. Distinct demographic signatures also emerge for different geographic sub-branches of Bantu speakers. These findings highlight the power of mitochondrial DNA to trace maternal ancestry and demographic history in Africa, while also acknowledging its limitations for phylogeographic reconstruction.

12.13. Genomic Insights into Population Structure in Namibia, Angola, and Zambia

Nikola Vuković

The population history of Southern Africa reflects a series of complex interactions among hunter-gatherers, pastoralists, and farming populations. While the Bantu expansion is a key focus in African prehistory, earlier population structure and its contribution to present-day variation remain largely elusive. We present a population genomic analysis of present-day individuals from Namibia, Angola, and Zambia using high-coverage whole-genome data to characterize genetic variation, population structure, and admixture patterns across these regions. Using an Africa-centered dataset of modern and ancient genomes, we investigate genomic variation not attributable to Bantu-related ancestry, quantifying its distribution across populations and testing for differential affinity to ancient hunter-gatherer lineages. This study aims to refine the characterization of genomic diversity in Southern Africa and provide a clearer framework for understanding the contribution of pre-Bantu population structure to present-day genetic variation in underrepresented populations.

12.14. Reconstructing Ancient Dietary Behaviors of Prehistoric People Of Thimlich Ohinga

Patrick Munyao

This research proposal is about dietary behavior of ancient people of Thimlich Ohinga. This is the first time that residue analysis shall be conducted on ceramics from the UNESCO world heritage site of Thimlich Ohinga. The research would endeavor to add knowledge to the subsistence economy of prehistoric people. Many ancient dietary behaviors of pre- historic people across the country have been studied to realize a complete understanding of their subsistence economy. But to arrive at the conclusion of what was the dietary behavior of a particular pre-historic community, the researchers have used macroscopic analysis of lithic and pottery found in archaeological context. This study will

use a new approach of reconstructing ancient diet behaviour of prehistoric people of Thimlich Ohinga. Microscopic analysis of food residues recovered from pottery will be used as an alternative method to give sure evidence of the dietary behaviour of the prehistoric people of Thimlich Ohinga. The study will also give a new perspective and add new value of analyzing and understanding functions of pottery. Not just going by shape and other parameters. Microscopy of food residues from pottery will answer questions, related to ancient dietary behaviour of people of Thimlich Ohinga.

12.15. Bioarchéologie et pratiques funéraires à Madagascar : défis et enjeux envers la société malgache

Rakotomavo Andritiana Lahatra

La bioarchéologie constitue une approche essentielle pour appréhender les sociétés malgaches, au sein desquelles les pratiques liées aux ancêtres occupent une place centrale dans l'organisation sociale et culturelle. En s'appuyant sur l'étude des sépultures et des restes humains, elle permet d'analyser les dynamiques historiques, les identités collectives et les interactions qui continuent de façonner le monde malgache. Cependant, son développement à Madagascar se heurte à de nombreux défis. Les contraintes culturelles, notamment les interdits (fady) liés aux tombes et au respect des ancêtres, limitent l'accès aux sites et imposent des approches différenciées selon les contextes régionaux. À cela s'ajoutent des difficultés d'ordre scientifique et matériel, telles que les conditions de conservation des vestiges, le manque de moyens techniques et l'accès restreint à certaines méthodes d'analyse. Dans ce contexte, cette communication interroge les conditions de développement d'une archéologie funéraire adaptée au contexte malgache, capable de concilier exigences scientifiques et réalités socioculturelles. Elle met en lumière les enjeux actuels de la discipline, tout en soulignant l'importance des approches collaboratives impliquant communautés locales, chercheurs nationaux et partenaires internationaux. Ainsi, l'étude des restes humains et des pratiques liées aux ancêtres apparaît non seulement comme un outil de connaissance du passé, mais aussi comme un espace de dialogue et de solidarité, contribuant à la valorisation du patrimoine et à la construction d'une mémoire collective au sein de la société malgache contemporaine.

12.16. Dental Calculus as a Molecular Archive: Expanding Bioarchaeological Insights into Diet and Disease

Selloane Maboea, Anja Meyer, Carina Schlebusch, Maja Vukovikj

Background: Bioarchaeological reconstructions of health in past populations have traditionally relied on morphological assessment of skeletal and dental remains. Many infectious conditions leave limited or non-specific skeletal signatures, restricting our ability to identify pathogen exposure, and destructive sampling of bone is often ethically constrained in curated historical collections. Aim: This paper proposes dental calculus as a minimally destructive alternative substrate for investigating pathogen exposure and dietary practices in historical skeletal populations. Methods: Dental calculus is a mineralized biofilm that entraps microbial DNA, host biomolecules, and environmental particles during life. It is sampled via minimally destructive mechanical removal, with extracted biomolecules subjected to metagenomic sequencing and proteomic analysis and authenticated against established ancient DNA criteria. Drawing on current literature in bioarchaeology, paleo-microbiology, and ancient DNA research, this concept paper evaluates these methodological approaches for reconstructing diet and health across different archaeological contexts. Results: Such approaches enable identification of specific pathogens, dietary taxa, and host immune markers that remain

invisible through conventional skeletal analysis alone. Conclusion: By integrating dental calculus analysis with established paleo-pathological methods, this research enhances reconstructions of past health beyond the inferential limits of morphological observation. We argue that dental calculus represents a valuable molecular archive that can refine interpretations of disease processes and expand our understanding of population level health in the past.

12.17. Teeth as Time Capsules: Exploring Dental Calculus as a Non-Destructive Molecular Archive for diet and disease reconstruction

Selloane Maboea, Anja Meyer, Carina Schlebusch, Maja Vukovikj

Bioarchaeological reconstructions of health in past populations have traditionally relied on morphological assessment of skeletal and dental remains. While macroscopic and radiographic analyses provide important insight into disease processes, many infectious conditions leave limited or non-specific skeletal signatures, restricting our ability to identify actual pathogen exposure. In archaeological contexts, destructive sampling of bone is often ethically constrained, particularly in curated historical collections. This paper proposes dental calculus as a minimally destructive alternative substrate for investigating pathogen exposure in historical skeletal populations. As a mineralized biofilm formed during life, dental calculus entraps microbial DNA, host biomolecules, and environmental particles, preserving a biological record of oral and systemic microbial communities. Drawing on current literature in bioarchaeology, paleomicrobiology, and ancient DNA research, this concept paper evaluates available methodological approaches for the reconstruction of diet and health portfolios of different individuals within different archaeological contexts. The proposed framework will be applied in my doctoral research on skeletal remains from six South African mining sites, where traditional osteological assessment alone may not fully capture patterns of infectious disease exposure. By integrating different analysis methods of dental calculus with established anatomical and pathological methods, this research seeks to expand interpretations of health and disease beyond morphological expression alone. This study positions dental calculus as a valuable molecular archive capable of enhancing anatomically grounded reconstructions of past population health.

12.18. Looking into the Face of Trade from the Vantage Point of Bassar Population Structure

Susanne T Green, Pakou Harena, Lebarama Bakrobena, Thembiwe Russell

The highest diversity of both male and female DNA sequences is found in Africa, thus making the continent a fundamentally important area for genetic research. The research herein applies to the genotyping of 164 DNA samples previously collected from Bassar, Togo and examines them with respect to the phylogeography of the four cantons and of seven cartiers of Bassar. Our results reflect the analysis of both autosomal DNA and mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) and Y chromosome haplogroup assignments from Bassar, combined with comparisons to other published genetic studies and with interpretations from written and oral history. Our genetic analysis suggests that the population of Bassar is largely West African, but is also reflective of genetic influence from micro-migrations from both the western and eastern extremes of the continent as well as from both North and Central Africa, and further, that newcomers to Bassar were incorporated into the population with similar admixtures across all areas of the Bassar Region. The burgeoning iron economy in Bassar not only attracted migrants from expanses of the continent, but possibly precipitated the need for foreign African slaves, who were also admixed into the Bassar metallurgical economy, suggesting social mobility and economic opportunity irrespective of a newcomer's cultural origin or social status. Ultimately, the population structure of Bassar is indicative of an interconnectedness with

trade networks that spanned the Sahara and traversed the Mediterranean towards Europe and West Asia, demonstrating a strong demand abroad for African goods during Bassar's Late Iron Age (c. 13th - 20th centuries).

Session: 13 (Room 4)

13.1. The Politics of Beauty: Exploring the Intersection of Culture, Heritage, and Power in 'Ghana's Most Beautiful' Pageant Archaeology and Heritage Studies in West Africa: Trends, Perspectives and the Way Forward

Agnes Afua Nyaanyowa Adomako-Mensah

The 'Ghana's Most Beautiful' pageant is a cultural event that attempts to embody the relational complexities of beauty, culture and power in the Ghanaian society. This study examines the intersection of culture, heritage, and power in the pageant, discussing how beauty standards, cultural norms, and power dynamics are negotiated and performed. Through a critical analysis of the pageants' performances, participant narratives, costumes and accessories, music and dance as well as audience reception, this research argues that the 'Ghana's Most Beautiful' pageant is a site of cultural politics, where dominant beauty standards, cultural expectations and power structures are reinforced and contested. The study reveals how the pageant projects certain notions of beauty, femininity and identity, while also providing a platform for participants to challenge and subvert these norms. The research focuses on ways in which cultural heritage is mobilized and commodified in the pageant, and the implications of this for Ghanaian culture and identity. Through a thorough examination of beauty in the 'Ghana's Most Beautiful' pageant, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of the complex relationships between culture, heritage, and power in the Ghanaian society.

13.2. Traditional Medicine and Cultural Heritage in Kodiabe, Ghana

Bismark Asamoah

There is little research on the use of traditional medicine in Ghana or in Kodiabe. This is a problem because it is difficult to create an evidence-based approach to medicine. The emphasis on mysticism and religion in medicine is also a barrier to the effectiveness and reliability of medicine. This research on the healing practices in Kodiabe seeks to reveal the ways in which the people of the region use local knowledge and local medicine. The research is based on ethnographic research that seeks to observe the healing rituals in the context of the local environment. The research reveals the significance of the healing rituals to the people of the region. The research also seeks to scientifically test the local medicine with the aim of validating the local knowledge. The study reveals the significance of local knowledge to the people of the region. The study highlights the importance of indigenous knowledge in health and cultural preservation, recommending a comprehensive approach to both traditional and modern healthcare systems and also contributes to the understanding of indigenous medical systems, offering insights for biomedical research and global health.

13.3. Student-Led Public Archaeology and Digital Documentation in the Jos Plateau, Nigeria: Engaging Youth as Heritage Stewards

Chinda Gamdu Medugu, Gyang Joseph Alexander, Kuanum Emmanuella Doose, Rinbal Jonathan Nyonkyes

Archaeology and heritage studies in West Africa are increasingly turning to digital tools and public engagement, yet young people, the future custodians of cultural heritage, often have limited awareness of the field. This study examines a student-led initiative by ReCulture: Heritage in Motion, a volunteer group based at the University of Jos, in the Jos Plateau, Nigeria. The group used accessible digital tools to promote heritage appreciation among secondary students through peer engagement. Using Polycam, they created 2D and 3D models of stone tools, bronze and terracotta artifacts, and pottery sherds, while open source QGIS was used to map archaeological sites across the Jos Plateau, including rock shelters, burial complexes, and settlement patterns. Structured questionnaires assessed student awareness before and after interactive sessions with these digital resources. Results showed a marked increase in students' interest in heritage, understanding of cultural significance, and sense of preservation responsibility. By combining digital documentation with student-led outreach, ReCulture connects academic research to public education, reflecting broader regional trends toward community-based archaeology, digital heritage, and the democratization of heritage knowledge. Student-led groups like this offer a sustainable pathway for cultivating the next generation of heritage stewards. Sustained collaboration with local communities, museums, and heritage agencies will be essential to expand outreach and strengthen long term cultural resource management. This case study contributes to ongoing discussions about the future of archaeology and heritage studies in West Africa, highlighting the value of youth engagement and digital innovation.

13.4. What is in a Name? Repositioning Archaeology and the Emergence of Heritage Studies at the University of Ghana

Daniel Kumah

The early 2000s marked a period of significant institutional transformation at the University of Ghana, during which several departments redefined their academic identities through changes in nomenclature and curricular orientation. Within this broader context, the Department of Archaeology formally incorporated Heritage Studies into its disciplinary framework and was subsequently renamed the Department of Archaeology and Heritage Studies in 2008. This paper examines the motivations, processes, and implications of this transformation. It argues that the integration of Heritage Studies fundamentally repositioned archaeology from a predominantly excavation- and artefact-focused discipline to a more expansive field encompassing cultural heritage management, museum practice, tourism, and public engagement. This shift reflects wider intellectual and institutional efforts to decolonize archaeological practice by foregrounding indigenous heritage systems and community perspectives. The transformation was accompanied by substantial curriculum reforms, including the revision of existing courses and the introduction of interdisciplinary offerings such as cultural resource management, visual anthropology, gender in archaeology, and information technology applications in heritage studies. It also fostered stronger engagement with heritage institutions and the tourism sector. A key outcome has been increased student enrolment and the diversification of career trajectories for graduates. Despite ongoing challenges particularly in relation to field training and institutional capacity the paper highlights the growing relevance of archaeology and heritage studies in Ghana. It concludes by reflecting on future

directions, including digital heritage, artificial intelligence, and community-based research approaches.

13.5. Community-Based Archaeological Practice and Heritage Stewardship in West Africa

Fatima Musa, Ishaq Isah Ishaq, Yusuf Rabiu

Recent developments in archaeology highlight the growing importance of community-based approaches in managing and interpreting cultural heritage, particularly in West Africa, where archaeological sites remain closely tied to living communities. This paper examines how community participation strengthens heritage stewardship and promotes more inclusive research practices. It emphasizes that collaboration between archaeologists and local communities enhances the documentation, interpretation, and protection of archaeological resources. Drawing on examples from the region, the study shows that local knowledge systems, oral traditions, and indigenous practices play a vital role in understanding archaeological landscapes. Community involvement in site monitoring, heritage education, and participatory documentation fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility, contributing to sustainable conservation efforts. The paper also explores the benefits and challenges of this approach. While community-based archaeology supports the democratization of knowledge and can promote local development initiatives such as heritage tourism, it also requires careful management of issues like authority, cultural sensitivity, and resource allocation. Institutional limitations, funding constraints, and weak heritage policies further affect its sustainability. Overall, the paper argues that integrating community perspectives into archaeological research is essential for preserving cultural heritage and ensuring its continued relevance to local communities.

13.6. Safeguarding Living Archives to Community Digital Museums as Intangible Cultural Heritage

Fidelia Serwaa Ametewee

This paper examines indigenous music as a living archive safeguarded through community archiving and co-creation. In many West African societies, historical memory, philosophy and social values are preserved not in written texts but in dynamic, oral and performative traditions. Yet rapid urbanization, globalization, digital homogenization, extractive activities, climate pressures and declining mother-tongue literacy are accelerating the erosion of these intangible heritages. Traditional music functions as a living archive dynamic, embodied and communally curated through which knowledge is transmitted across generations. The paper focuses on Akpalu's music from Anyako in the Anlo - Ewe area of Ghana's Volta Region, its explores, how despite earlier documentation in Ewe, the repertoire remains largely inaccessible to younger generations due to the passing of custodians and the dense philosophical language embedded in metaphor. No resident Akpalu group currently performs in the place where the compositions originated from, rather it has become a dirge and used as and when notable people pass away. Therefore, this original site relies on external performers, while the dominant local genre has shifted to Borborbor music from the inland Ewedome areas.

13.7. Traditional fishing methods of São Tomé and Príncipe archipelago: an ethnoarchaeological approach to maritime heritage research

Gonçalo C. Lopes, Joanna Basso

The present proposal focuses on traditional fishing practices in São Tomé and Príncipe archipelago. A comprehensive inventory of fishing gear, accessories, and equipment has been compiled and is accompanied by a detailed analysis of the techniques employed, the craftsmanship involved, and how fishing communities adapt to seasonal fluctuations in available species. The study also addressed the social, economic, and resource-related challenges these communities face, as well as their response to the archipelago's emerging environmental challenges. It is important to recognize that all this fishing equipment is considered maritime heritage and therefore requires comprehensive characterization to facilitate better understanding and preservation. These elements are an integral part of São Tomé's cultural identity, yet they are gradually disappearing. Consequently, efforts such as this proposal, which seeks to document and protect this tradition, are particularly significant. In the context of maritime archaeology, this study is part of a recent approach that focuses less on ships themselves and more on issues related to heritage, collective memory and maritime cultural landscapes. This study aims to analyze the strategies employed by São Toméans to exploit fishing resources sustainably, considering local and available natural resources. Essentially, our role is to document and preserve the ancient memories of maritime and fishing communities, each of which has its own characteristics. This study was conducted through direct observation and talks with local fishing communities, which proved to be an invaluable source of information.

13.8. Utilisation rituelle des plantes ligneuses et le rite du Dialan chez les communautés déplacées autour du parc national du Niokolo Koba (la plus grande aire protégée du Sénégal)

Idrissa Manka, Tereza Majerovičová, Miguel Ballesteros, Alioune Deme

Les plantes jouent un rôle crucial dans la société, notamment celles qui sont utilisées comme intermédiaires entre les humains et la sphère surnaturelle à des fins diverses (passage, naissance, guérison, purification, protection, etc.). Ces croyances ancestrales font partie intégrante de l'identité des groupes ethniques de certaines régions du monde. Nous étudions l'utilisation rituelle des espèces ligneuses en menant une enquête auprès de sept villages situés à proximité du parc national de Niokolo Koba. Notre étude documente également la pratique rituelle du Dialan, qui fait appel aux forces invisibles. Au total, 41 espèces ont été mentionnées à des fins magico-religieuses. Les plantes fréquemment citées sont Khaya senegalensis, Ceiba pentandra, Adansonia digitata, Ficus gnaphalocarpa et Parkia biglobosa. La botanique rituelle visant à établir la connexion avec le surnaturel implique l'utilisation de ces plantes lors de bains, de fumigations, de la fabrication d'amulettes et de masques, de sacrifices, d'offrandes, d'incantations, etc. Ces rituels se déroulent parfois dans des endroits spécifiques comme les forêts sacrées. Malgré les influences extérieures, notre étude a démontré la persistance de ces traditions dans certains villages isolés situés au sud-est. Près de la moitié de la population croit en une forme ou une autre de ces rituels traditionnels, bien que peu de personnes les pratiquent ouvertement. La désintégration des sociétés traditionnelles, l'influence des religions monothéistes, la modernisation et le déplacement des communautés hors de leurs lieux d'origine en raison des politiques de conservation n'ont pas complètement fait disparaître ces rituels, mais ont gravement compromis et menacé leur pratique.

13.9. Un/archiving of generational wellbeing in Elmina

Ineke Naa Amarnobeah Dodoo

Digital archaeology creates new opportunities for collaborative heritage management in Elmina. This research integrates simple digital recording platforms into the documentation and safeguarding of

local heritage while foregrounding generational wellbeing. The study is situated within archaeological landscapes associated with Elmina Castle. The project employs accessible tools that include chatbots in local languages, digital repositories and social media to support community engagement. These platforms enable the production of open heritage records that preserve stories, cultural memory and creative expression through exhibition displays of selected artworks as well as videos created by youth. The approach links heritage interpretation with public education within the community. Community workshops also provide training in digital documentation for young residents. This process strengthens local capacity for site monitoring and interpretation of places connected to the trans Atlantic trade network. Methods include observation, documentation, photography and videography in recording heritage materials and youth creative outputs. Findings indicate that youth participation in festivals, religious gatherings and educational activities contributes to generational wellbeing within the community. The study argues that participatory digital archaeology can enhance heritage awareness while supporting youth empowerment in Ghana. It demonstrates that accessible digital tools can connect heritage preservation with social development in historic settlements across West Africa.

13.10. From Data to Policy: Building Institutional Capacities for Archaeological Heritage Management in Senegal, Guinea-Bissau and The Gambia

Lamine Badji, Ibrahima Thiaw, Adama H. Athie, Madick Guèye

Archaeological research in West Africa is undergoing profound changes, both in terms of its orientation and its methods, driven in part by initiatives that place the sustainable management of cultural heritage at the heart of its concerns. With Senegal as a case study, this paper examines how an international project with strong local roots can strengthen institutional capacity and generate knowledge about archaeological heritage. Over a five-year period, the MAEASaM project has deployed innovative approaches, including remote sensing and geographic information systems, to document archaeological landscapes in Senegal first, and then, expand to neighbouring Gambia and Guinea-Bissau. In a context marked by mining expansion and infrastructure development in regions with high archaeological potential, the databases created might become reference tools for decision-making for both researchers and practitioners. The presentation will focus on three main areas: the methodological innovations implemented in Senegal; the contribution of these data to the sustainable management of cultural resources; and the conditions for ensuring the long-term viability of the tools produced and their transfer to partner institutions.

13.11. Digital Mapping of Hill Top Archaeological and Heritage Sites on the Jos Plateau, Central Nigeria

Macham Mangut

The Jos Plateau possesses an exceptionally rich archaeological and cultural heritage record spanning from the Early Stone Age to the twentieth century. Despite previous efforts to document these resources, existing records remain fragmented and often lack adequate geospatial precision, thereby limiting their usefulness for research, heritage management, and policy formulation. This study, conducted as part of the Mapping Africa's Endangered Archaeological Sites and Monuments (MAEASaM) project, explores the integration of legacy archaeological data with remote sensing techniques to identify and document the hilltop settlements that characterize the Jos Plateau. Drawing on archival records, published literature, historical maps, and project dissertations, the study reconstructs known site distributions and complements these with satellite-based analysis to

detect previously undocumented features. These hilltop settlements, often strategically situated, preserve significant material evidence of past human occupation and landscape use. Ground-truthing is employed to validate remotely identified features and to assess site condition, preservation status, and potential threats.

13.12. Potencialidades arqueológicas e antropológicas do sítio da Praia Melão nas possíveis rotas culturais do Atlântico Sul ilha de São Tomé

Maria Nazaré de Ceita

S. Tomé e Príncipe, Ilhas do Golfo da Guiné, passaram pela colonização portuguesa entre os sécs. XV ao XX, tendo conquistado a independência em 12/07/1975. As ilhas tiveram fixação europeia a partir dos finais do séc. XV, tendo o empreendimento da cana-de -açúcar sido o suporte dessa dinâmica colonial, fomentando a economia – mundo com base na escravatura e coisificação da mão-de-obra africana. Partindo desses pressupostos, existiram inúmeros engenhos de açúcar no arquipélago, mas apenas as ruínas de um (o engenho da Praia Melão) persistiu ao longo de todos esses séculos. Partindo desses pressupostos, uma equipa de arqueólogos (chefiada por Maria das Dores Cruz) e Historiadores (incluindo eu própria) está a realizar um estudo desse sítio como um dos mais antigos do Atlântico. Pretende-se conhecer como foi a vida quotidiana, as relações laborais, os artefactos usados, entre outros. Trata-se de um sítio de memória extremamente importante para as ilhas, demonstrado a partir dos primeiros furos feitos no terreno em 2024. Pensamos que, por isso, existem enormes potencialidades que podem colocar as ilhas nas rotas do turismo cultural do Atlântico Sul.

13.13. Plantes médicinales et botanique ritualisée de la moyenne vallée du fleuve Sénégal

Mariam Bocar Ly

La moyenne vallée du fleuve Sénégal est un espace marqué par une grande diversité végétale, liée à une hydrographie variée dominée par le fleuve Sénégal et aux conditions climatiques sahéliennes. Cette richesse naturelle constitue un élément essentiel de la vie des populations locales, tant sur le plan écologique que culturel. Dans ce contexte, l'inventaire des arbres et des plantes médicinales apparaît comme une démarche importante pour mieux connaître et valoriser les ressources naturelles de la région. Ce travail met en lumière une flore variée composée d'espèces aux usages multiples. Les plantes recensées, telles que le Gawdé, le Mourtoki, le Guelooki ou encore le Niwaquinine, jouent un rôle fondamental dans la médecine traditionnelle. Elles permettent de soigner différentes maladies comme les maux de ventre, les infections, les troubles respiratoires ou encore la fatigue. Leur utilisation repose sur des techniques simples comme les infusions, les décoctions ou les applications locales. Au-delà de leurs propriétés médicinales, ces plantes occupent également une place importante dans les pratiques culturelles et spirituelles. Certaines sont utilisées pour se protéger contre les mauvaises influences, attirer la chance ou purifier le corps et l'esprit. Cela montre que les végétaux ne sont pas seulement considérés comme des remèdes, mais aussi comme des éléments liés aux croyances et aux traditions. Il y'a toute une chaine d'activités symboliques qui permettent de transformer ces plantes en éléments utilisables dans la pharmacopée. Cette présente se concentre sur ces activités symboliques.

13.14. Entre caste, artisanat et patrimoine : les savoir-faire du bois chez les laobés de Kaolack (Sénégal)

Mbaye Diouf

Cet article documente les savoir-faire du bois chez les Laobés de Kaolack (Sénégal). À partir d'une enquête ethnographique et d'une documentation croisant caste, artisanat et patrimoine culturel immatériel, il examine les chaines opératoires, les modalités de transmission techniques, les significations sociales du métier et les recompositions contemporaines. Les résultats montrent que cet artisanat constitue un capital symbolique fondé sur l'appartenance de caste et une ressource patrimoniale soumise à des recompositions générationnelles : héritage, innovations techniques et demande de reconnaissance. L'article discute des enjeux de patrimonialisation, de conservation communautaire et de valorisation muséale, et propose des pistes pour intégrer ces savoirs dans les politiques culturelles durables en Afrique de l'ouest.

13.15. Botanique ritualisée à Toubacouta (Delta de Saloum)

Nguénar Ndong

Le Delta du Saloum, reconnu pour la richesse de ses écosystèmes et classé Réserve de biosphère, constitue un cadre privilégié pour l'étude des interactions entre sociétés humaines et environnement. Dans cet espace, Toubacouta constitue un cadre d'étude particulièrement pertinent pour appréhender la notion de botanique ritualisée. Cette étude met en évidence le rôle central des plantes dans les sociétés locales, où elles sont perçues à la fois comme ressources thérapeutiques et comme entités investies de significations symboliques et spirituelles. Les savoirs botaniques, transmis de génération en génération, s'inscrivent dans une conception holistique reliant l'homme, la nature et les forces invisibles. Les végétaux interviennent ainsi dans divers domaines: soins médicaux, rites de protection, cérémonies religieuses et pratiques sociales. Certaines espèces, telles que le baobab, le cailcédrat ou le moringa, illustrent cette multifonctionnalité à travers leurs usages nutritionnels, médicinaux et rituels. Leur utilisation repose sur des pratiques codifiées (décoctions, macérations, applications locales), souvent associées à des gestes symboliques et à des systèmes de croyances. La botanique ritualisée apparaît dès lors comme un élément structurant des systèmes de santé locaux et un vecteur essentiel de transmission des savoirs. Elle constitue également un patrimoine immatériel majeur, révélateur des dynamiques d'adaptation des sociétés ao leur environnement.

13.16. Archaeological Heritage Tourism and Site Conservation in West Africa: Insights from the Shai Hills Resource Reserve, Ghana

Odarkor Ankrah-Addison

The rapid growth of heritage tourism across West Africa is creating new pressures on fragile archaeological landscapes, raising urgent questions about how tourism can coexist with effective site conservation. This paper examines the relationship between archaeological heritage tourism and site conservation through a case study of the drystone terraces located at Manya Hill and Hioweiyo within the Shai Hills Resource Reserve (SHRR) in Ghana. Constructed by the Se (Shai) people, these terraces represent important archaeological features that reflect historical settlement patterns, agricultural practices, and environmental adaptation in the Accra Plains. Despite their cultural and historical significance, the terraces are increasingly threatened by both natural processes including erosion, vegetation growth, and climatic conditions, and human activities associated with tourism

and pilgrimage. Using a mixed-methods approach that combines archaeological survey, GIS mapping, photographic documentation, and interviews with local communities, park officials, and tour guides, this study documents the distribution, classification, and preservation state of the terraces at both sites. The findings reveal notable variations in preservation between Manya Hill and Hioweiyo and highlight the complex dual role of tourism as both a potential contributor to conservation and a source of site degradation. The study contributes to ongoing debates on sustainable archaeological heritage management in West Africa by demonstrating how tourism, community engagement, and conservation planning can be integrated to protect fragile archaeological landscapes.

13.17. The MOWAA Archaeology Project (Benin City, Nigeria): setting the context for a new research partnership and pre-construction archaeology project

Olusegun Opadeji, Bayo Folorunso, Sam Nixon, Matthew Brudenell

This paper introduces the MOWAA Archaeology Project, a research and preconstruction project developed in the center of Benin City, designed by the Museum of West African Art (MOWAA) and the British Museum in partnership with the Nigerian National Commission for Museums and Monuments (NCMM), and in conjunction with Cambridge Archaeology Unit and Wessex Archaeology. The project is set in the context of developing the MOWAA campus in the center of Benin City, delivering pre-construction archaeology on key construction sites. Focusing on the central area of Benin City, which saw looting, destruction and occupation by British colonial forces in 1897, the project aims to improve understanding of the history of the Kingdom of Benin as well as the colonial occupation and its aftermath. The project's first phase was evaluation and mitigation fieldwork throughout 2022, focused on the construction of the new MOWAA Institute, alongside geophysical and pedestrian survey. The second phase involved research excavations in 2023 and 2024 at the site of the future MOWAA 'Rainforest Gallery', a space for contemporary arts. Fundamental elements of the project are investment in supporting opportunities for young archaeologists and training in modern equipment and new recording methods, as well as a sustained program of community engagement. The project is now researching the extensive archive of cultural materials, environmental samples, fieldwork records and the production of two book volumes.

13.18. A one people's Archaeology: Breaking the mould of colonial boundaries in the Senegambia

Omar S. H. Drammeh, Lamine Badji, Ibrahima Thiaw, Hassoum Ceesay

In 2006, Gambia and Senegal listed together their megalithic stones circles in the UNESCO World Heritage as one cultural asset. Two years later in 2008, the Kankurang, Manding Initiatory Rite was listed as a cross border intangible heritage. These two initiatives that took place two decades ago are strong testimonies of cultural continuities in between the two countries but also of the constraints that colonial boundaries imposed on archaeological practices and which had significant consequences for our understanding of our joint culture histories. The artificial demarcation of borders between the two countries since the 19th century durably fragmented the institutional and academic frameworks of archaeological research. The recent extension of the MAEASaM (Mapping Africa's Archaeoloical Sites and Monuments) project to incorporate the two countries is an opportunity for a cross-border archaeology that might enable us to document cultural heritage continuities. This participates in the long-standing effort for a panafrican archaeology that promotes cultural integration to dismantle the multiple artificial constraints imposed by colonial boundaries. Ongoing research has made it possible to build a corpus of data mobilizing two complementary approaches, in particular remote sensing for the identification of archaeological sites and monuments, and legacy data. The paper presents the preliminary results of the research and discuss potentials for the development of a truly panafrican archaeology.

13.19. New archaeological and heritage research in Guinea

Oumar Salya Savané

The history of human settlement has long been a central theme of archaeological inquiry. It concerns the origins, dispersal, and development of human populations across the world, including Africa, a continent that continues to contain regions that remain insufficiently investigated, particularly from an archaeological perspective. Guinea is one such region. Situated within a landscape of considerable historical and environmental significance, Guinea played an important role in the development of West African civilization through its association with the Mali Empire, the trans-Saharan and Atlantic trade networks, the period of French colonial rule, and the resistance movements that accompanied colonial expansion. Endowed with abundant natural resources, including extensive river systems, fertile lands, and rich iron ore deposits, the territory has supported human occupation since the Palaeolithic. Guinea preserves a diverse and significant archaeological record that documents successive phases of human occupation and cultural development. Despite this exceptional heritage potential, much of the country's archaeological record remains inadequately documented and insufficiently investigated. This paper aims to assess the current state of archaeological knowledge and documentation of Guinea's cultural heritage. It examines the principal regions that preserve evidence of past human occupation and discusses their significance for understanding migration routes, patterns of landscape use, settlement dynamics, technological development, and the evolution of material culture within broader socio-political and environmental contexts. Although archaeological research has been undertaken in Guinea since the twentieth century, the discipline remains comparatively underdeveloped. This contribution therefore explores the principal factors that have constrained archaeological research and heritage documentation while highlighting future priorities for the investigation, protection, and sustainable management of Guinea's archaeological resources.

13.20. From Archaeology to Archaeology and Heritage Studies: Institutional Shifts and the Emergence of Heritage-Oriented Archaeology in Nigeria

Rabiu Yusuf

Over the past two decades, archaeology in Nigeria has undergone significant intellectual and institutional transformation. Traditionally, archaeological research in the country focused largely on excavation, material analysis, and the reconstruction of past societies. However, growing concerns over cultural heritage preservation, community engagement, museum development, and the management of archaeological resources have broadened the scope of the discipline. One visible manifestation of this shift is the renaming of several university departments from “Department of Archaeology” to “Department of Archaeology and Heritage Studies.” Currently, four out of the five university departments offering archaeology in Nigeria have adopted this nomenclature, reflecting a deliberate move toward a more inclusive and interdisciplinary orientation. This paper examines the emergence of heritage-oriented archaeology in Nigeria through an analysis of this institutional transformation. It explores the academic, professional, and policy contexts that have encouraged archaeology departments to integrate heritage studies into their curricula and research agendas. The paper argues that this change reflects broader global trends in archaeological practice, particularly the increasing emphasis on cultural resource management, public archaeology, museum studies, and community participation in heritage conservation. Drawing on examples from Nigerian universities, the study highlights how the inclusion of heritage studies has expanded training opportunities for students and aligned archaeological education with contemporary heritage challenges such as site preservation, museum management, restitution debates, heritage tourism,

and community-based heritage initiatives. The paper also considers how this shift responds to pressing threats to archaeological resources in Nigeria, including urban expansion, looting, environmental change, and limited institutional capacity for heritage protection. While the integration of heritage studies represents an important step toward strengthening the relevance of archaeology in contemporary society, the paper also identifies key challenges, including curriculum development, professional specialization, and the need for stronger collaboration between universities, museums, and heritage management agencies. Ultimately, the paper argues that the transition from archaeology to archaeology and heritage studies reflects a broader reorientation of the discipline toward socially engaged research and sustainable heritage management. By examining this institutional shift, the study contributes to ongoing discussions about the future direction of archaeology and heritage studies in West Africa, highlighting how academic restructuring can play a crucial role in responding to evolving heritage needs and expanding the societal impact of archaeological scholarship.

13.21. Materiality of the Ancestral Veneration Site at Nkyinkyim Museum, Ada, Ghana

Sarah Lotus Asare

This paper provides an in-depth analysis of the materiality and visitor experiences of the Ancestral Veneration site at the Nkyinkyim Museum in Ada, Ghana. The museum's immersive outdoor installation, created by renowned sculptor Kwame Akoto-Bamfo, leverages the symbolic language of art to archive African heritage and history. The focal point is a collection of life-size portrait heads in a graveyard-like setting, drawing on the Akan tradition of funerary clay figures. Through qualitative methods including site observation, collection analysis, interviews with museum staff and visitors, and researcher participation, this study examines the site's composition, emotional impact on visitors, and significance within Ghana's broader slave trade heritage tourism. The research reveals the veneration site was purposefully developed to honor enslaved individuals and provides a space for both culturally specific and universally resonant reflection on the legacy of the transatlantic slave trade. The findings underscore the potential for heritage sites to employ experiential, symbolic materiality to foster transformative visitor engagements and highlight the role of contemporary art in facilitating cultural memory, mourning and healing.

13.22. Le tissage du pagne sirani, une technique de production endogène malinké à l'épreuve de la modernité

Seidou Abdoulaziz

Le pagne traditionnel occupe une place importante dans le patrimoine culturel et vestimentaire ouest-africain. Plus qu'un signe identitaire, il constitue un levier de développement social, économique et culturel. Aujourd'hui, avec l'urbanisation croissante et l'industrialisation, les pratiques et techniques traditionnelles sont abandonnées. C'est le cas du pagne sirani chez les Malinké de Côte d'Ivoire, dont la technique de production est en pleine mutation. L'objectif de cette étude est de montrer la résilience des techniques de production endogènes, en l'occurrence celles du tissage du pagne sirani, dans une société en proie à la modernité. Notre méthodologie repose sur la théorie de la "chaîne opératoire", approche socio-anthropologique, qui a permis de comprendre le tissage du Sirani comme un fait social total dont la rupture de la transmission technique, dans un contexte de modernité, entraîne une déconstruction des cadres identitaires malinké. Le tissage du pagne originel malinké sirani est aujourd'hui confronté à un abandon de ses techniques, avec lui, la perte de tout un système de valeurs et de symboles.

13.23. Multimedia and its platforms for archaeological information dissemination in Elmina

Stephen Adokpah

My paper will discuss the role of multimedia and its platforms in disseminating archaeological research findings in Elmina, Ghana. The discussion is intended to show how multimedia and its platforms can be used effectively to bridge the communication gap between researchers and local communities and to diversify access to the results of archaeological and cultural heritage studies. Public understanding in Ghana of archaeology and archaeological research results is relatively limited. Meanwhile, multimedia technologies have transformed archaeology in recent years around the globe, helping to provide chances to share the results of archaeological research with the general public. Yet, these platforms have not yet been used adequately to disseminate archaeological information in Ghana and beyond. Based on recent studies I undertook in Elmina, Ghana, I will posit that the use of multimedia and its platforms to disseminate archaeological and other cultural heritage information is an effective means of granting local communities access to information on their past. Using video documents I produced as part of my research project in Elmina, I will show the extent to which the local people welcome audio-visual documents on aspects of their culture, cultural heritage and history as an effective means of accessing information on their past.

13.24. The West African Archaeological and Biocultural Heritage Research Project (WAABHRP)

William Narteh Gblerkpor

This presentation examines the West African Archaeological and Biocultural Heritage Research Project (WAABHRP), highlighting its theoretical foundations, research methods, and its broader function in connecting archaeological research with heritage management in West Africa. WAABHRHP is a multi-phase, interdisciplinary initiative that combines archaeological and biocultural research across Ghana’s national parks and heritage sites. Since its inception in 2018, the project has progressed from initial documentation to conducting systematic surveys, excavations, and remote sensing at key sites, including Mole National Park, Shai Hills Resource Reserve, Krobo Mountain, Kwahu (Afram Plains), and the Eastern Accra Plains. Guided by a biocultural heritage framework, WAABHRP brings together experts from archaeology, anthropology, conservation biology, environmental science, and biomedical fields to explore long-term human–environment interactions and cultural resilience. Community involvement is a core part of the project, with ongoing efforts in museum development and public archaeology to foster local stewardship and engagement. In light of increasing threats from agriculture, illegal mining, construction, climate change, and looting, WAABHRP creates and implements evidence-based conservation strategies. The presentation concludes by exploring the opportunities and challenges of integrating archaeological and biocultural perspectives in the study and preservation of West Africa's heritage

Session: 16 (Room 5)

16.1. Recent Investigation at the Middle Pleistocene Acheulean site of Tihodaïne (Central Sahara, Algeria)

Hocine Sahnoun

The Tihodaïne site is a key Acheulean locality in the Sahara that yielded Mode 2 lithic artefacts associated with well-preserved macro-mammals faunal remains within lacustrine deposits, indicating enhanced climatic conditions characterised by a savannah-like environment and a freshwater landscape. Although the chronology of this site has been estimated to be approximately 250 ka, several critical questions remain unresolved, including the precise stratigraphic context, the absolute dating of the archaeological deposits and the nature of the association between fossil bones and stone tools, and the broader behavioural implications of the archaeological record. Preliminary results from recent systematic excavations, combined with stratigraphic, lithic technology and zooarchaeological analyses, provide new evidence that addresses these uncertainties and improves our understanding of Acheulean hominin behaviour during the Middle Pleistocene Green Sahara Periods (GSPs).

16.2. Evidence of Carcass Processing and Feeding at the Acheulean Site of Erg Tihodaïne (Middle Pleistocene, Central Sahara, Algeria)

Razika Chelli Cheheb

We present here the Middle Pleistocene Acheulean site of Erg Tihodaïne (ET-W1) in the Central Sahara of Algeria, which provides a potential of documenting Acheulean subsistence patterns. The deposit ET-W1, located on the northwestern edge of the Erg Tihodaine, a dune massif at the foot of the Tassili n'Ajjer, has yielded an Acheulean stone tool associated with rich large mammalian faunas. The taphonomic circumstances of the fossil bones show that the archaeological remains were accumulated in a primary context –lacustrine environment- and evidence of carcass processing are documented indicating that hominins from this site exploited meat and marrow from animal carcasses.

16.3. What drives technological variation during the northern African Middle Stone Age?

Lucy Timbrell , Cecilia Padilla-Iglesias, Solène Boisard, Andrea Manica , Matt Grove, Eleanor Scerri

Identifying the factors that shaped technological variability among prehistoric hunter-gatherers is central to understanding cultural evolution. While cognitive capacity likely underpins long-term patterns across hominin evolution, spatiotemporal variation within species is more plausibly shaped by a combination of ecological and demographic factors. Here, we apply novel quantitative metrics of technological diversity and complexity to evaluate these competing influences during the northern African Middle Stone Age (MSA). We analysed a lithic attribute dataset, calculating technological diversity, richness and evenness using latent class analysis, and technological complexity as the number of discrete manufacturing steps present (“procedural units”). We integrate the lithic assemblages with a range of modelling methods to parameterise ecological risk within Marine Isotope Stage (MIS) 5 landscapes, such as climate suitability and distance to water sources, and prehistoric demography, specifically spatiotemporally-explicit estimates of population

density and mobility. We then explored the relative impact of these two drivers on different aspects of technological variation during this key phase of the northern African MSA. This talk will present this computational framework for evaluating ecological risk and demographic hypotheses of technological change in the archaeological record.

16.4. Technologies, human adaptations and connectivity in late Middle Pleistocene Sahara

Emanuele Cancellieri

The late Middle Pleistocene was a pivotal phase in African prehistory, characterised by significant biological, cultural and environmental changes witnessing the development and diffusion of Middle Stone Age (MSA) technologies. Despite its importance in understanding the evolutionary context of Homo sapiens, the archaeological record of this period is patchy across much of Africa, especially in the Sahara. Here, humid phases likely created ecological corridors that facilitated population movements between sub-Saharan Africa and the Mediterranean coast, but episodes of environmental stress may also have prompted human mobility and the intensification of social networks and technological innovation. This presentation reviews the Late Middle Pleistocene archaeological record from the central and northern Sahara, where limited chronological resolution, discontinuous stratigraphic sequences and uneven research coverage continue to restrict our understanding of the timing and geography of the Acheulean MSA transition and MSA developments. By integrating recent technological analyses with updated chronological frameworks, the presentation examines how the archaeological evidence from these regions contribute to broader discussions on technological innovation, population mobility, and interregional connectivity across North Africa, reflecting complex patterns of diffusion, regional adaptation and cultural interaction. Incorporating Saharan datasets into broader PanAfrican frameworks is essential for reconstructing the environmental and cultural dynamics that shaped the emergence and diversification of MSA technologies.

16.5. Présence d'une industrie osseuse dans le site atérien des Phacochères (Alger, Algérie)

Djillali Hadjouis

Au début des années 1980, quand nous débutions nos travaux de thèse sur les ongulés du Pléistocène supérieur du site des Phacochères, situé sur les hauteurs d'Alger, le syndrome Binford commençait à s'emparer du paradigme naissant des sites à carnivores. Aussi, tous les scénarii des assemblages osseux des gisements paléolithiques possédant, au sein de leurs mobiliers, quelques pseudo-outillages en os, devaient être systématiquement réinterprétés, mettant cela en lien avec la présence de l'hyène (ou d'autres carnivores) et notamment des dégâts que pouvait occasionner ce charognard/prédateur. Comme tout le monde, nous avions succombé à la tentation interprétative de Binford, nous obligeant à mettre de côté, le remarquable mobilier osseux aménagé, aussi bien sur les plans, quantitatif que qualitative. De nos jours, et après avoir abandonné le scénario des années 1980, plusieurs sites du Paléolithique inférieur et moyen ont montré qu'une industrie osseuse, bien qu'assez brute, existait bien au sein des assemblages osseux. C'est surtout les retouchoirs/broyeurs/polissoirs sur os, utilisés comme outils ou matrice qui ont été sélectionnés dans l'exploitation des carcasses et dont les ressources tirées de la matière dure animale semblent être prépondérantes. Les espèces les plus représentatives sont le rhinocéros, l'aurochs, le cerf

mégacérin et surtout le phacochère, animal abondant dans le site, alors que les parties anatomiques aménagées sont les défenses, le bois de cervidé, le métacarpe.

16.6. Dynamiques environnementales du Pléistocène moyen et supérieur : le cas du site d'Oued Djabbana -Bir El Ater (l'Est Algerien)

Ichrak Larbi

Le site d'Oued Djabbana constitue un gisement de référence pour l'étude de la faune du Pléistocène moyen et supérieur en Afrique du Nord. Les assemblages fossiles documentent une diversité biologique et permettent d'appréhender les dynamiques d'évolution et les adaptations des espèces aux variations environnementales. L'analyse de ces données offre des éléments essentiels pour la reconstitution des paléoenvironnements et l'identification des processus écologiques ayant structuré les communautés animales. Ce site représente ainsi un référentiel majeur pour les recherches paléontologiques régionales et comparatives.

16.7. Reconstruction of prehistoric landscapes at the Oued Djebbana site (Bir el Ater), Eastern Saharan Atlas: new datas

Roumane Kahina, Boudjermine Badreddin, Oubraham Joher, Semchaoui Ahmed, Chaid Saoudi Yasmina , Zerrouki Tarek, Mahouis Koussaila , Amri kamel

The Oued Djebbana site, located in Bir El Ater in the eastern part of the Saharan Atlas, is notable for the discovery of featuring a socketed joint system, documented for the first time in Algeria. Since 2019, several excavation and survey campaigns carried out across the entire perimeter of Djebel Onk have made it possible to update the available data. Several research projects have been conducted in this area to reconstruct the palaeoenvironmental, biostratigraphic, and cultural dynamics through sedimentological analyses (mineralogical and granulometric), the identification of faunal taxa dating from the Middle to Upper Pleistocene, and the predominance of Levallois type material featuring a stem. These results have led to a revision of the stratigraphy and sedimentology of the Pleistocene deposits at the site, as well as to the establishment of correlations between the various lithological sequences across the entire formation.

16.8. Quaternary sedimentary dynamics of the corniche of Bizerte (northern Tunisia)

Khouloud Khallouli, Amel Chakroun

This study investigates the sedimentological and microtextural characteristics of Quaternary deposits along the Corniche of Bizerte (northern Tunisia). The main objective is to better understand depositional environments and the processes controlling sedimentary variability between northern and eastern Tunisian coasts. Field observations reveal Tyrrhenian formations dominated by sandstones, conglomerates, and sandy deposits rich in marine bioclasts (bivalves, gastropods, bryozoans). Three stratigraphic sections were analyzed to describe lateral and vertical facies variations. Macroscopic observations highlight erosion features (haloclasty, differential erosion), marine transgressive surfaces, and bioerosion structures. Microtextural analysis of quartz grains

shows sub-rounded to rounded morphologies, percussion marks (V-shaped impacts and crescent fractures), as well as dissolution and silica precipitation features. These characteristics indicate a polycyclic evolution involving high-energy marine transport followed by chemical diagenesis in intertidal or confined environments. Additionally, the presence of continental levels with helicids and rhizoconcretions reflects alternations between marine and continental conditions, linked to Quaternary sea-level fluctuations. Human activities, including coastal construction and urbanization, significantly impact current shoreline dynamics. This work contributes to a better understanding of paleoenvironmental evolution and Quaternary sedimentary processes along the northern Tunisian coast.

16.9. Pigeon Cave (Algeria): An Example of Human Adaptation to The Transition of the Terminal Pleistocene/Holocene in The Maghreb

Sam Youcef

In this work, we present the preliminary results of excavations carried out at Pigeon cave (Figure 1), located in a mountainous region far northwest of Algeria. It constitutes a typical example for the study of human adaptation to paleoenvironmental changes in the Maghreb during the transition from the Terminal Pleistocene to the Holocene. Indeed, the stratigraphic deposit, with an average thickness of 1.30 meters, reveals the succession of two distinct periods: yellowish to reddish clayey-silty sediments in the lower sequence, which yielded mainly remains of ungulates including Pleistocene species and few lithic artifacts, while the upper sequence is contained in an ashy and gray sediments that yielded considerable amounts of land snails, and to a much lesser extent small vertebrates, an abundant lithic industry (made of limestone and flint) as well as a few decorated ceramic shards restricted to the top of the assemblage. Based on charcoal sample dating this latter gave an age of 6720 +/- 30 BP. The Zooarchaeological and taphonomic analysis of ungulate remains in the lower sequence showed that humans were the main contributor to the bone accumulation through hunting. Human subsistence behaviors appear to have completely changed in the upper sequence due to climatic changes that occurred with the onset of the Holocene. Studying the material, it yielded is in progress and this work allows us to learn more about the transition period of the Terminal Pleistocene/Holocene in the Maghreb.

16.10. The Damous Rockshelter (Northern Tunisia): New Funerary Practices during the Upper Capsian (7th Millennium cal BC)

Nabiha Aouadi, Lotfi Belhouchet, Fatma Touj

Located in the Central Tunisian Atlas between Jebel Bargou and Jebel Sarj, the newly discovered Capsian site of Damous rockshelter (Henchir el Bez-Bargou) has revealed an archaeological sequence of the rammadiya type with an exceptional thickness exceeding 3 meters. Radiocarbon dating from the upper levels (6600-6400 cal BC) places this occupation within the Upper Capsian culture. The subsistence economy, centered on the hunting of Barbary sheep (Ammotragus lervia), demonstrates a specialized exploitation of the mountain game environment. From a technological perspective, the lithic industry is characterized by the adoption of pressure flaking, a key innovation of the Upper Capsian. The eastern sector (Square Y7) revealed a complex stratigraphy that yielded secondary

deposits of human remains. The study highlights intentional manipulations primarily affecting the cranial vaults. The presence of artifacts crafted from human bone suggests that this material may have been treated as both a technical and symbolic medium, much like ostrich eggshell or stone. These discoveries raise critical questions regarding the status of the shelter: was it a funerary space, a sanctuary dedicated to ancestral cults, or a site for the production of skull masks and trophies? This presentation aims to introduce the new site of Damous and its unexpected findings, which significantly enrich our understanding of the funerary rites and symbolic behaviors of Capsian populations in the Eastern Maghreb.

16.11. La grotte d'Imi-nw-Aqvun (Kheneg el Ghar): un refuge clé face aux changements climatiques sahariens durant l'Holocène moyen

Iddir Amara, Ilham Bentaleb, Jacob Morales, Saida kasri

Les monts des Ksour, dans l'Atlas saharien occidental algérien, constituent une zone clé pour comprendre les dynamiques de peuplement et les transformations environnementales du Sahara durant l'Holocène. Les fouilles pionnières menées au XX^{e} siècle dans la grotte atlasique du Djebel Amour, à Brézina (~5850 BP – 4160 BP), ont révélé d'importants dépôts archéologiques. Toutefois, les méthodes de terrain employées à l'époque et l'absence de datations fiables ont limité les interprétations paléo-environnementales. Les recherches se sont principalement concentrées sur les industries lithiques, la céramique et l'art rupestre, alors même que certains sites livrent une abondance de restes fauniques. En revanche, les études paléo-environnementales y demeurent rares et les approaches biogéochimiques restent encore inédites dans cette région. Nous présentons ici le potentiel scientifique des nouvelles fouilles dans la grotte non référencée d'Imi-nw-Aqvun (Kheneg el-Ghar), sur les versants méridionaux des monts des Ksour. Cette étude intégrée et multi-échelles combine archéozoologie, archéo-botanique, protéomique et analyses isotopiques du collagène osseux ($\delta^{13}C$, $\delta^{15}N$, $\delta^{34}S$, $\delta^{2}H$, $\delta^{18}O$) pour documenter les environnements de l'Holocène moyen et les stratégies de subsistance humaines. Les datations sur graines carbonisées indiquent une occupation entre 5300 et 4300 cal BP, cohérente avec les analyses céramiques du Néolithique moyen récent. La campagne 2023 a livré un matériel organique abondant : ossements de mammifères, macrorestes végétaux et microfaune, offrant une rare opportunité pour les approches biogéochimiques. Certains restes sont attribués au cheval (Equus sp.), au bœuf domestique (Bos sp.) à la chèvre et au mouton (Capra et Ovis), au chien (Canis familiaris), ainsi qu'au lapin, petits rongeurs, insectivores et oiseaux. Les données carpologiques suggèrent un paysage en mosaïque de garrigue et steppe avec Olea, Pistacia et Ziziphus, associé à des micro-habitats mésophiles autour de points d'eau. La faune et la flore indiquent un système agro-pastoral exploitant des pâturages ouverts avec un stress hydrique modéré. Les valeurs isotopiques du boviné ($\delta^{13}C$ = 19,24 ‰; $\delta^{15}N$ = 6,92 ‰) confirment une végétation dominée par des plantes C3. Ce site constitue un refuge stratégique pour les dernières communautés de chasseurs-cueilleurs et les premiers groupes agro-pastoraux. Des analyses complémentaires permettront de mieux comprendre les interactions climat environnements sociétés dans cette région encore peu étudiée.

16.12. Sedimentary and geodynamic study of the occupation soils of the Kheneg El Ghar cave (Western Saharan Atlas, Ksour Mountains)

Badredine Boudjermine, kahina Roumane, Semchaoui Ahmed, Zerrouki Tarek

The Kheneg El Ghar region is located in the Monts des Ksour, an extension of the Western Saharan Atlas. Its stratigraphy consists of Meso-Cenozoic formations typical of the Saharan Atlas. Situated at the boundary between the Atlas reliefs and the Saharan Platform, the cave provides an exceptional setting for investigating the interactions between environmental dynamics and human occupation in a semi-arid context. This study adopts a geoarchaeological approach to reconstruct the sedimentary and geodynamic history of the karstic cavity and to identify the environmental conditions that favoured or constrained human settlement. The research is based on a multidisciplinary methodology combining sedimentological analyses (grain-size analysis, morphoscopy, micromorphology, and petrography) with the geodynamic interpretation of cave deposits. Several stratigraphic profiles were systematically recorded and sampled. Preliminary results reveal alternating sedimentary units of colluvial, aeolian, and anthropogenic origin, indicating a complex infilling history controlled by climatic and morphostructural factors. Layers rich in charcoal, ash, and anthropogenic remains indicate intermittent human occupations, likely associated with wetter climatic phases. Grain-size analyses show marked variations between sedimentary levels, reflecting alternating episodes of rapid deposition related to intense runoff and more stable periods of fine-grained sedimentation. These findings are supported by evidence of geodynamic instability, including roof collapses and internal mass movements, highlighting the importance of endokarstic processes in sediment redistribution. This study contributes to a better understanding of the geological and sedimentological evolution of the Western Saharan Atlas and provides new insights into the palaeoenvironmental conditions that shaped prehistoric human occupation in the region.

16.13. Archaeology and Paleoenvironment: The Case of the Telem Fezza Cave (Tassili-tan-Ahaggar, Central Sahara, Algeria)

Yasmina Damouche, Iddir Amara, Ilham Bentaleb, Djillali Hadjouis, Jacob Morales, Núria Rovira Buendia, Hayette Berkani, Ahmed Nafis, Youcef Anesbaghour

Understanding environmental dynamics and human occupation patterns in the Sahara during the Holocene relies on the combined analysis of natural and archaeological records. In this context, the Telem Fezza Cave, located in the Tassili-tan-Ahaggar (Central Sahara, Algeria), represents an exceptional site for investigating the interactions between prehistoric societies and Saharan environments. Carved into Devonian sandstones by the combined action of runoff and wind erosion, this cavity overlooks the left bank of the Ti-n-Tarabine wadi and occupies a strategic position on the Telem Fezza plateau. Excavations initiated since 2022 have revealed a complex stratigraphy characterized by alternating dark organic, light sandy, and ashy layers, reflecting phases of human occupation and environmental variations. Paleoenvironmental data are based on the identification of plant remains indicative of climate and vegetation, such as Celtis (hackberry), Ziziphus (jujube), Vicia faba (faba bean), and Lathyrus (meadow vetchling), associated with assemblages of macrofauna, microfauna, and mollusks. These are complemented by a rich corpus of cultural remains (ceramics, lithic and bone industries, ornaments, basketry fragments, etc.) as well as rock engravings depicting, among others, elephants, rhinoceroses, giraffes and cattle. Altogether, these data contribute to a renewed understanding of the interactions between human societies and environments in the central Sahara during the Holocene.

16.14. Necropolis of In-Aradigh and Holocene Environment in the Tassili-tan-Ahaggar (Algeria)

Ahmed Nafiss, Youcef Anesbaghour, Yasmina Damouche, Iddir Amara, Djillali Hadjouis

The In-Aradigh site, located near in Guezzam in the Tassili-tan-Ahaggar at an altitude of approximately 400 m, is a necropolis that has yielded numerous human remains and archaeological artifacts. It is situated a few hundred meters from a settlement site of the same name a relatively rare configuration in a prehistoric context. Several skeletons exhibit blackened bones, likely due to prolonged immersion in water, testifying to the environmental transformations the site underwent during the Holocene in relation to the climatic oscillations of the in Guezzam region. A field mission made it possible to record the number of visible skeletons, analyze their spatial distribution, and define the extent of the necropolis, which is currently located on a mound near a dried-up wadi (oued). These observations provide new evidence for understanding how Saharan Neolithic societies adapted to Holocene environmental changes.

16.15. Farming on the Shores of Two Seas: A Macroscale View of Human-Environment Relations in Holocene North Africa

Michaela Heale

Holocene North Africa has oft been viewed as a land caught between worlds and different dichotomies, such that his pluralistic expressions fall between the ontological cracks. Ecologically, as well as materially, it represents a marginal space affected by climate change and varied cultural dynamics, between the Mediterranean world on its northern littoral, and the Saharan sea encroaching on its southern edge. The same can be said of subsistence and lifeways, which, during the early Holocene, represent a mosaic of practices, from persistent and intensive foraging and reliance on coastal resources to pastoralism and some scattered signs of early agriculture, we also see varying engagement to the landscape in the form of continued transhumance and early sedentism. In the efforts to refocus on this land-in-between, the MedAfriCarbon database was constructed, collecting and collating radiocarbon data from across Holocene (and earlier) North Africa. With this database, as well as new and exciting discoveries made since its publication in 2020, I have undertaken a spatial-statistical computational approach to gain a wider, super-regional understanding of dynamics and patterns that emerge in this diverse ecotone during the early-to-mid-Holocene. In particular, I will employ eco-cultural niche modelling and Bayesian phase modelling, whose results will be interpreted in consideration of each other. This is with a view to shed light on human-environment relations during, as well as to contribute to our knowledge of the nature, speed, and tempo of, the spread and uptake of farming in North Africa.

16.16. La céramique du site de Tan Ainesis durant l'Holocène : Téfedest, Ahaggar

M. Bensadok

Parmi les travaux de recherche significatif sur la Téfedest, ce massif granitique de 105 000 km², figure ceux de Jean-Pierre Maître à partir de 1963. Ces travaux de fouille, de prospections et de sondages ont permis de révéler et d'individualiser des cultures et des faciès culturels de la région

durant l'Holocène. De nouvelles recherches ont été entamées par le CNRPAH en 2003 et se poursuivent jusqu'à aujourd'hui. Les missions de recherche s'articulent autour de trois volets:

- l'art rupestre,
- les monuments funéraires,
- la recherche archéologique.

Cette dernière est illustrée par la fouille du site d'habitat de Tan Ainesis, daté d'environ 4000 ans et qui a livré une quantité importante de matériel archéologique, notamment de la céramique. Les prospections menées depuis 2009 dans la région et l'analyse du matériel recueilli témoigne de l'évolution de l'occupation du site durant l'Holocène. La poursuite des prospections dans les autres secteurs de la Téfedest et la richesse en céramique constaté confirment que celle-ci constitue un élément essentiel pour la compréhension les changements du mode de vie des populations ayant occupé la région. Par ailleurs, la présence de poterie représentée sur certaines fresques d'art rupestre confirme l'existence de périodes de transition marquant une transformation des modes de vie au cours de l'Holocène.

16.17. Du Néolithique à la protohistoire en Algérie : continuité ou rupture

Khoukha Ayati, Farida Ouzzani, Lycia Sayah, Benbarkane Mohamed Seghir

Le Néolithique, dernière période de la Préhistoire, se caractérise par d'importantes innovations techniques, agropastorales et sociales. Vers la fin de cette période apparaissent et se diffusent les premières techniques de la métallurgie, marquant l'émergence de l'âge du cuivre (Chalcolithique). Cette innovation se développe ensuite durant les âges des métaux, avec une diversification des objets caractéristiques de l'âge du bronze, puis de l'âge du fer. En Algérie, cette continuité reste difficile à démontrer. La synthèse des sources documentaires met en évidence que les âges du cuivre et du bronze ne seraient attestés qu'à partir de l'âge du fer, souvent associé à l'arrivée des Phéniciens au cours du dernier millénaire avant notre ère. Par ailleurs, certains chercheurs, tels que Pallary, ont avancé dès le début du XX e siècle que le « Néolithique berbère » en réalité une industrie paléolithique identifiée aujourd'hui comme l'Atérien aurait perduré jusqu'à l'époque romaine. Si la rareté du mobilier métallique attribué au Chalcolithique ou à l'âge du bronze constitue l'argument principal avancé par plusieurs auteurs (Pallary, Gsell, entre autres), cette hypothèse semble en décalage avec les données issues de la documentation disponible. En effet, un nombre non négligeable d'objets métalliques, provenant essentiellement de contextes funéraires, a été recensé, sans compter les pièces dont la localisation actuelle demeure inconnue. Ainsi, cette étude propose de réexaminer la question de l'existence d'un âge du cuivre et d'un âge du bronze en Algérie, à la lumière de nouvelles approches méthodologiques développées dans le domaine de la métallurgie.

16.18 What Human Paleogenetic Studies Can Tell Us About North African Archaeology?

Alejandra C. Ordóñez

This paper examines the development of human paleogenetics and its role in understanding the history of North African populations. Starting from the discipline's beginning in 1984, it discusses technical challenges such as DNA fragmentation and chemical decay, and outlines the shift from analyzing mitochondrial DNA to utilizing whole-genome next-generation sequencing (NGS). North Africa faces specific challenges in bio-preservation due to its environmental conditions, but recent

genomic data offer vital insights into long-term demographic patterns. Key findings from the Paleolithic and Epipaleolithic, especially from the Taforalt site, reveal an "autochthonous Maghrebi" component characterized by a mix of Natufian-related and sub-Saharan ancestries, showing significant continuity over thousands of years. The Neolithic transition appears highly diverse; while some groups maintained local lineages, others show gene flow from the European Mediterranean and the Levant. For example, sites like Kaf Tahtel-Ghar indicate European Neolithic influence, while Skhirat-Rouazi shows direct Levantine contributions. Finally, genomic data from ancient Egypt suggest long-term continuity with Near Eastern populations. This overview highlights the complexity of prehistoric migrations and emphasizes the importance of addressing ethical challenges in African genomic research to develop a more inclusive human history.

Session: 69 Workshop (Room 2)

69.1. The establishment of a historic urban landscape approaches: the potential threats and vulnerability of Wolaita material culture sites in Wolaita, Southern Ethiopia

Afework Hailegiorgis Abebe

In the last 50 years, human and natural factors have treated the existence of Wolaita material culture. The objective of this research paper was to identify the major dilemmas in managing the cultural heritages of Wolaita material culture and examine and contextualise the Historic Urban Landscape Approach. The research explored the impacts of development projects in causing damage to the Wolaita material culture through the extraction of resources around the heritage sites. It also plotted the roles of daily labourers, the local community, and local government officials in the preservation and management of the Wolaita material culture. Semi-structured interviews, informal interviews, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, field observation, and pedestrian assessments were used to collect the data in this study. The findings proposed that the HUL approach is better for the reinforcement of the Wolaita material culture sites because the administration of Wolaita material culture is indifferent to cultural heritage, and their priority is economic development rather than conservation.

69.2. Défis et opportunités de la construction d'une base de données patrimoniale au Togo

Aka Adjo Bebewou

La préservation du patrimoine culturel et naturel est un enjeu majeur pour les pays en développement. Au Togo, le patrimoine culturel et naturel du Togo représente un capital symbolique, historique et économique majeur. Toutefois, son inventaire demeure fragmentaire et peu numérisé. Ainsi, la mise en valeur du patrimoine culturel et naturel constitue un enjeu stratégique pour le développement durable. Face aux défis liés à la conservation, à l'accessibilité et à la gestion des ressources patrimoniales, la mise en place d'une base de données patrimoniale nationale apparaît comme une solution structurante. Cet article vise à analyser les principaux défis techniques, institutionnels, financiers et socioculturels associés à la construction d'un tel dispositif, tout en mettant en évidence les opportunités offertes par la transformation numérique, les partenariats internationaux et le renforcement des capacités locales. L'étude adoptera une approche analytique fondée sur la littérature scientifique et les rapports institutionnels relatifs à la gestion du patrimoine en Afrique subsaharienne.

69.3. Microscale perspectives of rural pastoral economies and the excavations of middens associated with a corbelled house, Loxton, Northern Cape

Jenna Larangeira

There has been a steady rise in research and excavations conducted around corbelled buildings in South Africa in the last decade, particularly in the Northern Cape regions of Carnarvon, Calvinia, and Loxton. These buildings play an integral role in analysing the lifeways of rural economies and how they link to the broader South Africa. Additionally, corbelled houses further Historical Archaeologists' understanding of everyday pastoral life in the 19th century. An excavation conducted outside of Carnarvon at Rondawels, a corbelled building complex, in November of 2023 by myself and my supervisors, Dr Vuyiswa Lupuwana, Emeritus Associate Professor Simon Hall, and Patricia Kramer allowed for a deeper understanding of the houses' inhabitants. As with all Historical Archaeology sites we found ceramics, glass, and faunal remains which can indicate socio-economic status. Corbelled houses were previously associated with white trekboers to further a narrative put forth by the apartheid government in the 20th century. This work and previous research aim to uncover the true inhabitants beyond a biased view and does this by examining all forms of evidence. This presentation will focus primarily on my master's research and the discussions and conclusions drawn from it.

69.4. Doctorant en Archéologie et Patrimoine

Baba Tinting Emmanuel

Les architectures défensives du Logone et Chari, dans l'Extrême-Nord du Cameroun, illustrent des systèmes endogènes de sécurité territoriale, essentiels à la compréhension du patrimoine bâti en Afrique. Souvent étudiées sous des angles ethnographiques ou historiques, ces structures fortifiées, comme les murailles de Zina, Mazra et Goulfey, constituent un modèle local de défense, élaboré dès la protohistoire et consolidé au cours des périodes historiques, notamment pendant la civilisation Sao et les sultanats sahéliens. Ces architectures, adaptées aux défis environnementaux du Sahel (inondations, faune sauvage) et humains (conflits, rivalités politiques), témoignent d'une réflexion stratégique collective. L'approche archéologique de ces vestiges met en lumière la complémentarité des fonctions politiques, militaires et symboliques des palais sultanaux de la région. Ce sont des structures hybrides, intégrées à des cités fortifiées, conçues pour répondre à des enjeux de protection territoriale et de gestion sociale. L'étude croisée des traditions orales, des données de terrain et des prospections archéologiques révèle une organisation spatiale méticuleuse, fondée sur des savoir-faire locaux et une gestion collective des menaces. Repositionner ces architectures comme un patrimoine bâti essentiel dans le cadre de l'archéologie africaine permet de réévaluer leur valeur et de repenser la manière dont elles sont perçues au sein de l'héritage patrimonial. Cette réflexion ouvre des perspectives nouvelles pour leur conservation et valorisation, en tenant compte des enjeux éthiques liés à la reconnaissance du patrimoine précolonial, tout en faisant face aux défis contemporains de gestion du patrimoine.

Sesssion: 33 (Room 6)

33.1. Holocene Cultural Transitions in Central Africa: a new paradigm for interactions between hunter-gatherers, villagers and iron-smelters

Clist Bernard

The most fascinating research outcome of the last 40 years in Central Africa is the identification of cultural transitions. We easily follow Neolithic transitions which are in stark contrast to Late Stone Age traditions, probably resulting from new incoming populations. The earliest such transition is older than 3,000 BP in southern Cameroon, around 2,300 BP on the Congo River in the western DRC, and around 2,400 BP in the Inner Congo Basin. In the latter area, the settlers may have been already connected to iron-producing centers as they did not use polished stone adzes and axes. Though stone-using hunter-gatherers coexisted with villagers from then until modern times, losing along the way their stone toolkit, recent finds of pottery in Stone Age context is perhaps evidence of them acquiring knowledge of pottery making or of long distance exchanges between hunter-gatherers and villagers. The Iron Age brought different pottery traditions into play. Such Neolithic Iron Age transitions are situated between 2,200 and 1,900 BP. They follow an irregular north to south chronological gradient, probably associated with the diffusion of iron smelting, but also with new waves of people moving towards the Atlantic coast. These breaks are likely caused by a new human influx, replacing the previous production sequences, and changing the visual labels for group identification. Research on small cemeteries in Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea and Gabon revealed important differences in burial practice together with major changes in pottery production and deposits of similar iron artefacts along hundreds of kilometers through the Equatorial forests.

33.2. The Hybrid Landscape of Hunter-Gatherers and Farmers at Daimane II: Materiality, Connectivity and Mobility of the last 4000 years in the Lower Lebombo range, Southwest Maputo Province, Mozambique

Décio Muianga

This paper investigates the hybrid landscape of hunter-gatherers and early farming communities at Daimane II, a basaltic rock shelter sequence in the Lower Lebombo range, southwest Maputo Province, Mozambique, over the last 4000 years. Daimane II is located at the intersection of the coastal plains and the interior uplands, providing a distinctive and comprehensive record of interaction, continuity, and transformation between Late Stone Age foragers and incoming agro-pastoral groups. The study combines the analysis of archaeological and different types of data to examine how material culture reflects patterns of connectivity, mobility, and adaptation in this ecotonal setting.

33.3. Climate Resilience of Early and Late Farming Communities in southern Mozambique

Elena Skosey-LaLonde, Gideon Hartman, Mussa Raja, Ana Gomes

Mozambique's Holocene archaeological record offers critical insights into human-environment interactions along the southern coastline of the western Indian Ocean. This paper investigates the role climate change has had on facilitating the spread and settlement of agricultural populations in Holocene Mozambique. Stable isotope (δ18O and δ13C) analysis of the Lake Nyalonzelwe sediment-core (Inharrime, Inhambane) were used to reconstruct precipitation patterns, namely changes in monsoon intensity in Holocene Mozambique. TEX86 palaeothermometry and branched glycerol

dialkyl glycerol tetraether (brGDGT) indices provided estimates of mean annual air temperature (MAAT (oC)) over the last 7500 cal BP. Results suggest that MAAT stabilization and prolonged monsoon seasons may have contributed to the viability of the episodic migration of the Bantu through coastal Mozambique between 3000 and 2000 yr BP. During the earliest introduction of agriculture and through the medieval period in Mozambique, site abandonment is commonly tied to precipitation decrease rather than changes in temperature, and resilience to drought is seen in the heighted use of marine and coastal resources. These paleoenvironmental and paleoclimate data are integrated with ethnographic histories and archival archaeological records to explore patterns of human migration, settlement, and resilience strategies of Early and Late Farming Communities in southern coastal Mozambique.

33.4. Archaeological research in the Colouche caves, in Buchane, in the interior of Inhambane Province

Hilário Madiquida, Carla Saiva Cossa Matsinhe, Helena da Conceição Francisco Chivite, Wels Gregório Estevão, Armando Alberto Mangue

In this article we try to explore some traditional procedures before archaeological work began in various parts of Mozambique, in particular in the Colouche caves in Buchane, Inhassoro district, Inhambane province, and present data from archaeological research work in one of the excavated caves. The objective of collecting traditional cultural elements is to combine with archaeological data to understand settlement patterns, the basis of the economy, and the exploitation and use of resources. Prospecting around the three caves did not identify any archaeological artifacts and the excavation inside the cave results from ceramic fragments exposed in the guano-riddled sand and the identification of the stratigraphic section with the archaeological material inside the cave 2. The evidence excavated in cave 2 indicate that communities occupied these caves from the Late Stone Age until the Late Farming Communities. In total there are 4 caves, 3 are in the same location, 2 of which have conditions for human occupation, one (the first) has little oxygen and makes breathing difficult as it does not have an exit and the fourth is 8 km away from the three, local communities say that inside this cave has water and grass, we didn't get to visit that cave. The interior of the province of Inhambane presents little archaeological research, this was due to the concentration of studies in the archaeological sites of Chibwene and Manyikeni connected to long distance trade network and Great Zimbabwe, in the district of Vilanculos, associated with the lack of equipment, few personnel trained in the Stone Age and interest. Archaeological research in Buchane opens a new horizon and shows that the province of Inhambane has a vast unknown cultural and archaeological heritage that requires extensive research programs.

33.5. Beyond the Forager–Farmer Divide: Contact Archaeology and Gradual Subsistence Transitions in Holocene Western Central Africa

Katharina V. M. Jungnickel

Although the transition from foraging to food production in Africa has often been portrayed as a straightforward, demographically driven process, archaeological evidence from Western Central Africa increasingly challenges such simplified narratives. This paper explores interactions between foragers and early food producers during the late Holocene (6000–2000 BP), drawing on a comparative dataset of approximately 200 sites across Cameroon, Gabon, the Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, the Central African Republic, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Rather than assuming abrupt economic or cultural replacement, the paper highlights the coexistence of Late Stone Age lithic technologies with early ceramics and emerging metallurgical practices. These

material associations imply gradual, context-dependent subsistence transitions influenced by local conditions, mobility strategies, and possible inter-group interactions. The long-term capacity of tropical rainforest environments to support foraging populations complicates assumptions that agriculture or sedentism were necessary prerequisites for this region's populations. Methodologically, the study stresses the importance of material culture, radiocarbon dating, and subsistence-related evidence over inferences based solely on linguistic or genetic models. By positioning Western Central Africa within broader African discussions on Holocene transitions, this paper advocates for a nuanced understanding of cultural change as a mosaic of selective adoption, coexistence, and adaptation, and seeks a constructive framework for reevaluating Holocene subsistence dynamics.

33.6. Pyrotechnologies and the Sensible Terms of Life in central and southern Africa, 3000 BCE to 1700 CE

Kathryn de Luna

For five thousand years, African men and women living in "Bantuphone" Africa a region extending from the Cross River in Nigeria, through the forests of central Africa, to the savannas and coasts of eastern and southern Africa characterized by the predominant use of Bantu langauges understood "radiation" (the linked phenomena of heat and light present in fire) as a metaphor for "worldly lifeforce" and of pyro-technologies as a means for technicians to manipulate these lifeforces in a morally legitimate way. Bantu speakers developed and then held fast to this specific way of thinking about the spiritual connections between fire and lifeforce, even as their repertoire of pyro-technologies grew and changed. This essay connects reconstructed lexicons of pyro-technology to archaeological evidence to recover the changing sensorial underpinnings of developments in pyrotechnologies (swiddening, potting, cooking, and smelting) across thousands of years of extraordinary political, economic, and social changes in central and southern Africa. Such terms reveal the ways pyrotechnicians, politicians, and consumers alike situated changing pyro-technologies and their products in a system of values that helped users understand their connections to political authority and good living and help explain the particular signatures of firework we see in the archaeological record.

33.7. Forager to Farmer Subsistence transitions and Zooarchaeological evidence in Zambia

Martha N Kayuni

This study critically evaluates the current state of archaeological research on subsistence transitions in Zambia, with particular emphasis on zooarchaeological evidence. It identifies significant methodological and conceptual limitations that continue to constrain interpretation. The persistence of rigid binary frameworks, most notably the dichotomy between foragers and farmers, has further limited interpretive scope. Such models inadequately capture the complexity of subsistence practices in regions like Zambia, where archaeological evidence increasingly points to prolonged processes of human-animal interaction, adaptation, and entanglement rather than abrupt or linear transitions. By highlighting these constraints, this work, through a systematic literature review, underscores the need for more refined methodological approaches, improved chronological control, and theoretically flexible frameworks. Integrating advances in zooarchaeology with interdisciplinary techniques offers a pathway toward more nuanced reconstructions of past lifeways, ultimately enabling a deeper understanding of the dynamic relationships between humans, animals, and environments in southern Africa. Recovery biases in excavation practices, insufficient chronological

resolution, and underdeveloped zooarchaeological analyses have collectively limited the analytical potential of faunal assemblages. As a result, key aspects of past human environment interactions and subsistence strategies remain underexplored.

33.8. Farmers and Hunter-and Gatherers: what is missing in our records?

Anneli Ekblom, Michel Notelid

Farmers and hunter- and gathers: what is missing in our records? We begin the paper with a short overview of environmental evidence for (or the absence of evidence) for large-scale landscape transformations in southern Africa at the beginning of the first millennium which points to a continuity rather than a decisive break in land use or settlement. The study is based on pollen records in combination with coprophilous spores which has not been reviewed before. We then zoom in specifically on the the Limpopo Valley with its several river confluences acted as smelting pot of amalgamation and innovation of new practices and traditions. However, there have been few surveys on the Mozambique side that allows us to link this region with other parts of the Limpopo. In this paper we present the results of survey carried out between 2006-2018 with regard to the possible linkages to hunter-gather and farmer interactions in the early first millennium AD and until the 19th century. We discuss the few evidence of Late Stone Age sites in the area (building also on sites presented by other researchers) and the Chicumbane site dated from 500-800 AD a site with Gokomere and Zhizo type pottery. Finally, we discuss the evidence of later interactions and presence of hunter and gather communities in the second millennium.

33.9. Human Environment Interactions and Geochemical Signatures of Anthropogenic Activities in Southwest Nigeria

Peter Adewale Jegede

Understanding the interactions between anthropogenic activities and environmental systems is central to geoarchaeological research in tropical Africa. This study investigates human–environment interactions and the geochemical signatures of past human activities at selected archaeological sites in southwest Nigeria, including Iwo Eleruru (Ikere-Ekiti), Ipinsa settlement site, and Igbo Olodumare (Oke Igbo), representing diverse ecological and cultural contexts within the humid rainforest zone. A multidisciplinary geoarchaeological framework is adopted, integrating stratigraphic field observations, sedimentological characterization, and high-resolution geochemical analysis. Systematic sampling of soils and sediments was conducted from well-defined archaeological contexts, with ongoing laboratory analysis using Inductively Coupled Plasma Mass Spectrometry (ICP-MS) to quantify major, minor, and trace element concentrations. Analytical emphasis is placed on the use of elemental enrichment patterns, multivariate geochemical proxies, and diagnostic elemental ratios to differentiate lithogenic background signals from anthropogenic inputs associated with habitation surfaces, pyrogenic activities, and refuse deposition. Sedimentological parameters, including grain size distribution and depositional characteristics, are further examined to elucidate site formation processes and post-depositional alteration. The study aims to refine the application of geochemical and sedimentological proxies in reconstructing past human–environment dynamics in tropical archaeological contexts and to contribute to broader interpretations of land use, environmental modification, and cultural practices in West Africa.

33.10. A 3D Relative Geologic Time (RGT) model for the Late Pleistocene/Holocene Site of Mochena Borago Rockshelter, Southwestern Ethiopia

Peter Lanzarone, Elisabeth Hildebrand, Erich Fisher, Steven Brandt

Here we present a three-dimensional relative geologic time (RGT) model of Mochena Borago (MB) Rockshelter, a large shelter situated on the western slopes of Mount Damota volcano in Southwestern Ethiopia. At ~ 2200 masl, MB was occupied by hunter-gatherers throughout much of the Late Pleistocene into the Late Holocene. The site contains a rich accumulation of flaked obsidian artifacts within a complex stratified sequence of fluvial, alluvial and colluvial deposits punctuated by sterile layers of volcanic lahar and tephra. A ground penetrating radar (GPR) survey was first conducted to map sections of the shelter away from excavation units. To avoid contamination of the primary GPR signal, the raw GPR data were processed to remove airwaves or data artifacts from ray scattering off the shelter walls and ceiling. We interpreted the data using a variety of methods, including a facies-based technique that allowed the correlation of radar profiles across the site. Although this presented a useful view of the shelter subsurface, the interpretation was limited to individual 2D profiles. An innovative 3D model was later constructed by incorporating all the coherent reflections in the 2D GPR dataset, where each part of the dipping reflection is considered as a geological time surface. In this way, we could represent the subsurface evolution of the shelter from the basement through the shelter floor. This has allowed us to infer and characterize the subsurface sedimentary sequences at the site and compare it with our observed stratigraphic profiles from excavations. We conclude with a discussion of how this innovative 3D method can be used at MB and other caves and shelters whether volcanic or karstic to obtain a much richer and nuanced understanding of human reaction and resilience to Late Quaternary natural and behavioral perturbations.

33.11. Entangled Occupations and Social Complexity: Forager-Farmer Interactions at Mbere Shelter in the Middle Limpopo Valley, northern south Africa

Siphesihle Kuhlase, Tim Forssman

Foragers in the Middle Limpopo Valley of northern South Africa adopted diverse survival strategies during the late first millennium AD, engaged in exchange networks with farming communities, and contributed to the emergence of complex society during the Mapungubwe period (AD 1220-1300). This paper presents new findings from the recently excavated Mbere shelter, which provides important evidence for forager participation and agency within the socio-economic networks of this period.

33.12. Misrepresentations of the Iron Age Period in the Zambian School History Curriculum

Yvonne Kabombwe, Martha Kayuni

This study analysis the current Zambia History curriculum, which presents a fragmented narrative of the past by underrepresenting or omitting a comprehensive study of the Iron Age, thereby rendering the prehistoric sequence incomplete. This gap obscures critical transitions from Later Stone Age foraging societies to food-producing communities characterized by metallurgy, agriculture, and increasing social complexity. The absence of sustained engagement with Iron Age evidence, such as the history of centralized communities, settlement patterns, iron production technologies, the history of domestic faunal and flora remains, and the impact of environmental interactions, limits

students' understanding of long-term cultural and ecological transformations. The study analyzed syllabuses for the history for secondary schools and the curriculum framework to find out the representations of the Iron age period in Zambia. This work argues that integrating Iron Age archaeology into the curriculum is essential for reconstructing a continuous and coherent prehistoric framework. Drawing on an abundant archaeological record and the large Iron Age population across the Zambian landscape, this research highlights how Iron Age communities in Zambia adapted to and modified their landscapes, developed subsistence economies, and participated in regional exchange networks. By foregrounding these dynamics, the study demonstrates that the Iron Age is not merely a transitional phase but a foundational period shaping later historical developments. The paper ultimately advocates for curriculum reform that embeds Iron Age perspectives within the national history education. Such inclusion would bridge the conceptual divide between prehistory and history, foster critical engagement with archaeological evidence, and promote a more nuanced appreciation of Zambia's deep past.

Session: 38 (Room 7)

38.1. Archaeological Reconnaissance of Tsohuwar Mah Settlement, Kubau LGA, Kaduna State: Preliminary Insights into Settlement and Cultural Practices

Abdulbasit bello Bashir, Muhammad Isa

This research is a preliminary report of an archaeological reconnaissance of Tsohuwar Mah, one of the earliest settlements known to have formed North Eastern Zazzau. It's located in Kubau Local Government Area of Kaduna State, Nigeria. It aims to document visible material remains found on surface of the site. Methods adopted were oral traditions, consultation of relevant written records, and archaeological reconnaissance to provide a more understanding of the settlement. Surface materials identified include potsherds, upper and lower grinding stones, dye pits, and a dyeing area, suggesting domestic occupation alongside specialized craft production. Additional features such as habitation mounds, an abandoned well, and a spiritual tree point to an organized settlement pattern shaped by economic, social, political and cultural practices. The presence of dyeing facilities indicates engagement in localized production activities, possibly connected to wider regional interactions. Also, oral traditions obtained from local community members complement the material record by providing insights into the historical identity, belief and political systems, and cultural meanings associated with the site. This integration of indigenous knowledge enhances archaeological interpretation and reflects emerging approaches in African archaeology that prioritize community perspectives. The study highlights the significance of Tsohuwar Mah as a heritage site and underscores the need for further investigation, documentation, and preservation within a community engaged research framework.

38.2. An investigation on public perception and response towards the practice of public archaeology in Ndali, western Uganda

Asiimwe Raymond

This paper explores public perception and response towards the practice of public archaeology in Ndali, western Uganda. Public archaeology has been referred to in literature for some time as a practice geared towards the inclusion, education, and engagement of the public in all archaeological investigations. In spite of all the scholarly recognitions, its practice, especially in sub-Saharan African countries, is still in embryonic stages, given that many archaeological sites are unconsciously destroyed following economic developments. A situation that presents questions such as "Does public archaeology work, or is it what the community wants?" With limited data on these gaps in

Africa, this study evaluated the practice of public archaeology in Ndali, western Uganda, through the eyes of local people (perceptions and responses) and describes how best this concept can be embraced in the country.

38.3. Emergence from "Hole and Sky", Myth or Reality? and Archaeological Investigation of Asante Origin Narratives at Santemanso

Beatrice Bawuah

Oral traditions among the Asante of Ghana detail that their ancestors emerged from a hole in the earth (efom) and descended from the sky (esoro) at Santemanso. Though these narratives have been widely documented in historical, linguistic, and anthropological literature, archaeological investigation with Santemanso as a material and memory landscape remains limited. Research in the Ashanti Region has mainly focused on settlement systems, iron production, trade networks, and political centralization (Shinnie & Shinnie1995), often disregarding cosmological landscapes and treating origin narratives as myth rather than as historically meaningful knowledge. Situating this study within debates on African archaeology beyond borders and the decolonization of heritage knowledge, this paper studies how the archaeological landscape of Asantemanso can highlight the historical, cultural, and cosmological dimensions of Asante origin narratives. It approaches these narratives as historically mediated forms of knowledge embedded in landscape, memory, and material culture. The research adopts an interdisciplinary framework that integrates landscape archaeology, memory studies, material culture studies, and decolonial perspectives. Methodologically, the research employs archaeological survey techniques, which include reconnaissance, spatial mapping, drone-based documentation, and magnetometry with excavation, ethnographic, and oral historical inquiry in Manso, Esumeja, and Manhyia. Using Peter Shinnie's excavation as a foundation, this study repositions Santemanso as a living cultural landscape where memory, materiality, and cosmology intersect. It contributes to decolonizing African archaeology by foregrounding African epistemologies and advancing inclusive interpretations of origin, identity, and heritage in West Africa.

38.4. Decolonizing Cultural Heritage Management in Kenya: A Case Study of the Sacred Mijikenda Kaya Forests

Dennis Kioko Mbandi

Although heritage management in Africa is often thought to have started with colonialism, this assumption is wrong, for many heritage sites encountered by Europeans had only survived intact because of local forms of traditional management (Arazi & Thiaw, 2013). This paper builds on that premise to argue that Indigenous systems of custodianship, ritual governance, and ecological stewardship constituted sophisticated heritage management frameworks long before the emergence of formal state-led conservation regimes. Using the Sacred Mijikenda Kaya Forests as a case study, it demonstrates how community-based governance ensured the survival of culturally and ecologically significant landscapes along the Kenyan coast. Inscribed on the World Heritage List by UNESCO in 2008, the Kaya Forests are fortified settlements and sacred ritual spaces of the Mijikenda communities. For centuries, access, resource use, conflict resolution, and spiritual practices were regulated through councils of elders and customary law, embedding conservation within cosmology and social organization. Colonial and postcolonial statutory frameworks, however, reconfigured authority over these sites. Centralized bureaucratic models and legal codification often displaced local custodians, redefining communities as "stakeholders" rather than primary managers. While

formal recognition provided legal protection and international visibility, it also generated tensions around ownership, ritual access, and benefit-sharing. Drawing on archival research, policy analysis, and community perspectives, this paper argues that decolonizing heritage management requires structural transformation, not symbolic inclusion. Recognizing Indigenous governance systems as legitimate and epistemically authoritative is essential for rethinking archaeological and heritage practices in Africa and for developing collaborative models that integrate customary custodianship with statutory conservation.

38.5. Diagnóstico sobre o impacto do desenvolvimento urbano na preservação do património edificado da Ilha de moçambique: o caso da cidade de macúti

Elton Santos Machava, Cláudio Zunguene

A Ilha de Moçambique, inscrita na Lista do Património Mundial da UNESCO desde 1991, constitui um sítio de elevado valor histórico, arquitectónico e cultural, resultante de um longo processo de intercâmbio entre a África, Europa e Ásia. Apesar deste reconhecimento internacional, a preservação do seu património edificado enfrenta desafios significativos, decorrentes sobretudo do desenvolvimento urbano acelerado e desordenado, particularmente na Cidade de Macúti. O crescimento demográfico, a informalidade descontrolada, a insuficiência de infraestruturas básicas e as fragilidades institucionais têm contribuído para a degradação física dos edifícios históricos e para a progressiva descaracterização da paisagem urbana. O presente estudo analisa o impacto do desenvolvimento urbano na preservação do património edificado da Ilha de Moçambique, com especial enfoque na Cidade de Macúti. Procura identificar os principais factores de pressão do desenvolvimento sobre o patrimonio edificado. De seguida, o estudo avalia a eficácia dos mecanismos legais e institucionais para a protecção do patrimonio edificaddo, assim como compreender o papel da comunidade local nos processos da sua conservação. A investigação adoptou uma abordagem metodológica qualitativa, complementada por dados quantitativos, estruturados como um estudo de caso. Os métodos utilizados incluíram a revisão bibliográfica e documental, a análise espacial e o diagnóstico físico do património edificado. Para um diagnóstico completo, foram efectuadas entrevistas semiestruturadas a actores institucionais e comunitários, bem como a análise comparativa com outros sítios africanos classificados como Património Mundial. Os resultados indicam que a fraca aplicação da legislação patrimonial, as limitações técnicas e financeiras das instituições de gestão, a pressão urbanística e a reduzida participação comunitária na gestão do património constituem factores determinantes para a degradação do património edificado. Conclui-se que a adopção de uma abordagem de gestão integrada, assente no planeamento urbano sustentável e no envolvimento activo das comunidades locais, é fundamental para conciliar o desenvolvimento urbano com a preservação patrimonial na Ilha de Moçambique.

38.6. A evolução da implementação da Convenção do Património Mundial em África: de uma abordagem global para local

Filipe Alage

A convenção do património mundial sob iniciativa da UNESCO foi uma iniciativa inovadora de promoção da cooperação entre os países nas áreas de cultura e natureza, no quadro do espírito do mandato das Nações Unidas. Baseado na ideia de valores humanos partilhados pelos povos, introduziu o conceito de património mundial. Este conceito, traz em sua operacionalização a ideia de uma harmonização de práticas de classificação e gestão dos bens do património. Entretanto a questão que se coloca é de saber se até que ponto esta harmonização de procedimentos é viável e aplicável a todos os povos? Olhando para a implementação da convenção de 1972 em África, o presente artigo analisa como o continente tem estado a receber e responder ao longo do tempo a

padronização de processos de classificação e gestão de bens culturais e naturais no contexto da convenção de 1972 e analisa igualmente se esses procedimentos são aplicados as particularidades e especificidades do continente africano e suas culturas. O artigo é baseado em revisão documental e na experiencia profissional do autor enquanto profissional de património mundial em África. Em resultado, o estudo argumenta que a implementação da convenção do património mundial em África nos últimos 50 anos tem evoluído de uma abordagem inicialmente global inspirada nos procedimentos adoptados universalmente para uma abordagem local mais contextualizada. Esta mudança tem sido resultado de reflexões críticas de especialistas africanos nas últimas décadas assim como de desenvolvimentos internacionais dentro do contexto da própria convenção. Graças a essas mudanças a implementação da convenção em África tem caminhado para uma via mais sustentável com o reconhecimento do papel preponderante das comunidades locais.

38.7. The role of remote sensing in monitoring heritage threats in Africa

Friederike Jürcke, Ahmed Mahmoud, Akinbowale Akintayo, Dana alSalamin

African heritage is increasingly threatened by natural and human-induced pressures operating across different spatial and temporal scales. Threats like flooding, coastal erosion, agricultural intensification and urban expansion have a spatial reach beyond individual sites at scales no community can monitor alone. Remote sensing offers a powerful means to monitor such threats at scale, but its integration into heritage management systems and monitoring processes raises as many epistemological questions as technical ones. Remote sensing carries scalar biases, reflects the priorities of those who commission it, and risks reinforcing top-down heritage governance if deployed uncritically. When thoughtfully integrated into a decolonial monitoring framework, nevertheless, it can serve as a bridge providing an evidence base at country or continental level for heritage practitioners to engage meaningfully with local communities, stakeholders, and relevant authorities. This paper reflects on where and how remote sensing can effectively bridge the scales of heritage administrations and local communities. At which temporal, spatial and threat levels does it help and where does it fall short? We also reflect on how a remote sensing-based monitoring framework can integrate community and practitioner knowledge as structuring epistemology, not supplementary validation. Grounded in the ongoing work of the Mapping Africa's Endangered Archaeological Sites and Monuments (MAEASaM) project, working across Botswana, DRC, Ethiopia, The Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, Sudan, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe, we invite our audience to engage in shaping what an equitable, scalable, and locally grounded approach to heritage threat monitoring in an African context might look like.

38.9. Archaeological Heritage in Somaliland: Achievements, Challenges and Lessons for the Future

Khalid Abdillahi Abdi, Jorge de Torres

This paper presents an overview of the history, current state, and future prospects of archaeological heritage in Somaliland, a country that declared independence in the early 1990s and has since taken steady steps despite a complex political environment and limited external support to preserve and manage its rich archaeological and historical legacy. The paper reviews the development of archaeological research in the region, early initiatives aimed at documenting and protecting archaeological sites, and the establishment of heritage-related institutions and legal frameworks for the preservation, regulation, and management of cultural resources. In recent years, significant progress has been made. The construction of the National Museum of Somaliland, the imminent

approval of an Antiquities Act, the ongoing implementation of a National Inventory of Archaeological Sites, and the increasing professionalization of Somaliland's archaeologists are collectively laying the foundations for a more robust and institutionalized framework for archaeological practice in the country. However, these positive developments coexist with a growing number of challenges. These include pressures from mining activities, expanding urbanization, infrastructure development, looting and vandalism, and the illicit trafficking of antiquities. Additional constraints such as a shortage of adequately trained personnel, limited funding, and still-emerging public awareness of cultural heritage further complicate preservation efforts. Drawing on the Somaliland experience, this paper contributes to broader discussions on heritage management in Africa by identifying key strategies, initiatives, and potential partnerships. It advocates for the development of context-sensitive, Africa-based approaches to the protection and sustainable management of archaeological heritage.

38.10. Rescue archaeology and methodological adaptation in endangered contexts: rethinking field practices in central Tanzania

Makarius Itambu, Prisila Malley, Leonard Mhuri, Marina Gallinaro

Across many regions of sub-Saharan Africa, archaeological sites are increasingly threatened by clandestine excavations driven by the widespread belief that they contain hidden treasures, often linked to colonial histories. These activities severely disturb archaeological deposits, disrupting stratigraphy and compromising the integrity of the material record. Such conditions call for a critical reassessment of field methodologies, especially where conventional approaches are insufficient to address urgent preservation challenges. This paper presents a methodological reflection based on recent fieldwork in the Singida region of central Tanzania, where sites are continuously affected by illegal digging motivated by expectations of material wealth. While in many cases these disturbances completely destroy archaeological contexts, causing the total loss of any archaeological data, in other cases they are partial, exposing stratigraphic profiles, features, and materials that can still be systematically documented. In response, the paper proposes a dual approach. On the one hand, it emphasizes the need for rapid-response recording strategies such as documenting exposed sections, mapping disturbed areas, and targeted sampling to recover as much information as possible about on-site formation processes, chronology, and material culture. On the other hand, it highlights the importance of sustained community engagement to address the social and economic drivers of looting. Involving local communities is essential not only for prevention but also for fostering shared responsibility in heritage preservation. By combining immediate data recovery with long-term engagement strategies, this study contributes to debates on rescue archaeology in Africa, demonstrating that meaningful knowledge can still be produced even in heavily disturbed contexts.

38.11. Decolonizing Heritage Landscapes through Community Co-Creation: The Archaeological Biocultural Park of Chongoene and Xai-Xai

Miguel Ângelo Raimundo, Pedro Moiane, Solange Laura Macamo

The heritage landscape across Africa continues to be shaped by colonial paradigms that conceptualize cultural resources as static entities, confined within institutional frameworks and largely disconnected from their dynamic social, cultural, and ecological contexts. This paper advocates for a transformative shift towards participatory, integrated, and community-centered heritage management grounded in the principles of co-creation and collaborative governance. It draws upon the Archaeological Biocultural Park of Chongoene and Xai-Xai, located in Gaza Province,

Mozambique, as an illustrative case study. Funded by the Gerda Henkel Foundation and developed through a collaborative partnership involving Mozambican academic institutions and local stakeholders, the Park represents an innovative and context-sensitive model of heritage governance. It integrates archaeological shell middens, coastal dune systems, sacred landscapes, and associated cultural practices within a living biocultural landscape, thereby recognizing the inseparable relationship between tangible and intangible heritage. A defining feature of this approach is its commitment to in situ conservation, implemented through the strategic use of interpretive and informational signage that enhances the protection, communication, and public interpretation of heritage resources within their original spatial and cultural contexts. This strategy strengthens heritage conservation by fostering public awareness, promoting heritage literacy, and facilitating meaningful community engagement. Local communities occupy a central role in the governance framework as active co-creators, custodians, and stewards of cultural heritage, embedding conservation practices within everyday social, cultural, and environmental activities. Furthermore, the designation of the area as a Managed Resource Protected Area establishes an integrated governance model that reconciles heritage conservation, biodiversity protection, sustainable livelihoods, and community development. In doing so, the project advances a resilient and socially inclusive framework for heritage management that reinforces local custodianship, promotes long-term sustainability, and offers a replicable model for the decolonization of archaeological practice and heritage governance across Africa.

38.12. Whose past, whose voice? laws, the communities, and gaps in heritage governance: A case study of Nigeria and South Africa

Mohammed Ya'u Ibrahim

This study interrogates the disconnect between conventional heritage governance structures and the claims of local host communities in Post-colonial Africa. This paper uses and compares experiences from Nigeria and South Africa through literature reviews and critical analysis of two case studies. This paper highlights how national laws and institutional frameworks for heritage management, often adapted from colonial legacies, can result into critical governance loopholes. Both nations possess robust legal instruments-signified by Nigeria's National Commission for Museum and Monuments (NCMM) Act and South Africa's National Heritage Resources Act (NHRA). The application of such instruments usually marginalize the self-defined interest and epistemic authority of heritage hosting communities. This paper argues the lacuna as not being merely administrative but stresses the political and epistemic issues revolving around questions such as: Whose past is being curated? In Nigeria, this is expressly seen through loggerheads around archaeological sites, where heritage hosting communities altercate with state-centric control. Whereas in South Africa, the analysis is centered on the efforts to synthesize both living heritage and Indigenous Knowledge systems within a legislative structure still grappling with the legacy of apartheid. The findings posit that in spite of progressive constitutional provisions and policy reforms on community engagement and practice, heritage is often used to validate the existence of the state over local desires. The pitfalls here-seems to be ownership tussle, deprivation from heritage tourism and even the eroding of intangible cultural practices. Conclusively, this study advocates for bridging the gap demanding for a radical approach to heritage governance, transcending beyond consultation and legal pluralism requiring legislative reforms and institutional frameworks that "naturally" recognizes communities as rights-holders and not stakeholders who are chief custodians of their own heritage policy.

38.13. Archaeological Reconnaissance of Khitsan-Dop settlement site, Jema'a Local government Area, Kaduna state Nigeria

Nyat Kingsley Dyakas

This paper presents a preliminary report on the archaeological reconnaissance conducted on Khitsan-Dop settlement site in Jema'a local government area of Kaduna state Nigeria. Khitsan-Dop settlement site is one of the early sites said to have been inhabited by the Gwong ethnic group known as Kagoma in Jema'a Local government area in the southern part of Kaduna State. The research aimed at making archaeological contribution to the settlement history of the Gwong ethnic group in southern Kaduna. Collection and documentation of oral tradition, archaeological survey, and consultation of written documents are the research methods adopted in the course of this research. Surface finds such as potsherds, monoliths, mounds, relics of foundations and graves as well as pieces of iron implements were identified and documented in the course of the survey on the settlement site. A map showing the extent of the site, location and the spatial distribution of finds and features was produced in the course of the research for future reference. Oral traditions collected coupled with the availability of finds and features on Khitsan-Dop settlement shows clear evidence of early human habitation as claimed by the extant community. However, the paucity of ethnographic data to corroborate this claim is a major concern. Further archaeological survey including excavations and scientific analysis of finds is highly recommended. This will provide more data that will help in establishing the place of Gwong within the Nok culture zone and to understand further the nature of the settlement pattern in the past.

38.14. African archaeology, heritage and development in a rapidly changing world: The Nigerian example

Samuel Oluwole Ogundele

Nigeria is a vibrant store house of archaeological and ethnographic resources. Indeed, the rich epistemologies of the diverse ethnicities in the geo-polity have to be used to deepen our understanding, appreciation and appropriation of the archaeological past. These indigenous epistemologies include oral traditions made up of folk tales, hunters' chants, proverbs and praise songs. This is in addition to cultural ceremonies and conflict management systems. All these are in the domain of deep culture which (painfully) most archaeologists continue to gloss over, to the detriment of archaeology as if development matters. It is too easily forgotten that archaeological remains are a material signature of the intangible culture of a people or groups of people through time and space. Deep culture is like a set of rules and regulations guiding the morphology and content of the physical cultural heritage of a people. Nigerian archaeologists thoroughly de-market their discipline because they pay very little or no attention to deep cultural heritage. Thus, for example, the new yam festival-a pan West African expression, is about historical re-enactments beyond the sphere of mere entertainment. New yam festival is one of the West African priceless cultural heritages of local, regional and trans-oceanic flows and interconnections. The era of doing archaeology just for knowledge acquisition should be over by now, in the face of huge unemployment and underemployment across the land. Nigerian/West African archaeologists must begin to quickly broaden their visions and play down on conventional wisdom in order to liberate the subject from the shackles of de-marketing as the clock ticks.

38.15. Beyond the Monument: Intangible Heritage, Decoloniality, and the Biafra War Memory in Southeastern Nigeria

Stanley Jachike Onyemechalu

The movement to decolonize African heritage management necessitates a critical departure from state-sanctioned, monumental frameworks, particularly in post-conflict landscapes where official narratives suppress marginalized histories. This paper re-evaluates traditional heritage practices by exploring the understudied legacies of the Biafra War (1967-1970) in southeastern Nigeria. Following the conflict, the destruction of the physical landscape and subsequent extreme state censorship by military dictatorships rendered the construction of tangible Biafran memorials politically dangerous. Consequently, standard heritage frameworks rooted in material preservation fail to adequately capture the reality of post-war Igbo memory. Drawing on recent ethnographic fieldwork, this paper contributes to emerging studies on the 'generative impact' of conflict on heritage by demonstrating how local Igbo communities circumvent official erasure by negotiating and safeguarding their war memory through intangible "vessels of collective memory." The paper analyses grassroots practices, such as the evolution of survivalist foodways (Àbàchà and Okporoko) and the transgenerational performance of the Ojile dance, to highlight how the physical body and everyday cultural practices became archives of resistance and survival. Aligning with the session's call to rethink knowledge production and empower indigenous narratives, this paper argues that true decoloniality in African heritage management requires recognizing everyday, immaterial practices as valid, dynamic heritage. By centring grassroots adaptations over 'authorized heritage discourses', the paper offers a localized framework for understanding identity politics and memory preservation in post-colonial Africa, and challenges heritage practitioners to expand their definitions of what constitutes a 'site' of memory.

Sessão 70 (Room 8)

70.1. Intégration du patrimoine dans les curricula universitaires de Togo: obstacles et leviers

Aka Adjo Bebewou

Le Togo dispose d'un patrimoine culturel matériel et immatériel d'une richesse diversifiée et considérable. Des fêtes et rites traditionnels aux deux sites culturel et immatériel (Koutammakou et Ekpessosso) inscrit au Patrimoine mondial de l'UNESCO ; qui demeure pourtant largement absent des curricula universitaires. Cet article propose une analyse systématique des obstacles et des leviers à l'intégration du patrimoine dans les programmes d'enseignement supérieur togolais. S'appuyant sur une méthodologie mixte c'est-à-dire analyse documentaire des politiques éducatives et culturelles du Togo, entretiens semi-directifs avec des enseignants-chercheurs de l'Université de Lomé et de l'Université de Kara, ainsi qu'une revue de la littérature scientifique sur l'éducation patrimoniale en Afrique subsaharienne. Cette recherche identifiera les obstacles majeurs et mettra en évidence plusieurs leviers mobilisables afin de plaider pour une curriculisation contextualisée du patrimoine, articulant savoirs académiques et savoirs endogènes dans une perspective décoloniale de l'enseignement supérieur togolais.

70.2. Ensino e pesquisa: Contributo da FSCH – Universidade Lúrio na apresentação e interpretação do Património Cultural Mundial da Ilha de Moçambique

Cláudio Zunguene

Declarada Património Mundial pela UNESCO em 1991 a Ilha de Moçambique é um território rico em atributos e valores caracterizados pela riqueza da sua história, cultura e tradições seculares. A inscrição da Ilha na Lista do Património Mundial representa um grande desafio para o país, pois, reconhece-se as dificuldades na gestão e conservação desse património, bem como as fragilidades instituicionais e técnicas na manutenção da integridade e autenticidade, que são elementos presentes e evidenciados nos dois criterios utilizados pelo ICOMOS. A par disso, com a criação e entrada em funcionamento da Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas da UniLúrio na Ilha de Moçambique, em 2018 revelou-se bastante importante, não só pelos dois cursos oferecidos, mas sobretudo, pelo facto dos mesmos contemplarem na sua grade curricular as disciplinas de "Interpretação do Património Cultural" e, " Interpretação do Património Natural", sendo o último apenas presente no Curso de Licenciatura em Turismo e Hotelaria. Trata-se de um estudo qualitativo, alicerçado no paradigma interpretativo e objectiva compreender e explicar o contributo e a relevância da FCSH na apresentação e interpretação do Património Cultural Mundial da Ilha de Moçambique. Através da observação participante e entrevista a professores e alunos da FCSH, tentou-se aproximar a realidade da compreensão dos factos no terreno e por via da técnica de análise de conteúdo, chegou-se a conclusão da importância e do crescente papel determinante da FCSH na conservação do património, bem como a necessidade urgente do aprimoramento dos mecanismos para uma actuação coordenada e complementar entre os diferentes intervenientes locais

70.3. Mirando o patrimônio arquitetónico cultural edificado: Influência Epistemológica na Conservação e Restauração em Moçambique

Eusébio Fernando Chitlango

Inquietou-me a tendência de se olhar o patrimônio arquitetônico com visão neoimperialista, em que só se mira a Ilha de Moçambique, Patrimônio Mundial da Humanidade pela UNESCO. No entanto, existe um imenso patrimônio não reconhecido durante as três repúblicas, mas que influencia na fragmentação histórico-cultural, gerando "pedaços" e falta de sintonia entre o que o povo vive e possui e o que o Estado ensina. Neste ensaio procuro compreender a influência que enfraquece as práticas de conservação, restauração e gestão do patrimônio edificado. Alicercei-me na abordagem qualitativa, historiográfica e análise documental. A arquitetura moçambicana inicia com os povos sãns e khoi-khoi, inventando as palhotas e os árabes, persas e suaílis deixando a pedra coral, arcos ogivais e telhados planos durante o comércio transaariano. No início colonial, predominou a arquitetura militar e religiosa no "território descoberto" e mais tarde, fruto da pressão da Conferência do Berlim para ocupação efetiva, floresceu a arquitetura moderna (1940 a 1970). Depois da independência, a guerra dos 16 anos travou avanços, mas o capitalismo veio acelerar a arquitetura contemporânea. Atualmente existem cursos de gestores e pesquisas culturais, no entanto, a escassez de formação em conservação e restauração limita o avanço técnico e a reflexão interdisciplinar na preservação do patrimônio edificado. Constata-se que persiste uma dependência epistêmica neoimperial, que fragiliza políticas e decisões locais, e amplia desigualdades. Assim, o Estado e pesquisas considerando o patrimônio anterior a 1920, criando um dilema sobre a valorização do contexto local da paisagem cultural. Por isso, sugiro uma abordagem teórico-metodológica afrocêntrica.

70.4. Teaching Hope through Heritage: An African American Educator Decolonizing English Language Education in Japanese Higher Education

Hosea L. Baker III

Amid accelerating global change and persisting colonial legacies, higher education faces the challenge of preparing students for intercultural realities that demand both critical awareness and ethical engagement. This paper examines English language education in Japanese universities as a case study in teaching through cultural heritage, where language functions simultaneously as a medium of global connection and a site of historical tension. As an African American educator engaged in social justice work, I draw on my own heritage and lived experience as a reflexive lens in dialogue with students' reflections, foregrounding race, power, and historical responsibility within English language education. Drawing from four university English courses, the study analyzes qualitative data from a reflective online survey completed by 61 students, alongside classroom interactions and written work, to explore how culturally responsive pedagogy can foster engagement with heritage while developing linguistic and emotional intelligence competencies. Using a constructivist approach informed by decolonial frameworks, the research traces how students recognize, negotiate, and reinterpret cultural difference when invited to confront both Japanese and global histories, including Japan's own imperial past and contemporary multicultural realities. One survey item, for example, asked students to respond to the statement, "I believe that hope is connected to something larger than myself," to which the majority selected higher-end agreement, suggesting an emergent orientation toward relational and more-than-individual understandings of hope. This disposition becomes a key affective resource for engaging with difficult heritage. The paper argues that integrating emotional intelligence, critical reflection, students' lived experiences, and the educator's situated heritage into language curricula can operate as a decolonizing practice, transforming classrooms into spaces where cultural heritage is not only studied but experienced as a dialogic and, at times, uncomfortable process. Such practices contribute to broader discussions on sustainable and socially accountable education, offering a model for teaching that honors local histories while preparing students for shared global futures.

70.5. The Development of Cultural Heritage Education at Lúrio University: a curriculum analysis of the Architecture and Physical Planning degree programme

Isequiel Alcolete, Cristóvão Tomás

Cultural heritage education and research play a strategic role in the Mozambican context, being recognised as fundamental instruments for the protection, valorisation, and transmission of heritage to future generations, as established by Law No. 10/88 of 22 December. In light of contemporary higher education demands and ongoing global transformations, it is essential to understand how academic curricula incorporate this field, particularly within the Global South. This paper analyses the evolution of cultural heritage education within the Bachelor's degree programme in Architecture and Physical Planning at Lúrio University. The methodology is based on a qualitative comparative analysis of the curricula from 2010, 2013, and 2019, structured around four dimensions: nature of heritage, educational focus, pedagogical approach, and limitations. The findings reveal a significant evolutionary trajectory. In 2010, heritage appears implicitly, associated with a humanistic perspective centred on cultural identity. In 2013, it becomes formally established as a disciplinary field, with an emphasis on the conservation and restoration of built heritage. By 2019, a more integrated approach emerges, linking heritage with sustainability and territorial planning. Despite these advances, several limitations persist, notably the predominance of a material-centred understanding of heritage, the limited integration of local knowledge systems, and the absence of

decolonial and participatory perspectives. The paper advocates for a reconfiguration of heritage education, promoting more inclusive, interdisciplinary, and context-sensitive pedagogical models, aligned with the principles of the Nairobi Charter (2025), which emphasise the centrality of communities and the integration of heritage within sustainable development processes.

70.6. Educar o olhar para a (re) descoberta do património corrente, como instrumento de valorização do papel das comunidades

J. Mendes Silva, Lídia Catarino

Sendo as comunidades os mais relevantes destinatários da valorização do património construído, é da maior importância que possam ser envolvidas em processos de (re)descoberta desse património, necessitando, para isso, de ferramentas para a compreensão do processo e para um diálogo informado e paritário. A descoberta, compreensão e valorização do património construído por parte dos Estudantes e Técnicos pressupõe conhecimento dos conceitos e o domínio de uma gramática de leitura desses objetos construídos, com contributos de várias áreas do saber, mas também de treino para o olhar, para a dúvida metódica, para a persistência da descoberta. Para as comunidades, esta (re)descoberta da cidade e do seu património corrente exige educar o olhar e a sensibilidade, tal como se educam estes e outros sentidos para a música, a pintura ou as realidades sociais. Depois, um dia, uma vez (re)descoberto o que sempre lá esteve, mas invisível porque igual aos demais detalhes para olhos ainda não treinados, já não consegue deixar de se ver: é como um padrão que se identifica ou um mapa que se descodifica, e que passam a ser uma presença natural na nossa vida. Neste artigo apresentam-se e discutem-se diversas experiências de aproximação das comunidades ao seu património construído corrente, através de atividades participativas de educação para o olhar, baseadas em trabalhos de campo levados a cabo pela Universidade de Coimbra nos últimos 10 anos em Moçambique e em Portugal, com uma estrutura e uma metodologia que, progressivamente afinada, constitui já um modelo de atuação, abrangente e flexível.

70.7. Benefits of incorporating informal learning for passing down Cultural and Heritage knowledge for tourism learners

Lombuso Precious Shabalala

The study identifies the benefits of incorporating informal learning as a suitable vehicle for passing down Cultural and Heritage knowledge to tourism learners. It is understood that informal education is driven by experiential learning or unstructured teaching. This type of learning affords the opportunity to learn through interaction/experience with a custodian or expert outside the formal classroom environment. A qualitative method was adopted for this study, in which in-depth interviews were conducted with traditional leaders selected for their expertise in Culture and heritage knowledge. The study established that: (1) a key benefit of informal learning is acquiring knowledge firsthand from the custodian/ expert, in this case, the traditional leaders or experts of that particular culture or heritage. (2) The adoption of intergenerational learning can be realised, whereby seasoned custodians and practitioners could be invited to contribute /collaborate with the learners. (3) Scheduled educational trips could form part of the curriculum to give a learning experience in cultural heritage landscapes. The study advocates for the Department of Education to revisit its tourism curriculum, as the introduction of tourism subject/ module was meant to contribute to redressing past imbalances, and studies established that most of the participants view tourism as a subject worth including in the school's curricular offering, believing that it exposes

learners to a variety of career opportunities they were not exposed to in the past. Importantly, determining how our education policies are rooted in our local culture and heritage, and how they can be embedded in our education to ensure that it cherishes its legacy and embraces its diversity, is a need. In conclusion, a classroom is no longer the same. Therefore, education beyond the classroom is a reality to be embraced.

70.8. Experiences of Geography Teachers with Fieldwork during Teacher Preparation at the University of Zambia

Matilda Kanyampa Nakazwe, Steriah Monica Simooya, Pauline Namakau Monde

This paper establishes geography teachers' experiences with the fieldwork research method amongst the pedagogies utilised during their undergraduate teacher preparation. Geography teachers are expected to have acquired fieldwork knowledge and skills during their teacher preparation for effective teaching in secondary school. Geography teachers' experiences with fieldwork in practice by lecturers are cardinal in their own acquisition of pedagogical knowledge. This study was guided by the interpretive paradigm or worldview. The study employed the qualitative approach and a case study design. Purposive and snowball sampling techniques were utilised to access the participants of the study. The data was collected using semi-structured interviews with nine geography teachers trained at the University of Zambia and teaching in secondary schools. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data. The findings established that geography teachers found fieldwork to be interesting. Geography teachers had positive experiences especially during the data collection phase of the field research. However, the study also revealed that geography teachers found the fieldwork method to have been challenging due to insufficient guidance. Some participants indicated limited understanding of some of the concepts in fieldwork despite passing the fieldwork-based course at the University. The study highlights the need for geography teacher educators to improve on instructions when delivering fieldwork-based knowledge and skills during teacher preparation. It is critical for institutions of higher learning to consider assessment of pedagogies utilised as an integral part of teacher preparation in order to improve the quality of teaching in institutions of higher learning.

70.9. From Architectural Conservation to Contextual Heritage Management: Rethinking Heritage Education in Architecture Schools

Mohammad Habib Reza

Architectural conservation education has traditionally centred on the protection of material fabric, stylistic integrity, and monument-focused doctrines rooted largely in Eurocentric conservation theory. While this approach has contributed significantly to the safeguarding of historic buildings, it has become increasingly insufficient in addressing the complex realities of heritage in rapidly transforming contexts of the Global South, where heritage is lived, negotiated, sacred, informal, and deeply embedded in everyday socio-cultural practices. This paper reflects on the redesign of an undergraduate architectural conservation course at BRAC University, Bangladesh, and its deliberate repositioning toward heritage management and a New Contextual Heritage Management (NCHM) framework. The course shifts emphasis from conservation as a technical or restorative exercise to heritage as a dynamic process shaped by values, governance, community practices, environmental pressures, and political negotiation. While foundational conservation theory and international charters remain part of the curriculum, they are taught critically—as historical and ideological tools

rather than universal solutions. Drawing on teaching experiences, site-based learning, and case studies from Bangladesh and South Asia, the paper demonstrates how students are encouraged to engage with living heritage, sacred landscapes, historic urban areas, and climate-vulnerable sites through a management lens. The pedagogical approach foregrounds stakeholder analysis, value assessment beyond architectural fabric, heritage impact thinking, and context-responsive decision-making. The course culminates in the development of a contextual heritage management framework, enabling students to move beyond imported models toward locally grounded and adaptive strategies. By situating conservation education within broader debates on heritage governance, decolonising curricula, and teaching through lived heritage, this paper argues that architectural education must evolve to prepare future professionals not only as conservators of objects, but as stewards and mediators of cultural continuity. The experience presented offers a transferable model for rethinking heritage teaching in higher education, particularly within contexts where conventional conservation paradigms struggle to respond to social, cultural, and environmental complexity.

70.10. From pedagogy to practice: evaluating the impact of student centered learning on creativity in archaeology at the University of Botswana

Morongwa N. Mosothwane

Over the past decade, higher education institutions in Southern Africa have increasingly adopted student centred learning approaches in the teaching of archaeology, emphasizing student agency, critical thinking, independent inquiry, and active knowledge construction. This study evaluates the extent to which undergraduate students at the University of Botswana have integrated these principles into their learning over the last 15 years. Drawing on a review of more than 130 final-year archaeology research posters, the analysis examines students' ability to independently frame research topics that connect archaeology with their personal interests, cultural backgrounds, hobbies, and everyday experiences. Findings reveal substantial variation in students' capacities to formulate research questions that move beyond traditional disciplinary content and incorporate non traditional tools or creative approaches, such as the use of digital media or contemporary cultural expressions. Approximately 30% of the projects reflect strong alignment with student centred learning principles, while the majority rely heavily on class-derived topics or replicate themes from other courses. These results suggest that, despite institutional efforts to promote student centred pedagogy, many students continue to default to conventional, instructor-led modes of topic selection. The study highlights the need for enhanced guidance, scaffolding, and curriculum design strategies to support students in developing more independent and personally meaningful archaeological research.

70.11. From Objects to Relations: Integrating Indigenous and Traditional Knowledge Systems into Cultural Heritage Curricula in Zimbabwe

Prince Muzuva

This article examines how Indigenous and Traditional Knowledge Systems (ITKS) can be meaningfully integrated into cultural heritage curricula in Zimbabwean higher education, shifting pedagogy from object-centred, technocratic models toward relational, community-embedded approaches. The central argument is that dominant heritage education frameworks largely inherited from colonial epistemologies continue to privilege materiality, expert authority, and archival knowledge, thereby marginalising living knowledge systems, oral traditions, and Indigenous custodianship. Grounded in

decolonial theory and relational epistemology, the study conceptualises heritage as a dynamic social process constituted through relationships between people, place, memory, and ecology. Methodologically, the article draws on a qualitative case study design involving curriculum analysis from selected Zimbabwean universities, semi-structured interviews with lecturers, heritage practitioners, and community knowledge holders, and participatory field-based observations with students at local heritage sites. Data were thematically analysed to identify pedagogical practices, institutional constraints, and emergent innovations in teaching. The findings reveal growing, though uneven, efforts to incorporate ITKS through community-based learning, oral history, and experiential pedagogy. However, these initiatives are constrained by rigid accreditation systems, limited institutional recognition of Indigenous knowledge holders as educators, and persistent epistemic hierarchies. The study concludes that integrating ITKS requires not only curricular adjustment but a deeper pedagogical transformation that repositions communities as co-producers of knowledge. Such an approach strengthens heritage education's relevance, ethical grounding, and contribution to sustainable and socially just development in Zimbabwe.

70.12. Teaching African Archaeology in the Digital Era: Experiences from Online and Hybrid Learning Initiatives

Sofia Fonseca, John Osawe, Jörg Linstädter

Recent global disruptions, including conflicts, mobility restrictions, and unequal access to academic resources, have highlighted the need to rethink how archaeology and heritage studies are taught across Africa. Digital learning environments have increasingly complemented traditional forms of training, enabling broader participation in archaeological education and expanding access to international academic networks. This paper reflects on experiences from recent online and hybrid educational initiatives focused on African archaeology and heritage. Drawing on the development of large-scale online courses, webinars, and collaborative training programmes, the presentation explores how digital platforms can support capacity building while connecting students, researchers, and heritage professionals across different regions. The discussion examines both the opportunities and challenges associated with digital heritage education. Key issues include connectivity limitations, language diversity, certification and academic recognition, and the importance of mentorship and peer networks in online learning environments. Particular attention is given to the role of online courses in supporting students from regions facing instability or limited institutional infrastructure. While online education cannot replace field-based training, it can provide an important complementary space for knowledge exchange and professional development. The paper argues that combining digital and in-person approaches may contribute to more inclusive and resilient models of archaeological education in Africa.

70.13. African universities and living heritage: agency and cultural capability formation through the teaching of ICH in Zambia

Suzyika Nyimbili

Though Watene and Yap (2015) argue that SDGs sideline culture as a dimension of development, the partial inclusion of culture in the SDGs still demonstrates that culture matters for development. Because the SDGs were formulated in 2015 and the University of Zambia (UNZA) introduced a Bachelor of Arts in Intangible Cultural Heritage (BA ICH) in 2018, adopting it could be viewed not only as a contribution to meeting the SDGs but also as a significant Afrocentric move by UNZA. However, there is insufficient scholarly data on the relevance and applicability of such a degree

programme to the Zambian community. Additionally, it remains unknown how this specific programme, informed and supported by the development agency UNESCO, contributes to human development, the building of capabilities, and the agency of individuals. This paper uses the capability approach to explore the experiences and perspectives of students and graduates of UNZA's BA ICH. I focus on how this BA ICH UNZA may help students develop cultural capabilities and agency. The data shows that graduates of this programme have enhanced skills and knowledge about ICH, which has contributed to better working relations with communities for ICH safeguarding. Though graduates and students indicate some level of agency, the reliance on UNESCO funding may undermine gains in enhancing the cultural capabilities and agency of students, graduates, and lecturers, as well as agency at the institutional level.

70.14. Integrating Ethnochemistry into Chemical Education through a Collaborative and Contextual Approach at Rhodes University

Tendamudzimu Tshiwawa, Pascal Taruvinga

Ethnochemistry studies chemical knowledge embedded in indigenous practices, exploring how communities understand and use natural materials in everyday life. Closely linked to Anthropology, it provides the cultural and social context in which chemical knowledge is developed and transmitted. Integrating these perspectives into chemical education offers a unique opportunity to make learning more relevant, interdisciplinary, and inclusive. Since 2022, Rhodes University has offered an Ethnochemistry module through a collaboration between the Departments of Chemistry and Anthropology. The module introduces culturally grounded examples—such as traditional medicines, fermentation, food processing, and natural product use—to teach core chemical principles, including thermodynamics, kinetics, and molecular interactions. This approach allows students to connect abstract chemical concepts to real-world and culturally familiar practices. The module has been well received, with students reporting increased engagement, improved conceptual understanding, and a deeper appreciation of chemistry’s relevance to everyday life. It also contributes to curriculum decolonization by recognizing indigenous knowledge systems as valid and complementary to conventional scientific frameworks. This presentation will highlight the module’s design, implementation, and outcomes, demonstrating how Ethnochemistry can enhance chemical education through interdisciplinary learning, critical thinking, and meaningful student engagement. It provides a model for integrating cultural knowledge into science teaching while promoting inclusivity and social relevance in the curriculum

Session : 64 (Room 9)

64.1. Preservation et valorisation des savoirs-faire traditionnels. Pagne tisse et teinture a l 'indigo

Aminata Sall

Les traditions textiles ouest-africaines, notamment le tissage manuel et la teinture à l’indigo, constituent un élément central du patrimoine culturel immatériel du continent, au croisement de savoir-faire techniques, d’identités sociales et de systèmes symboliques complexes. Ils sont aujourd'hui fragilisés par la concurrence industrielle, le coût des matières premières et le manque de protection juridique des motifs ancestraux. Face à ces menaces, la préservation de ces savoir-faire repose désormais sur une stratégie alliant structuration professionnelle et valorisation commerciale. La solution majeure réside dans la transmission institutionnalisée, avec la création d'écoles dédiées et de centres de formation pour encourager les jeunes générations à reprendre ces métiers. En parallèle, l'organisation des artisans en associations permet de mieux peser face au marché global.

Sur le plan juridique, la mise en place de labels et d'Indications Géographiques Protégées (IGP) devient cruciale pour lutter contre la contrefaçon et garantir que les bénéfices des motifs traditionnels reviennent aux communautés créatrices. Enfin, la sauvegarde de cet artisanat passe par un changement de positionnement : en intégrant les étoffes faites main dans la haute couture internationale, les créateurs transforment un produit utilitaire en un objet de luxe. Cette montée en gamme redonne une viabilité économique au secteur, tout en assurant la pérennité de l'« Or Bleu » et des tissus sacrés dans le monde moderne. Ce faisant, cette recherche contribue à une lecture critique du patrimoine africain contemporain, en soulignant que sa mise en circulation globale constitue à la fois une opportunité de revalorisation et un risque accru de dépossession.

64.2. Défis écologiques l'industrie artisanale de la teinture en Afrique de l'Ouest

Bebewou Aka Adjo

La teinture artisanale constitue une activité économique et culturelle majeure en Afrique de l'Ouest. Elle permet la valorisation des textiles traditionnels tels que l'indigo, le bògòlan ou encore l'adire. Cependant, l'expansion de cette activité dans un contexte urbain et informel pose de nombreux défis environnementaux. Les procédés de teinture génèrent des effluents liquides chargés de colorants, de produits chimiques et de matières organiques qui contaminent les sols et les ressources en eau. Cet article analysera les principaux impacts écologiques de la teinture artisanale en Afrique de l'Ouest, notamment la pollution des eaux, la dégradation des sols et les risques sanitaires, tout en discutant des perspectives de gestion durable.

64.3 Roduction Textile ancienne dans la région de kong (Nord-Est de la Côte d'Ivoire)

Beugre Marie Orlane Esther

Textiles have been present in human history since prehistoric times. They constitute both an essential activity in the daily lives of populations and a space for innovation reflecting human creativity. In Africa, during the pre-colonial period, trade was fundamental to the survival of communities, and textiles were among the goods traded. To better understand and trace the caravan trade routes and exchanges between the various African empires, researchers have focused on textile production. Several studies have highlighted trade routes crossing the northern regions of countries such as Nigeria, Benin, Ghana, and Côte d'Ivoire. For the latter, the cities of Bondoukou, Bouna, and Kong are commonly cited. The aim of this paper is to highlight the various centers of textile production in the Kong region and to offer an analysis of the historical evolution of this activity from the 16th century to the present day. This analysis is based on data from documentary research and archival collections, which constitute the main sources used in this paper. This data not only allows for a more detailed documentation of local textile production practices and enriches our understanding of historical exchange networks, but also guides future fieldwork, including field surveys and archaeological investigations.

64.4. L'art tinctorial indigo en Afrique de l'ouest ou la pérennisation d'un savoir-faire ancestral dans la post-colonie

Elisabeth Yao

Etroitement associée au tissage du coton, la teinture indigo fut pratiquée par plusieurs peuples de l'Afrique de l'ouest. Dans la région du Sénégal, les wolof, Soninké et Mandé de même que les Haoussa et les Yoruba, au Nigéria ont développé l'art tinctorial indigo. Ces techniques furent diffusées et vulgarisées dans toute la sous-région et adoptées partout où étaient installés des teinturiers, notamment au Mali, au Burkina Faso, en Côte d'Ivoire… Le savoir-faire des teinturiers ouest-africains s'est enrichi à travers les échanges commerciaux qui ont permis que voyage l'art de la teinture et que fusionnes des techniques anciennes et des influences exogènes pour donner naissance à des étoffes uniques. Toutefois ce savoir-faire ancestral, gardien silencieux de l'histoire, des cultures et d'un héritage qui se transmettent de génération en génération, a su traverser le temps et continue d'être pratiquée et de s'imposer dans le paysage culturel ouest africain. L'adaptation de la teinture traditionnelle indigo sur les supports textiles modernes, permet à travers son inscription dans la mode urbaine, l'expression d'une fierté identitaire africaine. Sous ce rapport, comment se pratiquait l'art tinctorial indigo pendant la période précoloniale et comment a-t-il réussit à se pérenniser dans l'univers textile moderne? Ce texte vise à montrer et à interroger les techniques de l'art tinctorial indigo dans les sociétés anciennes de l'Afrique de l'ouest et l'adaptation de ce savoir-faire à la mode contemporaine. Pour le documenter nous nous proposons de dépouiller et de croiser des sources archivistiques, imprimées, orales, ou iconographiques et les travaux scientifiques.

64.5. Les teintures naturelles dans la production textile endogène en pays Dida (Côte d'Ivoire): savoirs techniques, patrimoine culturel et défis contemporains de durabilité

Goeti Bi Irie Maxime

Depuis des siècles, la teinture dans la production textile occupe une place importante dans les sociétés d'Afrique de l'Ouest, tant économiquement que culturellement. Elle, constitue un savoir-faire technique transmis entre générations. En pays Dida (sud-ouest de la Côte d'Ivoire), cette pratique liée aux textiles endogènes témoigne encore de cet héritage. Toutefois, ces connaissances artisanales sont aujourd'hui fragilisées par la modernisation, l'usage croissant de colorants synthétiques et la concurrence des textiles industriels importés. Dans ce contexte, comment les techniques de teinture naturelle en pays Dida participent-elles à la production des textiles endogènes et quels défis se posent aujourd'hui pour la préservation de ces savoirs ancestraux? Cette communication vise à analyser les techniques de teinture naturelle mobilisées dans la production textile en pays Dida, afin de montrer leur importance culturelle et les enjeux contemporains liés à leur sauvegarde. La méthodologie adoptée s'appuie d'abord sur une analyse documentaire relative aux traditions textiles ouest-africaines. Ensuite, elle fait recours à la méthode qualitative combinant enquêtes de terrain, observations des pratiques artisanales, et entretiens semi-directifs auprès d'artisans et détenteurs de savoirs. Cette approche met en évidence la richesse des savoirs techniques liés à l'usage des plantes tinctoriales et leur rôle dans l'affirmation des identités culturelles locales. Elle révèle qu'en dépit des pressions économiques et des transformations du marché textile, ces pratiques connaissent un regain d'intérêt. Cela s'aperçoit dans les initiatives de valorisation du patrimoine culturel et de promotion de textiles durables, contribuant à documenter et préserver ces savoirs en Afrique de l'Ouest.

64.6. Textile traditionnel de Côte d'Ivoire et enjeux de transmission esthétique à l'ère du numérique

Irié Hermann Anges Fabrice

Le textile traditionnel occupe une part importante du patrimoine artistique et culturel de Côte d'Ivoire. De valeur esthétique très appréciée, il est peint, teint ou tissé à la main par bandes sur des métiers à tisser artisanaux. Cette diversité de moyens de production artisanaux dénote de toute l'attention portée au domaine vestimentaire en société traditionnelle. Cependant, confrontés à l'efficacité des modes de production de la technologie numérique, plus adaptés à la demande croissante, le textile traditionnel interroge sur la pérennité des méthodes de production et de consommation, mais aussi sur son succès qui pourrait être attribué à l'impact de sa valeur esthétique. Dès lors, dans quelle mesure la dimension esthétique du textile traditionnel influence-t-elle sa pérennité pour le maintien de sa consommation à travers les générations? Cette question met en lumière la survie de la production et de la consommation du textile local. Nous partons de l'hypothèse que le renouvellement de la consommation du textile est fonction de sa dimension esthétique qui contribue à inciter à la consommation. Le présent travail combine dans son approche théorique l'esthétique, la communication visuelle et l'innovation culturelle. La méthodologie s'appuie sur une approche qualitative, par des entretiens semi-dirigés pour la collecte de données. Le public-cible se constitue d'imprimeurs, d'artisans, de créateurs, d'industriels et de consommateurs. La zone d'étude est la ville d'Abidjan et le village de tisserands de Gbomizambo. Les résultats de l'étude montrent que la pérennité du textile traditionnel ivoirien réside dans sa valeur esthétique, ce qui permet sa réintégration dans divers objets d'usage courant à travers la technologie numérique.

64.7. La teinture traditionnelle à l'indigo chez les Marka de Nouna (Burkina Faso): Analyse technique

Kienou Carlos, Adama Tome, Dioma Ourobè

La teinture à indigo chez les Marka de Nouna constitue un patrimoine technique dont la documentation reste fragmentaire. Si l'importance de cette activité dans l'économie et la vie sociale des communautés ouest-africaine est généralement reconnue, les procédés techniques spécifiques mis en œuvre par les Marka n'ont fait l'objet d'aucune étude systématique. Comment caractériser précisément les opérations techniques, les savoir-faire empiriques et l'organisation du travail qui structurent cette tradition tinctoriale? Dans quelle mesure les mutations contemporaines affectent-elles ces techniques et connaissances qui leur sont associées? La présente communication se fixe pour objectif d'une part de documenter les techniques traditionnelles de teinture à l'indigo chez les Marka de Nouna à travers une description précise des procédés, des matières premières, des outils et des gestes techniques et d'autre part d'identifier les transformations techniques intervenues depuis l'introduction et analyser leurs implications sur la transmission des savoir-faire. La démarche méthodologique est celle des recherches documentaires, des enquêtes de terrains et celle iconographiques. C'est donc une contribution à la conn.

64.8. Indices tangibles de technologies de production en voie de disparition dans la région de Kandi (nord Bénin): le cas de la teinturerie à l'indigo

Madjidou Koragui, Barpougouni Mardjoua, Nestor Labiyi

Plusieurs technologies de production ont été développées dans la région de Kandi telle la transformation du sorgho en de la boisson locale, la production céramique, la production du poison, la filature, le filage. Certaines sont déjà complètement abandonnées et d'autres, par contre, sont en voie de disparition, c'est le cas de la teinturerie à l'indigo. Toutes ces activités sont la résultante de la maîtrise de la nature par l'homme pour satisfaire ses besoins. La présente proposition de communication porte singulièrement sur la teinturerie à l'indigo, qui est une technique de coloration du textile à partir de la combinaison et la transformation de feuilles, d'écorces et de racines de plantes. Ces textiles sont soit, des fils, soit des bandes ou soit encore, des pagnes. La communication vise à exposer l'inventaire des vestiges tangibles associés à la teinturerie à l'indigo dans la région de Kandi afin de contribuer à une meilleure reconstitution de sa chaîne opératoire. Lors des travaux de terrain notamment au cours des prospections et la collecte de la tradition orale, plusieurs ateliers de teinturerie, matérialisés entre autres par la présence de cuves, de dépôts cendreux ont été inventoriés. Certains ateliers se retrouvaient en pleine agglomération et leurs cuves furent comblées du fait des risques qu'elles constituaient aussi bien pour les hommes que pour les animaux. D'autres facteurs expliquent l'abandon et le comblement des cuves dont l'avènement des tissus importés, l'explosion démographique. Cet état de chose rend difficile l'identification de tous les ateliers et des cuves comme le notifie la tradition orale. Il se pose là l'épineuse question de la relance d'une technologie de production qui a pourtant contribué au rayonnement de la région. Il urge de trouver des solutions idoines pour leur préservation dans l'intérêt du patrimoine et de la génération future.

64.9. De l'archive à la cuve : restaurer la chaîne opératoire de l'indigo au Bénin face à l'érosion des savoirs de mordançage

Kossiwa Egnon Douceline Sonou

« C'est au bout de l'ancienne corde qu'on tisse la nouvelle ». Mais au Bénin, ce lien de transmission se fragilise. Si la production textile reste un pilier identitaire, la maîtrise des teintures végétales ancestrales traverse une crise profonde. Face à la saturation des textiles industriels et des colorants chimiques, les savoir-faire permettant d'obtenir le bleu traditionnel s'effacent, transformant un patrimoine vivant en simples vestiges documentés. Cette communication propose une approche pragmatique confrontant les sources historiques (notamment les inventaires du projet EMKP/British Museum) à une pratique d'atelier rigoureuse. Elle s'appuie sur une démarche d'archéologie expérimentale visant à stabiliser les pigments issus de l'Indigofera tinctoria et du Philenoptera cyanescens sur le percale 100% coton produit localement pour la confection de vêtements et d'accessoires textiles. Le constat de terrain révèle que l'obtention d'un bleu saturé dépend d'une chimie endogène complexe dont le maillon faible est le mordançage. La disparition de la recette du « saata tounga» (cendre de mordançage) crée un vide technique majeur. Au Nord, le savoir s'oublie face au désintérêt des jeunes générations, tandis qu'au Sud, il se verrouille sous forme de secret commercial. Par ailleurs, si la fibre béninoise est disponible en maille industrielle, l'abandon du filage manuel dénature le support historique de la teinture. En conclusion, cette intervention démontre l'urgence de réhabiliter ces savoirs chimiques locaux. Il s'agit de dépasser la seule documentation du passé pour recréer une filière textile souveraine, garantissant l'authenticité, la traçabilité et la durabilité de la mode béninoise contemporaine.

64.10. La pérennisation de l'art textile baoulé à Tiebissou : entre permanence et défis de la modernité

Kouadio Aya Anita Sandrine, Ahoue Jean-Jacques

Au centre de la Côte d'Ivoire, précisément dans le département de Tiébissou, se perpétue un art textile d'une richesse symbolique, exceptionnelle, le pagne baoulé. Bien plus qu'un simple élément vestimentaire, il incarne l'identité culturelle, la mémoire, la créativité et le savoir-faire ancestral de ce peuple. Ici chaque étape de fabrication de ce textile obéit à une tradition séculaire et à une division genrée du travail. Sa transmission est donc essentielle pour préserver ce patrimoine surtout face à la modernité. La présente étude se donne pour ambition de définir les leviers de pérennisation de ce patrimoine culturel, en analysant les mécanismes de transmission intergénérationnelle nécessaire à sa sauvegarde face aux mutations contemporaines. Il conviendrait dès lors d'élucider les mécanismes par lesquels les gardiens de ce savoir-faire assurent la perpétuation du geste à travers les âges. L'étude mobilise un corpus documentaire écrit, des enquetes orales ainsi que des observations de terrain. Cette approche méthodologique a favorisé la collecte de données probantes, mettant en exergue les modalités de transmission de cet art, les phases de l'apprentissage et les enjeux structurels inherents à cette activité.

64.11. Le métier de tissage des pagnes traditionnels "Loukta" : un levier de développement économique dans la préfecture de Tône (Nord du Togo)

Lare Babénoun

L'artisanat constitue un levier important de création d'emplois et un maillon essentiel de l'économie togolaise. Dans la préfecture de Tône, le métier de tissage des pagnes « Loukta » s'impose comme une activité économique structurante contribuant au développement local. Cette étude analyse les techniques de production de ces pagnes traditionnels, notamment l'utilisation d'outils artisanaux et modernes, ainsi que l'impact de ce métier sur la mobilisation des revenus des tisserands. La méthodologie adoptée repose sur une recherche documentaire, l'observation directe, l'administration de questionnaires auprès de 260 tisserands enregistrés à la Chambre de Métiers, ainsi que des entretiens avec les responsables de ladite institution. Les données ont été traitées à l'aide des logiciels CsPro 7.4, des tableurs Excel et word et des cartes réalisées avec le logiciel ArcGIS 3.2. Les résultats révèlent que le métier de tissage des pagnes « Loukta » contribue à hauteur de 67 % au dynamisme du développement local. Plus de 65 % des enquêtés couvrent leurs besoins familiaux grâce aux revenus issus de cette activité, tandis qu'un tisserand sur dix réalise un bénéfice mensuel estimé à 97 929 Fcfa. Par ailleurs, 90 % des acteurs s'acquittent de leurs obligations fiscales. Toutefois, pour renforcer la contribution de cette activité à l'économie locale, des actions doivent être entreprises, notamment la sensibilisation des populations et des acteurs économiques, la promotion de la consommation des produits locaux, l'amélioration de la transparence dans la commercialisation, ainsi que la mise en place de mécanismes de financement adaptés au secteur du métier de tissage.

64.12. Industrie textile à l'indigo sur la côte du Bénin : cas de Ouidah

Lawal Kolawolé Djima, Nestor Labiyi

L'espace actuel qu'occupe la République du Bénin a connu une production textile industrielle. Cette production textile allant du coton brut à la teinturerie de l'indigo à considérablement dynamiser la vie sociale, économique et culturelle de ces sociétés. Elle a contribué à l'alimentation de différents

échanges régionaux et interrégionaux avant et après le contact avec l'occident. Dans la région de Ouidah, elle a joué un rôle incontournable dans les échanges régionaux, et dans la transmission des savoir-faire. La pratique de cette activité a ainsi laissé des traces matérielles significatives pouvant être objet des recherches. Cette recherche vise à étudier les contextes socio-historiques ainsi que la chaine opératoire mise en place dans la pratique de cette activité dans la côte de Ouidah. Cette recherche a combiné une approche pluridisciplinaire : la recherche documentaire, l'enquête orale et les recherches archéologiques. Les résultats obtenus à l'issue des travaux menés attestent l'historicité de ce savoir-faire artisanal qui nécessite d'être valorisé par des études approfondies et mise en valeur dans les projets d'exposition artisanaux.

64.14. Impact de l'urbanisation et des cultures maraîchères sur le patrimoine archéologique de la commune de Saaba: cas du village de Gonsé

Maïga Aïssétou, Thiombiano/ Ilboudo Foniyama Elise

L'archéologie préventive vise à assurer la préservation du patrimoine archéologique lorsqu'il est menacé par des travaux d'aménagement afin de favoriser sa valorisation. Dans plusieurs pays d'Afrique de l'ouest en général et au Burkina Faso en particulier, cette disposition reste encore un leurre. La prise en compte de la préservation du patrimoine archéologique dans les politiques nationales d'aménagement du territoire national du Burkina Faso n'est pas encore appliquée, malgré l'existence d'un cadre législatif en la matière. Le patrimoine archéologique de notre pays subit ainsi une destruction accrue au grand mépris des décideurs et des aménagistes/urbanistes. Le cas du village de Gonsé, en est une parfaite illustration. De ce fait, on remarque ces dernières années une forte urbanisation de Gonsé, La présente réflexion se propose donc de répondre à la question majeure suivante : Quel est le poids de l'action anthropique sur le patrimoine archéologique du village de Gonsé ? Pour ce faire, l'étude vise deux objectifs spécifiques : le premier objectif s'attèle à faire l'inventaire des sites menacés par l'homme, tandis que le second propose des stratégies de préservation et de valorisation de ce patrimoine archéologique consécutivement à sa grande proximité avec la capitale Ouagadougou. Cette situation constitue un stress certain sur la survie du patrimoine archéologique local. De plus, le poids des cultures maraîchères sur les berges du Massili, qui traverse le village du Nord au Sud, en est une autre pathologie. Tout le long de ce cours d'eau est dominé par la pratique du jardinage, affectant négativement l'intégrité physique des sites archéologiques environnants.

64.15. Indigo Dyeing Practice in Nikki (Northern Benin): Advantages and Challenges for the Preservation and Perpetuation of an ancestral know-how

Mardjoua Barpougouni, Labiyi Nestor

The city of Nikki, located in Northern Benin, is more than 500 km from Cotonou, the country's economic capital. Nikki was the political center of a major entity in West African political and economic history: the Wasangari kingdom of Borgu, part of which is now located in the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Beyond the central role it has played and continues to play politically, economically, culturally, and in terms of historical memory, Nikki is particularly significant for having been one of the most famous caravanserais in what is nowadays Northern Benin and Sub-Saharan Africa. Scientific research conducted in the region over the past five years has identified a dyer still active there, likely the last in this region. The aim of this paper is to raise awareness of the existence and practice of indigo dyeing in Nikki. Based on the collection of oral and written data, as well as archaeological investigations (surveys and archaeological pits), significant results have been

obtained, allowing for the documentation of this ancestral know-how in Nikki, highlighting its strengths and the challenges it faces. Drawing on these results and field experience, several avenues appear to be emerging to contribute to its preservation and perpetuation.

64.16. La production textile ancienne dans la région de Kong (Nord-Côte d'Ivoire)

Marie Orlane Beugré, Aïcha Gnini Touré, Barpougouni Mardjoua

Le textile est présent dans l'histoire de l'humanité depuis la période préhistorique. Il constitue à la fois une activité essentielle dans la vie quotidienne des populations et un espace d'innovation reflétant la créativité humaine. En Afrique, durant la période précoloniale, les échanges commerciaux étaient fondamentaux pour la survie des communautés, et le textile faisait partie des produits échangés. Pour mieux comprendre et retracer les routes du commerce caravanier et les échanges entre les différents empires africains, les chercheurs se sont intéressés à l'activité de production textile. Plusieurs recherches ont ainsi mis en évidence des routes commerciales traversant les régions nord des pays comme le Nigéria, le Bénin, le Ghana, la Côte d'Ivoire. Pour cette dernière, les villes de Bondoukou, de Bouna et de Kong sont généralement citées. L'objectif de la présente communication est de mettre en lumière les différents foyers de production textile dans la région de Kong et de proposer une analyse de l'évolution historique de cette activité, du XVI^{e} siècle à nos jours à partir des données collectées au cours des enquêtes de terrain et de prospections archéologiques. Elles permettent de documenter plus finement les pratiques locales de production textile et d'enrichir la compréhension des réseaux d'échanges historiques.

64.17. Weaving Futures: Young Apprentices and Social Trajectories in Rural Benin

Martina Laganà

West Africa is one of the youngest regions in the world, and transitions to adulthood are increasingly uncertain and dynamic. Traditional pathways to adult status are being reconfigured, producing fragmented and non-linear life trajectories. In this context, young people of the so-called "waiting generation" are far from passive; they turn these periods of uncertainty into active spaces for negotiating social belonging, aspirations, and life projects At the same time, occupations long considered in decline are gaining renewed interest, partly due to growing disillusionment with formal education models inherited from the colonial period, whose promises of social mobility are increasingly unreliable. Drawing on my doctoral research with young apprentices in rural Borgou (Benin), this paper examines youth trajectories in the textile craft sector, focusing on their social aspirations and the ways these professional pathways reshape identities and social belonging. Historically organized around hereditary systems and status hierarchies, weaving today is undergoing profound transformations that redefine access, social meanings, and recognition. In dialogue with contemporary economic anthropology and African youth studies, this analysis shows how craftsmanship provides a key site for observing how young people develop strategies of social positioning and imagine alternative routes into adulthood. It highlights the active role of youth in shaping both the continuity and transformation of social, cultural, and economic practices, revealing how traditional crafts can offer innovative pathways for negotiating adulthood in contemporary African rural contexts.

64.18. La teinture à l'indigo chez les Baatombou de la région de Banikoara d'après les sources orales et archéologiques

Mora Imouran Gounou Zime

L'Afrique de l'ouest a connu, depuis des siècles, plusieurs activités techniques dont certaines sont abandonnées ou en voie de disparition. Parmi celles-ci figure la teinture à l'indigo dont il est souvent difficile de retrouver les témoins sur les sites archéologiques. Dans la région de Banikoara au Nord-Ouest du Bénin, des traces de ce savoir-faire ancien sont encore visibles sur quelques sites. Malgré la disparition de l'activité, elle constitue tout de même un élément central du patrimoine culturel en milieu Batonu, transmis de génération en génération jusqu'à un moment donné de l'histoire. Le présent article qui vise à reconstituer la chaine opératoire la teinture à l'indigo chez les Baatombou de la région de Banikoara s'appuie principalement sur les données archéologiques du site de Gbèssara Bansu. Ainsi nous allons recenser les ressources naturelles ayant favorisé la pratique de l'activité tinctoriale sur le site et analyser son organization spatiale. La méthode combine la prospection archéologique sur le site, la collecte de données orales auprès des populations locales ainsi que des relevés cartographiques, spatiales.

64.19. The historical development of West African cotton weaving traditions: A comparative perspective

Natalie Swanepoel

There are at least three distinct cotton weaving traditions that emerged in West Africa, each associated with a distinctive loom type – the horizontal treadle loom, the vertical loom and the horizontal ground loom. Drawing on ethnographic, documentary, and pictorial sources, the distinctive nature of each loom and the cloth that it produced will be described. The introduction and dispersal of treadle-loom technology, in particular, will be discussed with reference to the Tellem textiles of Mali's Bandiagara Escarpment (as described in Bolland 1989) and the textiles collected during the 1841 Niger Expedition in Nigeria (as described in Kriger 1990). Further reference will also be made to the paired technology of spinning that likely travelled with the loom.

64.20. La teinture à l'indigo chez les Boo du Bénin : de la culture de l'indigotier à l'ennoblissement des habits

Nestor Labiyi

Les Boo constituent un groupe socioculturel établi dans le Borgu, un espace situé de part et d'autre de la frontière entre le Bénin et le Nigeria. Au Bénin ils sont localisés à l'extrême Nord-Est du pays. Ce peuple a abondamment pratiqué la teinture à l'indigo, une activité qui a pendant longtemps alimenté le commerce caravanier. De nos jours, cette activité séculaire a pratiquement disparu, à l'exception de quelques foyers encore fonctionnels signalés dans cet espace autrefois réputé pour la teinture à l'indigo. L'objectif de cet article est de reconstituer la chaine opératoire de la teinture à l'indigo, depuis la culture de l'indigotier jusqu'à l'ennoblissement des habits. Pour documenter cette culture matérielle qui a fait très peu l'objet de recherches scientifiques, nous avons adopté une méthodologie qui consiste à mener des investigations archéologiques pour identifier les anciens ateliers de la teinturerie et décrire les vestiges qui subsistent sur les sites, notamment les cuves généralement comblées. Les témoignages oraux sont ensuite recueillis auprès de quelques acteurs survivants pour décrire les différentes étapes de cette activité. Mots clés: Teinture, indigo, Boo du Bénin, archéologie, ennoblissement des habits.

64.21. Le tissage du pagne sirani, une technique de production endogène malinké à l'épreuve de la modernité

Seidou Abdoulaziz

Le pagne traditionnel occupe une place importante dans le patrimoine culturel et vestimentaire ouest-africain. Plus qu'un signe identitaire, il constitue un levier de développement social, économique et culturel. Aujourd'hui, avec l'urbanisation croissante et l'industrialisation, les pratiques et techniques traditionnelles sont abandonnées. C'est le cas du pagne sirani chez les Malinké de Côte d'Ivoire, dont la technique de production est en pleine mutation. L'objectif de cette étude est de montrer la résilience des techniques de production endogènes, en l'occurrence celles du tissage du pagne sirani, dans une société en proie à la modernité. Notre méthodologie repose sur la théorie de la "chaîne opératoire", approche socio-anthropologique, qui a permis de comprendre le tissage du Sirani comme un fait social total dont la rupture de la transmission technique, dans un contexte de modernité, entraîne une déconstruction des cadres identitaires malinké. Le tissage du pagne originel malinké sirani est aujourd'hui confronté à un abandon de ses techniques, avec lui, la perte de tout un système de valeurs et de symboles.

64.22. Making the "Senufo garment" or "Korhogo cloth" in Korhogo (Northern Ivory Coast): technique and evolution

Toure Gninin Aïcha, Gnapi Quesseda Philippe Alex Zougbo

The Senufo, a socio-cultural group established in northern Côte d'Ivoire for several decades, are distinguished primarily by their distinctive clothing style. Known as "Senufo attire," this garment is often adorned with painted motifs, which are also found on decorative textiles known as "Korhogo cloth." These garments hold significant socio-cultural and economic importance. This study aims to highlight the technical aspects of the production process for "Senufo attire" and "Korhogo cloth." To this end, oral interviews were conducted with specialized artisans, allowing for observation and documentation of the various stages of the manufacturing process. The results show that the paint applied to the fabrics is traditionally made from plant-based pigments. However, in recent years, the use of synthetic dyes has been increasing and is gradually being integrated into artisanal practices, raising the issue of preserving this ancestral know-how.

64.23. Ancient weaving and indigo dyeing in Burkina Faso: The case of the Moose

Vokouma Boussari Karimatou Jocelyne

Among the Moose, ancient weaving dates back to the reign of Naaba Wubri (1495-1517), who was the first ruler of the dynasty of supreme chiefs. Mythology indicates that it was from the village of Soulgo, as the first Moogo Naaba, that he imposed himself on his community through a clothing prototype that would serve as a reference for the enthronement and burial of supreme and ordinary chiefs. In the sixteenth century, under the influence of the Maransé, who came from Mali, indigo-dyed fabrics and clothing were adopted. The working methodology involved a literature review, field surveys in Burkina Faso, participant observation and photo shoots. In terms of results, we can remember the following: from 1495 to the present day, ordinary chiefs and moose paramount chiefs are enthroned and buried in the same types of clothing as those of Naaba Wubri; - in view of the specific relationships that exist between ancient clothing and traditional political power, ancient weaving still endures. It is in the consumption patterns and behaviors of Burkinabe citizens that changes are taking place under the influence of modernity, despite the attachment to ancient styles

of clothing; ancient textiles, dyed or not, are still present in ordinary clothing and on special occasions such as weddings, births, burials of the elderly and sacrificial rituals.

64.24. Le Gbaou (ou Gbaweu), pagne traditionnel du peuple Dan de l'ouest de la Côte d'Ivoire: origine, typologie, usages socioculturels et enjeux de préservation et de valorisation

Zan Tiato Daniel

Dans les sociétés africaines traditionnelles, le textile dépasse la simple fonction vestimentaire pour devenir un support d'expression culturelle, un marqueur identitaire et un vecteur de mémoire collective. Chez le peuple Dan de l'ouest de la Côte d'Ivoire, le Gbaou (ou Gbaweu) occupe une place significative dans les pratiques vestimentaires traditionnelles. Malgré son importance socioculturelle, ce pagne demeure encore peu étudié dans la littérature scientifique et se trouve aujourd'hui confronté aux transformations socioculturelles contemporaines. Cet article se propose d'analyser l'origine, la typologie et les usages socioculturels du Gbaou dans la société Dan, tout en examinant les enjeux liés à sa préservation et les perspectives de sa valorisation patrimoniale. La recherche s'appuie sur une approche qualitative combinant analyse documentaire, enquêtes de terrain, entretiens avec des détenteurs de savoirs traditionnels et observation des pratiques culturelles. Le cadre théorique mobilise les apports de l'anthropologie du vêtement, de la sociologie du symbolique et des théories de la patrimonialisation afin d'appréhender le Gbaou dans ses dimensions esthétiques, sociale et identitaire. Les résultats montrent que ce textile constitue à la fois un signe d'appartenance culturelle, un objet esthétique et un symbole social profondément ancré dans les pratiques et représentations du peuple Dan. Cependant, l'évolution des modes vestimentaires, la diffusion des textiles industriels et les dynamiques de modernisation fragilisent la transmission de ce savoir-faire traditionnel. L'étude met ainsi en évidence la nécessité de mettre en place des stratégies de sauvegarde, de documentation et de valorisation de ce patrimoine textile, afin d'en assurer la transmission et la pérennité dans le contexte des mutations culturelles contemporaines.

Wednesday, July 29

Session: 1 (Room 1)

1.1. Geochemical Signatures of Pastoral Occupation: Multi-Element Analysis of Inhabited and Abandoned Turkana Settlements

Abel Ruiz Giralt, Stefano Biagetti

Although ethnoarchaeological research on pastoral settlements has increased in recent years, earlier studies were relatively few. Among the earliest was the pioneering work of Robbins (1973) on Turkana material culture, which showed that most objects in an inhabited compound were perishable and that little material evidence could remain within a year of abandonment, highlighting the difficulty of detecting pastoral camps archaeologically. Rather than focusing on artefacts, this study examines the geochemical signatures preserved in sediments as a means of identifying pastoral occupation. Within this context, the ERC-funded project CAMP (ERC-CoG-2022 No. 101088842) develops a geoethnoarchaeological approach to the study of ancient pastoralism grounded in the observation and analysis of present-day pastoral practices. Systematic sediment sampling was conducted in a series of contemporary pastoral settlements in the Loreamatet area of the Turkana Basin (Kenya), including both currently inhabited camps and recently abandoned ones. Samples were analysed using portable X-ray fluorescence (pXRF) to characterise their elemental

composition. The resulting geochemical dataset was explored through Compositional Data Analysis, enabling the identification of elemental enrichments associated with livestock penning, dung accumulation, and other forms of anthropogenic deposition. This paper presents the results of the multi-element analysis and compares geochemical signatures between inhabited and abandoned settlements. Particular attention is given to the persistence and spatial distribution of elemental enrichments following site abandonment and to their potential as proxies for identifying pastoral occupation in archaeological contexts. By assessing how geochemical markers vary between active and abandoned camps, this study contributes to improving the archaeological detection of ephemeral pastoral settlements.

1.2. Exploring the tradition of pottery making in Dura, Tigray, Ethiopia: An ethnoarchaeological perspective

Berhe Negash Gebreyesus

This paper presents an ethnoarchaeological exploration of the living pottery-making tradition in Dura, (Aksum), Tigray Region, Ethiopia, and examines its implications for African archaeological interpretation. Drawing on 15 days of fieldwork involving interviews with ten potters and five local elders, as well as direct observation of production processes, the study documents technological practices, raw material procurement strategies, socio-cultural meanings, and challenges affecting the continuity of the tradition. Pottery production in Dura involves systematic clay selection from subsoil deposits, tempering with organic materials, hand-building techniques, surface finishing, decorative incision, and open firing using wood and animal dung. The application of a local plant resin known as “Enchecha” and “qolonqal” enhances surface durability and waterproofing. Morphological and technological parallels between contemporary vessels and ceramics attributed to the Aksumite civilization suggest long-term cultural continuity in northern Ethiopia, highlighting the resilience of indigenous knowledge systems. Beyond its domestic functions such as cooking, storage, and beverage preparation, pottery production plays an important economic and identity-forming role within the community. However, the tradition faces pressures from industrial substitutes, modernization, and social marginalization of potters. By situating Dura’s living ceramic tradition within broader African archaeological discourse, this study demonstrates how ethnoarchaeology contributes to interpreting ancient production systems, technological choices, and cultural persistence across the continent. The paper argues that documenting endangered craft traditions is essential for strengthening archaeological reconstructions and safeguarding Africa’s intangible cultural heritage.

1.3. Holocene Arboriculture and the Myth of Primary Forests in Central Africa: Morphometric and Archaeobotanical Evidence from Gabon

Champion Louis, Mariac Cedric, Saulieu Geoffroy, Osisly Richard

This study examines Holocene arboriculture in Central Africa and questions the notion of “primary” or untouched tropical forests through archaeobotanical and morphometric evidence from sites in the Middle Ogooué Basin (Gabon), including Youmbidi rock shelter and Gongourouma cave. The 2025 field campaign builds on previous excavations to document long-term human–environment interactions and the evolution of forest resource management. At Youmbidi, a stratified sequence spanning ca. 22,000–1,000 BP yielded thousands of plants macroremains recovered through sieving and flotation. The assemblage is dominated by Celtis sp., Canarium schweinfurthii, Elaeis guineensis, Irvingia gabonensis, and Poga/Panda oleosa. Diachronic variations reveal shifting patterns of

exploitation: a decline in Canarium alongside an increase in Celtis, while Elaeis and Irvingia remain stable, suggesting sustained and selective management of key forest resources. Morphometric analysis of Canarium schweinfurthii endocarps shows a progressive reduction in thickness through time, consistent with anthropogenic selection for more easily processed fruits. This provides evidence for incipient domestication processes within a forest context. At Gongourouma, the presence of Elaeis guineensis, Canarium schweinfurthii, and Irvingia gabonensis from at least 6,000 BP indicates early and diversified arboricultural practices. Comparative data from West and Central Africa support the regional significance of these taxa in early agroforestry systems. Taken together, these results suggest that Central African forests have been shaped by long-term human management. Rather than pristine ecosystems, they are better understood as anthropogenic landscapes, challenging the concept of "virgin" or primary forests in the region**.**

1.4. Pottery and People: Rethinking Holocene Cultural Change in the Central African Rainforest

Dirk Seidensticker**,** Katharina Jungnickel

The introduction of potting practices in Central Africa has traditionally been interpreted in conjunction with the introduction of sedentism and food production. However, archaeological evidence reveals a more complex picture of the dissemination of technological and cultural practices during the Late Holocene. The persistence of stone tools alongside early ceramics challenges binary classifications of 'foragers' and 'farmers' and emerging organic residue analyses call into question the direct association between pottery and agricultural subsistence strategies. Drawing on multi-disciplinary research conducted in the past two decades, this paper reassesses the relationship between pottery production, lithic technologies, and mobility patterns during the late Holocene. Based on a critical review of the uneven quality of archaeological data, which are often referred to indiscriminately, we highlight the impact of research biases and knowledge gaps, e.g. due to lack of evidence supported by absolute dating. By reviewing the available data on early pottery production, relying on extensive datasets and multi-variate statistical analysis, we are able to establish that the adoption of potting practice was part of flexible socio-economic strategies, instead of representing a uniform cultural package. The changes in technological approaches and cultural practices observed in Central Africa during the Late Holocene must rather be reviewed through integrated context-sensitive analyses of human behaviour and knowledge-exchange than by comparing typological sequences. Our results show that the adoption of ceramics is embedded within interactions between communities with distinct mobility-patterns, and multi-generational knowledge of landscape and resources, while changes in subsistence strategies have been of limited importance.

1.5. Archaeological excavations at Bona'Anja-Siga Bonjo in the valley of the Wouri river in Cameroon. Preliminary results

Eloi Cyrille Tollo, Mezop Alice, Ngouoh François, Epossi Zoila

Archaeological excavations in the valley of the Wouri river in the Cameroon atlantic coast, and more specifically in the village of Bona'Anja Siga Bonjo, is going through a rescue context due to some infrastructure works. The objectives of this research are to analyse cultural changes, reconstruct the history of settlements as well as the paleoenvironment. These excavations, which are the very first to be carried out within the river Wouri valley, were undertaken at two archaeological stations, one located in the hinterland and named Bona'Anja I and the second being underwater and called Bona'Anja II. Both of them revealed Holocene cultural sequences with different ceramic traditions.

Based on C14 dates and chronotypology, these two sites are dated respectively to the first millennium BC for the oldest and approximately the 15th century AD for the most recent one.

1.6 Pratiques funéraires en pays Fali: contribution de l'archéologie à l'histoire des sociétés préislamiques dans le massif de Tinguelin-Benoué (Région du Nord Cameroun)

Hamana Soumai Olivie

Le massif de Tinguelin ou Tongling porte le nom du groupe Fali qui l'occupe. Ce massif représente les derniers contreforts méridionaux de la chaîne du Mandara qui se prolongent dans la région de la Benoué. C'est une zone stratégique de peuplement, groupant des populations venues en plusieurs étapes, et d'horizons différents, aussi bien du Tchad que du Nigéria. Dans ce melting-pot de divers groupes ethniques que constitue la boucle de la Benoué, véritable trait d'union entre le sud et le nord, l'est et l'ouest, ainsi que les régions montagneuses avoisinantes, s'est développé au fil du temps plusieurs pratiques funéraires remarquables en l'occurrence des inhumations dans les tombes à jarre, les structures sépulcrales sous forme de puits avec des poteries tombales et des stèles monolithiques dressées et assignées à des contextes de mortalité particuliers, souvent tragiques. Ce sont des pratiques funéraires qui ont précédées l'islamisation de ces régions au 18ème siècle. Malgré la richesse de ces traditions, il manque une synthèse globale des données archéologiques. Ce qui limite notre compréhension des diverses périodes et contextes culturels. Une compréhension pourtant cruciale pour appréhender l'histoire sociale et économique de ces groupes humains. Le cœur de ce projet de thèse repose sur une problématique générale : élaborer dans une perspective historique l'évolution de ces pratiques funéraires et appréhender l'organisation sociale des sociétés préislamiques du massif de Tinguelin. Ainsi, la réalisation de cette recherche combine à la fois l'approche sociale et l'approche anthropologique d'étude du funéraire. L'approche d'interprétation sociale, fortement ancrée dans une tradition anglo-saxonne héritière des grands théoriciens de la New Archéology (L. Binford, J. O'Shéa) permet dans ce travail de comprendre ce que traduisent les dépôts de parures ornementales gelées dans les tombes Fali comme l'expression des valeurs sociales telles que l'exercice du prestige, la mise en scène de la richesse, de la mode, du capital matériel et symbolique. Et aussi l'armement découvert dans les tombes comme indicateur de la masculinité à considérer dans le cadre des phénomènes de violence à confrontations armées, pour les activités cynégétiques, voire halieutiques et figure souvent parmi les signes de virilité. A ce titre, elles sont généralement portées par les hommes lors de leurs déplacements. Quant à l'approche anthropologique telle que formalisée par l'école française d'anthropologie de terrain, portée par bon nombre de chercheurs dont H. Duday, C. Masset, J. Leclerc, et connue sous le néologisme d' «archéothanatologie», permet dans cette recherche d'observer sur le terrain les gestes d'indication sur la conduite des funérailles, de modifications taphonomiques afin d'établir une typologie des sépultures Fali.

1.7. Geo-Ethnoarchaeology applied to Makolontwane: Insites from p-XRF

Keelie S. Rix, Abel Ruiz-Giralt, Malebogo Mvimi, Stefano Biagetti

This paper reports the results of an ongoing current investigation within the framework of the project CAMP (ERC CoG 2022, CAMP-101088842) which aims to investigate anthropogenic sediments of archaeological sites using portable X-Ray Fluorescence (p-XRF) that will allow for the generation of qualitative and quantitative geochemical data. The main objective of the implementation of multielement chemical by means of p-XRF is to identify human activities through chemical signatures (anthropic markers) in the anthropogenic deposits. Results from ethnographic

sites establish expected elemental distributions of use areas, which can then be used as models for interpreting archaeological pastoral sites. This paper will report the results for the archaeological site of Makolontwane (Late Iron Age stone-walled agro-pastoral site) in southern Botswana using the built-in calibrations of commercial pXRF devices. The chemical anthropic signals detected from Makolantwane will be presented and discussed through the lens of those established from known BaKalanga ethnographic settlements where patterns related to habitation, burning /ash/ combustion activities, stock enclosures, etc. have been established. When compared, these chemical anthropic markers indicate different uses of space at Makolontwane and how site abandonment can affect chemical signals. This work represents advancements in ethnoarchaeological approaches in Southern African archaeology as it aims to facilitate a new modality in which agro-pastoral sites can be interpreted.

1.8. Ostrich Eggshell Bead Variability in the Western Cape and Cup Morphology Visualisation

Nicola Wells

Ostrich Eggshell (OES) beads have been an aspect of Late Stone Age (LSA) archaeology, specifically mid to late Holocene research, since the 1980s. While initial research focused on OES bead measurement data, there was then a shift in the 2010s towards experimentation on OES beads, use-wear analysis and isotopic provenancing. This shift especially moved away from the concept of a “boundary” bead size which was argued to indicate different populations (hunter-gatherers vs herders) in the post-herder landscape of South Africa. Some recent works continued, and formalised, OES bead attribute (bead diameter, aperture diameter, cup diameter) research by comparing bead sizes in East and South Africa. This led to the revival of OES bead attributes as a relevant topic in the understanding of LSA populations. This paper uses these formalised practices to show the variability of OES bead measurements from Holocene sites in the Western Cape. The results show there is great diversity in bead measurements throughout the Holocene, likely the result of climatic and environmental changes and tool development. There is a distinct size shift which occurs with the arrival of herders ~2 000 BP, however there was not a definite “boundary” size identified to separate hunter-gatherer beads from herder beads. Additionally, the study introduces the value of identifying cup morphology by identifying recurring traits. These traits follow patterns of prevalence throughout the Holocene, including a major shift with the arrival of herders ~2 000 BP.

1.9. The Shoulders of Aksum: A Bottom-Up Perspective on Rural Socio-Economic Integration at Addi Akuffa, Tigray, Ethiopia

Rediat Messele

Archaeological discourse on the Aksumite Empire—a major civilization that flourished in the highlands of northern Ethiopia and Eritrea from approximately 50 BCE to 800 CE—has historically prioritized the "top-down" history of its urban capital and elite monuments. However, the empire's stability relied on a sophisticated circuit of rural village sites acting as essential economic nodes. This paper presents the results of an archaeological survey at Addi Akuffa, situated 30km southeast of Aksum, revealing a complex socio-economic system integrated into the state apparatus during the mid-to-late Aksumite period (c. 4th–7th centuries CE). Through non-invasive Surface documentation and the analysis of diagnostic material culture—including state-minted coinage, diverse ceramic assemblages, and glass beads—I identify Addi Akuffa as a high-functioning rural center. The abundance of specialized tools, such as varied grinding stones and Bovidae faunal remains, suggests a resilient subsistence economy that sustained the urban core. Furthermore, I address the "Farmer’s Archive"—the localized, non-commercial collection of artifacts by the rural community. While

acknowledging the loss of primary context, I argue these "home-archives" represent a profound sense of indigenous custodianship and belonging. By repositioning Addi Akuffa as a vital node, this research contributes to a holistic, bottom-up understanding of how rural farming communities were the essential "shoulders" upon which the Aksumite state was built.

1.10. Non-invasive Geophysical Investigation of ancient Benin palace: a pre-archaeological excavation exercise

Solomon Jekayinfa, Adegbola, Elizabeth T., Segun Opadeji

To advance Museum of West African Art (MOWAA) campus development and heritage preservation, subsurface mapping is vital for non-invasive assessment of archaeological sites to ensure that the archaeology is adequately preserved, either by record or in situ. Therefore, this study explores the application of non-intrusive geophysical surveys at the MOWAA campus (an ancient palace) in Benin City, Nigeria. The approaches employed are Ground Magnetic Survey and Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR), to evaluate the presence, nature, and extent of any archaeological resources within the campus and the effectiveness of the geophysical techniques for archaeological exploration within the Benin context. Total Magnetic Intensity (TMI) data were collected over profiles and processed using the Oasis Montaj software. The GPR system was deployed across all accessible areas, and data were collected and processed using the GPR Slice to produce timeslices and radargrams. Results of the ground magnetic survey depict that several anomalies were visible, mostly with incoherent magnetic noise. The GPR survey identified a range of anomalous responses with a combination of high and low amplitude responses. Low-amplitude responses correspond mostly with local lithology, linear, well-aligned, and definite-shaped, while high-amplitude responses are archaeological features, such as walls, foundations, mud bricks, and other man-made structures. The GPR survey has revealed some of the archaeological potential of the sites, and its potential as an investigative tool in Benin City has been tested. These findings provide a basis for targeted excavation and demonstrate the potential of geophysics to support heritage preservation efforts in West Africa.

Session: 3 (Room 2)

3.1. Ethnoarchaeological Research on the slave trade of the Sancul sheikhdom in the Swahili World

Celso Simbine, Tim Forssman, Paul Lane, Cézar Mahumane

From the late 18th century to the early 20th century, the Sancul sheikhdom within Mozambique Island was the major political power on the northern coast of Mozambique because of its ascent economy from the slave and ivory trades, which were the main lucrative trades in this area. The commerce of slaves at the end of the 18th century enabled the Shawili to overtake the Maravi and Makua political and economic power, who previously ruled the region. Based on the combination of archaeological, ethnographic and written documents, this paper aims to present and discuss the participation of the Sancul sheikhdom in the interior-coastal slave trade, the human ecosystem of land-use history and the impact of European-Swahili interactions in the commerce of powder guns in exchange for slaves. Furthermore, this investigation is focused on revealing cultural sequences and material culture of the past and present-day Swahili and Makwa communities in the area. The analysis of stratigraphic features, local ceramics, exotic goods, historical sources, oral tradition and ethnographic data was a determinate key to understanding continuity and discontinuity in maritime culture and land use history of Sancul.

3.2. Geograficamente distantes, culturalmente conectados: a influência Swahili no interior Yao no contexto do Oceano Índico

Chafim Belson Boene Caetano Braga

Este estudo analisa a influência cultural das sociedades costeiras no interior, com enfoque nas interações entre os Swahili e os Yao no contexto do Oceano Índico. Embora as sociedades Swahili sejam frequentemente associadas a centros urbanos costeiros e ao mundo do Oceano Índico, o seu impacto estendeu-se profundamente para o interior através de redes comerciais que ligavam a costa ao interior. Esta conexão influenciou não apenas a circulação de bens, mas também contactos culturais. No entanto, a escassez de dados limita a compreensão destas dinâmicas e contribui para interpretações que apresentam as comunidades do interior como passivas. Neste contexto, procura-se compreender de que forma os Yao participaram activamente nessas redes, adoptando e adaptando elementos culturais da costa do Oceano Índico, incluindo práticas religiosas e formas de organização do espaço habitacional. A metodologia baseou-se num levantamento arqueológico preliminar, combinado com pesquisa oral e documental, permitindo uma abordagem interdisciplinar. Os resultados indicam que as redes comerciais tiveram impactos culturais significativos, evidenciando a adopção de elementos culturais. Conclui-se que estas interações foram dinâmicas, destacando a agência dos Yao na construção de paisagens entre o litoral e o interior africano. Assim, a emergência das formas culturais Swahili não pode ser compreendida apenas como um fenómeno costeiro, mas como resultado de interações complexas no contexto do mundo do Oceano Índico.

3.3. Interwoven Landscapes: Inland Power and the Foundations of the Indian Ocean Trade

Chapurukha M. Kusimba, Elgidius B. Ichumbaki

This paper challenges coast-centered models that prioritize maritime exchange and port cities as the primary engines of Indian Ocean connectivity. Drawing on archaeological, ethnographic, oral-historical, and documentary evidence from eastern and southern Africa, we synthesize four emerging analytical approaches—mosaic political economies, integrated landscapes and exchange corridors, inland power, and longue durée interior polities—to develop an integrated framework for assessing coast-inland dynamics. Collectively, these approaches demonstrate that inland African societies were central to the production, organization, and meaning of maritime trade. African interiors were not passive extraction zones but generated surplus, controlled strategic resources, structured demand for imported goods, and negotiated exchange through alliance, coercion, and institutions of mobility and risk management. Material categories such as iron, gold, glass beads, and ceramics served not merely as markers of contact but as evidence of locally embedded regimes of value, authority, and social differentiation. By anchoring theoretical debates in inland landscapes, corridors, and production zones, this paper reframes Indian Ocean exchange as an interwoven continental-oceanic system shaped as much by inland political economies as by seafaring and monsoon regimes.

3.4. Tracing the Emergence of Swahili Communities along the East African Coast: Language, Literature and Material Culture (AD 800 – 1900)

Eric Thuku Kariuki

The rise of Swahili communities along the East African Coast reflects sustained contact between coastal settlements, hinterland societies and the broader Indian Ocean world. While archaeological

research mostly emphasizes on material culture – ceramics, architecture, mosques and dhows – linguistic and literary sources reveal complementary insights into how communities negotiated identity, social practice and transregional exchange. This paper studies the emergence of diversified Swahili lifeways from AD 800 – 1900 by integrating archaeological findings with the analysis of language, oral traditions, and written texts. I argue that Swahili communities did not emerge solely through maritime trade or external Indian Ocean influences but rather, they were formed through maintained interactions between coastal and hinterland societies. By combining disciplinary perspectives, this study highlights the Swahili Coast not only as a hub of maritime trade but also as a dynamic cultural landscape where language, literature and material culture connected to shape identity and society. Drawing on linguistic data, which includes loanwords and semantic patterns related to governance, trade and navigation, they reveal the movement of commodities as well as ideas across inland coastal networks. This interdisciplinary perspective offers a nuanced comprehension of the coast-hinterland interface, expanding current debates on Swahili cultural emergence, consumption and its contact with the Indian Ocean network.

3.5. Not just imports: Local production and regional trade of glass beads in Mkokotoni, Zanzibar

Henriette Rødland

Glass beads are one of the most enduring artefacts recovered from archaeological sites in coastal East Africa, reflecting the deep history of Indian Ocean contact and trade at Swahili settlements. From the 11th century CE onwards, these vibrantly coloured monochrome beads became increasingly common in both urban and rural settlements, and a popular item of personal adornment and ritual practice. While the origin of the beads and their role in long-distance trade networks are becoming increasingly well-understood, their regional distribution and use within East Africa is still understudied. Whereas glass beads predominantly came to East Africa from south Asia, the recent discovery of 25,000 glass beads and associated bead waste from Mkokotoni in Zanzibar (11th to 14th century CE) challenges the assumption that glass beads were exclusively imported. The majority of the beads are morphologically and chemically different from the common Indo-Pacific bead type found at other Swahili sites, supporting the idea that local production and distribution occurred in Mkokotoni. In this talk I will present recent morphological and LA-ICP-MS analysis results of the Mkokotoni beads. This data will be used to discuss how this unique find can enhance our understanding of indigenous technological developments within an Indian Ocean framework and the role of production and local trade in East African coastal societies.

3.6. Seasons of power: rethinking african maritime archaeology through coastal governance and rhythmic seascapes

Keith Murangiri

Maritime archaeological research along the East African coast has long privileged exploitative narratives, trade and shipwreck, often marginalizing African-centered maritime knowledge and practice. This paper will contribute to emerging efforts to decolonize African maritime archaeology by reframing coastal history through a maritime cultural landscape approach. Focusing on key Swahili and post-Swahili centers from Lamu, Malindi, Mombasa and Vanga, the study will examine how seasonal monsoon rhythms structured governance, social organization, and political authority over the long term. Drawing on archaeological evidence and historical sources, the paper will explore how maritime seasonality shaped port activity, taxation regimes, ritual life, and administrative control across successive Swahili, Omani, Portuguese, and British contexts. Rather

than treating the ocean as a passive center for trade or empire, this research sees African maritime worlds as dynamic spaces constituted through cyclical practices of movement, aggregation, and dispersal. Governance itself is interpreted as a seasonally adaptive maritime practice embedded within lived coastal knowledge systems. This paper demonstrates how African seafaring traditions, maritime labor, and ritual practices have long structured political power and social relations. This contributes to a more inclusive and transformative African maritime archaeology that integrates material and intangible heritage, reconnecting archaeological research to contemporary coastal communities. The study argues that such an approach is essential not only for recovering the neglected maritime past but also for developing sustainable, community-centered heritage practices along Africa's coasts**.**

3.7. The Circulation of Glass Beads in the Western Indian Ocean World: A View from Southern Mozambique at Ponta Dundo, Bazaruto Island in the Late 1st Millennium CE

Kelsi Kaviani, Abigail Moffett

As one of the most prolific types of material culture of the 1st and 2nd millennium CE, glass beads are excellent proxies for understanding the circulation of technologies and knowledge and reconstructing the socioeconomic and cultural routes that they followed. This paper presents preliminary typological and chemical results from the newly excavated late 1st millennium CE site of Ponta Dundo (Bazaruto Island, Mozambique) and highlights new findings of Zhizo-type beads on the southeastern African coast. To date, the characterisation of these site-type beads has drawn primarily from research undertaken on collections excavated at the contemporary and nearby site of Chibuene. This study provides a key typological and chronological comparative of glass beads from a southern Mozambique coastal site and explores how glass beads were distributed, (re)made, and consumed locally alongside beads of other materials such as shell and metal. Overall, these results demonstrate the importance of the Bazaruto archipelago in both the distribution and regional use of glass beads within southeastern Africa and its maritime commercial presence in the markets of the Indian Ocean world.

3.8. Rationale for the classification of Swahili archaeological monuments in Mozambique

Osvaldo Marrame, Celso Simbine

In our country, we have a variety of archaeological monuments, especially those of the Swahili type, mostly concentrated on the northern coast of Mozambique. These monuments are known mainly through archaeological research (Duarte 1993), and are also a heritage resource that must be preserved and valued at all costs, through compliance with appropriate technical procedures. One of these procedures is classification. In addition to classification, which aims to declare the asset as Cultural Heritage, there is also the assignment of heritage classes in order to determine the permitted levels of intervention as well as compatible uses, within the scope of cultural sustainability. This study addresses the classification of Swahili archaeological monuments as national cultural heritage. The object selected for study is the Swahili archaeological monument of Somaná, located in the province of Nampula, in the district of Nacala-a-Velha. The classification of this monument is of local, national or even regional interest (East Africa) insofar as it allows for an in-depth study of long-distance trade and Swahili settlements in northern Mozambique, through the remains of its structure and the ceramics found on site. In addition to its scientific value, Somaná has a high cultural significance for the communities of this area, who use it for ceremonial practices. For

the PANAF session: Osvaldo Marrame, Archaeologist, junior researcher. Eduardo Mondlane University: Department of Archaeology and Anthropology.

3.9. Takwa Ruins, Water Scarcity, and Migration in the Swahili Maritime Landscape of the Lamu Archipelago

Richard Maluku Chalo

Takwa Ruins, located on Manda Island in the Lamu Archipelago, provided an important case for understanding the emergence of Swahili communities through migration, environmental constraint, and maritime connectivity. Historical and archaeological evidence suggests that Takwa was established in the fifteenth century AD by populations relocating from nearby lamu Island, where increasing pressure on freshwater resources and settlement sustainability shaped patterns of movement within the archipelago. This paper traces the emergence of Takwa ruins as a Swahili settlement formed through island-to-island migration rather than long-distance colonization. The transfer of social institutions, religious practices, and architectural traditions from Lamu to Takwa is visible in coral-stone mosques, domestic structures, and funerary monuments, reflecting continuity in Swahili cultural norms despite environmental displacement. At the same time, Takwa's coastal position enabled renewed engagement with Indian Ocean trade networks, as evidenced by imported ceramics and material culture associated with commerce and consumption. By focusing on water access, mobility, and settlement choice, this study highlights how environmental factors intertwined with maritime economies to shape Swahili lifeways. Takwa illustrates how smaller island communities emerged as adaptive responses to ecological stress while remaining embedded within broader coastal–hinterland and Indian Ocean interactions. The paper contributes to discussions on Swahili chronologies, migration, and material culture between AD 800 and AD 1900, emphasizing the dynamic and negotiated nature of Swahili community formation.

3.10. Exploring the maritime cultural landscape of Cabaceira Pequena: an anthropological approach to African maritimity

Diogo Oliveira

In northern Mozambique, archaeological research has contributed to a deeper understanding of historic maritime connections and their influences on Swahili history and landscape. When considering several aspects of daily practice and the ontological principles of coastal peoples, scholars have argued that traditional views of 'landscape' must be seriously reconsidered at the water's edge. This paper reviews an ongoing debate in the literature surrounding Swahili maritimity and the emergence of maritime cultural landscapes in East Africa. This discussion will help frame interpretations of recent archaeological evidence in Northern Mozambique while considering the longue durée of maritime practices along the Swahili coast.

3.11. Emergence of Swahili communities in East Africa

Felix Chami

The Swahili communities of the coast of East Africa are of 1200 to 1500 in the Christian time. This civilization is of the Early Iron Age in origin, of the ancestors who were involved with the wider Indian Ocean trade network. The Romans are known to have been part of this ancient Bantu speaking civilization, colonizing the capita Rhapta. The Swahili people adopted Islam and like their ancestor they were involved in trade networks extending to Asia and to the deep interior of Africa as

far as Zimbabwe and the Congo basin. The western Indian ocean islands of Madagascar and Comoros were part of the Swahili communities.

3.12. Surrounding the Citadel: An Archaeology of the Swahili Villages and Margins Around Portuguese Redoubts, Zanzibar Island

Neil Norman

The Later Zanzibar Archaeology Project has addressed a Portuguese redoubt and farming complex on the northwestern coast of Unguja Island. Previous reporting has focused on units and finds located in the core areas of standing architecture. This paper presents complementary data and evidence from the Swahili villages and settlements surrounding these Portuguese sites. In so doing, it broadens attempts to contextualize how Swahili people incorporated early Portuguese colonists into local Swahili systems of political, social, and economic exchange.

Session: 4 (Room 3)

4.1. Bound to the land, bonded through clay: African Diasporic links between South Carolina Lowcountry enslaved African handmade pottery and archaeological study of earthen embankments

Andrew Agha

When we excavate the settlements where enslaved Africans were forced to live on plantations, and when we excavate the earthen embankments, they built on plantations in rice fields and upland landscapes, we find and recover one commonality: the product of clay. At settlements, we recover colonoware, the pottery the enslaved made for daily, functional, spiritual/ritual/medicinal use. In embankments, we discover the intricate use of clay as a bonding agent, a waterproofing substance, and an impenetrable core that has resisted time and erosion, without maintenance, for upwards of almost 300 years. Taking cues from these materialities—pottery and embankments—this paper delves into the new idea that pottery production and rice agriculture went hand in hand, linked together through an ecological connection: clay required for embankment permanency and strength was a clay source for pottery that reinforced enslaved African lives and gave them the strength to persevere in the face of slavery day after day in their prison-plantations. In this paper, I highlight my 25 years of both embankment investigations and colonoware research to draw links between the enslaved and the material culture they created.

4.2. Archaeology and spirits at the Bigo bya Mugenyi earthworks, Uganda

Andrew Reid, Pauline Harding

Bigo bya Mugenyi has been the most prominent linear earthwork in southern Uganda since 1908 and the early days of the Uganda Protectorate. Comparisons with hillforts in southern Britain led to archaeological appraisals which made little headway in historical understanding. Work by Shinnie and then by Posnansky in the 1950s, to date the most recent excavations, barely improved matters. As Schmidt noted, Bigo rapidly became associated with colonial constructs of cultural succession, constructs that local leadership had little option but to buy into. Hence, Bigo took on the most prominent role in historical work by indigenous scholars and by those influenced by such scholarship. In Uganda today, Bigo is generally regarded as the capital of the Bacwezi Empire. Archaeology is now in a position to critique and even reject this idea, demonstrating that Bigo

emerged locally from other developments in the Mawogola landscape. Possibly more interesting is the potential for reconsidering the whole nature of archaeology in Uganda, replacing conventional western practice with indigenous perspectives that emphasise the continued occupation by spirits. These ideas offer not only the potential to re-consider the role of earthworks, but also to develop new understandings of heritage that are appropriate to Uganda itself.

4.3. Sungbo's Eredo and Earthworks as Theoscaping

Ayodeji Ogunnaike

The immense series of earthworks comprising Sungbọ's Eredo in southwestern Nigeria is one of the largest public works projects of precolonial Africa and despite its construction requiring the movement of over 1 million more cubic meters of earth than the Great Pyramid of Giza, scholars remain unsure of the precise reason for its construction. The magnitude of the earthworks clearly demonstrates the presence of a powerful state and organziation of labor but initial theories of a primarily military purpose seem insufficient given the nature of West African ecology and warfare which generally did not support large seiges. Instead, by drawing on long-standing Yoruba cosmology, later evidence of smaller earthworks and comparative evidence from earthworks in a similar time period and region in Benin, I argue that—without rejecting other potential purposes—the earthworks may have primarily served as a kind of "theoscape" or way of manipulating the landscape as a form of spiritual work. As African religions generally reject any division of the religious/secular or material/immaterial, such earthworks likely constituted a division of the environment between the sphere of "domestic" spirits which which the local people had developed well-ordered and reliable relationships and "wild" spirits whose lack of an established benevolent ritual relationship with the community rendered them chaotic and potentially dangerous. This framework can also help to make sense of the presence of water and ritual remains in ditches as negative or chaotic cosmic material could be deposited there and water ritually "cools" and neutralizes such "hot" spiritual material.

4.4. A monumental earthwork in Ijebu: stratigraphy, chronology, and interpretation

Gérard Chouin

Sungbo's Eredo is the largest unique linear earthwork known in Africa, with a total periphery of about 160km. Despite its monumental size, the earthwork has been the subject of only limited archaeological work, and a LiDAR campaign in January 2024 has yet to yield a full interpretation of the collected data. Here, we provide an interpretation based on limited oral traditions, on a new understanding of the macro-historical processes in the Gulf of Guinea in the wake of the opening of the Atlantic trade, and on an excavation of Sungbo's Eredo conducted by the team of the Ife-Sungbo Archaeological Project at Ilara, Lagos State, in 2016.

4.5. The Moat of Abomey: Archaeology, Chronology, and Symbolism

Inga Merkyte

The moat of Abomey, encircling the historic capital of the Dahomean Kingdom (present-day Bénin), represents a monumental landscape intervention that was both materially and symbolically central to the formation of the state. The presentation examines the archaeological, historical, and ideological dimensions of the moat, drawing on excavation data, oral traditions, and early European

accounts. Archaeological evidence suggests that the moat was constructed in the mid-17th century, likely during the reign of King Houegbadja (c. 1645-1685), requiring extensive labour mobilisation and reflecting a high degree of political organisation. The project itself is viewed as a way of creating a new group identity in a heterogeneous milieu. The moat, unique in its rectangular shape and measuring approximately 11-12 meters in width and up to 6.6 meters in depth, encloses an area of roughly 456 ha. The moat transformed Abomey – or Agbome (=inside the moat) into a spatially defined political and ritual entity - effectively a "super-palace" that mirrored the architectural logic of royal compounds, with Hougebadja's palace being at the very centre. While often interpreted as a defensive structure, the moat's military effectiveness appears limited, particularly in light of 18th-century conflicts. Stratigraphic evidence from excavations reveals a shift in the moat's use from active maintenance to refuse deposition by the late 18th century, reflecting broader transformations in political and military strategy. Yet over time, the moats' meaning evolved further, incorporating cosmological interpretations, notably associations with the serpent deity Dangbe, thereby embedding the structure within religious narratives and sacralising Abomey as a "super-temple"

4.6. The Benin Earthworks in Regional Perspective: Insights from Survey and Remote Sensing

Jan Hubert

The earthworks (Iya) associated with the Kingdom of Benin form one of the largest landscape systems in West Africa. While the earthworks around Benin City are well known, similar features occur across the wider region. This presentation provides an overview of selected sites in Benin City and its surroundings, including Udo, Ughoton, and Ukomu National Park in the north. Different interpretations have been proposed for these earthworks, including defense, territorial boundaries, and political organization. Observations from the Benin region suggest that some earthworks increased in size over time. Differences in form and scale raise questions about local practices and possible relationships between centres such as Benin City and Udo. Recent work carried out over the past year as part of the Mellon-funded project, implemented by MOWAA, has contributed to a better understanding of these features. LiDAR-based mapping, drone surveys, and ground verification were used to document additional sections and assess their condition. In parallel, the MAEASaM project applies remote sensing using satellite data to map earthworks across areas beyond Edo State and to highlight regional differences. Work in the northern extension of Ukomu and surveys in Ondo State provided further data on variation in form and layout. These results offer new insights into how the earthworks were constructed, used, and organized in the landscape, and contribute to a better understanding of their possible functions. They are compared with other earthwork systems in southern Nigeria, including Sungbo's Eredo, to place the Benin earthworks in a wider regional context.

4.7. Non-Linear Ditch and Earthwork Features in the Republic of Benin, West Africa

Neil Norman

One of the signal features of Coastal West African Kingdoms is massive, monumental ditch-and-bank earthworks. These features defined social space, designated domesticated from wild places, memorialized kings and gods, oriented movement around the kingdom, and provided barriers between those living inside and outside. In many cases, these features are relatively uniform in terms of depth and width and stretch for kilometers in a regular linear direction. This paper explores a counterpoint, the non-linear ditch and bank segments surrounding the seventeenth and eighteenth-century Huedan palace complex at Savi in the Republic of Benin. In so doing, it presents a contrasting example to more integrated and centralized polities that created linear ones.

4.8. Beyond Boundaries: Rethinking African Linear Earthworks through Community and Landscape Archaeology in Benin City, Nigeria

Oluwadamilare Omogbai, Pauline von Hellermann, Charles LeQuesne

Benin earthworks are among the largest man-made landscape features in the world and have been interpreted in many ways, including being defensive structures, territorial boundaries, and spiritually significant sites (Connah 1987; Darling 1998). This paper engages with these existing interpretations by presenting ongoing research on the outer Benin Moats, Nigeria, undertaken by the Museum of West African Art (MOWAA) as part of the Mellon Foundation-funded archaeological project. The research combines large-scale LiDAR survey, satellite imagery, photogrammetry, and drone-based digital terrain modelling with targeted excavations across the outer Benin earthworks in Edo State. These approaches are being used to generate new chronological and material data relating to the construction and use of the earthworks. Whilst further analysis including radiocarbon dating is ongoing, preliminary findings suggest evidence of settlement activity predating the earthwork. The study also explores practices of memory-making, highlighting how deities, ancestors, and historical events are embedded within these linear earthwork landscapes through features such as gateways, ditches, roadways, shrines, and sacred groves, drawing on ethnographic research into tangible and intangible heritage. In conclusion, this paper reflects on the methodological and interpretive challenges of integrating technological approaches with community-based perspectives in the study of African linear earthworks. While acknowledging the limitations of the current evidence and the provisional nature of some interpretations. It suggests that such multimodal approaches offer productive avenues for understanding these features as complex cultural landscapes.

4.9. Moats and Sociopolitical Formations in West Africa: Reconsidering Udo within the Benin Landscape

Timilehin Ayelagbe

This paper examines sociopolitical organization in West Africa through the lens of linear earthworks, focusing on the ditch-and-embankment system at Udo within the Benin Moat System in southern Nigeria. While these features are often interpreted as defensive or symbolic boundaries, this study considers how they may have structured social life, spatial organization, and patterns of interaction within enclosed landscapes. Drawing on ongoing archaeological research at Udo, including survey and excavation, the paper reflects on the distribution of habitation, production, and depositional contexts across the site. Rather than assuming a single centralized core, the emerging picture points to a more dispersed and layered use of space, raising questions about how authority, labor, and community were organized. Situating Udo alongside other African earthworks and space markers this paper contributes to broader discussions on precolonial and early contact sociopolitical formations. It suggests that moats may be better understood as part of dynamic systems through which social and political relationships were negotiated, rather than as fixed boundaries defining political centers.

4.10. Construction, Chronology, and Cosmology at the Linear Earthwork of Sungbo's Eredo, Southwest Nigeria, c.1400-1900 AD: New Insights into Africa's "Largest Single Monument"

Tomos Llywelyn Evans

Sungbo's Eredo is a vast linear earthwork structure: a bank and trench enclosure that is up to 20 metres in height and over 100 miles in its circumference, encapsulating the historical heartlands of the Ìjèbù-Yorùbá kingdom. Despite its vastness, its monumental scale, and its long history – it being thought to date to around the 15th century AD – little information on the Eredo exists in Early Modern and Modern written accounts. Thus archaeology, oral tradition, and ethnography have acted as crucial tools in answering questions pertaining to its chronology, construction, functions, and meanings. This paper details recent archaeological and archival work, and the novel evidence obtained from this, to address questions of when the Eredo was constructed, how it was constructed – and the labour, technology, and materials organised to do so – and why it was constructed, especially vis-à-vis its links to defence and regulation, spiritual protection, royal authority, and state and community memory. From a synthesis of excavation data from adjacent sites, architectural evidence (from stratigraphy), analysis of archival maps and documents, and survey of local shrines to the òrìsà (deities) and ancestors linked to the earthwork, the paper concludes that Sungbo's Eredo was a multifunctional threshold. It is argued that the Eredo was built through a centralised but segmented process of construction involving mass-mobilisation of labour in order to solidify, justify, and invigorate royal authority, while also protecting and regulating the territory within in the face of a number of physical and more esoteric threats, from cavalry raids to epidemics.

Session: 6 (Room 4)

6.1. Archive as Infrastructure: Redefining Maritime History on the Swahili Coast through a Hybrid Museum Model

Abdulrahman Ndegwa, Jentrix Chochy Sakwa

Maritime archaeology in Africa has long been shaped by a "wreck-centric" paradigm that privileges submerged material remains—particularly those tied to colonial encounters—over the broader, lived maritime landscapes that structure coastal communities. This paper argues for a reorientation of the field from an object-focused discipline toward a community-centered practice that recognizes maritime heritage as both lived experience and critical infrastructure. Focusing on the Swahili Coast and the wider Indian Ocean world, the paper introduces a hybrid maritime museum model grounded in the UNESCO Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) approach. Extending HUL into maritime contexts, it conceptualizes the coast as a layered, living landscape where intangible dimensions—community memory, oral histories and seafaring knowledge—are treated as equally significant as tangible remains such as shipwrecks and ports. The model operates as a multi-layered platform integrating archaeological data, archival records and oral histories to document and activate maritime heritage beyond site-bound interpretations. Emphasizing layering and context, it reconnects communities to their environments while tracing continuities between past and present practices. Methodologically, the paper combines heritage studies, critical museology and digital humanities, focusing on documenting community-based practices and activating heritage through community-centric management. It advances a decolonised, socially sustainable framework that supports community stewardship, inclusive development and equitable knowledge production by embedding maritime heritage within HUL.

6.2. Défis et opportunités de la construction d'une base de données patrimoniale au Togo

Aka Adjo Bebewou

La préservation du patrimoine culturel et naturel est un enjeu majeur pour les pays en développement. Au Togo, le patrimoine culturel et naturel du Togo représente un capital symbolique, historique et économique majeur. Toutefois, son inventaire demeure fragmentaire et peu numérisé. Ainsi, la mise en valeur du patrimoine culturel et naturel constitue un enjeu stratégique pour le développement durable. Face aux défis liés à la conservation, à l'accessibilité et à la gestion des ressources patrimoniales, la mise en place d'une base de données patrimoniale nationale apparaît comme une solution structurante. Cet article vise à analyser les principaux défis techniques, institutionnels, financiers et socioculturels associés à la construction d'un tel dispositif, tout en mettant en évidence les opportunités offertes par la transformation numérique, les partenariats internationaux et le renforcement des capacités locales. L'étude adoptera une approche analytique fondée sur la littérature scientifique et les rapports institutionnels relatifs à la gestion du patrimoine en Afrique subsaharienne.

6.3. Curating the Landscape through Digital Databases: the case of Kisumu city, Kenya

Benard Mahagwa Busaka

Digital heritage databases play an increasingly critical role in shaping policy, improving sitemanagement, and enhancing decision-making processes for heritage preservation. By systematically collecting, storing, and organizing cultural heritage data-ranging from archaeological records and architectural documentation to intangible heritage- these databases provide policymakers and practitioners with reliable, accessible and up-to-date information. In the policy sphere, they support evidence-based planning, enabling governments and institutions to prioritize conservation efforts, allocate resources efficiently, and develop informed regulatory frameworks. For site management, digital databases facilitate real-time risk assessment, and maintenance planning, allowing managers to respond proactively to threats such as environmental degradation, urban development, and climate change. Furthermore, they enhance decision-making by integrating spatial technologies, data analytics, and visualization tools, which help stakeholders evaluate multiple scenarios and predict long-term impacts. Ultimately, digital heritage databases foster transparency, collaboration and knowledge sharing among researchers, communities and authorities, thereby strengthening sustainable preservation strategies and ensuring that cultural heritage is effectively safeguarded for future generations. Kisumu city has areas that are critical to the country's history. These places are area symbols of heritage, tradition, and continuity. Relying on primary observed data from the field and secondary sources, this paper is a sampled empirical analysis on how modern spatial developments in Kisumu city, Kenya continues unabated with total disregard to existing cultural heritages. Lack of an existing digital databases has the consequential effect in lack of planning in the city. This is despite the country having in existence laws that ought to protect the cultural heritages. The question that lingers is, development for who? Is digital preservation truly preservation or transformation of cultural heritage data? How does an efficient digital database aid planning and development? These are some of the questions the paper will attempt to answer. It specifically addresses the importance of curating the landscape via adoption and appropriation of digital technology to document existing cultural spaces so as to monitor change over time and seeking remedies to heritage threats within the context of sustainable development. The argument is that Digital cultural heritage databases provide a blue print for development planning in the country.

6.4. Sea Paths: Creative Strategies to Promote Underwater Cultural Heritage on the Island of Mozambique

Celeste Mandlaze, Cézar Mahumane, Celso Simbine, Samira Jamu, Crimildo Chambe, Diogo Oliveira

The Underwater Cultural Heritage (UCH) in Mozambique remains largely inaccessible to the public, due to its submerged nature and the limited implementation of outreach initiatives. This study explores innovative strategies for promoting Mozambique Island UCH through the means of Geographic Information Systems (GIS), with a particular focus on the ArcGIS Story Maps platform, as a tool to enhance public engagement and the dissemination of knowledge. The methodology used in the study combined documentary research, field data and community-based contributions that supported the development of a Story Map prototype. By integrating spatial data, historical narratives and multimedia content, the Sea Paths project created a pilot interactive digital platform for the Nossa Senhora da Consolação wreck, making it visible and accessible to different audiences. Preliminary results indicate that digital storytelling can significantly improve awareness and promote local engagement with heritage resources. The integration of digital technologies into heritage management constitutes a sustainable and inclusive approach to the preservation and promotion of UCH in Mozambique.

6.5. Introductory Statement: From Digital Documentation to Policy-Relevant Heritage Data. Data without Impact? Rethinking the Role of Digital Heritage in African Policy Frameworks

Dana AlSalamin

Despite significant advances in digital heritage documentation across Africa, its impact on policy and development planning remains limited. This contribution introduces a discussion on the disconnect between the growing production of digital heritage data and its marginal role in decision-making processes. It suggests that the challenge is not only technical but structural, rooted in how heritage is positioned within governance systems and how digital outputs are framed and communicated. Drawing on current debates in heritage governance and sustainable development, the contribution explores how digital documentation can either reinforce or challenge existing exclusions within policy frameworks. Using the MAEASaM project as a reference point, it reflects on how geospatial data, remote sensing, and structured databases are produced, circulated, and interpreted, and why they often fail to influence planning processes dominated by economic and infrastructural priorities. Rather than presenting a fixed solution, it proposes a shift from data production to data translation, where digital heritage data is reformulated as policy-relevant evidence. It invites discussion on how digital documentation can engage with institutional realities, support cross-sector dialogue, and align with planning systems. In doing so, it positions digital heritage data as a potential tool for reshaping how cultural heritage is valued within development agendas.

6.6. Apport de l'outil ArcGIS Survey123 dans la documentation et la gestion du patrimoine archéologique : cas des sites du massif de l'Ennedi au Tchad

Djimet Guemona, Guemona Djimet, Emmanuelle Honoré, Alexandre Livingstone Smith

Au nord-est du Tchad, le massif de l'Ennedi recèle un vaste patrimoine archéologique, témoignant d'une occupation humaine ininterrompue de la Préhistoire à nos jours. Cette richesse culturelle a

justifié son inscription, dès 2016, au patrimoine mondial de l'UNESCO. Depuis 2019, le gouvernement tchadien a confié la gestion de ce massif à l'ONG African Parks, qui a mis en place un département d'archéologie. L'une de ses réalisations majeures est la conception d'une base de données géospatiale, via le logiciel ArcGIS Survey123. Ce dispositif a permis l'inventaire standardisé de plus de 1 800 sites, en intégrant des formulaires paramétrés, des référentiels typologiques et des outils de géolocalisation précis, adaptés aux contraintes du terrain. Cette communication propose: (i) une analyse de l'architecture conceptuelle et fonctionnelle de la base de données; (ii) une évaluation de son apport dans la normalisation des pratiques d'enregistrement et la production de données comparables; (iii) une démonstration de son rôle dans l'identification, la hiérarchisation et la spatialisation des facteurs de dégradation; (iv) une discussion sur son potentiel comme outil d'aide à la décision pour les stratégies de conservation. En croisant retour d'expérience empirique et réflexion méthodologique, cette étude met en évidence la manière dont les technologies géospatiales mobiles redéfinissent les modalités de documentation et de gestion du patrimoine archéologique en milieux contraints, et ouvrent des perspectives de reproductibilité dans d'autres contextes africains.

6.7. Beyond Borders: Collection Management Databases and the Digital Reconnection of Egyptian Archaeological Heritage – The Egyptian Museum in Cairo as a Case Study

Marwa Abdel Razek

African archaeological heritage is often dispersed across multiple institutions as a result of historical excavation practices, colonial collecting, and international museum exchanges. This dispersal has created fragmented object histories and limited access to knowledge, particularly for source countries. In response to these challenges, collection management databases have become essential tools for documenting, reconnecting, and reinterpreting archaeological collections beyond physical and institutional borders. This paper examines the role of collection management databases in the management and interpretation of Egyptian archaeological collections, using the Egyptian Museum in Cairo as a case study. It explores how digital collection management systems are employed to document object data, provenance, excavation records, conservation histories, and associated archival materials, and how these systems support research, transparency, and long-term heritage stewardship. The paper discusses the potential of such databases to digitally reconnect Egyptian objects held in the museum with related material dispersed in international collections, archives, and publications. By enabling structured data management, interoperability, and digital linking, collection management systems contribute to reconstructing object biographies and broader archaeological contexts that transcend national and institutional boundaries. At the same time, the paper addresses key challenges facing collection management in African museums, including data standardization, legacy documentation, multilingual metadata, and resource limitations. It argues that strengthening digital collection infrastructures within source-country institutions such as the Egyptian Museum in Cairo is central to developing more equitable, collaborative, and borderless approaches to African archaeological heritage.

6.8. Developing strategies for archaeological data management in Mozambique

Omar Madime

Archaeological research in Mozambique has yielded a large quantity of archaeological data, preserved in various formats. This data contributes to the study of the country's past and to the development of heritage management aimed at site protection and raising community awareness of

their past as a source of identity and self-conditioning. Archaeology is a destructive process; all that remains after an excavation is documentation, which must be preserved as a record of the site. The information about the site is very diverse. Beyond the excavated material culture and site and landscape descriptions, these include a range of information on cultural heritage contained in research reports and publications. All of this content is considered archaeological data. However, the management and dissemination of this data constitute a major challenge for archaeological research entities and cultural heritage management institutions in the country. This problem is further complicated by the current context, characterised by a scarcity of funds to finance archaeological research projects, a lack of qualified technicians, and a lack of appropriate institutions for managing and disseminating archaeological data. Therefore, the level of dissemination of scientific knowledge produced in the country is very low, or it benefits only a few individuals. Drawing on the experiences of the MAEASaM digitisation project, this paper seeks to identify and discuss possible strategies that research projects, institutions that develop and manage archaeological research, and cultural heritage management institutions can adopt to ensure the management and dissemination of archaeological data to the general public.

6.9. A Digital-Based Methodology of Integrating Impact Assessments in Heritage Conservation: The Experience of Botswana National Museum and the MAEASaM Project Collaboration

Tshekiso Kgosietsile, Paul Lane, Stefania Merlo, Phillip Segadika

Traditionally, archaeological sites in Botswana have been mapped and recorded using paper records, managed by the Botswana National Museum; this includes data from salvage archaeology, contained in impact assessment reports. However, the establishment of Archaeological Impact Assessment within the Environmental Assessment framework has significantly furthered the protection and conservation of cultural heritage, aligning it with sustainable development objectives. However, constraints related to finances and time during rescue operations, along with varied recording methods over the years, have rendered much information from salvage operations absent from main site maps and catalogues. Consequently, numerous salvage sites, while outnumbering sites of recognised significance, remain largely unacknowledged both by the public and heritage authorities due to their failure to meet universal value criteria. Many of the threats that currently impact salvage sites are similarly shared with sites of national importance, albeit at a greater scale and pace because of their precarious conservation status. This paper draws from a case study within a collaborative project between the national museum and the Mapping Africa's Endangered Archaeological Sites and Monuments (MAEASaM) project, it examines the benefits and challenges of digitising and documenting old data. It raises critical inquiries about the insights that can be gleaned from the reuse of such data and its implications on heritage management practices now and in the future. Reflection on salvage archaeology is offered, supported with case studies from infrastructural projects, particularly dam constructions in central eastern Botswana, which have revealed numerous sites from diverse chronologies that remain largely unexplored.

6.10. Barriers to the adoption of digital methods in archaeological heritage governance: evidence from Kenya and Botswana

Victoria Marcano, Stefania Merlo

Despite efforts to reduce the digital gap in the African continent, the uptake of digital methods in African archaeological heritage governance remains relatively low. What are the main factors that hinder this uptake, and how do these factors impede such digitization processes? This paper

presents the results of a qualitative study on the adoption of digital methods in Kenya's and Botswana's archaeological heritage governance structures. Findings highlight three main challenges: a technical and resource divide, which stems from a mismatch between government rhetoric and funding, exacerbated by a disconnect between budgeting authorities and technical experts; a legislative divide, marked by a lack of robust policies, leading to data ownership uncertainties and project disruptions; and an attitudinal and institutional divide, which reveals polarized views on digitization linked to insufficient interdisciplinary collaboration and the exclusion of key professionals from decision-making. To address these challenges, recommendations include fostering interdisciplinary collaboration, promoting advanced training programs, developing adaptive legislative frameworks, encouraging cultural shifts towards digitization, and publicizing successful digitization initiatives.

Session: 8 (Room 5)

8.1. University Museums as Hubs of Cultural Exchange: Exhibitions and the Educational Role of the University Museum, Department of Archaeology and Heritage Studies, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, in Preserving West African Heritage

Abdulbasit Bello Bashir, Ishaq Isah Ishaq, Terry Little

University museums in West Africa are increasingly recognized as important spaces for cultural exchange, education, and public engagement (Isah, 2023; Bashir, 2025). This paper examines the University Museum, Department of Archaeology and Heritage Studies at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, focusing on its role in preserving and interpreting West African heritage through exhibitions. Despite growing recognition, the potential of university museums in West African region remains underexplored, particularly in community engagement (Eze, 2021). Using qualitative methods of observation and participation, the study explores how collections are transformed into meaningful narratives that promote cultural understanding. Special attention is given to the exhibition "Something from Nothing: Saving Our Planet," sponsored by the U.S. Embassy, which engaged students across multiple disciplines to address environmental sustainability through recycle art, that attracted both national and international stakeholders. The paper argues that the museum functions as a hub of cultural exchange by bringing together academic, community, and professional audiences. However, challenges such as inadequate funding, limited infrastructure and accessibility hinder its full potential. The study concludes by recommending strategies to strengthen exhibition practices and enhance the educational role of university museums in West Africa.

8.2. Changing Concepts and Roles in Curating Exhibitions

Anwayi Danjuma Jude

A single visit to a museum can give in-depth information on an object. This is because museums by their nature collects, study/researches, store, and interpret artifacts of historic, scientific, artistic, and cultural interest to the public through exhibitions. The International Council of Museums (ICOM) defines a museum as "a not- for- profit, permanent institution in the service of society that researches, collects, interprets and exhibits tangible and intangible heritage. Open to the public, accessible and inclusive, museums foster diversity and sustainability. They operate and communicate ethically, professionally and with the participation of communities, offering varied experiences for education, enjoyment, reflection and knowledge sharing" (ICOM News October 2022 P48). Exhibition is the major media by which museums interact with the public. However, since the

late 1960s, museums have witnessed a paradigm shift. There has been a shift from the fixed ideas of curating as collection management meant only for caring and administrative activity, towards one of mediating and performative activities akin to artistic practices, which allowed for interactive exchanges. The curator is now a creative artist of exhibitions. With the creation of the International Museum Day (IDM) in 1977, which is celebrated every year on 18 May around a theme, museums all over the world are invited to participate by organizing enjoyable and free activities. This paper examines the curator's abilities to adapt to the fast- changing roles of the concept of exhibition to the needs and expectations of society, using the National Museum Jos as a case study.

8.3. Archaeologists and the Making of Community Museums in West Africa: Insights from Begho, Ghana

Daniel Kumah

This paper examines the evolving role of archaeologists in the establishment and development of community museums in Ghana and across West Africa, using the Begho Community Museum as a central case study. Traditionally positioned as producers of academic knowledge, archaeologists are increasingly engaging in public-facing roles that extend beyond excavation to include heritage interpretation, community collaboration, museum development and community centres. This shift reflects broader transformations in African archaeology toward more inclusive, socially embedded, and practice-oriented approaches. Drawing on field experience at Begho, the paper explores how archaeological research has contributed to the conceptualisation, design, and implementation of a community museum that focuses on local histories and material culture. It argues that archaeologists play a critical mediating role between scientific knowledge and community heritage, facilitating the translation of excavated materials—into accessible and locally meaningful narratives. At the same time, the paper situates Begho within wider regional efforts, highlighting similar initiatives in West Africa where archaeologists have collaborated with communities to create decentralised and participatory heritage institutions. The paper also interrogates key challenges, including ethical considerations, resource limitations, sustainability, and the negotiation of authority between experts and local stakeholders. Despite these constraints, the involvement of archaeologists in community museum development presents significant opportunities for redefining the discipline's social relevance and public impact. By critically assessing these dynamics, the study contributes to ongoing discussions on heritage practice, museum innovation, and the future of community-based archaeology in Africa.

8.4. Label Writing and Digital Interface a Strategy Towards Effective Communication with Museum visitors

Dikko Idris

Museum labels carry information that curators consider essential to the understanding and appreciation of objects and their history. This paper discusses the significance of label writing in museum exhibitions, without which the object on display is meaningless. It is apparent that communication is one of the key functions of museums. Information may be communicated to the museum audience in different ways. The paper also highlights the role of digital interface as another modern strategy in reaching out to museum audiences. The digital influx, both institutionally and functionally, has opened up many opportunities for museums.

8.5. From Objects to Narratives: How Technology is Shaping Museum Exhibitions in the Museum of Archaeology

Edwin Senanu Yao Atoklo

Museums worldwide are increasingly adopting digital technologies to revolutionise how exhibitions are designed, interpreted, and experienced. Traditionally seen as object-focused institutions dedicated to collecting and conserving artefacts, museums are gradually transforming into interactive spaces where digital tools enable storytelling and visitor participation. This paper explores how the integration of digital technologies is changing exhibition narratives and visitor experiences at the Museum of Archaeology at the University of Ghana. Using Everett Rogers' Diffusion of Innovation theory, the study investigates how decisions to adopt digital technology are made within museums and how these innovations affect curatorial practices and audience engagement. Using a qualitative ethnographic approach, the study employs in-depth interviews, participant observation, field notes, and comment-book analysis to explore how museum professionals and visitors interact with emerging digital exhibition tools. The research concentrates on identifying the types of technologies currently employed in exhibitions, understanding how institutional decisions regarding technological integration are made, and evaluating how these tools influence visitor learning, engagement, and participation. Particular attention is given to the sustainability challenges faced by museums in adopting and maintaining digital technologies, especially in contexts where financial resources, technical expertise, and infrastructure may be limited. The study contributes to the ongoing debates about the changing role of museums as social institutions and knowledge platforms in the digital era. By exploring the intersection of technology, narrative creation, and visitor engagement, the research offers insights into how museums in developing regions can strategically implement digital innovations while maintaining sustainability, accessibility, and curatorial responsibility.

8.6. Building collaborative competencies in undergraduate students through exhibition projects in the Museum of Archaeology, University of Ghana

Gertrude Aba Mansah Eyifa-Dzidzienyo

University teaching museums, such as the Museum of Archaeology at the University of Ghana, create unique teaching and learning environments for students. The Museum's learning environment, when utilised creatively and innovatively, develops students' competencies. This paper argues that student-led museum exhibition projects are powerful catalysts for developing essential collaborative competencies rarely cultivated in traditional classroom settings. Drawing on my recent undergraduate students' engagement in group exhibition projects and a survey of their learning outcomes, this paper demonstrates that when students collaborate on museum exhibitions, they gain both practical museum knowledge and essential interpersonal skills. Key success factors include intentional course design, clear learning objectives, inclusive facilitation, and availability of exhibition space and facilities.

8.7. Exhibition and Education in West African Museums: Challenges and Innovations from the National Museum Kaduna, Nigeria

Ishaq Isah Ishaq

Museums in West Africa increasingly serve as key institutions for public education and cultural interpretation, yet their capacity to deliver effective exhibition-based learning is often constrained by structural, financial, and institutional limitations. This paper examines the relationship between exhibition and education at the National Museum Kaduna, Nigeria, using it as a case study to explore broader challenges and emerging innovations in West African museum practice. Drawing on qualitative methods including direct observation of exhibition galleries, staff interviews, and analysis of museum documentation, the study assesses how archaeological and ethnographic collections particularly materials from the Nok Cultural Landscape are presented and interpreted for public audiences. Findings indicate that while the museum's thematic exhibitions provide valuable visual representations of Nigeria's cultural history, educational delivery remains largely descriptive, with limited integration of archaeological context, interactive interpretation, or research-based narratives. Institutional constraints such as inadequate funding, limited training for museum education officers, and insufficient research engagement with stored collections further affect the depth of public learning experiences. However, recent initiatives, including improved storage organization through the RE-ORG programme and increasing openness to academic collaboration, suggest opportunities for innovation in exhibition practice. The paper argues that strengthening the educational role of West African museums requires integrating collections-based research, interactive interpretation strategies, and stronger collaboration between museums and universities. By situating the Kaduna Museum within wider debates on museum education and heritage communication, the study contributes to ongoing discussions on how West African museums can transform exhibitions from static displays into dynamic platforms for learning, dialogue, and cultural engagement.

8.8. Visitor Learning at Elmina Castle

Jacob Nii Marley

For about three decades now, the Elmina Castle Museum has been mandated to educate the public about Elmina Castle's history. It has attempted to achieve this through its exhibition and onsite tours. Studies over the years, however, have revealed issues of accessibility, inclusion, and satisfaction regarding the designs of these services, as well as biases in the narratives they present. This paper aims to deepen the understanding of the state of the exhibition and tours at Elmina Castle and their impact on visitor learning. It critically discusses the exhibition and tour designs and narratives, drawing on data from fieldwork and archival and literary sources through the lenses of critical museology, narratology, and habitus. It explores the museum's educational challenges and opportunities, taking into account the contexts of both the museum and its visitors. The paper argues that while Elmina Castle Museum effectively facilitates affective learning, it constrains critical enquiry by embracing sanitized narratives and monolithic interpretations coupled with designs that limit meaning-making, visitor accessibility, and learning opportunities.

8.9. From Visibility to Meaning: Rethinking Visitor Engagement in Ghana's "Art After Independence" Exhibition

Magdalene Eyram Kwashie

This paper examines the visitor evaluation of the pilot exhibition "Ghana 1957: Art After Independence" held at the National Museum of Ghana between January and March 2025, as a precursor to the country's 70th independence anniversary exhibition in 2027. While the exhibition

was designed to explore the evolution of Ghanaian art in the post-independence era, the study identifies two critical challenges: low visitor turnout linked to limited public awareness, and inadequate interpretive support within the gallery space. A significant number of potential visitors were unaware of the exhibition due to insufficient publicity across traditional and digital media platforms. Additionally, although the exhibition attracted a largely youthful audience, the absence of consistent educator-led engagement limited visitors' ability to fully interpret and assimilate the meanings embedded in the artworks. Using a mixed-methods approach, data were collected through questionnaires administered to 59 visitors. Findings indicate that although many visitors had little prior knowledge of Ghana's post-independence art, the exhibition sparked interest and facilitated learning, particularly regarding cultural identity, women's contributions to art, and national symbolism. However, the presence of unaddressed visitor questions highlights gaps in narrative clarity and guided interpretation. The paper argues for a more integrated visitor engagement strategy that combines targeted publicity, expanded outreach through media and academic institutions, and active educator involvement within exhibition spaces. Strengthening these areas will not only increase visitor numbers but also enhance meaning-making and deepen audience experience. The study contributes to ongoing discussions on museum practice, particularly in improving accessibility, interpretation, and audience engagement in African museum contexts.

8.10. Exploring entangled histories of collections of the National Museum of Ghana: Towards a home-grown object-research pedagogy

Mark Seyram Amenyo-Xa

The discourse surrounding African cultural heritage is largely dominated by the external quest for restitution, which often overshadows critical internal requirements for expertise development and collection maintenance in African institutions. Through the engagement of students and museum staff in exploring the entangled histories of collections of the National Museum of Ghana (NMG), this research represents the starting point for the development of a home-grown pedagogy for object-research. This exploratory research develops essential skills in object-research among students and museum staff, predicated on the central thesis that existing training modules for students and professional museum staff are bereft of specific pedagogical approaches to object-research. Adopting the framework of Histoire Croisée and interstitial provenance, the methodology integrated archival investigation of institutional collecting mechanisms with ethnographic fieldwork and oral histories. This multi-modal approach was necessary to validate alternative knowledge epistemologies and circumvent the inherent narrative constraints of strictly archive-based colonial records. The research demonstrated that NMG's collections function as vital sites of layered, paradoxical entanglement, reflecting both colonial residue and national cultural agency. Crucially, the research validates the development of an exploratory provenance research curriculum which effectively merges existing local ethnographic strengths with specialized collections research. This pedagogical model hopes to create a sustainable structure for training students and honing the skills-set of museum staff with regards to object-research, thus securing the long-term provision of skilled personnel and management of the NMG's collections.

8.11. Management and Sustainability of Heritage Sites in Ghana: The Case of the Frederiksgave Plantation and Common Heritage Site

Michael Nii Dodoo Darku

This paper critically examines the management and sustainability of the Frederiksgave Plantation and Common Heritage Site as a model of collaborative cultural heritage preservation. Situated within global heritage discourse shaped by institutions such as UNESCO and ICOMOS, the study

conceptualizes heritage as a shared, transnational resource that reflects interconnected histories and collective identities. Using the Ghanaian-Danish "common heritage" framework, the paper traces the historical evolution of the site from a nineteenth-century Danish plantation to a reconstructed museum opened in 2007 through joint efforts between Ghanaian scholars, Danish institutions, and the Sesemi community. Drawing on historical and archival sources, the study highlights how the site initially embodied participatory and inclusive heritage management, with strong community involvement and international collaboration. However, the analysis reveals that the absence of institutionalized governance structures, succession planning, and long-term resource commitments led to a gradual decline following the loss of key project leaders. The deterioration of infrastructure and loss of artifacts underscore the fragility of heritage initiatives that rely heavily on individual actors rather than sustainable systems. The paper argues that while the Frederiksgave project demonstrates the potential of common heritage approaches to foster dialogue and shared historical understanding, its trajectory exposes critical gaps in sustainability planning. It concludes that effective heritage management requires robust institutional frameworks, continuous stakeholder engagement, and long-term strategic planning to ensure the preservation and relevance of such sites for future generations.

Session: 39 (Room 1)

39.1. Gestão do Património Subaquático e Desenvolvimento Turístico da Ilha de Moçambique

Alcínio Moreira Bernardo Adriano Muimela

A Ilha de Moçambique, classificada como Património Mundial, possui um significativo conjunto de vestígios de património cultural subaquático resultantes do intenso movimento marítimo histórico no Oceano Indico. O presente estudo analisa de que forma a preservação desse património pode contribuir para a potenciação do turismo local e para o desenvolvimento sustentável. A pesquisa baseou-se em revisão documental, recorrendo a entrevistas com moradores, operadores turísticos e um especialista do património, complementadas por analise bibliográfica e legislativa, aquando da realização do Trabalho de Culminação do Curso (monografia). Os resultados indicam que, apesar do elevado potencial turístico e científico do património subaquático da Ilha de Moçambique, a sua exploração ocorre frequentemente de forma descontrolada, marcada por pilhagem, fraca fiscalização e insuficiência de normas específicas de gestão. Constatou-se igualmente que a valorização turística deste património permanece limitada, embora exista reconhecimento do seu valor histórico, cultural e económico. O estudo defende a necessidade de adopção de estratégias integradas de preservação in situ, reforço do quadro legal, promoção de parcerias institucionais e envolvimento comunitário, de modo a garantir a exploração sustentável do património cultural subaquático. Conclui-se que a gestão adequada destes recursos pode constituir um importante vector de dinamização do turismo cultural e de desenvolvimento local na Ilha de Moçambique.

39.2. Mussel Processing and Women's Livelihoods in the Coastal District of Vilanculo, Mozambique

Berta Macamo, Abigail Moffett, Varsil Cossa, Silva Mutombene

The practice of mussel processing as a strategy among women in the coastal district of Vilanculo is deeply rooted in a historical continuum dating back to the Chibuene archaeological settlement of the mid-first millennium CE, and it has long been a culturally embedded subsistence activity in the region. The historical context of mussel processing, an

integral part of local culture for generations, is crucial to understanding its current socio-economic and environmental implications. However, contemporary practices are increasingly shaped by gendered economic vulnerability and growing pressure on coastal ecosystems, particularly mangrove forests, which have traditionally been used as fuel for shellfish processing. This study examines the socio-economic and environmental aspects of mussel processing as a livelihood strategy among women in the coastal district of Vilanculo, to assess the viability of introducing alternative processing technologies, such as solar cookers, that could reduce women's dependence on firewood while enhancing environmental sustainability. A qualitative case-study approach grounded in participatory rural appraisal was adopted to understand the lived experiences of mussel processors, the patterns of mangrove use, and the socio-environmental impacts of overexploitation. Findings reveal that mussel processing, a livelihood increasingly threatened by environmental degradation, restrictive conservation policies, and the lack of support for low-cost, locally appropriate innovations, is not only a means of income generation but a coping strategy for women navigating structural poverty, lack of formal employment, and the responsibilities of single parenthood. Therefore, empowering these women through culturally grounded, gender-sensitive, and environmentally sustainable interventions is crucial for enhancing coastal resilience and fostering inclusive rural development in Mozambique.

39.3. A Best Practice Protocol for Heritage and Development in Nigeria

Charles Le Quesne, Abubakar Sule, Caleb Adebayo Folorunso

Nigeria, like much of West Africa, is facing a crisis of loss of heritage in the context of ever accelerating development. At present, major infrastructure is taking place without any heritage protection measures. There is no legislation that addresses the issue and, therefore, no regulation. The result is uncontrolled, extensive but unquantifiable destruction to tangible and intangible heritage. This is despite the fact that many financial institutions funding major infrastructure have clear standards that require heritage assessments and documentation where impacts on living heritage and archaeology are likely to take place. This problem is exacerbated by the fact that environmental and social consultancies tasked with carrying out assessments of cultural heritage in the context of development have no reliable sources of information. Up to the present there is no map hard copy or digital of sites of cultural heritage importance in the country. Presented with a requirement to carry out impact assessments, therefore, developers have no guidance in terms of process nor do they have reliable sources of data. In this context that MOWAA and the AAN have developed a best practice protocol for heritage and development that sets out an approach that is in line with international standards and best practice. This is designed to provide a template for developers designing infrastructure projects, those advising on environmental and social impacts and government institutions looking to implement more effective systems of protection and documentation. This paper will present a summary of this work and explore some of the challenges involved with its implementation over the coming years

39.4. Património arqueológico e desenvolvimento local: caso do sítio arqueológico de Namilepia

Filipe Alage

As teorias de desenvolvimento endógeno apontam para o património cultural como um activo cultural com potencial para impactar o desenvolvimento local em território onde tais bens existam. Tal perspectiva tem animado os planificadores do desenvolvimento e profissionais do património que, dentre mais, passam a atribuir esse papel ao património. A luz desta teoria, o trabalho procura analisar o caso das pinturas rupestres de Namilepia localizadas no distrito de Monapo, província de Nampula e procura ver de que forma este bem patrimonial tem contribuído para o desenvolvimento local. Olhando para a relevância deste local arqueológico, o estudo procura analisar que relações podem ser feitas entre o sítio e o desenvolvimento territorial analisando os usos que se tem feito do local e sua relações com o desenvolvimento local. O estudo é resultado da pesquisa bibliográfica e visita de campo no qual foram realizadas algumas entrevistas abertas com actores da comunidade local. Como resultado, o estudo aponta que, apesar da relevância das pinturas rupestres e das iniciativas levadas a cabo para seu uso ao serviço do desenvolvimento, estas tem tido um impacto bastante limitado no desenvolvimento local. Tal se explica por outras condicionantes relevantes que tem grande peso.Em conclusão, o estudo sugere algumas recomendações para que o sítio torne-se mais visível e impacte o desenvolvimento local.

39.5. From Static Shell Middens to Living Systems: A Regenerative Economic Model for the

Jesse O'Driscoll, Miguel Ângelo Raimundo, Naomi Macamo, Silva Mutombene, Hamido Atuia, Solange Macamo, Paul Lane

The Chongoene and Xai-Xai Archaeological and Biocultural Heritage Park proposes a paradigm shift in African heritage management, moving from static site conservation to dynamic management of living territorial systems. The core challenge is creating economic sustainability while rejecting standard mass tourism. This paper presents the park's operational marketing blueprint, demonstrating how biocultural preservation and economic development form a symbiotic loop through a "Regenerative Marketing Ecosystem" driven by two mechanisms. First, we analyze The Living Asset (The Community). By safeguarding intangible heritage, specifically local "foodways," craft traditions, and oral histories, community members are transformed into active knowledge holders and economic beneficiaries. Second, we activate. The Narrative & Intelligence Engine. We translate this Living Asset into global visibility through cinematic, creator-led storytelling. This content acts as a data-gathering mechanism, generating real-time demand data to target specific, high-value traveler profiles. This drives low-volume visitation aligned with the park's ecological carrying capacity. This regenerative approach ensures marketing provides the financial incentive to keep ancient traditions alive. Revenue flows directly back into the community to protect the ecosystem, proving a holistic, living park is more valuable than a static ruin. This paper contributes by showing a new way of thinking about heritage parks in Africa. Instead of treating heritage as something frozen in time, it presents Chongoene and Xai-Xai as a living system where culture, nature, and people work together. It helps readers understand that protecting heritage does not only mean conserving old sites, but also supporting the daily life, knowledge, and traditions of the communities that live there. Another important contribution of this work is how it connects culture with economic sustainability. It also explains how local food, crafts, and stories can become real economic resources without losing their cultural meaning. By placing community members at the centre of the model, the project shows that people are not just beneficiaries of tourism, but key actors in creating value, while still preserving their identity and way of life. Moreover, our aim is to present a new marketing approach that respects the environment and local culture. That shows how storytelling and digital content can attract the right type of visitors, not mass tourists, but people who value culture and nature. In this way, marketing becomes a tool not only for promotion, but

also for protecting the marine heritage associated with ecological and intangible values and ensuring that tourism growth happens in a responsible and sustainable way.

39.6. M'Zab Valley World heritage site Participatory community-based safeguarding approach and further synergies with the 2003 Convention

Messili Lamia

Recognizing the importance of living heritage in all aspects of sustainability appears to be the main priority as we moved into the International Decade of Science for Sustainable Development 2024–2033. Proof of this is last year's commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Intergovernmental hydrological program with as advocacy action *Strengthening international cooperation for sustainable water management* honouring inter alia traditional hydraulic systems. Among them, the ancient system for collecting and distributing flood water in the M'zab Valley World Heritage site[1], also a protected sector, managed by the Office for the Protection and Promotion of the M'Zab Valley, Ghardaïa, Northern Sahara. This cultural property remains a unique model of human settlement in desert environments which retains its integrity almost intact. Specific agrobiodiversity with distinctive landscapes characterizes these vernacular oasian settlements and their remarkable fortified villages built since the early 11th century. The preservation of their original functions, particularly within intra muros areas of the pentapole, has contributed to maintaining its authenticity and viability to this day. They form resilient systems sustainably managed by actively engaged community members who contribute to the collective effort, according to a model of local governance and sustainable, innovative, and inclusive initiatives and solutions that are community-driven. It is considered here as an example of good safeguarding practices that best reflect the principles and objectives of the 2003 Convention for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage[2] in order to highlight the opportunity of and explore future synergies between the two Conventions.

39.7. Landscape Transformation and Heritage Exposure in Lamu, Kenya: A Remote Sensing and Sociocultural Assessment of LAPSSET Corridor Impacts

Pamela Ochungo

Large scale infrastructure development increasingly intersects with culturally sensitive landscapes, raising concerns regarding cumulative heritage exposure. The Lamu Port South Sudan Ethiopia Transport Corridor in coastal Kenya overlaps with a historically layered cultural seascape that includes archaeological sites and the UNESCO World Heritage property of Lamu Old Town. This study integrates ten-meter Dynamic World land use land cover analysis with qualitative interview data to evaluate landscape transformation within buffered areas surrounding archaeological sites between 2017 and 2025. Results demonstrate a substantial increase in built up area within archaeological buffers, corresponding to a marked spatial expansion. Site-level analysis reveals concentrated

[1] since 1982.

[2] The Register of Best Safeguarding Practices under the 2003 Convention is subject of a reflexion aimed at a "better" and broader implementation of Article 18 of the Convention, which pertains to it. Unlike the Convention's two Lists, this Register remains underused; to illustrate this, only one element from the Africa region has been selected on this register: *Success story of promoting traditional foods and safeguarding traditional foodways in Kenya*, inscribed in 2021.

growth near Kimbo and Mwea, indicating uneven spatial exposure to development pressure. Concurrent ecological restructuring includes a decline in shrub and cropland and increase in flooded vegetation, suggesting hydrological modification of coastal systems. Interview findings align with spatial evidence, highlighting restricted fishing access, changes in mangrove condition, and shifts in occupational patterns. By combining satellite derived metrics and sociocultural assessment, the study operationalizes landscape integrity as a measurable variable and advances remote sensing-based monitoring approaches in heritage science. The findings demonstrate emerging heritage vulnerability within the Lamu cultural landscape and underscore the need for continuous spatial monitoring in infrastructure intensive coastal environments.

39.8. The Potencial of Audiovisual in the Preservation and Promotion of the Namilepia Rock Paintings, Mozambique

Rodrigo Constantino Massumagy, Elvira Elias José, Felizardo Cézar Nafai

The article addresses the archaeological heritage of the Namilepia rock paintings, located in the Monapo district, Nampula province, northern Mozambique. This site holds profound mythical and cultural significance for the local community of the Emakua (Makua) ethnicity, embodying ancestral narratives, spiritual rituals, and collective identity. However, it faces critical challenges, including limited access (due to its remote location), maintenance difficulties (environmental degradation and lack of resources), and low dissemination, all of which threaten its long-term visibility and sustainability. The central focus lies in analyzing the potential of digital and audiovisual technologies as innovative tools to overcome these barriers, thereby promoting the preservation of the site and enhancing its recognition as both tangible and intangible heritage.

Methodology: The research adopts a mixed and interdisciplinary approach, combining: A comprehensive bibliographic review of previous studies on the Namilepia site, literature on cultural heritage theories (including concepts of preservation, symbolic value, and community-based management), and references to rock art in African contexts. Fieldwork conducted directly at the site, involving observation, documentation, and interaction with the local community. The practical production of a video prototype as a concrete output, demonstrating the application of audiovisual tools for recording, narration, and dissemination of the heritage.

Results: The findings highlight that digitization (through photographic records, audiovisual (educational and narrative videos) offer significant contributions: they enhance remote accessibility to the site, facilitate maintenance via digital monitoring, strengthen dissemination to broader audiences (including education and cultural tourism), and empower the Emakua community in preserving its mythical meaning. The produced video prototype serves as a viable proof of concept, illustrating how these mechanisms can integrate archaeological heritage into contemporary narratives, promoting its sustainability and global recognition without compromising the site's sacred local value.

39.9. Arquitectura como instrumento de valorização patrimonial e desenvolvimento sustentável: Parque Biocultural de Chibuene

Yuran Jessen, Judite Nhanombe

A estação arqueológica de Chibuene localiza-se na costa da província de Inhambane, no distrito de Vilankulo, aproximadamente a cinco quilómetros da vila do mesmo nome. Este sítio constitui um importante testemunho histórico das antigas redes de comércio que ligavam a costa do Oceano Índico ao interior do sul de África. Apesar do seu valor arqueológico e cultural, a área apresenta atualmente fragilidades relacionadas com a proteção do património, a ausência de infraestruturas de interpretação e visitação, bem como conflitos de uso do território associados ao desenvolvimento turístico e à ocupação do solo. Partindo deste contexto, o presente estudo tem como objetivo propor um modelo de valorização territorial e patrimonial através da criação de um Parque Biocultural em Chibuene. A proposta procura integrar conservação arqueológica, valorização da paisagem natural e desenvolvimento de equipamentos culturais capazes de promover a interpretação do sítio, a investigação científica e a educação patrimonial. Em particular, destaca-se o papel do centro de interpretação como instrumento fundamental para a mediação entre o património arqueológico, acomunidade local e os visitantes. Metodologicamente, o estudo baseia-se numa abordagem qualitativa que articula análise documental, estudo do contexto territorial e arqueológico, observação do local e análise comparativa de casos de estudo de centros de interpretação e parques patrimoniais. A partir desta base, desenvolve-se uma proposta arquitetónica e urbanística que procura respeitar as condicionantes ambientais e arqueológicas, ao mesmo tempo que cria estruturas de apoio à investigação, visitação e turismo cultural. O projeto pretende contribuir para o debate sobre a relação entre arquitetura, património e desenvolvimento sustentável em contextos arqueológicos africanos.

Session: 44 (Room 3)

44.1. Investigating Maternal Genetic Diversity in Medieval Nubia through Ancient DNA Analysis

Arianna Cozzarelli, Kendra Sirak, Matthew Emery, Robert Stark

Ancient DNA recovery from desert environments presents significant challenges, with heat and arid conditions accelerating DNA degradation. Nevertheless, genetic data from these regions greatly assist in broadening understandings of regional population interactions and movements over time. Medieval Makuria (6th–15th centuries CE) was the largest of the three Christian Nubian kingdoms and acted as a trade crossroad connecting Africa, Eurasia, and beyond. Within Makuria, the monastic community at Ghazali and the capital city of Old Dongola (Tungul) reflect two significant settlement locales of expected population interactions, providing compelling opportunities to investigate biogeographic diversity and population movement at two monastic and metropolitan sites. Ghazali's geographic isolation from the Nile River Valley and its desert setting suggest that individuals buried there traveled to the site intentionally, rather than reflecting a locally resident population. Old Dongola, an expansive urban landscape, occupied a strategic position along the Nile River across from the terminus of the Wadi Howar, a known travel route connecting the Nile Valley with Chad and trade networks like the Darb al-Arba'in, the forty day route. To further assess the genetic diversity at Ghazali and Old Dongola, DNA was extracted from the petrous portion of the temporal bone and ossicles of individuals interred at both sites. Successful retrieval and subsequent mitochondrial DNA assembly (Ghazali n=10; Old Dongola n=8) enabled mitochondrial haplogroup

assignments of 18 individuals, revealing matrilineal ancestry connected to both Africa and Eurasia. Such additional bioarchaeological data further attest to the complex cultural history of this region.

44.2. Ancient DNA and disease in southern African archaeology

Carina Schlebusch

Ancient DNA research has transformed interpretations of southern African population history, but its impact extends beyond ancestry to the reconstruction of past disease landscapes. Skeletal palaeopathology documents physiological stress, trauma and some infections, yet many infectious diseases leave no diagnostic skeletal lesions, limiting inference when used in isolation. Southern Africa currently provides a unique case where palaeopathology, human ancient DNA and direct molecular evidence of infection can be integrated: the ~2,000-year-old Later Stone Age child from Ballito Bay is the only individual in sub-Saharan Africa for whom all three lines of evidence are jointly available. Palaeopathological analyses of the Ballito Bay child document indicators of compromised health, including developmental stress and skeletal changes consistent with chronic disease burden. Shotgun metagenomic sequencing of the same individual recovered and authenticated an ancient Rickettsia felis genome, directly demonstrating infection with a flea-borne pathogen. Together, these data provide rare, mutually reinforcing evidence linking observed skeletal stress to an identified infectious agent in a mobile forager context. This integrated case challenges earlier interpretations of R. felis as a recently emergent pathogen associated with domesticated animals, instead demonstrating its presence among foragers with no association with farming or animal husbandry. More broadly, recent methodological advances show that systematic metagenomic screening of ancient human remains can embed disease directly into archaeological interpretation. Integrating palaeopathology with human and pathogen ancient DNA will allow archaeologists to assess disease burden and health stress alongside subsistence, mobility and environment, expanding how health and disease are incorporated into reconstructions of Africa's past.

44.3. La bioarchéologie, reconstitution de l'âge et conditions sanitaires des restes humains d'un site de la moyenne vallée du fleuve Sénégal: Doogal, 1650-1950 AD

Ibrahima Oumar SY

Cet article porte sur la reconstitution de l'âge dentaire et des conditions sanitaires des restes humains provenant du site de Doogal, 1650-1950 AD. Ce site est un complexe d'habitat et funéraire situé dans la moyenne vallée du fleuve Sénégal, au Sénégal. La méthodologie adoptée se fonde sur une observation directe et une inter-observation. Celles-ci permettent une caractérisation des différentes étapes du développement dentaire, allant de la calcification à l'éruption complète des dents. Elles offrent aussi la possibilité d'identifier et de discuter des pathologies dentaires et osseuses. Cette recomposition a pu révéler l'âge biologique, la présence de caries dentaires chroniques et une parodontite sur les restes des cinq individus humains étudiés. Ils sont constitués d'un adulte âgé, de deux adolescents et de deux enfants.

44.4. Current insights and future aDNA research perspectives on Africa's disease landscape

Maja Vukovikj

Africa's biodiversity, rapid ecological change and intense human wildlife contact make it a critical hotspot for emerging infectious diseases. Ancient DNA studies outside Africa have generated high-resolution genomes of ancient pathogens, transforming our understanding of past epidemics. In Africa, however, ancient pathogen research remains in its infancy, lacking a systematic survey of sub-Saharan contexts, with research efforts concentrated on Egyptian mummies. To date, only one study has directly analysed metagenomes from sub-Saharan human remains, identifying Rickettsia felis in a 2,000-year-old child from Ballito Bay, South Africa. This sparse genomic record contrasts with Africa's long history of infectious disease, reflected in burdens of typhoid, tuberculosis, cholera, malaria and schistosomiasis, and in genomic evidence pointing to an African origin of the MTBC ancestor. Written sources suggest African roots for the Justinian plague, and the continent continues to experience the highest global incidence of plague, with Madagascar as a hotspot. Yet evidence for how these pathogens shaped past African populations, influenced outbreaks and drove host adaptation remains limited. With expanding archaeological access, advances in biomolecular methods and increasing interest in Africa's disease history, the coming years are likely to transform our understanding of ancient pathogens and their impacts on African populations.

44.5. Are endocranial granular impressions pathognomonic of tuberculous meningitis or a marker of tuberculous infection? An investigation on a medieval osteoarcheological assemblage from Italy

Maria Laura Genchi

In recent paleopathological literature, granular impressions on the endocranial surface are considered pathognomonic of tuberculous meningitis. This study aims to verify the presence of granular impressions and assess their relationship with tuberculosis in an archeological human skeletal assemblage. Materials: The study analyzed the endocranial surfaces of 212 skulls (38 non-adults and 174 adults) from the medieval site of Pieve di Pava, Italy. Methods: Macroscopic and stereomicroscopic examination of the endocranial surface was conducted to evaluate the presence, location, and manifestation of granular impressions. Results: Granular impressions affected more than half of the individuals, with no statistical difference between males and females. Conclusions: The high frequency of granular impressions challenges their interpretation as pathognomonic of tuberculous meningitis, a rare complication of tuberculosis affecting the central nervous system. Instead, these lesions should be considered indicative of bacteremia, when bacilli reach the central nervous system and form tubercles on the meninges. It cannot be established whether these tubercles were quiescent or had ruptured, leading to tuberculous meningitis. Significance: Based on the pathogenic life cycle of M. tuberculosis, as defined in clinical settings, it seems prudent to consider granular impressions as a marker of tuberculosis infection, rather than of active tuberculosis disease or tuberculous meningitis in paleopathology. Limitations: Research limitations include the smaller number of non-adults compared to adults. Suggestions for further research: Screening of granular impressions in other large osteoarcheological assemblages could provide new and more reliable data on the spread of tuberculosis infection across different social contexts, geographical settings, and historical periods.

44.6. Paleo-brain or Endocranial compact soil? Insights from CT examination of endocranial mass

Pearl Lamptey

Background & Objective. Medical imaging techniques: computed tomography and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) are proven non-destructive tools for investigating the under-layer of living and dead organisms. Considering their viability for examining and reconstructing some archaeological artifacts, five human skulls with dense matter in the endocranial cavity were subjected to CT examination to analyze their internal characteristics for paleopathological insights and to confirm the possibility or otherwise of preserved brains.

Materials & Method: The skulls were excavated in the 20th century from archaeological sites: Sekondi and Ntereso in Ghana's Western and Savannah regions, respectively. Computed tomography examination of the crania was carried out using the Toshiba Aquilion One 640 slice CT scanner for slices between 0.5 mm and 5.0 mm in the axial protocol. The films were viewed with the Merge PACSTM software in the bone window with pre-set attenuations of 2000 HU window width and 500 HU center level.

Results & Discussion: Although no calcified carcinomas and white/grey matter were observed in the bone window, high-density artifacts, dark-grey low-density blotches (indicating decomposed tissues), post-mortem bone fragmentation and dental pathologies were visible. Moreover, the examination revealed an interesting necrophobic practice and the skulls' external aspects to have resulted from soil compression and not intentional cranial modification. The research underscores the significance of bioarchaeological enquiry to understanding the archaeological record.

44.7. Cross-regional assessment of skeletal and dental pathologies: evidence for reconstructing the intra-vitam health of Ghanaian ancestors

Pearl S. Lamptey

Background & Objective: Paleopathology allows the study, characterisation and differential diagnosis of skeletal and dental pathologies in past populations and assesses their evolutionary trajectory among contemporary populations. These pathologies elucidate population or individual intra-vitam health conditions and dietetics from interactions with environmental and cultural factors. The enviro-cultural influences may include dietary patterns and activities to which morbid and comorbid variables differ because of selective mortality and heterogeneous frailty (Buikstra, 2019a). The research sought to reconstruct the intra-vitam (oral) health of 25 individuals from four sites in Ghana from their skeletal and dental pathologies.

Materials & Method: The human remains were excavated in the 20th century from archaeological sites in Ghana's Western, Bono and Savannah regions. The study employed the mixed research approach involving standard anthropological observational charts/ scoring systems and CT examination.

Results: The skeletal pathologies (40%) included brucella spondylitis, porotic hyperostosis, sinus inflammation, osteoarthritis, head lice infestation, while the dental pathologies (60%) constituted: calculus, caries, enamel hypoplasia, hypercementosis, periodontitis and abscess.

Discussion & Conclusion: The pathologies were discussed in relation to physiological stressors, dietetics, developmental and functional stress on the teeth, and poor oral hygiene. The research provided multifactorial insights into the life histories (general health) of the individuals, ultimately contributing to the paleopathological discourse in the Ghanaian and West African regions.

44.8. Continuities and transformations in Ndau healing practices from precolonial times to the postcolonial era, 1890-2025

Portia Mlambo

The paper traces the historical development of Ndau indigenous healing practices from the precolonial period to the present. It argues that indigenous medicine continues to shape Ndau culture, despite the significant cultural transformations experienced over the years. I draw on archival data, document analysis, interviews and observations to understand how the Ndau continue to use indigenous knowledge systems to address health issues. I explore how different historical events have shaped Ndau healing practices. The study addresses a methodological gap by engaging the Ndau traditional healers, whose voices have been missing in the previous studies, yet they are the key players in indigenous medicine. The contemporary efforts in promoting heritage-based medicine among African countries call for further research into the dynamics of these practices to fully understand them and find ways to integrate them into the formal healthcare system. I specifically investigate the Ndau in Chipinge due to their long history with indigenous medicine. The study identifies major transformations among the Ndau over the years in terms of the symbols, rites, rituals and practices. Although these changes have had positive impacts on societal wellbeing, they also come with their shortcomings. For instance, the people lament how the healers have become power-hungry, focusing more on themselves rather than serving the community. Due to these shortcomings and colonial misrepresentations of African indigenous healing practices, people continue to be sceptical about them. Thus, the study recommends more programmes that educate the society about indigenous medicine for them to fully appreciate the dynamics.

44.9. Tombs of Tungul: Bioarchaeology and the Burial Landscape of Old Dongola

Robert J. Stark

Under excavation since 1964, the more than 60 years of research conducted to date at Old Dongola, Sudan the ca. 6th to 14th c. CE capital of the medieval Kingdom of Makuria known in Old Nubian as Tungul has brought to light numerous distinct burial localities, several of which have been additionally considered through bioarchaeological inquiries. Along with the varyingly preserved qubba style tombs and burials in proximity to such that prominently denote the development of a distinct Muslim cemetery space at Old Dongola, various diverse medieval period burial locales have been identified and excavated at the site, namely within the large Christian cemetery, in association with the Kom H monastery, various churches, and the citadel-settlement area. The location of Old Dongola between the Third and Fourth cataracts on the east bank of the Nile River across from the terminus of Wadi Howar (18.223056, 30.743889; ca. 242 masl), a long-known travel corridor connecting the Nile valley with Chad, marks a key nexus of population interactions, trade, religious authority, and political power. This presentation considers Tungul from a burial landscape perspective, adopting a bioarchaeological lens to provide context to the lived experiences and eschatology of the inhabitants of this medieval period capital city, namely through interrogation of burial styles, radiocarbon dating, osteobiographical details and palaeopathological observations, as well as isotopically informed perspectives on diet and mobility.

Session: 68 (Room 4)

68.1. Museu enquanto lugar de memória silenciada: O Museu das Pescas e a patrimonialização da actividade pesqueira em Moçambique, 1901-2013

Daniel Inoque

As actividades económicas são objecto de patrimonialização emergente nas sociedades contemporâneas como fruto da desactivação tecnológica e/ou da necessidade de legar a sociedade onde se inserem o papel desempenhado por uma dada actividade/sector na economia dos estados-nações. Neste sentido, considerando a importância não só económica como também social do sector pesqueiro e, no sentido de salvaguardar a sua memória, foi adoptado um museu que se constituiu como instrumento de preservação, não só da sua memória histórica, mas também de parte significativa da representatividade da cultura material e imaterial da comunidade pesqueira em Moçambique. É neste sentido que o trabalho visou sistematizar o historial da criação do museu para o sector das pescas de Moçambique, tendo notado que o processo data de há mais de um século, sendo a iniciativa, materializada em 2013. Partindo de uma pesquisa bibliográfica e documental, a posterior realizado um trabalho de campo para recolha de informação por via de entrevistas estruturada ou semi-estrutura, observou-se que o museu começa a reconfigurasse da sua função enquanto lugar da memória de legitimação do poder para um lugar da memória silenciada, associada a grupos socio-económicos ou seja, de áreas de actividades económicas ou ainda de comunidades que pelo seu papel relevante no desenvolvimento dos estados modernos, são objecto de patrimonialização como foi o caso do sector pesqueiro de Moçambique.

68.2. "Facing the colonial legacy in museum": the participatory museum and the challenges of teaching about the colonial past – the experience of the TRASNMAT research project (2021–2025)

Elisabete Pereira, Alexandra Marques, Maria Figueira

In this paper we present the participatory strategies and methodologies employed to promote historical awareness and address contemporary issues related to colonial legacies in museums. In the context of the 'Facing the Colonial Legacy in the Museum' exhibition, which ran from March to October 2025 at the Santos Rocha Municipal Museum in Figueira da Foz, Portugal, we adopted a transdisciplinary methodology, drawing on history, anthropology, archaeology, art history, heritage studies, and the participation of non-academic stakeholders. Through a collaborative and participatory format involving active visitor participation, the museum became an open space for shared knowledge and dialogue. By integrating new research and challenging colonial and racialised narratives through international collaboration, public engagement, and transparent provenance research, this exhibition demonstrates how museums can adopt inclusive, ethical, and decolonising practices to convey a more comprehensive and inclusive understanding. The curatorship revealed the colonial past of objects that had previously been framed by Eurocentric perspectives. It sought to stimulate dialogue, awareness, and new ways of interacting. This participatory approach not only challenges the museum's authority but also creates a space where history is no longer told by a single voice, but rather co-created by many. The aim is to demonstrate how an exhibition can be used as a participatory and engaging educational resource, designed as a space to encourage critical reflection on colonial legacies and their implications for contemporary museum practices.

68.3. Desafios de gestão e governança na transição da Casa do Maranhão para a REFESA

Iguatemy da Silva Carvalho

Este artigo investiga os desafios de gestão e governança enfrentados durante o período de transição e fechamento ao público da Casa do Maranhão, para uma suposta reformulação na REFESA, um processo marcado pela paralisia das obras físicas e indefinição orçamentária por parte do Estado. Diante desse cenário de imobilidade material e incerteza, o estudo analisa como a equipe técnica da instituição construiu um legado intelectual e de gestão, assegurando a preservação de seu acervo e relevância sociocultural. A pesquisa, configurada como um estudo de caso qualitativo, revela que a capacidade resiliente da instituição foi resultado de estratégias deliberadas baseadas em três pilares interligados: a gestão como ação museológica primária, redirecionando esforços para atividades realizáveis como a digitalização e documentação do acervo, transformando a crise em criatividade; a governança colaborativa como rede de sustento, que ativou arranjos informais e multidirecionais com parceiros da arte, cultura, ensino e pesquisa, garantindo legitimidade e ação por meio da interdependência; e a resiliência como prática cotidiana, onde a estratégia emergiu da improvisação orientada e das negociações constantes no dia a dia, em detrimento de um plano formal. Conclui-se que, em contextos de adversidade, o investimento na construção de um "patrimônio de gestão", composto por conhecimentos, protocolos e redes colaborativas, é tão vital quanto a infraestrutura física, demonstrando que a missão de uma instituição museal pode ser sustentada e seu legado ampliado mesmo em condições de severa restrição.

68.4. Musealização do património histórico militar em Moçambique

Moisés Timba

A comunicação aborda a história da musealização do património histórico militar em Moçambique iniciada no período colonial num contexto da ocupação e exploração colonial do território. Os museus, dentre vários objectivos, visavam contribuir para legitimação da história da ocupação e servir de propaganda turística da colonização. Com a independência nacional em 1975, num contexto de revolução, marcado pelo desejo de ruptura como passado colonial, o património histórico militar português e os museus militares criados, foram repensados, descontinuados ou requalificados visando a construção de uma nova identidade, o enaltecimento dos valores patrióticos e a promoção da unidade nacional mas, devido a limitações de diversa ordem os projectos iniciados enfrentaram dificuldades. Compreender a história da musealização do património histórico militar e contribuir para a salvaguarda do património histórico através de uma proposta de criação de um novo museu de história militar, que inclua a memória da resistência e um museu ao serviço da sociedade, são os objectivos da presente comunicação.

68.5. Museus do Mar: experiências e desafios para com os patrimónios

Larsen Vales

Moçambique possui um sub-território marítimo significativo, que representa 43% da superfície total. Com massas de águas interiores igualmente significativas, a milenar relação dos povos que habitam os espaços que configuram o território hoje designado República de Moçambique com o meio aquático remete para a necessidade de potenciar a paisagem marítima enquanto activo, sendo o património decorrente da referida relação a unidade básica e fundamental. Para garantir que o património das comunidades marítimas contribui para o desenvolvimento destas, aspectos como (i)

processos de patrimonialização, (ii) salvaguarda e (iii) promoção do conhecimento afiguram-se incontornáveis. Assim sendo, as dimensões político-administrativa, organizacional, técnica e financeira sustentam a medida estratégica de musealização, através do Museus do Mar e respectiva rede, sujeita a desafios contemporâneos que emergem dos contextos mundial e, principalmente, local e que se expressa através de 3 funções estruturantes: museu, investigação e literacia. Esta comunicação abordará a experiência e os desafios do Museu do Mar através de um conceito em implementação.

68.6. Revisiting Colonial Collections and Cultural Legacies in the Present Time. Shadowed Spaces in Museum Collections in Portugal

Nuno Silas

The presentation proposes a critical approach to Mozambican cultural heritage held in the collections of the former Instituto de Investigação Científica Tropical (IICT) and the Museu Nacional de História Natural e da Ciência (MUHNAC), Univ. Lisbon. It analyses selected artefacts and human remains, photographs and scientific reports produced during Portuguese geographic and anthropological to Mozambique (XIXth-XXth Century), preserved in physical or digital archives. If recent scholarship has engaged with colonial collections, systematic provenance research on Mozambican materials in Portuguese institutions remains under studied, and African perspectives underrepresented. The presentation aims to fill this knowledge gap, combining archival and provenance research with participatory methodologies. By critically re-evaluating the new formation and display of these collections, the project will produce original, situated curatorial and museological knowledge, contributing to reparative scientific practices and public debate on Portugal's colonial past.

68.7. The Museum as Forum and Arena for Curatorial Co-creation: The Case of the IAS Teaching Museum

Philip Owusu

This paper draws on my decade-and-a-half experience with the Institute of African Studies (IAS) Teaching Museum at the University of Ghana. Positioned as one of the academic resource units of the IAS, the museum gallery receives students offering different academic programmes for hand-on experiential learning. For other patrons, the museum provides the arena for engagements and reflections on artefacts that foster deeper understanding of African lifeways. In the last five years, more and more instructors have acknowledged the auxiliary role of the goldweights exhibition at the gallery to the teaching of their courses ranging from African Arts, Business, Drama and Theater, Heritage Studies, to Engineering and Material Science. Thus, the museum records an average of a thousand registered University of Ghana students in an academic year. With examples and illustrations on how I structure the interactions at the gallery to allow for co-creation, I argue that the museum could be a dynamic space for cross and multi-disciplinary learning. Hence, I advocate for a deliberate shift from the traditional curatorial pontification that projects certain authorized narratives. Thus, considering the museum as a forum and arena for encompassing process of meaning-making and interpretations through co-creation, the IAS Teaching Museum has proven to be viable teaching resource and maintains relevance.

68.8. New Museology in Practice: Visual Mapping and Relational Aesthetics through Ngwenya and Parks

Stephanie Jenn Boggs, EdD

New Museology advocates for engagements that redefine museums as agents of social change—active community spaces dedicated to collective advancement by prioritizing the experiences and co-created interactions between visitors, artifacts, and artists. It positions museums as custodians of artistic-intellectual knowledge and encourages creative, holistic, and integrative interdisciplinary approaches to documenting cultural heritage. New Museology in Practice: Visual Mapping and Relational Aesthetics through Ngwenya and Parks is a lecture and interactive opportunity that employs curatorial practices, art disciplines, adjacent materials, and theoretical tools and frameworks to conceptually re-present an artist, their work, and their resonance in museum spaces. It studies artists Malangatana Ngwenya (Mozambique) and Gordon Parks (United States) as multidisciplinary social-political artists and activists, critically organizing their lived experiences, spoken words, central ideas, influences, social circumstances, and related elements such as textures, colors, images, and symbols to make sense of their impact. It considers how museums can serve as facilitators of this embodied knowledge and culture, encouraging engagement from various entry points. Additionally, I am curious to explore with museum scholars and practitioners to what depths we can learn when we use complementary methods to contemplate, through communal dialogues and encounters with materials, how artists communicate themselves through their creative practices and how museums stage this conversation for visitors. As a tested framework and pedagogical tool, visual mapping provides museum educators with a grounded practice for this work, which demonstrates a method for teaching social-political art to college-level students in traditional institutional spaces.

68.9. Museus comunitários em Moçambique e no Brasil: desafios e possibilidades

Teixeira Chinaca, Martha Marandino, William Barbosa, Sinaida Vasconcelos

Como resultado do movimento da Nova Museologia surgido nos anos de 1960/70, ocorre a crítica às formas como os museus estão dissociados do seu contexto natural e sócio cultural, ao mesmo tempo que despontam experiências museais de co-criação comunitária, como um modelo de gestão museológica na contemporaneidade.Atualmente, em Moçambique e no Brasil, aumenta a responsabilidade pela conservação, valorização e divulgação do património cultural e natural, por meio de políticas e práticas voltadas a recuperar a história e as culturas dos povos que vivem nos territórios e cujas trajetórias foram apagadas, subordinadas ou negadas. Esse panorama aproxima dois diferentes e distantes países que possuem uma ligação profunda histórica, cultural e social, além da língua em comum: Moçambique e Brasil. Este trabalho apresenta o resultado de duas pesquisas sobre a mesma tipologia de museus – ecomuseus ou museus comunitários – nos dois países indicados. A primeira é uma dissertação de mestrado sobre o papel da mediação com as comunidades nos Museus do Mar de Moçambique, considerando a sua função educativa para múltiplos públicos, como também o saber popular. A segunda pesquisa de mestrado foi desenvolvida no Brasil, no Ecomuseu da Amazônia, na cidade de Belém no Pará. Ambas mobilizam os conceitos de museus comunitários, educação museal e bioculturalidade, para discutir os desafios e possibilidades da produção de espaços museológicos e de educação que valorizam saberes e fazeres locais ao mesmo tempo que tiram benefícios do património marinho e da floresta amazônica.

Session: 18 (Room 6)

18.1. Advances in Geoarchaeological Investigation of Prehistoric Sites in the Kilwa Coastal Landscape, Tanzania

Amanuel Beyin, Kokeli Peter Ryano, David K. Wright, Jan-Pieter Buylaert

Since 2016, our archaeological research on the Kilwa coast of southeastern Tanzania has investigated prehistoric sites aimed at establishing the role of eastern African coastal ecozones in early human survival and behavioral innovation. The main objectives of the project include, characterizing the environmental, cultural, and chronological contexts of prehistoric hominin activities through targeted excavations, systematic surface collections, and geomorphic prospection. Initial Optically Stimulated Luminescence dating of artifact-bearing strata at the primary site, Mnaraeka 01, indicates human occupation in the area extends beyond c. 200,000 years ago. The main behavioral residues at the sites are stone artifacts composed of prepared core and blade technologies attributable to the Middle Stone Age, quartz-based microlithic debitage, and Karari cores and occasional bifaces, demonstrating the inhabitants' flexible technological adaptation. This paper discusses the progress of our ongoing work at focal sites, emphasizing the emerging chronological, paleoenvironmental, and archaeological datasets. Moreover, depositional models related to the sedimentary history of the archaeology-bearing deposits will be discussed as a means of contextualizing hominin settlement and site formation histories.

18.2. The dynamic relationship between lithic technology and raw materials at Border Cave from the Middle Stone Age to the Later Stone Age

Dineo Masia, Paloma de la Pena Alonso, Zubair Jinnah

A drastic shift from Levallois technologies made on rhyolite and quartzite in the post-Howiesons Poort (post-HP; <60 ka) to bipolar knapped, chalcedony and quartz microlithic tools occurs from the Middle Stone Age (MSA) to the Later Stone Age (LSA) in southern Africa. This transition is well documented at Border Cave, which preserves one of the most complete cultural sequences in the region and forms the basis of Beaumont's (1987, Journal name, issue, page numbers) definition of the 'Early LSA' (ELSA). While MSA/LSA lithic technologies are well studied, raw material use remains understudied. This paper examines changes through time in (1) the frequency of cores, retouched tools, and points in Beaumont's collection; (2) the raw materials used to manufacture these tools; (3) shifting relationships between tool types and raw materials from the post-HP to the ELSA; and (4) potential raw material procurement outcrops. Technological, macroscopic, and petrographic analyses show a dominance of points in the post-HP and bipolar cores in the ELSA. Raw materials include ignimbrite, rhyolite, cryptocrystalline silicates, quartz, basalt, and quartzite. Early humans primarily used porphyritic ignimbrite cores in the post-HP and this is reflected in the final tools (retouched tools and points). They shifted to chalcedony cores in the ELSA but final tools rarely reflect this change. Geological evidence indicates ignimbrite and rhyolite were collected within 10 km from Border Cave, and cryptocrystalline silicates were likely sourced from amygdales in the volcanic rocks of the Jozini Formation. These results reveal strategic choices in tool production and material use at Border Cave.

18.3. Late Pleistocene and Holocene settlement patterns and climate conditions at the site Txina Txina, Massingir, Mozambique

Elena Skosey-LaLonde, Mussa Raja, Ana Gomes, Vera Gomes, Nuno Bicho

Mozambique's southern coastline has become increasingly vulnerable to tropical cyclones and flooding events. Over the past five years, the country has endured more than 20 major storms, with intensifying unpredictability threatening coastal livelihoods. This climatic volatility has added to the interest in Mozambique's archaeological record, particularly in the nation's biogeographical positioning as a potential refugium and migratory corridor between eastern and southern Africa for climatically stressed populations. This study reconstructs the mean annual air temperature (MAAT) and precipitation history of southern Mozambique over the past 30,000 years using $\delta^{18}O$ and $\delta^{13}C$ stable isotope and TEX86 analyses from the Lake Nyalonzelwe sediment core (Inharrime, Inhambane) and the Machampane River sediment at the archaeological site Txina Txina (Massingir, Gaza). Results suggest that: during the LGM, cold conditions were associated with site abandonment in back basin contexts, suggesting heightened vulnerability to temperature extremes in the Limpopo River Basin. MAAT stabilization and prolonged cyclone seasons may have facilitated episodic Bantu migrations through coastal Mozambique around 2.6 ka. During the earliest agricultural phases and into the medieval period, site abandonment is more closely tied to precipitation decline than temperature shifts, though, ultimately, resilience to drought is reflected in the intensified use of marine and coastal resources by agricultural communities in response the LIA cold conditions. The resulting paleoclimate and environmental archive sheds light on human-climate interactions and adaptive strategies exhibited by late Quaternary coastal populations in southeastern Africa.

18.4. Rethinking Stone Age boundaries: a flexible approach to MSA-LSA classification in eastern Africa and its implications for Homo sapiens behavioural adaptation

Francesco BucciCasari Degli Atti di Sassoferrato , Francesco Lucchini, Marianna Fusco, Enza Elena Spinapolice

The schematic definition of the Middle Stone Age/Late Stone Age (MSA/LSA) transition in eastern Africa is based on the presence/absence of specific technological and cultural traits, where the MSA is typically associated with points, Levallois and discoid methods, while the LSA is marked by an increase in blade production and geometric microlithic technologies. However, emerging evidence challenges this binary framework. Elements traditionally associated with either MSA or LSA appear across both periods, sometimes within the same assemblages. This overlap complicates the classification, highlighting the limitations of normative cultural taxonomies when applied to the complex and regionally variable record of eastern Africa. Here we propose an alternative classificatory approach based on fuzzy logic for MSA and LSA identification. We tested this approach on assemblages from several MSA, LSA, and MSA/LSA transitional sites across eastern Africa. While the assemblages clearly demonstrate the presence of diverse characteristics fitting both MSA and LSA technocomplexes, our proposed method evaluates the degree to which an assemblage can be classified as MSA, LSA or MSA/LSA transition based on both technological lithic industry traits and others evidence like ostrich eggshell beads, ochre, perforated shells, etc. expressed as a percentage. This offers a flexible and methodologically innovative solution to the challenges of archaeological classification. This comparative case study allows us to propose a more nuanced understanding of the MSA/LSA transition in eastern Africa, contributing to broader debates on the cultural adaptation of Homo sapiens.

18.5. From blocks to blanks: Reconstructing hornfels procurement during the Middle Stone Age by extensive refitting at the Jojosi open-air sites (KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa)

Gunther H. D. Moeller, Manuel Will

Procurement of raw materials constitutes an understudied step in lithic technology. We examine specialised lithic raw-material procurement in the early Middle Stone Age (MSA) by integrating techno-typological attribute analysis with systematic refitting at the Jojosi open-air localities (KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa). Such reconstructions remain scarce because strictly contemporaneous, in situ MSA lithic assemblages are rarely preserved in open-air settings, and rock shelter sequences commonly form palimpsests of mixed reduction episods dominant later knapping stages. We analysed 1442 hornfels artefacts from five stratified, spatially constrained artefact lenses at Jojosi 5–7, dated to ~220–110 ka, including plotted pieces (>2cm) and debitage from fine fractions. Systematic refitting documents conjoins and reduction sequences, while recording key refit sets via SfM. We integrate these results to test: i) assemblage integrity; ii) task-related, consistent reduction strategies of raw material procurement across sites; iii) whether reduced frequencies of preferential products reflect deliberate export.

All lenses are exclusively composed of hornfels and dominated by cortical products, core preparation elements, and abundant small- and microdebitage. Formal tools and retouching debris are practically absent. The 305 refitted artefacts in 103 groups reconstruct sequences that begin with initial-stage decortification and proceed to flexible platform-core strategies aimed at producing laminar blanks. The scarcity of preferential products matches selective export of blanks from the sites. Collectively, these results provide a high-integrity open-air record of early MSA core reduction and blank provisioning, refine our understanding of specialised procurement sites, and generate testable hypotheses on trajectories of exported hornfels blanks within regional settlement systems.

18.6. East African Arabian Palaeolithic Connections: New Evidence from Oman

Jiri Chlachula

East Africa and Arabia share a deep geological and paleogeographical history. Some of the oldest indices of the mammalian and human evolution demonstrate these close connections. Recent (2023-2026) Quaternary geology and geoarchaeology investigations in north-central Oman documented numerous (~30) Early and Middle Palaeolithic sites on rocky desert plains along the Al Hajar Mountains, following a discovery of the first multi-sequenced Palaeolithic locality at Manaqi (Chlachula, 2025). The open-air sites are contextually associated with Middle and Late Pleistocene palaeo-channel alluvia. The early occupations took advantage of local mafic and sedimentary rocky outcrops (basalt, gabbro, limestone, chert) used for stone tool making. Numerous lithic artifacts occur in concentrations on the desert surface; some are found in partly stratified, calcium-cemented alluvia. The technological and typological characteristics of the lithic industries document repeated MSA and LSA settlements. Diagnostic tool items include typical bifaces and prepared polyhedral cores, and show a clear linkage to the Acheulean tradition of Homo erectus and the Levallois Tradition of early Homo sapiens, respectively. The emerging evidence points to a broader geographical distribution of the chronologically sequenced peopling of the Arabian Peninsula linked to the early homini spreads from East Africa. More humid climate conditions and biotically productive environments are presumed for the stages of the Palaeolithic habitation.

18.7. Preservation, Visibility, and Social Connectedness in the Middle and Later Pleistocene Record of Eastern Africa

Kathryn Ranhorn

Rock shelter sites in eastern Africa provide key records of technological and ecological change across the Middle and Later Pleistocene. Such sites are central to reconstructing the evolution of human social behavior and demography. However, ongoing fieldwork and re-examination of legacy collections highlight the extent to which preservation and visibility influence the archaeological record in ways not always explicitly accounted for in interpretation. Drawing on recent field investigations, stratigraphic reassessment, and comparative analysis of lithic assemblages and site formation processes at two rock shelters in Tanzania, named Nasera and Kisese II, this paper evaluates how differential preservation affects the resolution at which technological and behavioral patterns can be identified. At Nasera, shifts in reduction strategies and toolkit composition, documented through attribute-based lithic analysis, intersect with challenges posed by partial curation and loss of provenance. At Kisese II, variability in sediment integrity, post-depositional disturbance, and degradation of associated rock art further complicate correlations between stratified deposits and broader behavioral models. Both cases demonstrate that interpretations of social behavior are inseparable from the conditions under which archaeological records are preserved, curated, and accessed. By foregrounding preservation as an analytical variable, this study contributes to efforts to refine research design and interpretation in eastern African Pleistocene archaeology. It emphasizes integrating geoarchaeological context, legacy data, and field observations to better assess the reliability and comparability of key sequences, underscoring that long-term sustainability of human evolution research depends on the stewardship of archaeological collections.

18.8. Pleistocene Archaeology and Environments of the Kagera River

Laura Basell, Charles Kinyera-Okeny, Merrick Posnansky

The Pleistocene archaeology of the Kagera River catchment offers a valuable opportunity to explore the mosaic, nonlinear nature of hominin behavioral evolution in eastern Africa. This paper presents results from investigations at two stratified sites, Nyabusora in northern Tanzania and Rubirizi in southwestern Uganda, combining legacy archives, artifact collections, and fieldwork results by a multidisciplinary team. Together, these sites illuminate technological diversity, environmental complexity, and varied adaptive strategies in Middle Pleistocene hominins, potentially challenging models of linear technological 'progression'. At Nyabusora, re-examination of the unpublished 1959 and 1961 excavation archives of M. Posnansky and W. W. Bishop, supported by a 2014 survey led by the authors, provides the first comprehensive synthesis of the site's Sangoan lithics, rare faunal remains, and sedimentological context. As the only Early to Middle Stone Age site in the region to yield both lithics and faunal remains, Nyabusora offers critical insights into raw material selection, subsistence possibilities, and landscape use within a period increasingly recognized for its behavioral flexibility. The stratified sequence, likely dating to the Middle Pleistocene, contributes new data on technological variability and ecological adaptations within the western Lake Victoria–Nyanza Basin. At Rubirizi, results of excavations of stratified lithics in the Kagera system are also presented. This research positions the Kagera catchment as a key region for understanding Middle Pleistocene hominin diversity, innovation, and coexistence across equatorial Africa. Both regions are the focus of ongoing research.

18.9. A relative geologic time (RGT) model from Mochena Borago Rockshelter

Peter Lanzarone, Steven Brandt, Erich Fisher

Mochena Borago Rockshelter is an archaeological site located in southwest Ethiopia. The site contains a rich accumulation of lithics deposited in sedimentary sequences punctuated by interlayers of volcanic tephra. Artifacts span from the Late Pleistocene through the Holocene, supporting a continuous occupation of the site. A ground penetrating radar (GPR) survey was acquired to map portions of the shelter away from excavation units. The raw GPR data were processed to remove airwaves, or data artifacts from ray scattering off the shelter walls and ceiling that contaminated the primary GPR signal. The data was interpreted using a variety of methods. Early on in our interpretation, we relied on a facies-based methodology that allowed the correlation of radar profiles across the site. Although this presented a useful view of the shelter subsurface, the interpretation was limited to the individual 2D profiles. We have now taken an innovative new approach considering the dipping reflections we observe in the GPR data. In this paper, we present a three-dimensional relative geologic time (RGT) of Mochena Borago. The model is constructed by incorporating all the coherent reflections in the 2D GPR dataset, where each part of the reflection is considered as a geological time surface. In this way, we can represent the subsurface evolution of the shelter from the basement through the shelter floor. This has allowed us to infer and characterize the subsurface sedimentary sequence at the site and compare with our observed stratigraphic profiles from excavations.

18.10. Early Homini Spread from Africa: New Evidence from Oman, East Arabia

Jiri Chlachula

Eastern Africa and Arabia share a deep geological and paleogeographical history. Some of the oldest indices of the mammalian and human evolution demonstrate these close connections. Recent (2023–2026) Quaternary geology and geoarchaeology investigations in north-central Oman documented numerous Early and Middle Palaeolithic sites on rocky desert plains along the Al Hajar Mountains, following a discovery of the first multi-sequenced Palaeolithic locality at Manaqi. The open-air sites are contextually associated with Middle and Late Pleistocene palaeo-channel alluvia. The early occupations took advantage of local mafic and sedimentary rocky outcrops (basalt, gabbro, limestone, chert) used for stone tool making. Numerous lithic artifacts occur in concentrations on the desert surface; some are found in partly stratified, calcium-cemented alluvia. The technological and typological characteristics of the lithic industries document repeated Middle- and Later Stone Age settlements. Diagnostic tool items include typical bifaces and prepared polyhedral cores, which show a clear linkage to the Acheulean tradition of Homo erectus and the Levallois tradition of early Homo sapiens, respectively. The emerging evidence points to a broader geographical distribution of the chronologically sequenced peopling of the Arabian Peninsula linked to the early hominin spreads from eastern Africa. More humid climate conditions and biotically productive environments are presumed for the stages of the Palaeolithic habitation

18.11. Anatomical, behavioral, and ecological contexts at the dawn of Homo sapiens: New data from Megenta, Afar Rift, Ethiopia

Yonatan Sahle, Dawit Tibebu, Behailu Habte

While the emergence of distinctive anatomical and behavioral patterns often associated with our species is increasingly attributed to abrupt and recurrent ecological variability beginning ~500,000 years ago, the empirical testing of such models remains constrained by a dearth of securely dated Middle Pleistocene African contexts. Our research at Megenta, in Ethiopia's Awash basin, promises a detailed understanding of such dynamics across this critical period. By integrating novel hominin fossil, archaeological, and paleoecological data, we elucidate the intricate processes of anatomical and behavioral transition as well as environmental context during this period. Consistent with broader regional patterns, the Megenta hominin remains exhibit a complex mosaic of primitive and derived features. The associated lithic material—while characteristically Late Acheulean demonstrates sophisticated core preparation and predetermined debitage exploitation reminiscent of the Levallois technology.

Session: 19 (Room 7)

19.1. Middle Stone Age and Late Stone Age of southern Mozambique: possibilities, depth and challenges

Décio Muianga

Although research on the Middle Stone Age (MSA) and Late Stone Age (LSA) in Southern Mozambique has expanded over the past few decades, it remains characterised by inconsistent data, methodological discrepancies, and limited integration with broader discussions in southern Africa. This paper critically examines the current state of knowledge in this field, highlighting the main issues and opportunities to improve our understanding of human occupation, technological change, and environmental adaptation during this transitional period. Significant issues include the scarcity of well-stratified and securely dated sites, the poor preservation of organic materials, and the underrepresentation of coastal and inland ecological zones. Furthermore, interpretations of cultural variability and continuity between MSA and LSA populations have been constrained by the reliance on typological frameworks without sufficient contextual analysis. Despite these limitations, southern Mozambique offers significant research potential. Rock shelter sequences, open-air sites, and coastal deposits provide opportunities to investigate long-term human environment interactions, mobility patterns, and subsistence strategies. Advances in geoarchaeological methods, micromorphology, and absolute dating techniques such as optically stimulated luminescence (OSL) and radiocarbon dating enable more refined chronologies and site formation analyses. Furthermore, an interdisciplinary approach integrating lithic analysis, zooarchaeology, palaeoenvironmental reconstruction and genetic data, where possible, can contribute to a more holistic understanding of population dynamics and cultural change. The paper also addresses broader challenges, including logistical constraints, limited funding, and the need for stronger collaboration between local institutions and international research teams. It is vital that ethical considerations and community engagement form part of any sustainable research practice and heritage management strategy. By critically assessing these issues, this contribution aims to outline future research directions that move beyond descriptive approaches toward integrated, regionally grounded frameworks, positioning southern Mozambique as a key area for understanding the MSA/LSA transition in southern Africa.

19.2. Beer and Metal: Contextualizing spatially distributed excavation areas at Holley Shelter, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

Emil Schummers, Gregor Bader, Manuel Will

Holley Shelter is a Middle-(MSA) and Later Stone Age (LSA) site located in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The site was first excavated by Gordon Cramb in the 1950s and has been re-excavated since 2022 by G. Bader and M. Will. Since then, two areas, one in the northern (North Coast), one in the southern (South Coast) part of the shelter, were excavated. The first results from the North Coast were recently published and dated to between 33-36 000 cal BP. The archaeological layers in this area are named after metal bands and contain an unusual expression of the final MSA, with multiple splintered pieces, unifacial points, and laminar blank production. The South Coast, where the layers are named after beer brands, remains unpublished. This study presents the results of the lithic technological analysis of layer Castle (CST) in the South Coast. The primary goal is to compare the assemblage from CST to the already published assemblages from the North Coast, to make assumptions about chrono-cultural correlations, and to infer patterns of spatial site use within Holley Shelter. The lithic analysis shows that the studied assemblage is characterized by large hornfels blades and a high frequency of splintered pieces. Unifacial points, bipolar percussion, and sandstone tools are additional, more minor parts of the assemblage. Based on these findings, we tentatively correlate CST and the North Coast excavation area and interpret our results in the wider frame of ongoing debates about regional variation amongst final MSA assemblages in southern Africa.

19.3. Preliminary results from Ghana Palaeolithic Project

Eslem Ben Arous, Alexander Blackwood, Eleanor Scerri, Samuel Amartey

The Middle Stone Age (MSA) emerged across Africa around 300 ka, broadly contemporaneous with the earliest fossils of Homo sapiens, and represents a key phase in the evolution of human behavior and material culture. Despite its significance, the timing and nature of the MSA's emergence remain poorly understood in West Africa due to the scarcity of well-dated archaeological sites. Recent multidisciplinary research in Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire has begun to address this gap, establishing human occupation in the region by ~150 ka, identifying some of the earliest MSA assemblages at ~140 ka, and documenting the occupation of previously unrecognized biomes, including tropical forests and mangroves. To further investigate regional variability in early human lifeways, the Ghana Palaeolithic Project (GPP) was initiated in 2025 to explore the transition from the Earlier Stone Age to the MSA and to study the MSA in Ghana in greater depth. Survey of the Dayi River system (Volta Region) led to the discovery of Dogloboe 1 (DGB1), a stratified MSA site preserving an in situ lithic assemblage beneath 2–3 m of colluvial deposits. Excavations recovered over 300 minimally disturbed artefacts, likely reflecting primary knapping activities. Ongoing optically stimulated luminescence (OSL) and electron spin resonance (ESR) dating aim to establish a robust chronological framework. Here, we present the first results of this project and discuss their implications for the emergence, persistence, and diversity of the MSA in West Africa.

19.4. The Missing Link Finding and contextualizing the Later Stone Age of northern KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

Gregor D. Bader, Christian Sommer, Dominic Stratford, Gunther Möller, Jocktan Mtani, Stephan Woodborne, Jörg Linstädter, Gavin Whitelaw

Over the past decades, different research teams have significantly improved the resolution of the Middle and Later Stone Age (MSA & LSA) in southern KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) and Eswatini. New archaeological investigations are underway in southern Mozambique, along the border with Eswatini, at several rock shelters and MSA/LSA open-air sites. Numerous research questions have arisen from these projects that address the spatial and temporal relation of MSA and LSA assemblages in southern KZN, Eswatini, and Mozambique, and the near absence of late Pleistocene and early Holocene LSA assemblages in Eswatini. Questions also center around the role of natural geographic boundaries and environmental conditions on variability in material culture. Targeting these research questions is limited by a large area of archaeological no-man's-land between southern KZN, Eswatini, and southern Mozambique. To overcome these limitations, in 2025, we began new fieldwork at Zuka Private Game Reserve, located at the center between the three areas of major research efforts. Zuka further covers diverse vegetation zones and the two major biomes documented across all project sites: the Savanna and the Indian Ocean Coastal Forest. Additionally, Zuka is located at the southernmost extension of the Lubombo Mountains, which are proposed to form a natural geographic boundary that may have influenced human and animal migration and the transmission of knowledge. Here we report on the first results from the newly discovered Holocene hunter-gatherer site, Crowned Eagle Shelter at Zuka. In addition, we introduce a second, highly relevant LSA site in Eswatini, Khabane Cave.

19.5. From blocks to blanks: refitting-based reconstruction of Middle Stone Age hornfels procurement at the Jojosi open-air sites (KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa)

Gunther Möller

This study reconstructs specialised lithic raw-material procurement in the early Middle Stone Age (MSA) by integrating techno-typological attribute analysis with systematic refitting at the Jojosi open-air localities (KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa). Such reconstructions remain scarce because strictly contemporaneous, in situ lithic assemblages are rarely preserved as rock-shelter sequences frequently constitute palimpsests, while open-air contexts are commonly affected by erosion and post-depositional disturbance. We analysed 1442 hornfels artefacts from five stratified, spatially constrained artefact lenses at Jojosi 5-7 dated to ~220 110 ka, including individually plotted pieces (>2 cm) and debitage from fine fractions within a techno-typological attribute and reduction stage analysis framework. The systematic refitting studies document conjoins and reduction sequences while recording key refit sets via SfM. We integrate these results to test for i) assemblage integrity, ii) task-related, consistent reduction strategies of raw material procurement across the sites, and assess iii) whether reduced frequencies of preferential products reflect deliberate export of preferential products. All lenses are exclusively composed of hornfels and are dominated by cortical products, core preparation and rejuvenation elements, and abundant microdebitage, whereas formal tools and retouching debris are practically absent. The 305 refitted artefacts in 103 groups reconstruct reduction sequences that begin with initial-stage decortification and proceed to flexible platform-core strategies aimed at the production of laminar blanks. The relative scarcity of preferential products is consistent with the selective removal and export from the knapping sites. Collectively, these results provide a high-integrity open-air record of early MSA core reduction and blank provisioning, refine our understanding of specialised lithic procurement sites, and generate

testable hypotheses on potential trajectories of exported hornfels blanks within regional settlement systems.

19.6. Pyrotechnologies and the Sensible Terms of Life in central and southern Africa, 3000 BCE to 1700 CE

Kathryn de Luna

For five thousand years, African men and women living in “Bantuphone” Africa – a region extending from the Cross River in Nigeria, through the forests of central Africa, to the savannas and coasts of eastern and southern Africa characterized by the predominant use of Bantu langauges – understood “radiation” (the linked phenomena of heat and light present in fire) as a metaphor for “worldly lifeforce” and of pyro-technologies as a means for technicians to manipulate these lifeforces in a morally legitimate way. Bantu speakers developed and then held fast to this specific way of thinking about the spiritual connections between fire and lifeforce, even as their repertoire of pyro-technologies grew and changed. This essay connects reconstructed lexicons of pyro-technology to archaeological evidence to recover the changing sensorial underpinnings of developments in pyrotechnologies (swiddening, potting, cooking, and smelting) across thousands of years of extraordinary political, economic, and social changes in central and southern Africa. Such terms reveal the ways pyrotechnicians, politicians, and consumers alike situated changing pyro-technologies and their products in a system of values that helped users understand their connections to political authority and good living and help explain the particular signatures of firework we see in the archaeological record.

19.7. Mozambique Stone Age Landscape: A Decade of Archaeological Research

Nuno Bicho, Célia Gonçalves, Hilário Madiquida, João Cascalheira, Jeff Rose, Jonathan Haws, Michael Benedetti, Michael Daniels, Milena Carvalho, Mussa Raja

In the last decade, Stone Age archaeological research in Mozambique has expanded substantially, yielding one of the most comprehensive prehistoric settlement datasets in southeastern Africa. This paper presents a spatial and chronological analysis of 657 Stone Age sites, including approximately 300 newly documented localities discovered through systematic survey campaigns between 2010 and 2025. These new discoveries nearly double the previously known record, fundamentally transforming our understanding of prehistoric occupation across the Early, Middle, and Late Stone Ages in this understudied yet critical region. Analysis of altitudinal distribution reveals significant differences between chronological periods: ESA sites cluster at lowest elevations, MSA at highest, and LSA at intermediate positions. When multicomponent sites are included, 45.8% of all documented sites contain MSA evidence, establishing the MSA as the dominant phase and indicating maximum territorial expansion during this period. Spatial clustering intensifies progressively from ESA through LSA, suggesting a long-term shift from extensive mobility toward more intensive landscape use. Provincial patterns reveal four distinct regional settlement zones, with the Maputo, Niassa, and Gaza Provinces dominated by MSA occupations, and Sofala Province by LSA coastal plain use. These findings demonstrate that systematic open-air survey provides critical data for testing hypotheses about the emergence and dispersal of anatomically modern humans. By combining spatial analysis with chronological and typological data, this paper contributes to an emerging, locally grounded vision of Stone Age behavioral variability in southeastern Africa - one built on a substantially expanded empirical foundation.

19.8. Lithic techno-economics and OSL chronology of the Later Stone Age at Chessungalane, Save River Valley, Mozambique

Osama Samawi, Jeff Rose, Jonathan Haws, Mussa Raja, Nuno Bicho

Nestled between East and Southern Africa, the Stone Age archaeology of Mozambique offers important insights into Later Stone Age (LSA) behavioral variability across a region pivotal to understanding human adaptations. Here, we present results from technological analysis, refitting, and Optically Stimulated Luminescence (OSL) dating of the newly discovered site of Chessungalane in south-central Mozambique. OSL dates indicate occupation spanning ~23-7 ka, corresponding to the Early LSA through Wilton periods. Technological analysis of lithic artifacts, refitting, and raw material survey reveals differential technological investment strategies employed by LSA groups. Chert was introduced during last occupation phase for systematic bladelet production through complex reduction sequences, likely due to its scarcity and superior knapping qualities. In contrast, quartz and quartzite were procured during all the occupation phases for simple flake production via shorter, simpler reduction sequences, reflecting their local abundance and fracture constraints. The results from Chessungalane demonstrate a strong relationship between raw material availability, quality, and technological investment.

19.9. Marshill Rockshelter (Eastern Cape, South Africa): A new Late Pleistocene and Holocene archaeological sequence in the Maloti-Drakensberg piedmont

Paloma de la Peña, Molefyane, T., Arriaza, M.C., Croll, K

In this presentation, we report the first steps for establishing a regional sequence at a selected site of the Stormberg: Marshill rock shelter. We present the first archaeological analyses on the stratigraphy, geochronology, fauna, pollen and lithic. The site has a long and complex stratigraphic sequence with three clusters of dates: a group of dates pertaining to the last 2000 years, another clustering around the Terminal Pleistocene (10 to 15 ka), and finally a cluster older than 20 ka. The archaeological material from the first excavations at the site is in accordance with these initial ages, and show unique snapshots in time from the deep Upper Pleistocene to late Holocene and historical periods in this region. The site features a Middle Stone Age archaeological assemblage (represented in different layers) that shows some similarities with other sites in the Grassland, Savana, and Fynbos biomes of southern Africa, although with the lithic evidence available at this time it is difficult to establish stronger comparisons. Whereas the Later Stone Age stone tools could be related to some Wilton assemblages, the Marshill Holocene layers are microlithic and oriented towards the production of small flakes, most likely from unifacial cores. Regarding the initial faunal and pollen analyses, these accord with historical records from the area, indicating open grasslands with thicketed kloofs. In terms of evidence for subsistence behaviour, the occurrence of domestic stock suggests links to pastoralist groups and a herding economy in the upper Holocene layers.

19.10. Biomass tar, Podocarpus leaves and the diversity of southern African Stone Age adhesives

Patrick Schmidt, John Parkington, Armelle Charrié-Duhaut

Adhesives are among the most informative archaeological artefacts for understanding the behaviour of Stone Age forages. In the southern African Middle and Later Stone Age, the botanical origin of

most adhesives was identified as conifers of the genus Podocarpus. The earliest identifications of Podocarpus adhesives come from Elands Bay Cave, Border Cave and Diepkloof Rockshelter. However, more recently, it has been shown that similar adhesives can be, and were, produced from many plants available on the southern African subcontinent, opening important questions about the role of Podocarpus within these plants. Here, we re-investigate the Later Sone Age adhesives from Elands Bay Cave and compare them to natural and experimentally produced adhesive substances, using infrared spectroscopy and mass spectrometry. We find that Elands Bay Cave artefacts were made from the leaves of several plant species including Podocarpus spp using the condensation method. We also identify the oldest archaeological record for an adhesive based on water-soluble plant gum. These findings have important implications for our understanding of Stone Age adhesives as proxies for human evolution and the dynamics of invention. Early attributions to Podocarpus were correct but did not represent the entire complexity of the South African adhesive technology in terms of the raw materials used.

19.11. Lechwe, lithics and landscape connectivity in the Pleistocene central interior of southern Africa.

Will Archer

Wetlands structure ecological distributions and movement pathways in semi-arid environments, yet their significance for Middle Pleistocene landscapes in the central interior of southern Africa remains underdeveloped. We revisit the Florisian wetland model, most explicitly synthesized by Brink (1987, 2016), by integrating evidence from the Florisbad faunal record, comparative faunal structure at other sites, regional palaeohydrology, and published demographic comparisons between wetland- and arid-adapted antelopes. Lechwe (Kobus leche), obligate wetland specialists absent from the region today, appear in abundance at Florisbad by ~200 ka but are absent from older central South African records such as Cornelia (~1 Ma), indicating a major shift in hydrological connectivity. Florisbad is important because this same sequence documents not only the first appearance of lechwe in the region, but also the earliest currently documented Homo sapiens and the earliest well-contextualized early Middle Stone Age in southern Africa, with Levallois technology already present in units dated to ~200 ka. Comparative faunal analyses indicats that Florisbad represents a broader wetland-rich ecological structure rather than a local spring anomaly, while Kalahari palaeolake records and genomic contrasts between lechwe and gemsbok indicate repeated expansions and contractions of wetter sub-continental conditions. We argue that Florisbad formed part of a broader, temporally structured Florisian wetland system within which both faunal dispersal and, more tentatively, hominin movement and interaction may have been facilitated.

Session: 2 (Room 8)

2.1. Coastal Benin in the Precolonial Period: Grand-Popo as an Early Atlantic Trade Center

Affolbai Angelo Ayedoun

Long before Ouidah became a major center of Atlantic trade in West Africa, the Grand-Popo region, located on the coast of what is now the Republic of Benin, was an early contact zone with Europeans in the second half of the fifteenth century. This Paper examines the pre-colonial history of Benin's coast through the case of Grand-Popo, a settlement located between the lagoon and the Atlantic Ocean. As such, it can be considered as one of the first anchor points for interactions between local societies and external actors in this part of the Gulf of Guinea. Framed by the concept of the

maritime cultural landscape, this study combines terrestrial and underwater material cultures, oral traditions, and historical sources to analyze patterns of occupation and interaction during the second millennium AD. Preliminary data indicate that Grand-Popo served as the first node in emerging Atlantic trade networks, where local communities were actively engaged in the expansion of trading systems while negotiating dynamic coastal conditions. Material evidence reveals how trade, mobility, and ecological adaptation have shaped local identities and spatial organization.

2.2. Decolonising the Deep: Because Wrecks Aren't the Whole Story in South Africa

Briege Williams

South Africa's maritime archaeological landscape illustrates the broader transformation underway in African maritime heritage practice. For much of the 20th century, research in the region was shaped by colonial salvage and a narrow focus on European shipwrecks. Today, however, a decisive shift toward African-led, community centred, and decolonizing methodologies is redefining the field. The South African Heritage Resources Agency's Maritime and Underwater Cultural Heritage (MUCH) Unit now oversees a diverse range of sites, including submerged prehistoric landscapes, indigenous fish traps, and sacred inland lakes. This expanded scope underscores a move beyond shipwrecks toward more holistic understandings of coastal and underwater heritage. Research incorporating non wreck evidence further reflects this shift. Stone walled fish traps highlight indigenous engineering and resource-management systems, while submerged prehistoric finds reveal deep, long-term human engagement with coastal environments. Additionally, depictions of ships in San and Khoi rock art provide early African interpretations of foreign maritime presence and enrich our understanding of cross-cultural encounters. Decolonizing practice is also evident in projects such as the study of the São José, a slave ship wrecked off Cape Town, which centres African diaspora histories and the lived experiences of enslaved people. Parallel efforts to integrate Intangible Cultural Heritage into coastal and Marine Protected Area management further exemplify this paradigm shift. This talk will explore the shift in South Africa away from perceived colonial heritage to a more multidimensional understanding of a broader heritage perspective, all whilst aiming to move towards a more inclusive and sustainable future.

2.3. Community archaeology in practice. The role of local communities in the research, presentation and management of the 16th Century Ngomeni shipwreck in Kenya

Caesar Bita

Archaeological research has shown that for over 2000 years, the East African coast was part of the ancient global maritime network. Through these periods and later, this coast exhibited several thriving port cities from Somali in the north, to Mozambique in the south. Bound by the Western Indian Ocean, many shipwrecks fell casualties of the lack of modern navigational tools and seabed of this region is today a rich archive of underwater cultural heritage (UCH). Despite this rich UCH resource in the sub-Saharan region, many countries are yet to adapt underwater archaeology in its management with many local communities remaining unaware of the significance of this resource. Kenya however is putting in place strategies to ensure sustainable management of her UCH. This paper explores the involvement of locals in the ongoing research on the 16th century Ngomeni shipwreck in Malindi Kenya. It brings into perspective of how local communities apply indigenous knowledge in the research and management of heritage. It underscores how engagement of communities in underwater archaeology is important in the sustainable preservation and management of cultural heritage.

2.4. “Pedra a Pedra construímos um novo dia” - Collaborative development of Maritime archaeology in Mozambique.

Cézar Mahumane, Celso Simbine, Ricardo Duarte, Steve Lubkman, Marc-Andre Bernier, David Conlin, Crimildo Chambe, Samira Jamu, Saide Selemane, Momade Ossumane, Amade Viegas

We document the last quarter century struggle to preserve and protect Mozambique Island’s Underwater Cultural Heritage through the mobilization of a coalition of Mozambican archaeologists and international collaborators and fostering local community involvement to face the formidable challenges –and address damage caused by international salvage companies; and offer alternatives based on best-practice standards in archaeology and that are decolonizing heritage, history, and archaeology itself. Through strategic collaborations, Mozambique has developed new national research capacity, is contributing to regional and international capacity building, and pursuing collaborations on specific underwater and maritime landscape sites that address a millennium of Mozambique’s involvement in multiple strands of transoceanic exchange. Despite these developments, there are still major challenges faced in terms of legislation, compliance and recognition of the maritime cultural heritage.

2.5. Decolonising Maritime Narratives: Shipwrecks as Gateways to Broader Aquatic Heritage in Namibia.

Eliot Mowa

African maritime archaeology has historically been framed through colonial lenses that privilege European exploration, trade, and technological achievement while marginalizing African experiences and memories connected to maritime spaces. This paper proposes a transformative interpretive framework for maritime heritage in Namibia by foregrounding inclusive narratives that recognize multiple historical voices embedded in shipwrecks and related underwater cultural heritage. Drawing on case studies such as the Bom Jesus shipwreck (1533), the Eduard Bohlen shipwreck (1909), and inland underwater cultural heritage located in Namibian rivers and lakes, the study demonstrates how maritime sites can serve as anchors for broader, community-centered heritage interpretation. The Bom Jesus provides insight into early global trade networks and the circulation of commodities and people along the African coast. In contrast, the Eduard Bohlen represents a more complex and contested heritage landscape. While the vessel functioned as a transport link for European settlers between Swakopmund and Cape Town, historical accounts also indicate its use as a holding vessel for incarcerated Herero and Nama individuals during the colonial period. This duality reveals how a single maritime site can embody both colonial mobility and indigenous suffering and resistance. By integrating archaeological evidence, historical documentation, and community perspectives, this paper argues for an interpretive approach that acknowledges these layered meanings. Such an approach allows both European-descended and African communities to engage with maritime heritage as part of their shared yet contested past. Ultimately, the study calls for African maritime archaeology to move beyond colonial narratives toward inclusive interpretations that foreground memory, resilience, and resistance within maritime landscapes.

2.6. Tailoring the Maritime Archaeology of the Slave Trade Training to its Trainees: SWP-Academy's Evolving Experiment in Transformative Capacity-Building

Gabrielle Miller, Marc-Andre Bernier, Luis Felipe Santos, Stephen Lubkemann

Since its inception the Slave Wrecks Project has been committed to building global capacity in the maritime archeology of the slave trade--with an emphasis on creating new opportunities for professional advancement, participation and leadership for institutional and individual research partners from Africa, the global south, and across the global African diaspora. This paper reviews how this commitment has evolved from an ad-hoc approach to a program (SWP-Academy) that has been designed to provide graduate-level training in maritime archeology of the highest professional caliber-inclusive of exceptional field-training that is integrated into ongoing research-- but that also takes crucial steps beyond existing conventional maritime archeology programs to integrate: 1) comparative critical historiographic methods; 2) participatory and community-engagement approaches, and 3) leadership and strategic program development--all 4) delivered in an intensive modular format that is responsive to the particular circumstances of global south professionals, while 5) also providing unprecedented opportunities for transnational collaboration across multiple axes (south/south as well as north/south). We reflect on the lessons learned from the efforts to launch this tri-lingual program so far in three regions (Senegal-West Africa; Mozambique-East Africa; Brazil-Latin America), and the vision for the further development of this transnational training network--and discuss the practical mechanisms through which we aim to realize its transformative--of-the--discipline objectives, as well as the emergent challenges these efforts confront, moving forward.

2.7. Nouvelle orientation archéologique en Côte d'Ivoire : Implication communautaire et ministérielle pour la connaissance et la protection et des sites subaquatiques

Grâce Désirée Raymonde Grodji, Hélène Timpoko Kienon-Kabore

Lieu d'échange et de rencontre entre culture et civilisation, le littoral ivoirien ouvert à l'océan atlantique avec ses cours d'eaux intérieurs est un carrefour de l'histoire des contacts façonné au fil des temps. Les recherches archéologiques terrestres ont mis en lumière des systems d'organisations, des styles d'habitats en interaction avec l'environnement. Ces vestiges sont des témoignages pour la compréhension de la dynamique socio-culturelle ancienne. Depuis quelques années, les recherches documentaires et les enquêtes de terrain pour l'introduction de la recherche en archéologie subaquatique, présentent le littoral ivoirien comme un point non négligeable dans l'expansion atlantique et les contacts avec le monde et la sous-région ouest-africaine. Les premiers résultats à la fois terrestres que subaquatique apportent des perspectives de réflexion sur les routes maritimes locales, régionales et globales. En plus, ils présentent les implications ministérielles, communautaires et les démarches abordées pour la collecte de données sur le terrain et les initiatives de valorisation. Face aux constats de pillage et de trafic illicite, le ministère de la Culture et de la Francophonie s'est engagé, par des voies juridiques et diplomatiques, à sensibiliser le public local pour la protection des biens submergés.

2.8. Underwater Archaeology in Cape Verde Past, Present and Future

Jaylson Monteiro

The article examines the evolution of underwater archaeology in Cape Verde, highlighting the region's strategic historical importance as a trade route since the 15th century, its consequent underwater heritage, and the heavy impact of treasure hunting on its archaeological sites. Following the negative outcomes of past explorations, recent projects such as CONCHA and MARGULLAR aim to research, preserve, and enhance this underwater heritage, paving the way for future sustainable practices and tourism initiatives. The state is now actively working on a national plan for safeguarding and enhancing its underwater cultural heritage.

2.9. The Impact of UNESCO Trainings in Africa for Young Professionals Maritime and Underwater Archaeologists

Jentrix Chochy Sakws

The coastal landscape of Africa contains important archeological frontiers such as submerged settlements, ancient shipwrecks, and indigenous maritime infrastructure that have long suffered due to limited local expertise and scholarly neglect. Recognizing this significant gap, UNESCO launched the Priority Africa - Underwater Cultural Heritage (UCH) Program, a decade-long program of organized capacity-building interventions that was started in 2015. This paper offers a critical analysis on the impact of these UNESCO-led trainings, in relation to the advancement of maritime and underwater archaeology on the African continent between 2015 and 2024. This article documents how the trainings have helped to equip young African professionals with competencies in underwater survey methods, site recording, artefact preservation, and legal heritage systems. The impacts of these training extend beyond the acquisition of individual skills. National UCH units have been established and strengthened in multiple countries across the continent. Maritime archaeology now features in domestic heritage policies and legislation. Most notably, trained professionals have transitioned from learners to leaders. Senegal, for instance, now actively mentors and shares field expertise with practitioners in The Gambia. This knowledge transfer marks a turning point, signaling the growth of a self-sustaining African UCH professional community. The discipline has also widened considerably in scope by holistically exploring maritime space. Beneficiaries are leading community heritage engagement projects, documenting intangible maritime traditions, and 'rethinking' maritime museums that bring submerged heritage to wider public audiences. Field skills gained through the training are being applied in real archaeological contexts across coastal and inland water sites. Ultimately, the UNESCO trainings have empowered African practitioners to document, monitor, and protect submerged sites threatened by climate change, coastal development, and illegal salvage. Through these means, they assert Africa's sovereign right to preserve its own underwater past for future generations.

2.10. A Beginner's Guide to Maritime Archaeology in South Africa

Jonathan Sharfman

Maritime archaeology has struggled to find traction within the mainstream of archaeology in South Africa. Colonial legacies, treasure hunting, political machinations and a lack of capacity development have resulted in a skewed portrayal of what the discipline is and why it is meaningful. Maritime archaeology has been described as having little local relevance. Recently however, new approaches to maritime and underwater cultural heritage have refocused attention on maritime sites and their

histories, and the impact of maritime culture, seafaring, trade and global expansion on the evolution of southern African society. This has compelled researchers and publics to reappraise the local, regional and global significance of South Africa's maritime heritage and the relevance that it holds for us all. However, with renewed interest has come a new set of threats that endanger maritime heritage sites and require new methods for investigation and management. This paper will examine the status quo of maritime archaeology in South Africa and reaffirm the need for an African approach to the discipline.

2.11. A Ilha dos Tesouros: A Pilhagem do Património Subaquática em Moçambique

Júlio Raimundo Machele, Elcídio Rui Macuacua

O património cultural subaquático de Moçambique, composto por naufrágios, artefactos e estruturas ligadas a séculos de circulação no Oceano Índico, constitui um dos mais valiosos repositórios de memória históricos do país. A costa moçambicana, integrada em rotas comerciais desde o período pré-colonial e intensamente utilizada durante a Expansão Marítima portuguesa e o tráfico de escravizados, preserva numerosos sítios submersos que testemunham interações económicas, contactos multiculturais e episódios de violência. Contudo, este património encontra-se sob forte pressão devido à pilhagem sistemática, realizada por caçadores de tesouros, empresas privadas e mergulhadores amadores, que removem artefactos sem registo, destruindo contextos arqueológicos e esvaziando o seu valor científico e identitário. Este artigo argumenta que o combate à pilhagem e a proteção do património subaquático não representam apenas uma ação de conservação material, mas uma responsabilidade histórica: garantir que a memória marítima de Moçambique, incluindo as narrativas silenciadas do tráfico escravista - seja preservada, interpretada e partilhada de forma ética e inclusiva. Metodologicamente, o estudo se baseia na revisão de literatura, jornais, entrevistas, mapeamento das fontes arqueologicas do laboratório do Departamento Antropologia e Arqueologia, pesquisa das fontes primárias e orais do Arquivo Histórico de Moçambique, bem com as convecões da UNESCO.

2.12. Above Board: is Community Archaeology the Liferaft Maritime Archaeology Needs?

Karyn Moshe

For decades, shipwreck sites were left unmonitored and unprotected, and an immeasurable number of archaeological resources - along with their potential for revealing information about the world’s maritime history - were lost. Around the mid-1900’s, maritime archaeology entered the global academic mainstream and practitioners developed sophisticated methodologies and technologies to excavate underwater sites as thoroughly and efficiently as terrestrial ones. Despite these advances, maritime sites remain extremely fragile. The decay of historical maritime resources can be mitigated, however, through the inclusion of community archaeology techniques. Community archaeology is not just an ethical issue. Collaboration between archaeologists and communities is mutually beneficial: communities are socially and economically empowered while researchers gain a nuanced and contextualized interpretation of artefacts and sites. The involvement of the public creates continuity of projects, and the passing on of skills relating to artefact collection and heritage management ensures that valuable material is not lost. Equally important is the involvement of communities in research which is directly relevant to them. This is particularly pertinent to maritime archaeology - which is colonial by nature - as analyses often exclude local narratives. The result is a production of insufficient, one-dimensional interpretations which can be easily avoided through

alterations to traditional archaeological methodologies. Ongoing discussions regarding innovative ways of encouraging public participation in heritage management are underway.

2.13. Au-delà de l'épave coloniale : archéologie fluviale, mémoire de l'esclavage et pratiques maritimes africaines à Atok (Est-Cameroun)

Ligue Engamba Fernando

Cette communication s'inscrit dans une réflexion critique sur le renouvellement de l'archéologie maritime africaine, en dépassant le paradigme dominant centré sur les épaves coloniales pour explorer les pratiques fluviales africaines comme objets légitimes de savoir et de mémoire. À partir du cas du débarcadère d'Atok, situé sur le fleuve Nyong (Est-Cameroun), l'étude propose une approche interdisciplinaire croisant archéologie, histoire orale et archives coloniales afin de restituer un paysage fluvial façonné par des mobilités africaines contraintes, notamment dans le cadre de la traite esclavagiste interne. Les investigations de terrain ont permis d'identifier des vestiges non spectaculaires mais significatifs alignements de pierres, zones d'amarrage, objets métalliques et céramiques témoignant d'usages anciens du fleuve comme espace de circulation, de contrôle et de transit humain. Ces données matérielles sont éclairées par les récits oraux des communautés Maka, qui désignent le site sous le nom de Menkara (« là où l'on attache les captifs »), révélant la persistance d'une mémoire fluviale de la captivité. Les sources coloniales du début du XX^{e} siècle confirment l'existence d'un port fluvial actif avant la pacification allemande. En mettant l'accent sur les fleuves comme infrastructures maritimes intérieures africaines, cette communication plaide pour une archéologie maritime décolonisée, attentive aux savoirs locaux et aux paysages ordinaires. Elle défend enfin une approche transformatrice du patrimoine fluvial, conçue comme un levier d'autonomisation mémorielle, culturelle et socio-économique pour les communautés riveraines contemporaines.

2.14. Between Calunga and the Quilombo: Archaeology of the shipwreck of the Brig Camargo (1852) and the legacies of Black African slavery in Brazil

Luis Felipe Freire Dantas Santos, Gilson Rambelli, Luciana Bozzo Alves, Gabrielle Miller

This article discusses the potential of underwater archaeological heritage for understanding the transoceanic trafficking of enslaved Africans and for critical reflection on the legacies of slavery in contemporary Brazil. Using the archaeological site of the shipwreck of the slave brig Camargo (1852), located in Angra dos Reis, Rio de Janeiro state, as its central point, the text examines how the material remains of vessels used in the logistics of enslavement constitute fundamental testimonies of the violence of the forced African Diaspora, while simultaneously opening possibilities for the construction of memories, claims, and forms of resistance. In this debate, quilombola communities are understood as Black collectives formed by descendants of populations that resisted slavery and that, historically linked to their own territories, memories, and cultural practices, continue to confront the lasting effects of racial oppression in Brazil. The notion of Calunga Grande is mobilised as an interpretative key to understanding the sea not only as a space of death, loss, and crossing, but also as an ancestral territory of spiritual return, processing of trauma, and production of meaning in the present. Based on research conducted since 2022 on the shipwreck of the Camargo, a vessel associated with the illegal landing of enslaved Africans brought from Mozambique in one of the last clandestine episodes of trafficking in Brazil, the article argues that Maritime Archaeology can play a central role in preserving historically marginalized memories and strengthening the dialogue between archaeological practice, cultural heritage, and quilombola memory.

2.15. Rethinking Our Modernity Using Underwater Archaeology

Madick Gueye

Shipwreck sites of slave ships associated with transatlantic trade and European colonization have been coupled with the production of Eurocentric discourse. This narrative was constructed based on unequal relationships legitimised by a Eurocentric worldview that elevated Europeans above others. Studies of slave shipwrecks at the microhistorical level offer an ideal framework for archaeologists to revisit and rethink debates on slavery and modernity. In Senegal, thanks to the efforts of the Slave Wrecks Project, an academy in underwater archaeology was founded in 2022. Its primary objective is to train professional maritime archaeologists in West Africa capable of documenting and preserving the history of the transatlantic slave trade. This presentation will share the efforts made in Senegal as part of the Slave Wrecks Project- Academy and the preliminary results of the work carried out.

2.16. Perspectivas da Comunidade Local sobre a Longa e Árdua Jornada do Património Cultural Subaquático na Ilha de Moçambique

Momade Ossumane, Amade Ismael, Amina Ussene, Momade Mularanja, Abílio Analeque

Este artigo apresenta perspectivas locais sobre as experiências contrastantes da comunidade da Ilha de Moçambique com os principais projetos de arqueologia marítima realizados na ilha. Após uma breve menção às práticas iniciais e altamente excludentes da Marinha Portuguesa, que em grande parte reafirmaram o projeto colonial, o artigo detalha a experiência subsequente da comunidade, primeiro com o trabalho realizado pela empresa de salvamento comercial que deteve o monopólio por mais de uma década, e depois desde 2015 por meio das colaborações organizadas pelo Projeto Naufrágios de Navios Negreiros em conjunto com a Universidade Eduardo Mondlane (UEM), e mais recentemente também pela UEM com outros parceiros internacionais. O texto traça paralelos entre a forma como essas diferentes iniciativas interagiram com os atores locais, o grau em que reconheceram os interesses e valores locais e fomentaram o protagonismo local em relação ao patrimônio e à sua proteção; e buscou promover uma compreensão da plenitude da história marítima da Ilha de Moçambique, que abrange mais de um milênio. Discute o que foi aprendido pelos membros da comunidade local sobre o que eles devem esperar – e o que devem exigir de projetos arqueológicos – bem como alguns dos desafios e questões que formas relativamente novas de organização e colaboração (por exemplo, como “gestores comunitários”) devem considerar e enfrentar: incluindo como lidar com valores conflitantes tanto com colaboradores externos quanto dentro da própria comunidade, obter conhecimento técnico e compreensão dos processos arqueológicos, garantir a sustentabilidade a longo prazo, negociar bases de autoridade e académicos.

2.17. Mitigation in Maritime Preventive Archaeology: Morocco’s Path Forward

Najat El hafi

This presentation explores comprehensive mitigation strategies for coastal and maritime archaeological sites, drawing lessons from international case studies (fieldwork snd rescue missions from 1999 to 2019) and highlighting Morocco’s proactive engagement in ocean diplomacy and heritage protection. It begins by outlining the critical importance of safeguarding submerged cultural heritage against escalating development pressures, an issue common to all African nations,

introducing the mitigation hierarchy of avoidance, minimization, salvage, and monitoring. Through an in-depth analysis of the PNG LNG Project, (worth 6 months mission) both its technical successes in site avoidance and artifact recovery, and its challenges concerning local (ie Indigenous) consultation and data transparency, are examined. Further insights are drawn from the Hornsea Wind Farm project, showcasing advanced technical tools such as AUVs, multibeam sonar, and in-situ preservation methods. The presentation emphasizes the foundational role of the UNESCO 2001 Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage and other legal frameworks like the Equator Principles, advocating for their integration into national policies. It delves into cutting-edge solutions, including predictive modeling, digital twins, and bio-mitigation, demonstrating how technology can transform preservation efforts. Comparative lessons from project failures (e.g., Genoa Port) and successes (e.g., Baltic Pipe) underscore the necessity of meticulous planning and responsive management. Morocco's strategic path forward is detailed, focusing on policy alignment with international standards, capacity building through archaeological training, establishing robust legal safeguards, and fostering long-term custodianship. The presentation highlights national initiatives such as Project Atlantique and the crucial role of community partnerships, including fishermen and avocational archaeologists, in integrating local knowledge. Morocco's leadership in ocean sustainability is further evidenced by its participation in UNESCO Blue Ocean Week and the visionary statements from His Majesty King Mohammed VI and Princess Lalla Hasnaa.

2.18. Chasing a ghost ship. A new possible Portuguese shipwreck off the Somali coast

Pablo Gutierrez de Leon

The rounding of the Cape of Good Hope by Bartolomeu Dias in 1488 and Vasco da Gama in 1497 open the way for deep transformations for all the peoples on the shores of the mighty Indian Ocean and the global development of commerce, trade routes and warfare. The material traces of the Portuguese expansion can be found all throughout the Indian Ocean specially in the form of European-styled forts and, above all, shipwrecks. Numerous have been the shipwrecks excavated and also looted between South Africa, Mozambique, Arabia and India. On the 28th of April 2023, reporters from the local Somali news agency Awoowe Media visited a community of fishermen near Hobyo (Somalia). According to the reporters, the fishermen have extracted some bronze cannons from the Ocean floor. After been notified of the finding by Somali colleagues, the author obtained the permission from the local news agency to use the images they collected and began detailed research of the cannons of clear Portuguese origin due to the presence of armillary spheres. The present talk will focus in the detailed study of the cannon types, shapes and marks as well as their comparison with other types of Portuguese military artillery pieces and shipwrecks around the world. These, combined with and extensive use of primary sources, aimed to get a better understanding the role of Portuguese military artillery in the Indian Ocean and the identification of this mysterious and not yet researched shipwreck off the coast of Somalia.

2.19. Underwater Archaeology in Cameroon: Epistemological Perspectives

Salamatou Lame, Martin Eloug

Underwater archaeology in sub-Saharan Africa remains one of the few scientific fields still largely unexplored by African researchers, yet dominated by Western teams. Drawing on critical questions surrounding the lack of regional research interest in underwater archaeology, the need to articulate terrestrial and underwater archaeology for a comprehensive understanding of maritime cultural landscapes, and the management of "submerged" heritage, this article examines the structural and

scientific constraints hindering the development of this sub-discipline in Central Africa, and in Cameroon specifically. The analysis departs from classical models exclusively focused on the study of colonial shipwrecks. Situated within the framework of a transformative maritime archaeology, this study explores the potential of the Cameroonian coastline along the Gulf of Guinea particularly at Limbé, Tiko, Bimbia, and Manoka. Beyond a mere inventory of material remains such as docks, railway bridges, and shipwrecks as vestiges of the slave trade and colonization the reflection is structured around living spaces, rituals, and acts of resistance. Drawing on archaeological data, archival sources, oral traditions, and the oral histories of communities affected by the slave trade and colonization, and grounded in new epistemological foundations, this research seeks to uncover submerged traces that constitute unprecedented sources of information on merchant exchanges, the management of riverine and maritime resources, and the development of islands such as Nicholls Island, Dipikar, and Djébalè all of which remain, to this day, unexplored.

2.20. Maritime Archaeology of the Slave Trade: Towards a Transformative Disciplinary Engagement

Stephen C. Lubkemann, Gabrielle Miller, Jay Haigler, Cézar Mahumane, Celso Simbine, Luis Felipe Santos, Madicke Gueye, Marc-Andre Bernier, Gilson Rambelli, David Conlin, David Morgan, Paul Gardullo, Raquel Machaqueiro, Jaco Boshoff, Jonathan Sharfman

This paper first offers a critical overview of maritime archaeology's hitherto limited history of engagement with the African slave trade and lays out an agenda for an invigorated and socially engaged maritime archaeology of the slave trade that can simultaneously contribute to ongoing debates in historiography as well as to the decolonisation of scholarship and research. Scrutinizing the grounds for, and reflecting on the meaning and effects of the sub-field's long-term neglect of this theme (McGhee 1997, Webster 2008), this paper then draws upon the last decade of work of the Slave Wrecks project in places as diverse as Mozambique, Senegal, South Africa, The USA, Portugal, and Brazil, to explore what one internationally collaborative field research network has learned as it has sought to pursue and promote a maritime archeology of the slave trade that is as attentive to critical transformation in the present as it is to recovering the past. We discuss key possibilities and challenges that confront the maritime archaeology of the slave trade -- and lay out an agenda for moving forward--that focuses on a recovery of the past that emphasizes decolonization of the three "C's": Capacity-building, Community- Engagement, and Collaboration.

2.21. Shipwrecks along the Coast of Mozambique: History, Patterns, and Underwater Heritage.

Yolanda T. Duarte, Cézar Mahumane, Ricardo Duarte

This study presents a systematic survey of more than 400 shipwrecks along the coast of Mozambique, identified through archival research. Situated within Indian Ocean maritime networks, of which Mozambique has been part since the first millennium, it focuses on the period between the 15th and 20th centuries, contributing to the understanding of patterns of navigation, trade, and interregional connectivity. Based on research conducted in the collections of the Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino (AHU) and the Arquivo Histórico de Moçambique (AHM), it aims to develop a structured database of shipwreck records. The results reveal patterns associated with portuguese expansion, the slave trade, the transition to steam navigation, and 20th-century conflicts, with concentrations in

ilha de Moçambique, sofala, quelimane, inhambane, the quirimbas, and maputo. the study provides a systematic basis for research on underwater cultural heritage and its protection.

2.22. Archéologie de l'aménagement d'un terroir maritime : Palmarin du XVe au XIXe siècle

Youssou Ndour

Palmarin est une communauté sereer qui se trouve sur la petite côte Sénégalaise. Il est historiquement rattaché au royaume du sine dont il occupe une partie de la façade atlantique. Situé dans un écosystème marin dynamique, présente une trajectoire qui peut être définie comme de longue durée maritimes. Pour ce faire, elle a façonné son terroir pour s'adonner à leurs activités quotidiennes telle que l'agriculture, de riziculture, de pêche et l'exploitation des ressources naturelles comme le sel et le vin de palme. De par sa position stratégique sur le littoral sénégambien, il a joué un rôle prépondérant dans le système atlantique à partir du XVIe siècle comme exportateur d'esclaves et d'autres produits de traite. D'ailleurs, l'existence de son port a aussi été mentionnée par les sources portugaises sous le nom de Palmeirinha. Ce contact avec le système atlantique a ainsi entrainé des perturbations socioéconomiques et culturelles. La relation entre l'environnement physique et les activités culturelles qui s'y déroulent sont largement documentés par les sources écrites et encore perceptible dans la mémoire collective. L'archéologie, bien qu'encore inexploré dans l'étude des interactions culturelles entre Palmarin et la mer, constitue un domaine de recherche privilégié dans notre étude. L'ensemble de ces interventions occidentales, s'étendant de la traite atlantique à la colonisation Française, ont engendré des transformations socioculturelles et écologiques notables à travers Palmarin. Les vestiges résultant de ces activités demeurent visibles à travers le terroir, sous la forme de traces matérielles ou encore par des transformations des paysages. Dans cette communication, nous donnons les résultats préliminaires de notre recherche, la méthodologie adoptée pourrait inclure la télédétection des imageries satellitaires, la télédétection sous-marine au sonar à balayage latérale, ainsi que la plongée sous-marine en articulant les données ethno-historiques et des récits de voyageurs européens.

Session: 32 (Room 9)

32.1. Digital Model for the Inventory of Archaeological Heritage in Mozambique

Agostinho José, Solange Macamo

Information technologies, including electronic communication and the worldwide communication network, contribute to quick access to all types of information. The creation and innovation of informational devices for transmitting scientific, socio-cultural, and economic information, among others, contribute to speeding up and democratizing communication. This study presents a model of a digital platform, developed based on the current analogue model for the licensing of archaeological works by the national archaeological licensing authority, which can work alternatively and or in addition to this one. The limitations of the analogical model are discussed (for example. in the safe storage of archaeological heritage information and its quick access), with regards to the licensing of archaeological works in Mozambique. The current opportunities for technology development are taken advantage of for testing a platform digital. Meanwhile, the digital platform supports the registration of archaeologists and the issuing of licenses in a secure electronic system. It guarantees their correct connection to the internet, in order to facilitate quick access to its users. With this digital platform, it is believed that it can guarantee easy and quick accessibility, above all, the security and protection of the data of the Mozambican archaeological heritage.

32.2. Analogue vs digital approaches to archaeological data collection: Lessons from fieldwork in Nigeria

Akinbowale Akintayo

In the last few decades, several digital approaches have been developed for archaeological data collection during fieldwork. Prior to the development of these applications, classical methods of field data gathering have relied on the use of paper-based prospecting forms which are liable to being lost, mutilated or destroyed. Other than this, use of paper-based recording forms requires post-fieldwork exercises involving manually imputing data into computer systems for further analyses. While the use of paper-based forms should not be seen as outdated because it obviously has its own merit, adoption of digital approaches has provided more efficient and reliable mechanisms that has proven useful during fieldworks for data collection about archaeological and heritage sites. One of such digital applications is Open Data Kit (ODK) that has found application in archaeology and heritage studies in Africa. ODK workflow allows for data collection, verification and aggregation from archival, remote sensing and field data in collaboration with various national authorities that manage heritage sites in the respective countries as well as universities archaeology staff and students who often go for fieldwork. In this paper, I compare the experiences of using paper-based form and open-source digital tools for field recording at Sukur Cultural Landscape in Nigeria during two field seasons. This paper reflects on the pros and cons of these two approaches; the challenges encountered on the field and provides recommendations on sustainable approaches to digital heritage recording and archaeological data collection. Finally, the paper speaks to how African archaeologists can leverage on the capabilities of digital tools in their research scholarship.

32.3. African Heritage in the Digital Age: Geo-referencing through Integrating Historical Cartography and Digital Data in African Archaeology

Cindy Waweru, Keith Murangiri

Digital technologies are increasingly reshaping archaeological practice across Africa, offering new possibilities for documenting and monitoring endangered heritage sites. This paper presents a case study from the Mapping Africa's Endangered Archaeological Sites and Monuments (MAEASaM) project, focusing on the integration of digital tools for archaeological research in Kenya. The project combines the georeferencing of historical maps with organized digital documentation of archaeological sites to build a standardized, open-access spatial database for long-term monitoring and research. Using QGIS and Google Earth Pro, over 600 historical maps from the National Museums of Kenya and the British Institute in Eastern Africa archives were georeferenced through the application of control points, polynomial transformations and rigorous accuracy assessments. Georeferenced maps will be integrated with descriptive site records derived from scholarly literature, which will eventually enable accurate location mapping, environmental assessment, past excavation campaign recordings and condition monitoring of heritage sites. The paper will also examine the role of map annotations in facilitating archaeological site discovery, even where spatial accuracy is limited and will discuss the methodological workflows and challenges encountered in working with such sources, including incomplete map metadata and variations in spatial accuracy. By showing how legacy data can be transformed into compatible digital formats, this contribution highlights the value of digital data collection for enhancing accessibility, cross-institutional collaboration and heritage management in African archaeology. The paper will conclude by reflecting on capacity building and future directions for standardized digital documentation

frameworks that support both research and conservation within the MAEASaM initiative and beyond.

32.4. Approche géospatiale et cartographie des sites archéologiques et patrimoniaux du Sud et du Moyen-Bénin

Djima Lawal Kolawolé, Nestor Labiyi, Mama Djaouga, Didier N'dah

L'espace géographique correspondant au sud et moyen-Bénin dispose de nombreux sites archéologiques et d'une remarquable diversité de sites patrimoniaux. Ces sites ont été l'objet de plusieurs études scientifiques mais n'ont point vraiment bénéficié d'une analyse cartographique. Cette situation s'explique en partie par l'absence d'outils de gestion intégrée permettant une vision globale et actualisée de leur répartition et de leur état de conservation. Le manque d'une base de données archéologiques sur la zone d'étude, la pression liée à l'urbanisation croissante et aux activités anthropiques sur les sites soulève ainsi un véritable enjeu de préservation. Comment les Systèmes d'Information Géographique (SIG) peuvent-ils alors contribuer à l'inventaire, à la cartographie et à l'analyse spatiale des sites archéologiques et patrimoniaux du Sud et du moyen-Bénin? C'est pour répondre à cette question que nous avons utilisé les outils géospatiaux pour produire une base d'informations structurée et des cartes thématiques sur la distribution, les caractéristiques et les dynamiques spatiales des sites du Sud et du Moyen-Bénin. Plus spécifiquement, il s'agit d'identifier et de localiser les sites, d'analyser leur organisation spatiale, d'évaluer les pressions environnantes et de proposer des supports d'aide à la décision pour leur protection. La recherche s'appuie sur la collecte de données de terrain, l'intégration des informations existantes, la création d'une base géographique et l'exploitation des outils SIG pour produire différentes analyses spatiales et cartographiques. Cette méthodologie nous a permis d'avoir une meilleure connaissance de la distribution spatiale des sites archéologiques et patrimoniaux du Sud et du Moyen-Bénin. L'intégration de ces données nous permet de proposer des modèles de gestion et de valorisation des sites archéologiques et patrimoniaux de cette partie du Bénin.

32.5. Inventory of archaeological sites in Mozambique: proposal for a national georeferenced system

Énio Tembe, Anneli Ekblom

Several rescue archaeological activities, surveys, and test excavations were carried out in Mozambique in the 1990s-2000s by different individuals using their own systems of recording and registration. One of these was the late Leonardo Adamowicz, who developed a system for registering and assessing sites. Adamowicz introduced a computerised method that aimed to standardise the recording of sites and archaeological material. This was developed as part of the CIPRIANA project (1988), which surveyed Nampula Province, a region that remains largely understudied. We present the important contribution of this work for the understanding of the chronology and socio-economic shifts in Mozambique as part of a wider collaborative project within the context of Mapping Africa's Endangered Archaeological Sites and Monuments (MAEASaM). Here, we discuss and build on Adamowicz's Archaeological Impact Assessments of other parts of the country, with an update on the current status of these areas and their contribution to Mozambique archaeology. Finally, some recommendations as to area selection, survey design, and assessment will be presented. Considering the existing archaeological material, a collaborative approach is developed to improve the colonial-period inventory model and unify it with post-colonial inventory

procedures. The combination of these elements, in our view, will culminate in a georeferenced online database through which researchers can contribute data in a standardized way. The current difficulty of access to some archaeological sites can be overcome with the level of information to be produced and managed in the database, and in this way, can contribute to the archaeological recognition, protection, and management of the sites at the national level. (Please consider this abstract).

32.6. Sharing a common language in the context of digital African archaeology and heritage: reflections from the MAEASaM Arches project

Faye Lander, Orhun Uğur, Dana AlSalamin, Stefania Merlo

Western frameworks continue to shape the structuring of heritage data in digital knowledge systems, including the terminology used to describe it. However, there is growing recognition of the need to prioritise alternative concepts and vocabularies that better reflect the diversity of heritage and archaeological data at local and regional scales. This is particularly important in contexts sinceWestern frameworks—used to define sites, monuments, objects, and time periods— often fail to adequately capture the various ways the past is understood and represented. These challenges are especially evident in relation to language. Multilingualism and internationalisation are essential for digital heritage projects, yet they remain difficult to implement within standardised systems. In response, initiatives such as Local Contexts and PeriodO have begun to challenge dominant paradigms by introducing more inclusive, locally grounded approaches to heritage and archaeological web-based thesauri. This paper reflects on the value of developing a large collection of multilingual and locally adapted terms and concepts relating to African archaeological sites and monuments within the Mapping Africa's Endangered Archaeological Sites and Monuments (MAEASaM) project. While the compilation of vocabularies to describe heterogeneous heritage data is by no means a trivial task, it is a critical step toward improving data comparability, searchability, and interoperability across digital platforms, ensuring that such data can be effectively shared and reused by others in the future.

32.7. An integrated digital workflow for archaeological survey in the Gotera area (southern Ethiopia)

Francesco Lucchini, Carlo Mologni, Marianna Fusco, Enza Elena Spinapolice

Conducting archaeological surveys in some remote areas presents significant methodological challenges due to erosional phenomena and limited fieldwork time, making the efficiency and reliability of data collection systems critical factors. This contribution presents a digital field documentation workflow developed for systematic survey in the Gotera Archaeological Area (GAA), designed to maximise data quality and operational efficiency under such conditions. The GAA has been under investigation since 2016. It lies within a marginal lacustrine basin in the southern Main Ethiopian Rift (MER), characterised by short-lived MSA occupations spatially structured by dynamic hydro-morphological patterns, and preserves the first stratified open-air MIS 3 occupation documented in the MER (GOT-10, ~50–45 ka BP). Previous survey campaigns relied on separate systems for spatial and descriptive data, integrated only during post-fieldwork processing. The new workflow brings all data collection into a single open-source platform built around QField and QGIS, allowing multiple operators to work simultaneously and integrating positional data, photographs, finds descriptions, and sample records within a single recording environment. A key feature is the possibility of loading raster layers derived from hydromorphological analyses directly into QField,

allowing surveyors to contextualise archaeological evidence and samples within specific geomorphological units in real time during fieldwork. Dedicated recording fields for geomorphological description further support their systematic analysis in relation to the landscape's hydromorphological features. This study shows how integrated digital tools, tailored to challenging conditions, can substantially enhance the efficiency, accuracy, and analytical potential of archaeological survey, offering a replicable model for standardised digital field recording.

32.8 From Ground Survey to Digital Heritage Management: Mobile GIS Approaches in the Documentation of African Cultural Heritage

Jan Hubert

This paper presents the use of mobile GIS-based ground survey methods for documenting and managing cultural heritage, focusing on the earthworks (Iya) in Benin City. It highlights how QField was used as a central tool for systematic, on-site data collection. During fieldwork, mobile GIS enabled the direct recording of the condition and preservation state of the earthworks. Using GNSS-supported positioning, features were mapped with high spatial accuracy, while structured digital forms ensured standardized data entry, including attributes such as erosion, land use, and potential threats. In addition, geotagged photographs were captured and linked directly to mapped features, creating a comprehensive and spatially integrated dataset. Beyond documentation, the paper explores how such data can be applied to cultural heritage management. Mobile GIS workflows allow datasets to be structured, updated, and shared more efficiently, supporting monitoring, conservation planning, and informed decision-making. By making data accessible in the field, these tools enable heritage professionals and local stakeholders to engage directly with the documentation process and contribute to ongoing site management. The paper argues that integrating ground survey with mobile digital tools represents an important step toward more transparent, standardized, and accessible heritage practices.

32.9. Digital Archaeology: Integrating UAV Photogrammetry and Precision Geomatics at the MOWAA Excavations, Benin City

Opuada Uranta, Adeshina Olatubosun, Godswill Aziegbemhin

Archaeological field recording in many parts of the Global South continues to rely on conventional survey methods that limit spatial precision, data integration, and long-term accessibility. Excavations at the Museum of West African Art (MOWAA) in central Benin City (2022-2024) provided an opportunity to implement a highly integrated digital documentation workflow under realistic West African field conditions. Across 24 archaeological trenches some excavated, backfilled, and subsequently reopened the geomatics team deployed an Emlid Reach RS2+ DGPS base station with real-time kinematic (RTK) corrections, a Leica TS16 robotic total station for systematic feature and artefact recording, and a UAV for aerial photogrammetry. These systems operated within a unified geospatial framework, enabling seamless integration of aerial and ground-based datasets. All observations were recorded in the WGS 84/UTM Zone 31N coordinate system, with positional accuracy maintained at approximately 2 cm. BricsCAD, QGIS, and ArcGIS Pro supported three-dimensional visualisation and spatial analysis. The resulting dataset, integrating GIS mapping and 3D modelling, revealed spatially coherent relationships between structural features and diverse artefact assemblages including pottery, glass, beads, and charcoal layers while enabling stratigraphic reconstruction in reopened trenches. Digital integration improved recording efficiency, reduced transcription errors, and produced a georeferenced, queryable spatial archive for long-term heritage

management. However, constraints remain, including high capital costs, dependence on stable power supply, and the need for robust data management protocols. As heritage sites across West Africa face increasing pressure from urban development, the MOWAA case demonstrates that integrated digital geomatics workflows are both viable and increasingly essential in contemporary archaeological practice.

32.10. Developing a Visual Glossary for MAEASaM Project

Orhun Uğur

Controlled vocabularies have demonstrated their value in defining archaeological terminology, particularly by enhancing findability and interoperability. However, text-based information alone is often insufficient, especially for identifying shapes and features in remote sensing analysis. Without visual references, terminology can remain abstract and difficult to apply. To address this limitation, the MAEASaM Project will design and develop a digital image database based on satellite imagery, systematically documenting different types of evidence and their interpretations across varied landscapes and contexts. In this practice-based project, controlled vocabularies for evidence and interpretation are developed by combining definitions with visual examples derived from remote sensing data. This approach strengthens the relationship between terminology and observed material patterns, supporting more consistent identification practices. These resources are delivered through an accessible and user-friendly digital interface, enabling users to navigate, compare, and interpret visual and terminological data more effectively. Terms are further connected to the Linked Open Data environment through identifiers from international authority sources, such as the Getty Art & Architecture Thesaurus (AAT) and FISH Terminologies. The resulting visual glossary provides a shared reference framework for the MAEASaM team and the wider African archaeology research community, supporting the identification, comparison, and reuse of archaeological evidence and its interpretation.

32.11. Mobile Data Collection as Digital Infrastructure in African Archaeology: Lessons from the MAEASaM Project

Pamela Ochungo, Renier van Der Merwe, Dana Al Salamin, Tohamy Abulgasim

Remote sensing technologies and geospatial analysis have significantly improved large-scale site detection and monitoring in recent decades, but a persistent gap remains between satellite-based identification and systematic field verification. To address this gap, the Mapping Africa's Endangered Archaeological Sites and Monuments (MAEASaM) project has developed, over the past five years, a mobile data collection system using KoBoToolbox and KoboCollect. The customised, geospatially enabled mobile workflow is aligned with the MAEASaM Arches-based heritage database and is conceptualised not only as a technical solution, but as an infrastructural intervention that reshapes archaeological practice, data standardisation, and institutional collaboration. Drawing on iterative testing across multiple African countries, the paper traces the evolution of the system from an initial database-driven design to a workflow-oriented model grounded in field realities. The analysis highlights key challenges, including the tension between standardisation and usability, the importance of participatory co-design, the integration of geodetic and validation standards, and the complexity of downstream data cleaning and relational data management. It further demonstrates how mobile systems function as epistemic infrastructures, influencing what is recorded, how it is interpreted, and how knowledge circulates within heritage management frameworks. By

foregrounding the developmental and negotiated nature of digital infrastructures, the paper provides a transparent, replicable account of mobile system design in resource-constrained environments and underscores the importance of aligning technological tools with field practice, institutional ownership, and scalable heritage monitoring.

Session: 52 (Room 6)

52.1. The past in the Palaeolithic. Exploring the experience of time in the Iraqi Western Desert

Ella Egberts

Southwest Asia has been traversed by humans coming out of and back into Africa and across Eurasia since the Pleistocene (ca. 2.58 million to 11,700 years ago). Global climatic changes during the Pleistocene recurrently transformed the now-arid region into a wetter, greener environment, influencing early human presence, dispersals, and interactions. Southwest Asia is therefore key for studying human evolution and behavioral adaptation, and Palaeolithic research in the Levant, the Arabian Peninsula, and the Zagros Mountains has significantly contributed to understanding global human history. The Iraqi Western Desert (IWD), despite its central location and proven potential for Palaeolithic research, has remained largely overlooked. Finds from the region are not widely known and, lacking geomorphological context, have not been considered in global or regional palaeo-anthropological syntheses. The Geomorphological and Palaeolithic Survey of the Western Desert of Iraq was initiated to assess Palaeolithic material, establish its geomorphological context, recontextualise known finds, and identify new findspots. The pilot survey (2024-2025) has identified over twenty new Palaeolithic findspots around various karstic depressions, indicating repeated Pleistocene occupation. Using this newly discovered and rich Palaeolithic lithic record, this paper explores the human experience of time.

52.2. Core exploitation strategies at the Middle Pleistocene Acheulian sites of TK – Fish Gully, HK and FLK Masek: A sample overview from Mary Leakey´s collections

Eloy García Gil, Susana Rubio Jara, Sergio Heras Bastida, Joaquín Panera Gallego

Despite more than a century of research on the emergence and consolidation of the Acheulean in Eastern Africa, its later Middle Pleistocene stages remain poorly understood, as information on knapping strategies beyond Large Cutting Tools is still limited despite extensive fieldwork. In this regard, some of the most significant Middle Pleistocene Acheulean assemblages come from Olduvai Gorge (northern Tanzania), largely due to the work carried out by Louis Leakey and Mary Leakey during the 20th century. In her 1994 volume, Mary Leakey briefly describes three mid–Middle Pleistocene sites: FLK Masek, clearly associated with the Masek Beds (0.6–0.4 Mya), TK Fish Gully and HK, both situated in an uncertain position between Beds IV and Masek. Across these three sites—comprising more than 3,300 artefacts—M. Leakey identified only 11 pieces as cores, providing very limited detail on their reduction sequences. The main focus of this work is the identification of artefacts in Mary Leakey´s 1960´s collections that could be classified as cores, while considering their intra-site and inter-site variability in reduction sequences, raw material and size. In total, 62 cores have been identified for this analysis. By integrating this new data into Mary Leakey´s work, the sites of FLK Masek, TK Fish Gully and HK can provide a better overview of the knapping strategies developed during the later stages of the Middle Pleistocene Acheulian in Eastern Africa.

52.3. “I know where I’m going”: Finding the way in Stone Age Africa

Laura Basell

This paper examines how hominins navigated landscapes, challenging simplistic representations of movement often depicted as simple arrowed routes on maps or quantifications of distance (e.g. between stone tool assemblages and raw material sources). These conventional representations rarely address the practicalities of traversing diverse topographies or habitats. Adopting an exploratory approach, this presentation focuses on the Early to Middle Stone Age in eastern Africa, synthesizing insights from hunter-gatherer studies, biological anthropology, archaeology, and animal behavioural science. Landscape legibility, how distinct, memorable environmental features may have guided navigation will be discussed, raising the associated themes of memory, knowledge transmission, and multisensory wayfinding. The paper considers whether understanding hominin wayfinding strategies is possible, and if thinking about this can illuminate hominin habitat expansion and adaptations during the Early to Middle Stone Age. It also questions whether GIS, grounded in Euclidean geometries, adequately captures the complexities of spatial reasoning for these deep periods of our evolutionary past. Rather than offering definitive conclusions, the presentation invites dialogue on how hominins might have "found their way" in familiar, unfamiliar and dynamic landscapes.

52.4. Spatial Patterns and Occupation Dynamics at the Lower Floor Level of the Thiongo Korongo Site, Olduvai Gorge (Tanzania).

Lucrécia Álvarez Cortabarria, Joaquín Panera Gallego, Susana Rubio Jara, Juan Carlos García Palomares

Spatial analysis in archaeological sites is a fundamental tool that provides key information about behavioral patterns and dynamics of spatial use. In this study an intra-site geospatial statistical analysis approach is applied to the Lower Floor level (TKLF) of the Acheulean site of Thiongo Korongo (ca. 1.34 Ma), located at the top of Bed II in Olduvai Gorge (Tanzania), where one of the largest and best-preserved concentrations of Lower Pleistocene sites has been documented. Specifically, the spatial distribution of 3,626 lithic remains and 789 faunal remains recorded across an area of 52.17 m^2 is analyzed, with the aim of reconstructing part of the behavior of human groups with Acheulean technology. Geostatistical and spatial analyses have been carried out, integrating techno-typological, taxonomic, and taphonomic information to identify concentration areas and possible differentiated activity zones. These analyses include, among others, Kernel density estimation, spatial autocorrelation analysis (Global Moran’s I), hot spot analysis (Getis-Ord Gi*), cluster and outlier analysis (Local Anselin Moran’s I). Additionally, Ordinary Least Squares regression and Spatial Autoregressive models were applied, which are key to exploring the influence of different variables on the distribution of archaeological remains, with the aim of determining possible post-depositional and anthropogenic factors affecting their spatial location. The results show significant clustering of lithic industry, as well as a more dispersed distribution of faunal remains, dominated by indeterminate fragments, followed by equids and alcelaphins. These patterns suggest an organized use of space and provide new interpretations about spatial organization in the Acheulean Technocomplex.

52.5. Place of stones – and more? Specialized, long-term procurement of a single tool stone at the Middle Stone Age open-air site of Jojosi (South Africa)

Manuel Will

The procurement and selection of raw materials for stone tool production has been an everyday, pervasive element of hunter-gatherer lifeways. Both ethnographic and archaeological research have studied this topic, though with different foci due to varying resolution, quantity, and quality of available data and sources. Archaeological studies in the Stone Age of Africa and beyond commonly focus on technological, functional, and economic aspects, in line with the influential ethnographic work by Binford on mobility organization, efficiency considerations, and optimal foraging. Other ethnographic work that has received much less archaeological attention emphasizes that the search for raw materials – and the tool stones themselves – may entail many more and less mundane aspects. For example, stone quarries may act as places of a special history, territory, belief, or meaning. Here, I present the unique open-air Middle Stone Age site of Jojosi (South Africa), a Middle Pleistocene locality which early humans repeatedly visited for the sole purpose of obtaining and reducing a single raw material – hornfels – in strategic expeditions over many tens of thousands of years. My contribution explores in what way we can incorporate less commonly used concepts, such as place-making, materiality, perception, and agency, with more standard archaeological accounts to understand the findings from this unusual site. The contribution aims to disclose new ways of thinking about such special Stone Age places, to create an extended space for developing new hypotheses and potential ways of testing them archaeologically, and to provide a platform for further dialogue on these topics.

52.6. The Kerma Region as a Stone Age Place: Landscape, Mobility, and Meaning in the Middle Stone Age of Northern Sudan

Nuno Bicho, Alvise Barbieri, Jonathan Haws, Matthieu Honegger, Milena Carvalho, Osman Khaleel

The Kerma region of northern Sudan, situated just south of the Third Cataract of the Nile Valley, offers exceptional insight into Middle Stone Age (MSA) human occupation during a critical period of early human dispersal out of Africa. In 2019 and 2023, systematic surveys and test excavations in the hinterland east of the Nile identified nearly100 new Pleistocene sites, revealing a rich mosaic of quarry locations, open-air lithic workshops, and rockshelters embedded within a dynamic palaeolandscape of basalt plugs, alluvial plains, and former Nile channels. Rather than treating these sites merely as evidence of technological competence or migratory corridors, this paper explores how the Kerma landscape may have structured hominin movement, perception, and repeated place engagement. Prominent basalt landmarks such as Jebel El-Azrak were repeatedly visited and intensively worked over time, suggesting these features functioned not only as raw material sources but also as anchoring points within a meaningful territorial system. The multicomponent rockshelter SK7, with its stratified sequence spanning the MSA through the Mesolithic and into the Holocene, further demonstrates long-term human attachment to particular places across radically different climatic and cultural contexts. Drawing on lithic technology, geoarchaeology, OSL dating, and ground-penetrating radar, we argue that the Kerma MSA record invites reflection on the experiential dimensions of deep-time landscape use, and the extent to which place-making may have structured early human dispersals along the Nile Valley.

52.7. Living on the Ledge: Late Pleistocene Post Holes and Living Spaces at Mochena Borago Rockshelter, SW Ethiopia

Steven A. Brandt, Casie Fort, Elisabeth Hildebrand, Carlo Mologni

Spatial features suggestive of landscape behaviors are rare at Late Pleistocene (LP) sites in the Horn of Africa. One such site is Mochena Borago (MB), a large rockshelter (width=70m; height=12m;depth=20m) in the SW Ethiopian highlands MB has a complex depositional history. Almost all deposits at its southern end are radiocarbon dated to >49ka. A lahar (consolidated volcanic mudflow) just below the current surface was originally thought to be late Holocene in age; however, underlying sediments with new >49 ka dates now suggest a Pleistocene age. The lahar appears to have formed a ledge above a deep cavity, visible in neighboring excavation units, with extensive stratigraphic sequences >49 ka and cultural materials likely from MIS 4 or earlier. A shallow 5x8 m excavation revealed 8 small, artificially dug holes penetrating the lahar. These have a patterned distribution and are morphologically similar (round/oblong; ~8cm across; ~10-15cm deep). Each represents a single digging event. Two holes overlap but have a large chopper-like tool embedded between them, as if to prop up item(s) placed within. We hypothesize these small cavities represent post holes used to support structures of unknown type(s) built on the lahar surface. These and other new data suggest a novel interpretation of MB living surfaces: LP foragers lived on the lahar ledge above the large cavity, which served as dumping grounds rather than actual occupation surfaces! We conclude by examining ways in which archaeologists' expectations, and our traditions of landscape interpretations have been shaped by our own experiences.

52.8. On elands and embodiment. A cognitive ecology of the southern African Pleistocene

Tjaark Siemssen, Shumon T. Hussain

A map means nothing to an eland, but a herd knows its landscape through its many moving feet. Hunting these non-human animals, in turn, entails a particular way of being-in and perceiving the environment, which some have referred to as being an "empathetic predator". Such understandings resonate with the growing relevance of phenomenological and enactive views of hunting practices within the past years that draw from multispecies and anthropological accounts. These perspectives are at odds with traditional notions of landscape knowledge, which have long relied on representational and dualist understandings of the mind and its relationship to the environment. In recent years, scepticism regarding such dualist views have grown in the cognitive sciences, and approaches foregrounding the embodied, enactive, extended and embedded properties of cognition instead emphasise environmentally intanglible properties of cognition. Developments in these fields of research have been largely separate, and their intersection remains poorly explored. Here we ask: when cognition is expanded beyond its traditional boundaries in its emphasis on environment, body, and culture – what participatory role do their contextual ecological relationships play? By assessing the relationship between animal remains and subsistence strategies on Middle Stone Age sites in southern Africa, we sketch out a cognitive ecology that considers the participatory role of ecological networks. To grant ecology a place in 4E frameworks, we engage with the notion of affordances, cognitive ecology, and broader multispecies approaches in this study of human-animal relationships in deep time.

Thursday, July 30

Session: 71 (Room 1)

71.1. Maintaining status quo in a changing world: Impacts of change on World Heritage Sites in Africa

Akinbowale Akintayo

This paper discusses recent threats to the integrity of the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of Nigeria's first World Heritage Site and Africa's first cultural landscape to be inscribed into the World Heritage List – Sukur Cultural Landscape (SCL). Since its inscription in 1999, the landscape has witnessed significant impacts from Climate Change, urbanisation and cultural terrorism have influenced significant visible changes on some of the cultural features which make up the cultural landscape – the unique vernacular architecture. SCL consists of a hilltop settlement (covering about 764 ha) which was famous for strong political institutions, craft technology and trade, dating back to the 16th century CE. There is an adjoining lowland settlement, still an important residential area today, where inhabitants have long maintained local traditions of architecture, food and craft production and ritual. However, in December 2014, Boko Haram (a group of terrorists) launched an attack on Sukur, raiding about 173 houses, destroying traditional stone buildings with thatched roofs and granary covers, paved walkways, ritual sites which are the features for which Sukur was inscribed into the World Heritage List. The extent of physical damage and the legacy of the attack are part of multiple factors, along with climate change, soil erosion and socio-economic deprivation that together endanger this cultural landscape. This paper therefore focuses on post-inscription assessment of SCL (using GIS, remote sensing, digital tools, and community-centred engagement) in the wake of recent threats to its survival, management approaches and challenges being faced in ensuring the integrity of the site.

71.2. Sustaining World Heritage in a Living Heritage Site: Challenges from Lamu Old Town

Angela Kabiru, Josephine Gitu

Lamu Old Town was gazetted as a national monument in 1990 and inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2001. Despite this dual protection status, the property faces significant challenges which, if unaddressed, could threaten its World Heritage status. A key complexity lies in the fact that the entire town is protected, encompassing a diverse range of property types, including archaeological sites and standing built heritage. Consequently, conservation and management require varied and often specialised approaches across different contexts. Lamu is also a living town, where local traditions intersect with external influences from tourism, economic development and migration, resulting in continuous social and physical transformation. The Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the site is grounded in attributes that are increasingly difficult to sustain under these dynamic conditions. The MAEASaM project, which focuses on documenting risks and threats to archaeological sites, has recently engaged with the National Museum of Kenya's Lamu division to develop a new strategy for monitoring and responding to different heritage risks. This paper draws on these observations, supplemented by interviews with local residents and a review of recent developments within the archipelago. The findings suggest that the challenges facing Lamu extend beyond environmental pressures and infrastructure development. They are also rooted in gaps in governance, particularly in the implementation and enforcement of existing legal and regulatory frameworks. Addressing these will require stronger institutional commitment and more effective

integration of policy, community engagement, and conservation practice to ensure the long-term sustainability of Lamu Old Town.

71.3. Reframing Marine Cultural Heritage in East Africa's World Heritage Coastal Towns: Decolonising Management and Addressing Governance Gaps

Arturo Rey da Silva, Jon Henderson, Elgidius Ichumbaki, Cézar Mahumane

World Heritage coastal towns in East Africa face significant management challenges, including rapid coastal development, climate change, limited technical capacity, and insufficient integration of marine dimensions within existing conservation frameworks. This paper examines how Marine Cultural Heritage (MCH) remains systematically underrepresented in the nomination, interpretation, and management of World Heritage Sites such as Lamu, Zanzibar, Kilwa Kisiwani, and Mozambique Island. Despite their historical emergence through Indian Ocean networks, current management approaches prioritise monumental, terrestrial heritage while overlooking submerged sites, maritime infrastructure, and intangible practices embedded in coastal livelihoods. This imbalance reflects deeper structural limitations within World Heritage governance, including Eurocentric conceptions of heritage value and fragmented institutional frameworks separating underwater, intangible, and terrestrial heritage domains. Drawing on research from the Rising from the Depths network, the paper analyses how these omissions exacerbate vulnerabilities to both anthropogenic pressures—such as port development, tourism expansion, and extractive industries—and environmental threats, including coastal erosion and sea-level rise. It further demonstrates how weak integration of MCH undermines community engagement, reduces adaptive capacity, and limits the effectiveness of sustainable management strategies. The paper argues for a reconfiguration of World Heritage management in African coastal contexts through the adoption of cultural seascape approaches, participatory governance, and the integration of Indigenous knowledge systems. By addressing governance gaps and expanding definitions of Outstanding Universal Value, MCH can contribute to more inclusive, resilient, and sustainable heritage management frameworks across the continent.

71.4. From Documentation to Management and Monitoring: Digital Workflows for African World Heritage Sites

Dana AL Salamin, Fernando Avakian

World Heritage Sites (WHS) in Africa, despite their recognised Outstanding Universal Value, face persistent and cascading management and protection challenges, including those related to climate change, land-use pressures, rapid urbanisation, and socio-political instability. These pressures are often compounded by limited technical capacity, fragmented data systems, poor documentation, insufficient communication of protected delimitations, and institutional constraints, which together hinder effective monitoring, planning, and long-term conservation. This paper examines how recent developments in UNESCO-led approaches, particularly the growing emphasis on integrated and adaptive management (including across culture and nature designations), can be supported through coordinated digital initiatives. It highlights the emerging collaboration between the World Heritage Centre's geospatial efforts, catalysed around the UNESCO Sites Navigator, and the MAEASaM database, developed in parallel to document and structure heritage data across multiple African contexts. Rather than presenting digital tools as standalone solutions, the paper situates them within broader management challenges, showing how improved access to standardised and spatially explicit data can help address key gaps in site management. These include clearly conveying site boundaries, strengthening inventories, and supporting the identification and monitoring of human-

induced or natural risks. The paper also reflects on the importance of linking top-down institutional frameworks with bottom-up engagement with site managers, particularly in contexts where responsibilities and data ownership are often unclear. Not only does this lead to better-quality data, but it also fosters its ownership by the communities directly concerned. By bringing together global and project-based initiatives, this approach contributes to more coherent and informed heritage management practices. It suggests that while structural constraints remain significant, the strategic use and alignment of digital data systems can enhance the capacity of practitioners to respond to and anticipate challenges. In this sense, digital documentation and monitoring become not only technical processes, but essential components of sustainable World Heritage management in Africa.

71.5. Integrating indigenous knowledge systems and intangible heritage into heritage management in African world heritage properties

John Zulu

Africa is endowed with diverse cultural and natural landscapes that qualify as World Heritage properties; however, their effective management remains a persistent challenge. This paper argues that conventional heritage management frameworks are largely grounded in Western epistemologies which are incompatible for African contexts and landscapes. In Africa, landscapes are defined by layers of both the tangible and intangible heritage values which are interconnected. The meaning and significance of heritage are not solely embedded in the physical attributes but they are deeply rooted in living traditions, belief systems, and Indigenous knowledge systems safeguarded by local communities; “the owners”. Drawing on case studies of Mosi-oa-Tunya Victoria Falls (Zambia), Ngorongoro Conservation Area (Tanzania), and Domboshava Caves (Zimbabwe), this study examines how intangible heritage shapes the interpretation, use, and conservation of these landscapes. It demonstrates that local communities are not peripheral stakeholders but central actors who define heritage values and influence appropriate management approaches. The paper contends that sustainable heritage management in Africa is achievable only through meaningful community engagement, involvement that recognizes and integrates intangible cultural dimensions. Excluding communities’ risks undermining both the authenticity and integrity of these heritage sites. By advocating for participatory and context-sensitive management models, this study contributes to ongoing debates on decolonizing heritage practices and highlights the need for frameworks that reflect African realities. Ultimately, this paper positions community-driven approaches as essential for safeguarding Africa’s heritage in a holistic and sustainable manner.

71.6. Managing Fragile Heritage in African Drylands: Conservation Challenges at WonderCave, Cradle of Humankind

Palesa Setonsa

World Heritage Sites (WHS) in Africa face increasing pressures from climate variability, human activity, and tourism, raising urgent questions about sustainable management. This paper examines the Bothongo WonderCave, part of the Cradle of Humankind, as a case study to explore the intersection of environmental change and heritage conservation in a dryland context. Cave systems preserve sensitive palaeoenvironmental and archaeological records, yet they are highly vulnerable to microclimatic shifts, visitor impact, and infrastructure development. Drawing on field observations, conservation frameworks, and literature on site management, this study assesses the main threats to WonderCave and evaluates strategies for mitigation. It highlights how climate fluctuations, increasing tourism, and landscape transformation collectively influence both site preservation and

visitor experience. The paper argues that sustainable management of WHS like WonderCave requires integrated approaches combining heritage conservation, community engagement, and adaptive policies responsive to environmental and anthropogenic pressures. By situating this cave within broader debates on WHS management, the research contributes to discussions on resilience, risk mitigation, and future-proofing fragile heritage in African drylands.

71.7. Levelling the Playing Field: Former Political Prisoners, Victims and Witnesses and State Authored Narratives: A reflection on public experiences at World Heritage Sites of Memory in Africa

Pascall Taruvinga

Sites of Memory, associated with events, places, and activities with profound historical context and impact, have emerged as new World Heritage properties in Africa. While such heritage is often viewed as divisive and hurtful, it represents reconstructed identities, nationalism, emotional and painful experiences shaping new narratives and socio-political understandings in Africa countries. This heritage shapes individual and collective memories of nationhood in Africa. However, these sites do not speak for themselves. Tour guides, who act as mediators between the past and the public, deliver narratives crafted by institutions and fuse this with their own personal experiences. Using two World Heritage sites; Robben Island Museum (South Africa, a mixture of former political prisoners and state-trained guides), Rwandan Genocide Memorial Sites (Rwanda, the story of victims and witnesses), and a national site, the National Heroes Acre (Zimbabwe, state-trained guides), this paper reflects on the different political contexts and the narratives offered to the public. At these sites, narratives assert identity, legitimacy, and nationhood. Tour guides, with unique authority and emotional resonance, are at these sites are not mere storytellers, but actively involved with the meaning-making processes and delivery of the narratives. Their role demonstrates liminality between personal experiences and state-authorized narratives that are shared with the public. The paper argues that site narratives are not neutral as they operate within political, institutional, and ideological frameworks that influence what and how it is remembered, including what is left unsaid. The paper advocates for inclusive narratives which enriches and levels the narrative playing field at the World Heritage sites for the benefit of the public!

71.8. Paysage Culturel ou Écosystème Sacrifié? Le Delta du Saloum (Sénégal) et les limites de la gestion de sa Valeur Universelle Exceptionnelle de l'UNESCO

Sire Ndiaye

Situé dans le centre ouest du Sénégal aux environ de 150 km de la capitale, le Delta du Saloum a été un territoire d'une importance capitale pour les populations locales et l'administration bien avant les indépendances. En effet depuis les années 60 jusqu'à nos jours, ce territoire ne cesse de bénéficier de la protection de décrets, Lois et Conventions internationales pour sa gestion faisant face à un système traditionnel. D'ailleurs cette zone d'une biodiversité mixte de multiple classification est inscrite en 2011 comme Paysage culturel du patrimoine mondial de l'Unesco. Ce site unique alliant richesse culturelle et biodiversité naturelle reste essentiel à la fois pour les communautés locales, la recherche scientifique et l'équilibre environnemental mondial. Le processus de la mise en patrimoine de ce territoire, s'inscrivant dans une dynamique verticale du Haut vers le bas et un manque d'inclusivité absolue, aboutit à l'inscription de ce site comme paysage culturel grâce à l'authenticité et l'intégrité de ces amas et tumuli coquilliers. De ce fait cette mise en patrimoine,

profitant d'un programme conjoint et associé aux distinctions multiples de cette zone, impacte sur la gestion du site et de sa valeur universelle exceptionnelle. Ainsi, ce site est contraint aujourd'hui à une gestion multiple qui occasionne des difficultés majeures sur le plan social, culturel et économique des communautés locales. Cependant pour une meilleure gestion de ce site au profit de son développement communautaire durable, il serait primordial de se passer d'une patrimonialisation exclusive à une approche ascendante pour concilier universalité et résilience locale.

71.9. Improving Tourism Management and Community Participation at African World Heritage Sites: The Application of the ICOMOS International Cultural Heritage Tourism Charter (2022)

Sofia Fonseca, Fergus Maclaren

Africa is currently the continent with the most properties on the World Heritage Sites in Danger List. One of the key cited reasons is poorly regulated tourism development. Tourism is one of the most significant opportunities and challenges facing World Heritage Sites in Africa. While tourism can support site conservation, local economic development, and international visibility, poorly managed visitation may also lead to physical degradation, unequal benefit distribution, and the marginalisation of local communities. As African World Heritage properties continue to grow in number and visibility, there is an increasing need for management frameworks that integrate conservation, community participation, and sustainable tourism practices. There is still an opportunity to 'do things right' as far as tourism development is concerned, providing effective governance to ensure that heritage values are protected while maximising visitor satisfaction. This paper discusses how the ICOMOS International Cultural Heritage Tourism Charter (2022) can support more balanced and sustainable tourism management at African World Heritage Sites. The Charter emphasises key principles including: community participation, equitable benefit sharing, respect for local cultural values and traditions, and responsible visitor management. Drawing on experiences from recent international heritage initiatives and capacity-building programmes in Africa, the paper explores how the Charter's principles can be applied as practical guidance for site managers, policymakers, and heritage practitioners. Particular attention is given to the need for inclusive governance structures, collaborative planning with local communities, and improved professional training in heritage tourism management. By positioning tourism as a tool for both conservation and community empowerment, this contribution highlights how international policy frameworks can help African World Heritage Sites navigate the complex relationship between cultural heritage protection, tourism development, and sustainable futures.

71.10. Melka Kunture, Ethiopia: a new Pleistocene site on the World Heritage List

Andrea Serodio Domínguez, Eduardo Méndez Quintas, Tesfaye Aragie Abegaz, Adugna Debleke Belayneh, Yilkal Demis, Giuseppina Mutri, Patricia Bello-Alonso, Giuseppe Briatico, Margherita Mussi

The UNESCO World Heritage List (WHL), established in 1972, aims to protect sites of outstanding universal value. Nevertheless, Early and Middle Pleistocene archaeological sites, key to understanding human evolution, remain underrepresented. In 2024, the Melka Kunture and Balchit archaeological complex (Ethiopia) was inscribed on the WHL, marking a significant step forward.

This complex includes more than 20 sites documenting human occupation from 2 million years ago to the Holocene. It preserves some of the earliest evidence of *Homo erectus* and the Acheulean

technocomplex, alongside exceptional finds such as well-stratified fossil remains, obsidian tool workshops, hominin footprints, and a continuous sequence spanning the entire African Stone Age. The nomination process, initiated in 2013 by Ethiopian institutions in collaboration with international researchers, culminated in a recognition that enhances the global visibility of African paleoanthropological heritage.

This inscription not only confirms the scientific importance of Melka Kunture as a reference site for the study of human evolution and behaviour in the African Pleistocene, but also highlights the effectiveness of an integrated heritage management model. This approach combines collaboration between academic and governmental institutions, active involvement of local communities, the continuous capacity-building of stakeholders, and sustained efforts in public outreach.

Session: 28 (Room 2)

28.1. The Maritime Archaeology of a Slave Ship on Mozambique Island: Identifying and documenting the (tentative) L'Aurore site as a Task of Historical Recovery and Repair

Cézar Mahumane, Marc-Andre Bernier, Stephen Lubkemann, Celso Simbine, Ricardo Duarte, David Conlin, Jaco Boshoff, Crimildo Chambe, Jonathan Sharfman, Gilson Rambelli, Luis-Felipe Santos, Madicke Gueye, Gabrielle Miller, Samira Jamu

Since 2017, a Mozambican and international research team has pursued an effort to locate and document the remains of the L'Aurore, a ship that had been reported in historical records as lost in 1790 in the Mozambique Island Bay with the loss of hundreds of lives during a storm and just weeks after an onboard rebellion. This paper provides an overview of the systematic research process through which the shipwreck has been tentatively identified and is now being documented and further studied. This process used archival research to inform several field surveys, and the subsequent collection and analytical triangulation of specific and independent lines of diagnostic evidence (including dendrochronological analysis of wood samples, innovative geological analysis of ballast, and multiple forms of artefact analysis). Research on the site has since advanced to include excavation that is establishing the extent of hull remains, specific characteristics of ship construction, and the identification and distribution of artefacts. We discuss how the ongoing archaeological and archival investigation of this site may inform the history of the slave trade and how it is already provoking important public reflection on this tragic history at multiple levels from the local to the national, and globally. We also discuss how this research seeks to explicitly embody a spirit of "restorative repair" by actively incorporating a program (SWP Academy) to train national, African, and diasporan researchers; by providing new opportunities for international collaborate in the investigation of the shared history of the slave trade; by developing infrastructure and institutional capacity on Mozambique Island that can support national and regional research, conservation, and dissemination; and by enabling local communities to participate in research, site protection, and dissemination

28.2. What the sea cannot sink: Maritime archaeology, memory of transoceanic trafficking, and community-based education in Brazil

Gilson Rambelli, Luciana Bozzo Alves, Luis Felipe Santos, Stephen Lubkemann, Marc-André Bernier

This paper discusses new research possibilities on the memory of the transoceanic slave trade in Brazil from a maritime archaeology perspective, focusing on the study of shipwrecks, structures linked to the logistics of the trade, and landscapes associated with these historical processes. The reflection stems from experiences developed by the Afrorigens Institute, representative of the Slave Wrecks Project in Brazil, in partnership with traditional Quilombola communities. The work presented will cover the archaeological site of the brig Camargo (1852) in Angra dos Reis, Rio de Janeiro; research on the shipwreck of the Nau Nossa Senhora do Rosário e Santo André (1737) in Salvador, Bahia; and ongoing investigations in the Niterói region of Rio de Janeiro, motivated by the case of the Maltesa vessel (1850). The objective is to highlight how these projects have broadened the field of slave trade archaeology by articulating scientific research, social memory, historical justice, and community protagonism. More than just documenting submerged remains, these initiatives recognize Black, Afro-descendant, and Quilombola communities as central actors in formulating questions, reclaiming these memories, and defining the social and political uses of this heritage. Also noteworthy is the first edition of the SWP Academy Brazil, held in January 2026 in Salvador, as a pioneering experience in maritime archaeology training, diving, and archaeological documentation, which enabled the training of new divers, including members of the Quilombola community of Santa Rita do Bracuí, Angra dos Reis. These actions point towards a socially engaged maritime archaeology, committed to historical reparation, territorial defense, and the democratization of knowledge.

28.3. Finding the Dutch East India Company Slave Ship Meermin (1766): Developing Methodologies and Discovering New Meanings

Jaco Boshoff

In 1766, the Dutch East India Company ship Meermin (Mermaid) was the site of a revolt during its return voyage from Madagascar, where it was transporting a cargo of enslaved people. Theuprising ultimately led to the vessel being wrecked along the Cape South Coast. This paper outlines the historical context of theevent and the archaeological project that followed. It details thedevelopment of a new methodology for investigating intertidal shipwrecks in South Africa and reflects on the unintendedconsequences of the search for the wreck, particularly those that emerged in the public domain.

28.4. The Agency of Slave Ships: The role of the object in the process of enslavement

Jonathan Sharfman

In an examination of the maritime slave trade, the slave ship is often presented as an evocative visual backdrop against which violence and dehumanization occur. This paper argues that the slave ship is not simply the brutal vehicle of transport but is a central technological and social apparatus in the process of enslavement. Drawing on maritime history, material culture studies, and social theory, it argues that the ship functioned simultaneously as an object and a structured social system designed to transform human beings into commodified, sub-humanized labor.Building on Marcus Rediker's The Slave Ship: A Human History, the paper conceptualizes the vessel as a "floating

factory," engineered to strip captives of identity, impose regimes of terror, and reorder social relations along emergent racial hierarchies. The architecture of the ship, its holds, shackling systems, barricades, and surveillance structures, was integral to processes of dehumanization, reducing individuals to cargo and subjecting them to psychological violence through spatial compression, sensory deprivation, and systematic violence. At the same time, the ship operated as a controlled social environment in which power was violently enacted and normalized. Hierarchies among captains, crew, and captives reproduced broader logics of capitalism and racial ordering. Practices such as renaming, numbering, and the destruction of kinship ties contributed to the production of isolated, racialized identities that underpinned plantation slavery. By foregrounding the ship both materially and socially, this paper positions maritime spaces, and the slave ship specifically, as central to the history of enslavement and racial formation, arguing that the violence of the process of enslavement slavery cannot be fully understood without recognizing the ship as an active agent.

28.5. Anchored Memories: Afro-Diasporic Archaeology, Quilombola Communities, and the Material Evidence of the Transatlantic Slave Trade

Luciana Bozzo Alves, Luis Felipe Freire Dantas Santos, Gilson Rambelli

The Quilombola Community of Santa Rita do Bracuí, located in Angra dos Reis (RJ), constitutes a strategic territory for the analysis of the articulations between memory, materialities, and the African diaspora in Brazil. Its formation dates back to the 19th century, when portions of the old coffee plantation were bequeathed to enslaved people after the death of Commander José Joaquim de Souza Breves, configuring a particular form of Black territorial continuity in the post-abolition context. This process, far from being restricted to a specific historical event, is continuously reworked through collective memory, which structures Quilombola identity and grounds territorial and political claims in the present. In this way, Bracuí demonstrates that contemporary Quilombos should be understood as dynamic spaces of historical production and social agency. From the perspective of Afro-diasporic archaeology, this territory is part of a broader Atlantic network, marked by forced displacements, resistance practices, and processes of reterritorialization. In the case of Bracuí, this approach materializes in the articulation between terrestrial space and the marine environment, especially from the underwater evidence associated with the ship Camargo, which sank in 1852 and is recognized as one of the last records of the illegal trafficking of enslaved Africans in Brazil. These vestiges transcend their empirical dimension, constituting materialities of trauma and, simultaneously, supports for the emergence of historically silenced narratives. In this context, the aim is to analyze the dialogues established between this quilombola community, memory, and materialities, as evidenced by ongoing archaeological research.

28.6. Senegambia, the Sea, and Racial Stereotypes

Madick Gueye

In Senegal, maritime archaeology has not traditionally been a priority area of research. However, we are now beginning to appreciate its contribution to the study of the fascinating and highly complex maritime interactions between Africa, its peoples, and the rest of the world. Since prehistoric times, Senegambian societies have exploited fishery resources to supply inland trade networks and used maritime transport for coastal trade. As such, contrary to the Eurocentric narrative that defined the ocean as a dangerous and mysterious space in the African imagination, the sea has always been viewed in Senegambia as a familiar and unremarkable environment. Ethnographic, archaeological,

and documentary evidence shows that the sea in Senegambia constitutes a key focal point of historical commercial interactions. Its analysis provides a broader overview of the complexity of maritime trade, ocean navigation, and the various scales of history and archaeology. The ocean constitutes, in a sense, a special space for Senegambian communities, who define it as a partial reference structure underpinning their economic activity. In other words, the sea constitutes a recognised entity in its own right, a space that is integrated into Senegal's cultural and natural heritage. Using theoretical frameworks such as the cognitive landscape and the ritual landscape, as well as the experiences of African communities, this contribution offers a critical analysis of Senegambian maritime interactions over the long term.

28.7. The Ongoing Voyage of the slave ship São José Paquete d'África: The Role of Maritime Archaeology in Reclaiming Memory

Raquel Rodrigues Machaqueiro, Stephen Lubkemann, José de Andrade

The findings of the maritime archaeologists who launched the investigation of the shipwrecked slaver São José have since promoted new lines of research and discovery about the slave trade as a global enterprise and as a highly contested site of public memory particularly in countries like Portugal. Through research that has traced the commercial connections of the São José's owner--and also located the ruins of his commercial enterprise on the Lisbon waterfront--we illustrate the generative potential of a maritime archaeology of the slave trade. We review how this ongoing research has provided insights into the ways in which the slave trade was intertwined with other forms of commerce at global scale, how slave traders including the São José's owner were instrumental in the creation of the maritime insurance industry, and how this work has led to an emergent investigation of the role of the trade in the reconstruction of Lisbon after it was destroyed by an earthquake in the mid-18th century. We also discuss what the contemporary neglect of the materiality of the slave trade---as embodied in sites such as the aforementioned ruins in Lisbon, but also in other museological and public memorialization spaces and practices in Portugal, Mozambique reveal about public memory of the slave trade as a highly contested site--and about maritime archaeology's potential to intervene in the public square by rendering materiality visible.

28.8. Between Memory and Heritage: Community Stewardship on Mozambique Island in Comparative Perspective

Samira Jamu, Jay V. Haigler

Drawing on the recent Mozambican Island experience with the introduction of community monitoring and heritage stewardship programs, and casting it in comparative perspective, this analysis examines the critical yet often underrepresented role of local actors in shaping historical narratives and long-term preservation strategies. We argue that community agency and local ownership are required for sustainable heritage preservation--and examine how the structure of international partnerships often run the risk of marginalizing local voices. At the same time, we explore the challenges inherent in implementing participatory approaches in communities that inevitably are themselves heterogeneous. Critical comparative reflection on the potential and the limitations of participatory heritage models provides a basis for elaborating a framework for ethical collaboration that is based on reciprocity, cultural competency, and sustained investment in local leadership. We compare and contrast this proposed framework to already established models such as participatory action research and community-based heritage management--urging deeper

consideration of how power-sharing, long-term capacity building, and local knowledge systems factor into what “involvement” should mean.

28.9. The Slaving Shipwreck as a Destination and Point of Departure for Research: The Archaeological and Archival Pathways to and from the site of the São José Paquete D’Africa

Steve Lubkeman, Jaco Boshoff

In December of 1794, the São Josè Paquete d’Africa foundered off of Cape Town, South Africa while transporting nearly fivehundred slaves from Mozambique who were destined for northeastern Brazil, resulting in the death of over two hundred souls. This paper first traces the research process through which archaeological work on the shipwreck site, combined with archival work, enabled identification of the shipwreck and provides an overview of key findings to date. It then traces the expansive and still evolving lines of derivative research that are being traced from the linkages embodied in the story of this ship and its protagonists that are providing granular level insights that speak to the slave trade as a complex global and globally consequential endeavour. In conclusion we reflect on the heightened importance of systematic approaches to the identification of shipwreck sites from “neglected pasts”; on how the research that originates on these shipwrecks can productively redefine the parameters of the “site” itself in ways that speak to broader questions, and finally on how expansive research on one story requires global collaboration and engagement with multiple publics in ways that should provoke critical methodological reflection within maritime archaeology.

28.10. Au-delà de l’épave coloniale: archéologie fluviale, mémoire de l’esclavage et pratiques maritimes africaines à Atok (Est-Cameroun)

Fernando Ligue Engamba

Cette communication s’inscrit dans une réflexion critique sur le renouvellement de l’archéologie maritime africaine, en dépassant le paradigme dominant centré sur les épaves coloniales pour explorer les pratiques fluviales africaines comme objets légitimes de savoir et de mémoire. À partir du cas du débarcadère d’Atok, situé sur le fleuve Nyong (Est-Cameroun), l’étude propose une approche interdisciplinaire croisant archéologie, histoire orale et archives coloniales afin de restituer un paysage fluvial façonné par des mobilités africaines contraintes, notamment dans le cadre de la traite esclavagiste interne. Les investigations de terrain ont permis d’identifier des vestiges non spectaculaires mais significatifs alignements de pierres, zones d’amarrage, objets métalliques et céramiques témoignant d’usages anciens du fleuve comme espace de circulation, de contrôle et de transit humain. Ces données matérielles sont éclairées par les récits oraux des communautés Maka, qui désignent le site sous le nom de Menkara (« là où l’on attache les captifs »), révélant la persistance d’une mémoire fluviale de la captivité. Les sources coloniales du début du XXᵉ siècle confirment l’existence d’un port fluvial actif avant la pacification allemande. En mettant l’accent sur les fleuves comme infrastructures maritimes intérieures africaines, cette communication plaide pour une archéologie maritime décolonisée, attentive aux savoirs locaux et aux paysages ordinaires. Elle défend enfin une approche transformatrice du patrimoine fluvial, conçue comme un levier d’autonomisation mémorielle, culturelle et socio-économique pour les communautés riveraines contemporaines.

28.11. Conservation of archaeological materials in Mozambique Island: experimental methods developed at CAIRIM

Crimildo Chambe, Cézar Mahumane, Celso Simbine, Saide Selemane

Mozambique Island yields several artefacts related to its development and the socio-cultural interactions that have been established on the island for millennia. Nowadays, these materials are recovered either through archaeological research or in construction projects occurring on Mozambique Island. The Centre of Archaeology, Research and Resources of Mozambique Island (CAIRIM) has the mission to preserve and conserve these material cultures of different natures. This paper aims to discuss conservation methods used in the centre to stabilise artefacts from land and underwater sites, and to reveal interpretations associated with these artefacts, which are relevant to understanding past developments of Mozambique Island.

Session: 30 (Room 3)

30.1. Biocultural heritage as a collaborative research programme for the continent

Anneli Ekblom

Archaeology on the African continent has had a long tradition of integrative research combining archaeology with environmental data, oral history and current day practices of environmental and heritage practices which in many cases are interlinked. Bicultural heritage is a well-working umbrella for such endeavours as a way to link past, present, and future. In many landscapes, there is still a lack of archaeological or palaeoecological knowledge which restricts our possibility to trace methods/practices in the deep past or to learn from them today. The ‘degradation narratives’ which were successfully contested in the 1990s through research on the past are with climate mitigation investment and green agricultural schemes uncritically treated as facts. In the process living practices of care for heritage and biodiversity are being undervalued and, in some cases, undermined. In this paper I lay out a research programme and process for building collaborative knowledge around biocultural heritage with some examples. I also make comparisons with other parts of the world where the concept has been activated by and for the community. I discuss common challenges and potential venues for collaboration.

30.2. The Biocultural Heritage of Beescape: Linking Indigenous Apicultural Knowledge with Future Forest Conservation in Kenya's Central Rift

Benny Q. Shen

Despite its economic and cultural importance, pollination services for key cash crops, and broader ecosystem roles in biodiversity and soil stabilization, beekeeping in sub-Saharan Africa remains underrepresented in development and conservation literature. Similarly, despite its antiquity, apiculture has been largely overlooked in archaeology. Conventional archaeological approaches tracing the earliest beekeeping to the Near East via apicultural structures or beeswax lipid analysis are ineffective in sub-Saharan Africa, where hives were perishable and wax collection was recent.

Building on the concept of 'beescape' as biocultural heritage embracing multispecies intra-actions shaping ecosystems, landscapes, and material memories this paper advocates for a multidisciplinary, historical ecology approach. Using oral histories, participatory mapping, GIS, remote sensing, palaeoecology, and archaeology, it examines beescapes in eastern Africa. A comparative study of beekeeping in Kenya's Loboi Plain (lowlands) and Kapcherop Forest (highlands) highlights how cross-regional climate mosaicism sustains honeybee populations, critical for historical and future climate resilience.

30.3. Insect Stratigraphy: insect agency and entomological encounters in shaping colonial borders in the British Museum's (Natural History) Ruwenzori Expeditions (1934-5 & 1952)

Charlotte Wood

This paper shows how human-insect relations shaped the boundary between Uganda and the Belgian Congo. Mapping insect distribution, and associated disputes over collecting territory, helped delineate the border between British and Belgian territory in mountainous Ruwenzori region. Such surveying depended on Konjo knowledge, labour and their mobility across colonial borders. As porters, Konjo informants literally carried scientific instruments of knowledge-making and traversed difficult terrain for inexperienced entomologist-mountaineers. The meeting of these two knowledge systems shaped the overall entomological encounter. In this contact zone, insects shaped-shifted between discreet specimens and continuous substances, whose vertical and horizontal distribution along both elevation and territory gave an experiential depth to the 2D maps in the minds of museum entomologists. Insects were both collected as individual specimens and mapped against elevation where they were constructed as part of a strata's overall atmosphere. The experience of encountering a swarm of collective consciousness around a light trap for instance became part of the British/Belgian experience of the rift valley as much as its unique geology and flora. The paper attests to the importance of insects in shaping ecological perceptions, scientifically, politically and experientially, and the reciprocal interaction of different knowledge systems with non-human agencies.

30.4. Refugia in Ruins? Assessing Cultural Heritage Sites as Potential Insect Pollinator Havens along the Swahili Coast of Kenya: A Proposed Research Framework

Jane Macharia, Matthew Davies, Rebecca Karanja

Archaeological cultural heritage sites are increasingly recognized as important socio-ecological landscapes where long-term human–environment interactions have shaped biodiversity patterns. Yet, their potential role as refugia for insect pollinators in rapidly transforming tropical coastal environments remains underexplored. This study proposes to assess whether protected cultural heritage landscapes along the Swahili Coast of Kenya function as ecological refugia for insect pollinators compared to adjacent non-heritage areas. Focusing on three major sites, namely: Gede, Jumba la Mtwana, and Mnarani, the research will examine how site protection, vegetation structure, and cultural management histories from indigenous ecological knowledge influence insect pollinator diversity, abundance, and functional composition. This paper outlines the conceptual framework, methodological design, and anticipated contributions of the study. It aims to advance debates in African environmental archaeology by fronting insect pollinators as active agents in heritage

landscapes and by proposing cultural heritage sites as overlooked nodes of insect pollinator conservation. Drawing on interdisciplinary perspectives from ecology and human-environment, the study conceptualizes cultural heritage sites as bio-cultural archives where long-term landscape management, restricted land-use practices, and the persistence of semi-natural vegetation may create micro-habitats favourable for insect pollinators. The research will employ standardized insect sampling, vegetation surveys, ethnographic surveys and spatial comparisons between protected heritage sites and surrounding non-protected landscapes. Ultimately, the research contributes to wider discussions on adaptation, heritage management, and biodiversity conservation in the face of accelerating land-use and climate change along the East African coast.

30.5. Living Landscapes: Integrated approaches to community memory, heritage, and place-based practices in the forests of Inhambane, Mozambique

Pascoal Gota

Local communities possess perspectives, practices, and social norms that are safeguarded and transmitted intergenerationally. This evolving body of local knowledge and institutional memory shapes worldviews on heritage, landscape, and environmental management. This paper investigates the forest mosaics of Inhambane Province, Mozambique, documenting what histories embedded in social memories are continually negotiated and used to define contemporary community identity. By integrating results from inventories of forest patches and plant biodiversity with local heritage practices and physical remains, the study frames these areas as living landscapes. Methodologically, the research employs an interdisciplinary, place-based framework, drawn on the entanglement of historical ecology, oral history, cultural heritage, GIS, and environmental history. The findings suggest that collaboration with communities and a focus on community led practices are vital and or complementary alternatives to conventional models of heritage conservation and landscape management. Ultimately, this research demonstrates how biocultural heritage can effectively bridge the past, present, and future. These findings provide a framework for inclusive conservation of biodiversity and natural resources, offering evidence to argue for genuine integration of customary landscape management into national biodiversity and cultural heritage policies.

30.6. Early monasteries as niches of biocultural heritage: notes from Tigray, Ethiopia

Rediat Messele, Federica Sulas

Biocultural heritage approaches are reconfiguring the relation between the past and the present by exposing the enduring connection between the historic record and current socioecological agents and conditions. This paper explores the historic monasteries of Tigray, Ethiopia, as niches of biocultural heritages, discussing the social institutions embodied in the material and intangible expressions of water management through time Nestled on the northern highlands of Ethiopia, Tigrayan monasteries are amongst the longest-running, monastic institutions across sub-Saharan Africa. Established in the wake of early Christianization (mid 1st millennium CE), these monasteries soon became vibrant places of pray, writing, and water management. Important research on their architecture and written documents has chronicled their Aksumite rooting and made their tangible heritage of global significance. Several of examples of early foundation continue to serve rural communities amidst escalating humanitarian and war crises in the wider region. In reviewing material properties, the paper reflects on the role of local physical parameters (geology, topography, etc.) in water management. Such a focus illuminates on conventional technologies of water-

harvesting such as cisterns but also exposes spaces and places to capture intangible factors. Among these, water ritualization and power decentralization emerge as ongoing processes where socioecological memory has shaped and continued to shape practices of nurturing water for subsistence, environmental conservation, religious and social cohesion. By reflecting on the Tigrayan monasteries as niches of biocultural heritage, we hope to contribute a novel dimension to the understanding of water security over the long term.

30.7. Agrarian landscapes during the medieval period in the eastern horn of Africa

Valeria Franco Salvi, Jorge de Torres Rodríguez

Agrarian landscapes are approached here as relational configurations linking environment, production, and social life. From this perspective, our research at Aiyanle, a settlement of about fifty dwellings near Aw Barre in eastern Ethiopia, examines how historically pastoral groups incorporated agricultural practices from the thirteenth century onwards within the semi-arid environments of the eastern Horn of Africa. This period was marked by political and territorial reconfigurations, the consolidation of trade routes linking the highlands with the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean, and changes in settlement organization and resource management. In this context, the constitution of agrarian landscapes may be seen not only as a technical response to environmental constraints, but also as part of wider transformations in the ways communities inhabited, organized, and gave meaning to space. Conducted between 2022 and 2025, the research combines systematic survey, satellite imagery, UAV-based documentation, georeferenced archaeological recording, stratigraphic excavation, archaeobotanical analysis of phytoliths from agricultural terraces, and the study of materials and sediments within a GIS environment. The study also considers archaeological sites recently identified across Somaliland and preliminary interviews with present-day farmers in order to critically explore, in light of the historical distance involved, similarities and differences between past and present ways of inhabiting, working, and organizing these spaces. Preliminary results indicate that areas of cultivation and other forms of agrarian organization were not limited to soil retention, erosion control, or water management, but also materialized situated ecological knowledge through which communities organized productive practices and sustained particular ways of dwelling in semi-arid landscapes.

30.8 Biocultural Heritage and Climate Change Adaptation in Southern Mozambique: Local Knowledge, Cosmologies, and Environmental Change in Magude

Jossias Humbane

Climate change is increasingly recognised as a complex environmental and socio-cultural phenomenon that shapes how communities perceive, interpret, and relate to their surroundings. Drawing on eleven months of ethnographic fieldwork in Magude District, southern Mozambique, this paper examines how local communities interpret environmental change through traditional ecological knowledge, cosmological beliefs, and everyday experiences. The study explores the ways in which residents connect climatic variability, droughts, irregular rainfall, and other environmental disturbances to broader social, spiritual, and historical processes. The paper argues that local knowledge systems constitute a significant form of biocultural heritage, forged through sustained human-environment interactions across generations. These systems offer frameworks for making sense of environmental transformation and inform practical adaptation strategies at the community

level. They also coexist and sometimes converge with scientific explanations and state-led climate adaptation policies, producing hybrid forms of environmental understanding.

Session: 50 (Room 4)

50.1. The Geological Context of the Neogene fossil sites in Gorongosa National Park, Mozambique: Exploring the Southern Terminus of the East African Rift

Melissa Doyle Boyd, Rene Bobe, Susana Carvalho, João d'Oliveira Coelho

The East African Rift System (EARS) has long been recognized as a forge for hominin evolution, yet its southernmost terminus in Mozambique's Urema Rift has remained historically a paleontological and geological blind spot. Recent discoveries by the Paleo-Primate Project Gorongosa (PPG) are bridging the gap between the older, well-studied northern extent and the lesser-known southern end, which terminates in the Pungwe River Estuary near Beira, Mozambique. The PPG employs an integrative, multidisciplinary strategy, merging geology, archaeology, paleoanthropology, genetics, and ecology to understand the complex environments that shaped vertebrate evolution. Specifically, geological investigations endeavor to establish (1) the temporal framework of the Gorongosa fossil sites, (2) the paleoenvironmental reconstruction in local and regional contexts, (3) how environmental variability and change is manifested in Gorongosa and Mozambique deposits, and (4) how that change fits into the broader story of human evolution in the EARS. Research and fieldwork, initiated in 2016, have documented a unique coastal-plain mosaic of estuarine and riverine forest habitats, evidenced by an exceptional assemblage of marine and terrestrial fossils, including mammals, invertebrates, and wood. This provides the first empirical evidence of persistent coastal woodlands in the Neogene EARS. Extensive geological surveys and geochronological analyses suggest the Gorongosa fossil sites represent early to mid-Miocene marginal-marine to fluvio-tidal transition zone environments. Ultimately, we seek to test the hypothesis that coastal forests played a critical role in human evolution, highlighting how early primates and other fauna adapted to dynamic environmental shifts along the continental margin.

50.2. Baboon behaviour in a modern African environment: insights from Gorongosa National Park (Mozambique)

Rassina Farassi, Catarina Coelho, Emanuela Rabajoli, Susana Carvalho

How does the most abundant primate species in Gorongosa National Park, Mozambique, respond to a highly seasonal and heterogeneous African landscape? This research investigates the behavioural ecology of wild chacma baboons (Papio ursinus griseipes) living in a dynamic mosaic environment characterized by strong seasonality and diverse herbivore and predator communities. Seasonal resource availability, predation risk and interspecific interactions likely shaped the adaptive strategies of early hominins, making baboons a valuable model for understanding behavioural flexibility in terrestrial primates. This project investigates: (i) the sympatry dynamics between baboons and ungulates, (ii) how social relationships and hierarchy shape feeding ecology, (iii) which ecological pressures influence bipedal behaviour and (iv) the relationship between baboons and carnivores. Data collection (June-December 2025; April-September 2026) involves on-foot follows of two baboon troops (≈45 and ≈110 individuals) with partially overlapping home ranges. Behavioural observations record activity patterns, social interactions, interspecific associations and bipedalism events. Diet composition will be assessed through DNA metabarcoding (350 fecal samples) and compared with seasonal resource availability using phenology transects. GPS radio collars (on 13 individuals) allow analyses of movement patterns, habitat use, and spatial overlap with areas of

predator activity. In addition, 24 camera traps placed within the core home range of both troops, provide continuous data on interspecific encounters, predator presence and social behaviours. We predict baboons will exhibit behavioural flexibility driven by seasonal resource availability, differences in social dynamics, sympatry and predation risk, thus providing a multi-dimensional model for understanding the adaptive strategies of early hominins in heterogeneous African landscapes.

50.3. Paleoenvironmental reconstruction of the Mazamba Formation, Cheringoma Plateau, Mozambique: A stratigraphic and multidisciplinary approach

Ester de Sousa Alves Lourenço, Susana Carvalho, René Bobe, Melissa Doyle-Boyd

New fossil sites discovered within the Mazamba Formation (Cheringoma Plateau, central Mozambique) provide an opportunity to reconstruct the paleoenvironmental conditions of the southernmost segment of the East African Rift System (EARS) during the Neogene. Furthermore, the proposed arid corridor hypothesis (Bobe et al., 2023) suggests the development of a continuous belt of open and dry environments linking eastern and southern Africa, with significant implications for faunal dispersal and ecological connectivity. This framework is crucial for understanding paleoclimatic gradients and biogeographic patterns across the region. Building upon foundational work by Habermann et al., (2019) at Gorongosa Paleontological Localities (GPL) 1-9, this research presents new data from 12 localities found to date, with a focus on GPL-12W, GPL-12E, and GPL-12SE. Stratigraphic sequences at these sites are dominated by interbedded sandstones and clays. These facies associations suggest depositional environments ranging from fluvial to estuarine during the Miocene, supporting previous models of a dynamic coastal mosaic. Notably, these sediments preserve in situ vertebrate fossils with exceptional preservation, indicating a landscape of riverine forests and coastal woodlands that may have acted as a critical refuge or corridor for ancient fauna. By integrating stratigraphy, sedimentology, mineralogy and magnetic susceptibility, this multidisciplinary approach aims to refine the regional stratigraphic framework and establish a more robust chronology. The identification of potential datable horizons, such as carbonates and volcanic ash layers, is essential for correlating fossiliferous sections. Ultimately, this work contributes to a deeper understanding of the tectono-sedimentary evolution of the Urema Rift and the paleoecological significance of the Gorongosa fossil record within the broader African context.

50.4. The Bones of Gorongosa: Establishing Live Dead Fidelity in a Complex African Ecosystem

Jacinto Mathe, René Bobe, Susana Carvalho

Modern African ecosystem animal bone assemblages can reveal ecosystem structures and may reflect species interactions and population dynamics. Gaining a detailed understanding of how well current bone assemblages capture existing ecosystem properties can enhance our ability to reconstruct palaeoecology from fossilised bone assemblages. This is particularly pertinent for studying hominin origins and early evolution, for which most of our scientific understanding is derived from fragmentary fossil assemblages. Studying bone composition and distribution in diverse contemporary sediments can provide insights into factors influencing fossil density and distribution in palaeontological and archaeological sites. Here, we present a novel multi-method approach to assess live-dead fidelity in the highly heterogeneous Rift Valley ecosystem of Gorongosa National Park, Mozambique. We investigated how well modern bone assemblages and camera trap data mirrored the living mammal community across five different landscapes. Systematic surveys for bones were conducted across 23 (5 km) transects and 144 100x100 m plots. Both counts and rank

order bone data were compared with the living mammal species diversity, composition, and abundance, as recorded by four aerial biennial counts and from a 300 km2 grid of 60 camera traps. Species diversity in the dead community reflects that of the living across the five landscapes; the three survey methods have a higher level of similarity and complementary in documenting vertebrate species composition; the dead mammal community reflects the living mammal community and the reflection in rank order data; and osteological survey document more accurately species captured by camera trap than aerial survey. The rank order of species identified from bones explained live-dead fidelity better than species counts. The taxonomic relative abundances of the living community based on aerial counts closely reflected that derived from the bone assemblages. However, almost half of the species recorded by camera traps are not recorded in bone assemblages and aerial surveys. This research may have implications in the preservation of small mammal taxa and for our understanding of their diversity and species richness in the African fossil record, where some palaeontological sites have abundant middle- to large-sized mammals and few small mammals.

50.5. A Safari in Deep Time: The evolutionary history of the Gorongosa ecosystem

João d'Oliveira Coelho

Gorongosa National Park is often celebrated for its modern biodiversity, but its current ecological complexity is the product of over a billion years of geological and biological assembly. This presentation provides a comprehensive deep time overview of the Gorongosa ecosystem, tracing the evolution of its diverse landscapes from the Precambrian to the present day. We begin in the Mesoproterozoic (~1.3 Ga) with the Báruè Complex, which forms the crystalline basement of the region. We then examine the transformative Mesozoic magmatic and volcanic events of the Upper Karoo and the Lupata Group that sculpted the iconic Serra da Gorongosa and the Bunga Inselbergs. The narrative follows the region's marine history through the Grudja and Cheringoma Formations, where Eocene marine life laid the foundation for the karstic systems of the Inhaminga High. The focus then shifts to the Cenozoic golden age of discovery by the Paleo-Primate Project Gorongosa (PPPG). We detail the Miocene Mazamba Formation, which has yielded over 3,000 fossils including extinct plants, crocodiles, sharks, and afrotherian mammals reconstructing a lost coastal paleoenvironment. Finally, we discuss the arrival of the East African Rift System (~3 Ma) and the Pleistocene development of the Cheringoma caves, including Tombo Aphale 5, the first stratified Stone Age cave site discovered in Mozambique. By integrating these temporal layers, we demonstrate how Gorongosa serves as a high-resolution laboratory for understanding the environmental contexts that shaped ancient mammalian lineages and the evolution of hominins in the Rift.

50.6. Evaluation of coat color heterogeneity as a phenotypic indicator of hybridization in southern African baboons

Magdalena Gatsch, Dominique Cavallaro, Felipe Martinez, Susana Carvalho

Gene flow and hybridisation have been very common throughout the prehistory of Homo sapiens; however, it is very difficult to find proxies to study these hybridization processes. Baboons (Papio sp.) are particularly apt proxies for this purpose because different species within this taxon are able to reproduce and produce viable and fertile offspring in contact zones. There are six commonly recognized species of baboons, each of which occupy distinct geographical ranges and are characterized by distinct morphological traits, among them coat coloration. Heterogeneous coat

coloration has traditionally aided the identification of baboon offspring with mixed ancestry, in contrast to the more homogeneous coloration expected in non-hybrid individuals. However, evidence on whether individuals in contact zones exhibit heterogeneous coat coloration remains inconclusive and is based on limited datasets. Here, we use a large database of images of baboons collected through citizen science across Southern Africa to test this hypothesis. We assessed pelt color heterogeneity using a three-level scoring system and mapped the distribution of this diversity. Then, we modelled the likelihood that highly heterogeneous individuals occur in areas where IUCN-defined species ranges meet compared with areas within those ranges.

50.7. Past vegetation of the Cheringoma Plateau, Gorongosa National Park, Mozambique

Mmatolo Julliet Maphutha, Marion Bamford

The Gorongosa Palaeontological locality number 12 (GPL-12) is part of the many recent Miocene sites that have been discovered in the Cheringoma Plateau of Mozambique. The fossil sites are located at the southern end of the East African Rift System (EARS) where Miocene deposits are rare; they have also produced silicified wood, marine, estuarine, and terrestrial fossils, the first of their kind to be found in the EARS. Here, we reconstruct the vegetation and climate associated with vertebrate fossil finds using micro-fossil records of pollen, phytoliths, and charcoal from the Miocene sediment deposit from GPL-12 West. Standard methods were used to extract pollen and phytoliths from the palaeosols. The sediment layers were highly oxidised and gave negative results for both pollen and phytoliths. However, four of fourteen layers produced reliable non-pollen palynomorphs (NPPs); i.e. from the 1) A brown sandy clay layer, 2) Red band clay, 3) Brown clay, and 4) Red-grey clay with fossils. The brown clay layer produced mostly dinocysts and other marine NPPs, indicating a marine environment. The other three layers produced coprophilous and rust fungi, as well as NPPs that grow in stagnant, shallow water, and thus are affiliated with lacustrine environments. cf. Mangrovia hallii was found in the brown sandy clay layer depicting an estuarine environment with mangroves. Abundant silicified woods from the nearby Magare Hill, yet to be correlated stratigraphically with the GPP-12 site, indicate a mixed woodland of tall dicot trees and palms. Overall, the micro-fossil study supports previous claims that at times in the past the Cheringoma Plateau was much closer to the sea than today.

50.8. Dispersão de restos ósseos contemporâneos em diferentes habitates das paisagens do Parque Nacional de Gorongosa (PNG)

Rafael Gove, Jacinto Mathe, René Bobe, Susana Carvalho

Este estudo investiga os padrões de dispersão de restos ósseos de animais contemporâneos em diferentes habitates do PNG, com o objetivo de compreender os processos tafonómicos que influenciam a formação e preservação das assembleias ósseas. A pesquisa baseia-se numa abordagem multidisciplinar, integrando trabalho de campo e análise espacial. Os dados foram recolhidos através de transectos, parcelas estruturadas, levantamentos oportunistas e registos com câmaras-trap, permitindo identificar a localização das carcaças, os agentes envolvidos e as condições ambientais associadas. Os resultados demonstraram que a distribuição das carcaças é heterogénea e fortemente condicionada pelas características ecológicas e geomorfológicas de cada habitat. As planícies de inundação e os leques coluviais apresentaram maior concentração de restos ósseos, devido à maior disponibilidade de água, elevada densidade faunística e melhores condições de preservação. Em contraste, habitats mais secos revelaram menor densidade e maior fragmentação

óssea, influenciadas por processos como o intemperismo, a predação e a acção de necrófagos.Foram identificados vários agentes tafonómicos, incluindo civetas, hienas, leões, chacais, manguços e abutres, que desempenham papéis distintos na modificação, transporte e dispersão dos ossos. As implicações científicas do estudo são significativas, pois fornecem uma base empírica para interpretar a formação de sítios arqueológicos e paleontológicos. Os resultados contribuem para a reconstrução de paleoambientes e para a compreensão da evolução humana em África, ao oferecer modelos actualistas que ajudam a explicar como os restos biológicos se acumulam e preservam ao longo do tempo.

50.9. The Paleo-Primate Project Gorongosa: Integrative approaches to evolution in the southern African Rift Valley

René Bobe, Ester Lourenço, Jacinto Mathe, Susana Carvalho

The Paleo-Primate Project Gorongosa (PPPG) has been conducting fieldwork in Gorongosa National Park since 2016. The project is an international and interdisciplinary initiative that includes professional palaeontologists, archaeologists, speleologists, geologists, primatologists, and geneticists as well as students from Mozambique and other countries, working together to illuminate the evolutionary history of the Gorongosa ecosystem. Our team has been exploring the extensive karstic system of the Cheringoma plateau and has documented more than 100 caves, several of them with archaeological potential. Two of these caves (Conga and Tombo Aphale 5) have been excavated and have provided late Pleistocene to Holocene lithic artefacts and fauna. The team has also discovered 26 new paleontological sites of the Mazamba Formation, with a rich fossil record that includes giant hyraxes, extinct embrithopods, sirenians, ancient crocodilians, and sharks in a rich coastal paleoenvironment. Fossil wood and other paleobotanical remains are also abundant and exquisitely preserved. The chronological placement of these fossils is in progress but preliminary dates span the Miocene epoch. With regard to the modern environments and ecology of the park, we have a special interest in the study of living primates and how they adapt to complex and dynamic landscapes, which are, in some ways, analogous to those in which early hominins evolved. We are also conducting a long-term taphonomic study of modern bone accumulations in the various Gorongosa landscapes. This session aims to present key results and discussions of these interdisciplinary approaches, whilst celebrating the first decade of the Paleo-Primate Project Gorongosa.

50.10. Vertebrate Paleontology at Gorongosa: A new afrothere-dominated vertebrate assemblage from near the Paleogene-Neogene boundary

Robert L. Anemone

Paleontological surveys in the Urema Rift of Gorongosa National Park (GNP), Mozambique, the southernmost extent of the East African Rift System, have produced a unique assemblage of marine and terrestrial vertebrates from a coastal forest paleoenvironment. Dating has proven challenging; while the lower levels of locality GPL-12 are preliminarily dated to the Paleogene–Neogene boundary (~20 Ma), the Mazamba Formation also encompasses younger intervals, with sections such as Magare Hill representing later Miocene horizons. The assemblage includes marine vertebrates (Galeocerdo tiger sharks and batoid rays), turtles, crocodiles, as well as terrestrial (Hyracoidea and Embrithopoda) and aquatic afrotheres (Sirenia), comprising an assemblage consistent with geological and paleobotanical evidence for an estuarine setting. At locality GPL-12, several new hyracoid taxa are present, including a large species (~125–150 kg) represented by a

nearly complete left hemimandible. The cheek teeth are strongly lophodont, with pronounced transverse crests adapted for herbivory, likely folivory. The lower third molar bears an elongated hypoconulid lobe with sharp crests. Notably, both the protocristid and hypocristid are lingually extended by additional crests (metacristid and entocristid) connecting to distinct stylids. While Titanohyrax from the Fayum shares some similarities, the entocristid and entostylid appear to be novel derived features. Bayesian phylogenetic analysis integrating morphological and stratigraphic data, time-scaled under a fossilized birth–death model, places the Gorongosa giant hyracoid within Titanohyracidae, clustering with Titanohyrax and likely representing a new genus within this clade.

50.11. Conga Cave and Later Stone Age Adaptation in Central Mozambique

Will Archer

Mozambique occupies a critical geographic position linking eastern and southern Africa, yet its Later Stone Age (LSA) record remains comparatively underdeveloped in relation to these regions. This paper presents new results from Conga Cave, a stratified LSA site in Sofala Province, and evaluates its implications for understanding Holocene human adaptation in central Mozambique. Excavations at Conga Cave reveal a ~1 m deep stratified sequence spanning the early Holocene to the historical period, constrained by luminescence dating. The sequence records multiple occupation phases, including a lower minimally artefactual horizon, mid-Holocene LSA deposits dominated by lithic and faunal remains, and an upper layer containing pottery and fauna consistent with Iron Age herder activity. These deposits provide a rare chronological anchor in a region where archaeological sequences are often discontinuous or poorly resolved. The lithic assemblage is dominated by expedient core-and-flake technology focused on locally available quartz, with widespread use of bipolar reduction. Formal tools are rare, though occasional backed artefacts indicate limited composite tool production. Diachronic trends suggest increasing on-site reduction intensity and the introduction of exotic raw materials in upper layers, potentially reflecting shifts in mobility or exchange. Geoarchaeological analyses, including micromorphology and FTIR, indicate that despite post-depositional disturbance, the sequence retains coherent stratigraphic integrity. Conga Cave herefore provides a key reference point for central Mozambique, contributing to broader debates on LSA technological variability, raw-material economies, and interactions between foragers and agropastoralists during the late Holocene.

Session: 21 (Room 5)

21.1. Reconstitution et interprétation des fonctions du matériel de broyage de Bimlerou-haut dans les monts Alantika (Nord-Cameroun) (18ème-20ème siècles)

Biloa Alice, Mezop T. Noumissing Alice

La morphologie, les propriétés des matières premières, la typologie du matériel de broyage sont trois variables exploitées de manière privilégiée pour interpréter le matériel de broyage exhumée en Afrique de l'Ouest. Les marques d'usure n'interviennent que rarement comme variables fonctionnelles discriminantes. Ce travail propose d'abord un référentiel de traces macroscopiques d'usage élaboré à partir du matériel de broyage actuel des monts Atlantika dans le Nord du Cameroun. A la lumière de ce référentiel ethnographique, l'étude permet ensuite d'analyser et d'interpréter les macrotraces d'usures en surface des meules et broyeurs de Bimlerou-Haut, un ancien village de la même région occupé depuis le 18ème siècle. En combinant l'observation des

marques d'usure sur les outils ethnographiques avec l'archéologie, l'étude permet d'améliorer considérablement les possibilités de reconstituer la fonction des objets en contexte archéologique et révèle le potentiel d'informations historiques que contient cette catégorie d'indices.

21.2. "Beads Without Borders: Rethinking Ostrich Eggshell Beads Variability and Connectedness in Southern Africa"

Dione Brown

My PhD project, MorphOstrich, builds directly on my master's research at Bushman Rock Shelter in South Africa, where I conducted a techno-morphological and use-wear analysis of ostrich eggshell beads and preforms from the Later Stone Age occupation (ca. 15.6-10.6 ka). The results showed substantial variability in the beads' dimensions and morphology over a relatively short spatial and temporal range, suggesting that this variability was driven by technological, functional, or cultural factors rather than by chronological trends. In contrast, Miller and Wang (2022) utilise long-term changes in bead dimensions from 50,000 years ago to model changes in degrees of social networks across eastern and southern Africa during the Pleistocene. My observations at Bushman Rock Shelter prompt a critical reassessment of how OES bead dimensions are employed as proxies for connectivity. To investigate the factors influencing the variability on the dimensions of the beads, MorphOstrich combines three approaches: experimental replication of bead production using appropriate raw materials and tools; ethnographic work with San communities in collaboration with the Kalahari Peoples' Fund; and detailed technological and use-wear analyses of OES beads from Bushman Rock Shelter and Heuningneskrans Shelter (South Africa) and Pomongwe Cave (Zimbabwe). By integrating these datasets, the project investigates the factors driving bead variability and evaluates the reliability of OES beads as cultural and social markers.

21.3. Macro-lithic Tools from Oued Beht (Morocco): Preliminary Insights into a Stone Tool Assemblage in the Western Maghreb

Francesco Michele Rega, Caroline Hamon, Cyprian Broodbank, Giulio Lucarini

Despite its strategic location in North Africa and on the southern coast of the Mediterranean Sea, the Maghreb region has often been underrepresented in broader discussions about Neolithisation and early complex societies. However, recent structured research has significantly changed this trend with new solid data from the region. Nonetheless, studies on stone tools remain generally underexplored. Oued Beht, situated in the Khemisset Province of Morocco, presents an important opportunity to address this gap. This site is presently recognised as one of the largest and most important prehistoric settlements in the north-western Maghreb. Archaeological investigations indicate occupations in the Final Neolithic (c. 3400–2900 BCE), and later reoccupations in the early–mid 2nd millennium BCE and during medieval periods (11th–13th centuries CE). Since 2022, systematic excavations and, especially, surveys have yielded a significant macro-lithic assemblage, currently under study. This contribution presents the preliminary results of an ongoing research project (MSCA-SEPAMP). It aims to assess the analytical and interpretative potential of macro-lithic tools (also known as ground stone tools) for exploring economic practices and technological choices from the Final Neolithic in the Western Maghreb. Such discussions are based on raw material selection, techno-functional characteristics, as well as artefact distribution within the site and across

the surrounding landscape. Furthermore, while emphasising the value of macro-lithic tools analyses for advancing North African prehistoric research, the paper also highlights the importance of integrating African datasets into broader Mediterranean comparative frameworks, particularly with the Iberian Peninsula, to better explore similarities, differences, and contemporaneous technological trajectories.

21.4. Use-wear study of Ground Stone Axes from Tabu, Akwanga, Central Nigeria: An experimental approach

Masara Peter

This research investigates the manufacture, function, and cultural significance of Ground-Stone axes from Tabu, Akwanga, Central Nigeria, through an experimental archaeological approach. Despite the widespread discovery of Stone Axes in Nigeria and West Africa at large, limited attention has been given to their raw material sourcing, production processes, functional capabilities, and use-wear patterns. This study seek to address these gaps by replicating Ground-Stone axes using locally sourced rock materials, and subjecting them to a controlled practical tasks such as tree felling, hide scraping, butchery, and bone disarticulation. Detailed documentation of raw material selection, manufacturing processes, and tool performance will be complemented with microscopic use-wear analysis. The research seeks to clarify technological skills, efficiency, and edge-damage patterns (which will be analyst using microscope) of prehistoric tools. Ultimately, the study seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of human adaptation, resource exploitation, and technological innovation in prehistoric Central Nigeria, while bridging the gap between theoretical interpretations and practical experimentation in West African archaeology.

21.5. New Hypotheses for the Music Archaeology of Middle Stone Age Africa

Michael Praxmarer

This paper offers a fresh perspective on the origins of musical instruments. From a musical archaeological perspective, archaeological finds previously known as pendants might represent rattles. Furthermore, notched, elongated objects may have been used as scrapers. Most notably, ostrich eggshell artefacts, which were previously thought to be paint pots or flasks, could be the earliest examples of aerophones in human prehistory. While researching Palaeolithic European music archaeology, Michael Praxmarer studied geometric motifs at the Middle Stone Age (MSA) southern African sites of Blombos and Diepkloof. These are the earliest examples of geometric decoration and represent the advanced cognitive and cultural abilities of modern humans in Africa around 75,000 BCE. Although many researchers have acknowledged the musical sophistication of these societies, no archaeological evidence has yet been discovered. New hypotheses in African Middle Stone Age music archaeology include the following interpretations of musical instruments: 1) a possible rattle costume in Blombos Cave, 2) a possible scraper (guiro) in Border Cave, and 3) an ostrich eggshell ocarina in the Diepkloof Rock Shelter. While rattle costumes and scrapers can be found across all human cultures, vessel flutes made of eggshell appear to be unique. The closest parallels found so far are the Chinese xun, which are egg-shaped vessel flutes, and globular vessel flutes found in Greek prehistory and in modern Africa. These new hypotheses are being presented in the hope of establishing contacts for future fieldwork on traditional African music.

21.6. Experimental Manufacture of Ground stone axes made of gneiss from Akwanga, Central Nigeria: New Approach to interpreting Archaeological materials

Okopi Ade

Experimental archaeology allows researchers to replicate tool production and usage, providing a controlled framework to distinguish authentic use-wear patterns from those caused by post-depositional processes or handling. By integrating experimental approaches with advanced microscopy and spectroscopy, this study aims to build a reference collection that will support future comparative studies and refine interpretations of prehistoric tool use. Experimental studies with the aid of microscopy can demonstrate that microscopic wear and fracture scar resulting from tool use vary systematically based on the materials they were used to work (e.g., hide, wood, meat, bone, etc. Understanding these principles and relationships permits use-wear analysts to infer past uses of lithic artefacts with a greater degree of precision and accuracy than is achieved through reliance on either macroscopic attribute analysis or ethnographic analogues of tool form. This study is a pilot study which involved the experimental production of 30 ground stone axes made of gneiss from Akwanga, Nasarawa state, Nigeria. They were subsequently used to achieve varying tasks such as butchering, cutting, tearing, etc. When exposed and observed under the microscopes, the results revealed different traces/wear pattern. This is the results this study aims to present in this conference. This could bring about robust and meaningful contributions to our interpretive nuances as well as theoretical debate on the subject Stone Age scholarship in West Africa.

21.7. Traceological Studies of Ground Stone Axes from Akwanga, Central Nigeria, West Africa

Okopi Ade

Applying use-wear analysis to archaeological (stones, bones, teeth, metals) samples involves the use of microscopes for the observation and identification of use attributes on them for their understanding and interpretation of their prehistoric use and functions. This method was developed in Europe in the earliest part of the second half of the 20th century and has become an integral analytical approach to artefact interpretation and understanding. This approach has also complemented the traditional typo-technological approach to stone tools analysis. In spite of all the gains that have been made with the above methodological approach, it's application is completely lacking, not until recently and for the first time, that this researcher employed the method for the analysis and interpretation of Ground Stone Axes from West Africa. This paper examines how the methodological framework for use-wear analysis was adopted and how this was utilised, particularly as to what types of microscopes were used, how they were used, the results produced from using them, and the short-comings associated with these high powered equipment, and the general state of use-wear scholarship in the region at the moment. Attention is also drawn to what is the way forward for use-wear studies in West Africa? This is important because this method could help enhance our capacity in the interpretation of different artefacts category from the region.

21.8. Optimization of the 3D record of bifacial tools from the Thiongo Korongo site (Olduvai Gorge): a protocol for improving morphometric and functional resolution

Beatriz Ugarte-Villalba, Susana Rubio-Jara, Joaquín Panera

Reconstructing behavior in African Pleistocene contexts increasingly relies on methodologies capable of capturing technological variability at high resolution. In this context, 3D models of bifacial tools offer a key resource for integrating morphometric analyses and functional approaches. However, the digitization of artifacts made from complex raw materials such as Naibor quartzite or certain volcanic rocks from Olduvai Gorge presents specific challenges related to texture, reflectance, and achieving precise overlap between faces. This study presents an optimized protocol for generating 3D models of bifaces and cleavers from the Thiongo Korongo site, designed to overcome these limitations and ensure robust geometric documentation. The protocol combines capture strategies adapted to high-grain-size lithologies, controlled lighting adjustments, and overlap sequences that allow for the creation of highly stable and comparable three-dimensional models. These models provide a solid foundation for applying geometric morphometrics aimed at detecting subtle variations in shape, as well as for identifying zones potentially associated with specific activities. Although this study focuses on standardizing the digitization process, the results demonstrate the potential of this methodology to integrate with traceological and experimental studies, thereby contributing to more precise functional interpretations. Overall, this protocol improves the quality of 3D records for challenging raw materials and enhances the potential for interpreting human behavior in the African Pleistocene through advanced analytical approaches. This work has been funded by a predoctoral grant (PREP2023-002155). We would like to thank the Spanish Ministry of Science and Technology (HAR2017-82463-C4-2-P) and the Spanish Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities for funding this research (PID2023-146260NB-C22). We also thank the Ministry of Culture and Sport (2022, ID18) and the Spanish Ministry of Culture (2024, 16CA) for funding through the program of archaeological projects abroad

21.9. The afterlife of tools: use-wear analysis of lithic tools in the funerary cave of Cruz de la Esquina (Gran Canaria, Canary Islands, Spain)

Idaira Brito-Abrante, Amelia Rodríguez-Rodríguez, Jacob Morales

The Canary Island were colonised at the beginning of the 1st millennium CE by Amazigh people from Norh-Western Africa. After the initial settlement, the population in the archipelago remained isolated from the mainland, and islanders adapted their cultures to the different environments of each island. In Gran Canaria, farming was the main production activity, and the population built large settlements and storage facilities. More specifically, the island is notable for the complexity of its funeral practices, which also underwent changes over time. Caves played a central role as spaces for the deposition of human remains for most of the indigenous period. The funerary cave of Cruz de la Esquina represents an exceptional example due to the preservation of organic materials and associated artefacts, offering valuable insights into mortuary behaviour. Archaeological research has documented a wide range of materials linked to body treatment, wrapping and deposition, including plant fibres, wooden elements and other perishable items. In this context, lithic tools are also present, although their specific role within funerary practices has not been clearly established. This study presents the results of the use-wear analysis to lithic artefacts recovered from the cave, mainly made of volcanic rocks. The traceological study has identified a variety of worked materials and activities, including cutting leather and woodworking activities, where various types of movements

could be observed. The data highlights the diversity of activities carried out within the cave and points to a more complex role of lithic tools in funerary contexts.

21.10. An exploration of authorship and identity: A chaîne opératoire and use-wear analysis of bone tools from contemporaneous hunter-gatherer and farmer sites

Justin Bradfield

The worked bone component of archaeological sites seldom forms the focus of research, particularly when compared to less perishable materials like pottery and lithics. Consequently, worked bone is not usually incorporated into the technological descriptions of archaeological cultures. Drawing on the theory of material entanglement, archaeologists often use material culture as a proxy for people, with changes in ceramic design or stone tool technology serving as indicators of changes within human society, driven either by internal or external factors. Here, I will explore some South African case studies that have focused on the chaine operatoire and use-wear of worked bone from contemporaneous and associated Later Stone Age hunter-gatherer sites and Early Iron Age farmer sites. Bone tools in the farmer settlements were previously thought to signal amicable contact between the two groups, with the bone tools being made by the hunter-gatherers and exchanged for milk, cereals and pottery. Technological and microwear analyses, however, reveal distinct differences in the worked bones between the two sites. This would suggest that the bones tools in the farmer settlement were most likely made by the farmers themselves and do not in fact represent evidence of exchange between the two communities. I unpack how manufacturing technology and use-wear may profitably be used in studies of authorship and identity in the archaeological record, and how this component of the material record may be more meaningfully incorporated into broader discussions about the past.

21.11. An exploration of bone tool authorship in South African hunter/herder contexts: a technological and use-wear analysis of worked bone assemblages from Later Holocene sites

Liteboho Senyane, Justin Bradfield

One of the most persistent challenges in southern African archaeology is distinguishing the material culture associated with herder communities from that of hunter-gatherers. Archaeologically, these groups are often differentiated through subsistence-related artefacts, particularly lithic and ceramic assemblages. However, such distinctions are frequently ambiguous, as material culture was regularly exchanged, adopted, and adapted between groups over time. This complexity points to dynamic social interactions and underscores the need for more flexible and nuanced approaches to interpreting archaeological material from these contexts. Questions of identity and authorship have long been central to archaeological research, and artefact style has been shown to express social identity across a range of material media, including clothing, beadwork, basketry, and wood carving. This study employs technological and use-wear analyses of bone tools from eight sites containing both hunter-gatherer and herder occupations. In addition, it applies a chaîne opératoire framework, incorporating the analysis of bone-working debitage, an often-overlooked component of southern African archaeological assemblages. The limited application of this approach to regional bone tool assemblages presents a significant opportunity for generating new insights. Analyses will be conducted using low- and high-power reflected light microscopy to examine manufacturing

techniques and use-wear patterns on both formally identified bone tools and potential production debris recovered from faunal assemblages at these contact sites.

21.12. Understanding trace formation on quartz, quartzite and silcrete and its application in use-wear studies of Middle Stone Age lithics from Blombos Cave

Marzena Cendrowska, Karen L. van Niekerk, Christopher S. Henshilwood

One of the main challenges in the use-wear analysis of Middle Stone Age (MSA) artefacts from South Africa is the wide diversity of raw materials used in tool production. Quartz, quartzite, and silcrete dominate many assemblages, and differences in their properties affect the observation and interpretation of use-wear traces. Published experimental studies confirm that polish forms more slowly and unevenly on quartz and quartzite compared to flint. As a result, interpretations based on analogies between the raw material can often be unreliable. Although experimental research and discussions of trace similarity are available for quartzite and quartz, systematic comparisons among quartz, quartzite, and silcrete under identical tasks are currently lacking. This study presents results from over 60 controlled experiments focused on replicating potential MSA tasks, such as butchering, bone working, hide scraping (with and without additives), plant (reeds, wood, tubers) and ochre processing. Use-wear traces were documented through a combined qualitative (metallographic microscopy) and quantitative (3D surface parameters via confocal microscopy) approach. The same protocol was then applied to quartz, quartzite, and silcrete lithics from Blombos Cave. The goal was to examine how trace characteristics, development rate, and measurability vary across raw materials, and to evaluate how these differences can influence the resolution and reliability of functional interpretations in the archaeological record. This study introduces a material-sensitive framework that directly tests how constraints on raw materials influence trace recognition and classification, aiming to minimise interpretive bias in heterogeneous assemblages.

Session: 26 (Room 1)

26.1. Beyond linearity: Distance, movement and social networks in the southern African past

Abigail Moffett

Tracing the movement, of people, ideas and things across different landscapes remains a central area of archaeological research. There is an ever-growing plethora of approaches to studying movement in archaeology; from the intensification of geo-spatial mapping techniques to an ever-widening theoretical toolkit of relational entanglements and meshworks. Specific patterns of movement are frequently correlated with differences in the socio-political organisation of past societies. In particular, evidence of the increase in movement of people and things from rural/periphery to core/urban is regularly interpreted as reflecting patterns of centralisation, territorial control and emerging hierarchy. Conversely, the absence of evidence for this, particularly within early state societies, has often been assumed under the umbrella of heterarchy. In my earlier research on copper producers within the political economy of southern Africa's early states (900-1300 CE) I argued that the movement of a variety of objects and technologies across the southern African region in this period reflected a non-linear pattern of exchange and assumption, one that was likely 'socially embedded'. Building on this argument, this paper explores the nature of these social relationships, and the ways in which different social networks may influence movement patterns. Distance and direction emerge as two concepts that are both variable, relational and not always clearly correlated with political organisation. I argue that movement occurred on multiple

overlapping scales, and while these may be a challenge to identify through conventional mapping techniques, a pursuit of these diverse scales may hold promise for identifying greater diversity in 'complex' societies in the African past.

26.2. Local, the Foreign, and the Formation of Heterarchies at Aksum, Ethiopia (50-400 CE)

Dilpreet Singh Basanti

This talk looks at the interface of heterarchy and globalization using Aksumite mortuary material from northern Ethiopia as case study (50-400 CE). Heterarchies do not describe communities as a whole but are archaeological observations indexing diverse political economic practices. The formation of long-distance trade with heterarchy remains difficult to theorize in archaeology. Practices and behaviors that promote hierarchy are more readily used to explain the generation of long-distance trade. However, African archaeology has numerous examples of heterarchical groupings with long-distance trade. West African scholarship has also examined political economies where the investment in social networks could generate long-distance trade – often changing the social value of goods in the process. These conversations are relevant for understanding the Neutron Activation Analysis (NAA) results from mortuary ceramics at Aksum in northern Ethiopia. Aksum (50-800 CE) was the capital of a major centralized polity well-known for its central role in the Indian Ocean trade (200 BCE – 700 CE). Aksum's most notable material features are its monumental funerary stelae located in a central cemetery now called the Stelae Park (50-400 CE). NAA of mortuary ceramics from three tombs of this park demonstrates an unexpected patterning that contradicts the hypothesized wealth status of the tombs. Additionally, the spread of material culture suggests that Aksumites were creating foreigner versus local categories of objects to negotiate globalization. Together, these results indicate that moving from "economy" to "globalization" or the imagined categories of local/foreign was instrumental for the formation of heterarchical contexts in Aksum.

26.3. Thriving in Change: Nomads in the Islamic Horn of Africa (13th-16th centuries)

Jorge de Torres Rodriguez, Jorge Rouco Collazo, Mario Llorente García, Carolina Cornax Gómez

Between the 13th and the 16th centuries, the eastern Horn of Africa was an incredibly active region which went through a number of key political, social and economic transformations that impacted deeply in the nomadic communities who inhabited this territory. These changes included -among many others- the emergence of permanent settlements in areas previously occupied by nomads, the expansion and consolidation of state structures, the insertion of the region in international trade networks and the arrival and expansion of Islam through the region. At the core of these transformations were the Somali nomads, who not only adapted to this fluid context but actually thrived within it, developing a sophisticated network of interactions which gave birth to a complex society which was able to incorporate and direct processes such as the incorporation of agriculture or the development of urban centres. Drawing upon archaeological research conducted in Ethiopia, Somaliland, and Djibouti, this paper examines the multiple contexts in which nomadic communities of the Horn interacted with diverse social formations and agents, including state structures, urbanization processes, religious change, and evolving economic systems. The selected case studies explore how nomadic societies adapted to, influenced, and were transformed by these dynamics, while simultaneously maintaining key aspects of their social identity and preserving a degree of autonomy over time.

26.4. What does social-political complexity in ancient Igbo-Ukwu (SE Nigeria) look like?

Kingsley Chinedu Daraojimba

Igbo-Ukwu remains one of the most enigmatic archaeological discoveries on the African continent, and indeed globally, attesting to the existence of a highly complex society in southeastern Nigeria over a millennium ago. This society was clearly embedded within long-distance exchange networks, likely extending across the Sahara, enabling the accumulation of considerable material wealth, including thousands of glass and carnelian beads and highly elaborate metalwork. The Igbo-Ukwu bronzes, in particular, are of exceptional global artistic significance, representing some of the most sophisticated examples of lost-wax casting known anywhere in the world and significantly pre-dating better-known traditions such as the Benin Bronzes. Yet, despite this evidence of technological expertise, far-reaching connections, and material richness, the society responsible for these achievements remains almost entirely unknown beyond the small but extraordinarily rich excavated contexts at Igbo-Ukwu itself. There is paucity of evidence for the kinds of large-scale settlement patterns, centralized political institutions, or monumental architecture that are conventionally taken as archaeological indicators of social complexity. As a result, ongoing and recent archaeological investigations in the region are increasingly challenging established models of social organization and complexity. In particular, they call into question the assumption that social complexity must be expressed through monumentality or centralized state structures. In this paper, I will explore alternative pathways to socio-political complexity in Igbo-Ukwu grounded in ritual authority, title-taking systems, and religious networks. I will also interrogate if decentralized forms of social organization had always existed in Igboland since time immemorial.

26.5. Complexifying Heterarchy: some thoughts on next steps

Matthew Davies

As noted in the abstract for this session, in the 25+ years since the publication of ‘Beyond Chiefdoms’ considerable advances have been made in the re-framing of understandings of social complexity, both in global and Africanist archaeology. These advances, often labelled as forms of ‘heterarchy,’ have been used to describe socio-political systems with more diffuse structures of power and agency. Yet, there is a concern that ‘heterarchy’ itself has become a catch-all term, contrasted with hierarchy and used to describe weak understandings of organisation and change, rather than to critically interrogate multiple and often conflicting loci of authority, and examine how societies my dynamically and rapidly change between socio-political forms. In this brief overview, I aim to consider some of the challenges with simplistic notions of heterarchy and to complexify understandings of authority and change across a range of African societies by blurring the boundaries between what are often considered ‘more’ or ‘less’ complex societies. In so doing, I will briefly consider the multiple sources of socio-political-structure that often exist in productive tension in any society (including age/generation, ritual/belief, production/consumption, leadership, charisma etc) and suggest that hierarchy and heterarchy themselves exist in close tension, rather than as opposite poles.

26.6. Rethinking Isamu Pati: A revised site chronology and its implications for regional dynamics and connectivity in the second millennium CE in central and southern Africa

Per Ditlef Fredriksen, Constance Mulenga, 19.9, Isak Hansen-Krone Roalkvam

The Isamu Pati settlement landscape on the Batoka Plateau in southern Zambia offers a unique opportunity for a comparative long-term study of farming communities through the second millennium CE. Our recent re-analyses and radiocarbon modelling of Isamu Pati include a new set of radiocarbon dates and recalibration of the dates from Brian Fagan's original excavations in 1959-61. In addition, recent excavations by the ARCREATE project team uncovered an adjacent settlement (Isamu Pati II) that extends the long-term chronology of the Isamu Pati landscape to the entire 20th century CE. Importantly, this provides an opportunity to develop a new archaeological approach to sociopolitical developments in the region that also includes the period after 1500 CE. We present a revised chronology that identifies key phases in the site's stratigraphy and archaeological material and relate these to the regional linguistic chronology. This provides the basis for a geographically wider discussion of the Isamu Pati site landscape in relation to other and broadly contemporary Iron Age sites in southern central Africa, including recently re-excavated sites such as the Kalundu, Kumadzulo and Kamangoza. Furthermore, we relate our findings to recent works that have opened up new theoretical pathways to sociopolitical complexity, while demonstrating that the terms hierarchy and heterarchy are underpinned by similar problematic notions of sociality and mobility. Our rethinking of the development of the Isamu Pati landscape opens for a new multi-scalar approach that engages with multiple forms of mobility and connectivity. The approach is anchored in a ground-up perspective of firstcomer-latecomer dynamics with a primary focus on localized epistemologies and material knowledges.

Session: 43 (Room 2)

43.1. Rethinking Crop dispersal and agricultural adoption in Early Iron Age southern Africa

Alice J. Williams, Mica B. Jones, Russell Kapumha, Shadreck Chirikure

Farming reached southern Africa during the first millennium CE through processes often linked to the movement of Bantu-speaking communities and the spread of a complete cultural “package.” Yet the archaeological evidence suggests a more diverse pattern and regionally variable process. This paper synthesises published archaeobotanical data from across southern Africa to examine the dispersal of domesticated crops and farming practices during the Later Stone Age and into the Early Iron Age. By bringing together archaeobotanical remains from a wide, regional dataset, this study investigates the timing and distribution of the introduction of non-local domesticated crops into southern Africa. Rather than treating agriculture as a uniform package moving intact across the subcontinent, the paper explores whether farming practices spread through multiple pathways and how their distribution relates to broader patterns of settlement, pottery traditions, metallurgy, and exchange. Particular attention is given to the ways crop adoption may have varied across environmental zones and through interaction between farming, foraging, and pastoral communities. The archaeobotanical evidence is considered alongside other archaeological indicators for mobility and cultural transmission to reassess how food systems were established in new regions. In doing so, the paper contributes to wider debates on migration, interaction, and innovation, and argues for understanding early farming in southern Africa as a dynamic process rather than the simple expansion of a fixed cultural package.

43.2. Macroscopic and Chemical Variations in Iron Age Ceramic Wares from Kalundu and Isamu Pati, South-Central Africa

Constance Mulenga, Kenneth Luhila

This paper presents our recent analyses of ceramic finds from the two mound sites of Kalundu and Isamu Pati in southern Zambia. We use ceramic typologies integrated with portable X-ray fluorescence (pXRF) to examine variations in both visual style and geochemical composition. The new radiocarbon dates from the two sites have prompted us to rethink the previously established cultural chronological sequence and ceramic traditions. Earlier research had placed the Iron Age of this area between the 5th and the 12th centuries AD. The new dates provide a much more recent chronological framework and show that the two sites were occupied between the 11th and 15th centuries AD. Therefore, the main aim of this paper is to discuss the typological and geochemical results against the background of previous research and the updated radiocarbon chronology of the study area. By situating our findings within the revised radiocarbon dates of Kalundu and Isamu Pati, this study contributes to understanding Iron Age communities in south-central Africa, highlighting technological diversity, continuities and shifts in ceramic practices.

43.3. The importance of animal husbandry among southern African Early Iron Age communities, ca. 400-1000 CE

Mica B. Jones, Russell Kapumha, Alice Williams, Shadreck Chirikure

The on set of the Early Iron Age marked a fundamental shift in the ways people related to and interacted with animals in southern Africa. Migrant Bantu-speaking communities from areas to the north arrived in the region ~1000 years ago, bringing with them new ways of living that incorporated settled villages, metalworking, distinctive pottery-making traditions, and the maintenance of long-distance exchange networks that would eventually extend across the Indian Ocean. According to established narratives, the arrival of these groups also coincided with widespread zooarchaeological evidence for specialised herding, which contrasted with the wild food-focused economies that had dominated the subcontinent for thousands of years prior. Together with some evidence for agriculture, the bones and teeth of domesticated cattle, sheep, goats, and chickens from Early Iron Age sites have been used by archaeologists to demonstrate a transition from forager to food producer across southern Africa after ~400 CE. However, recent reviews of published faunal data have shown greater variability in people's overall reliance on domesticated animals than often considered during this period. These findings highlight diversity in the ways southern Africa's first 'farmers' incorporated animal husbandry into their economic strategies, raising interesting questions about the apparent shift from wild to managed food systems in the region. Here, we explore the factors that drove economic diversity during the Early Iron Age using zooarchaeological evidence from 91 sites spread across Botswana, Mozambique, South Africa, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. By tracing temporal and spatial patterning in the faunal record, we highlight cultural and environmental factors that may have influenced the spread and nature of food production across southern Africa.

43.4. Ceramics and Mobility in Southern Africa: Later Stone Age to Iron Age

Russell Kapumha

Ceramics have always been a ubiquitous form of the archaeological record. They have for a long time been synonymous with the practice of archaeology itself and are perhaps the most abundant. They have also long been held as markers of group identity. As such, this paper presents the first phase of ongoing work to construct a comparative survey of ceramics in southern Africa focusing on the Later Stone Age, transitional contexts and the Early Iron Age. It creates a ceramics baseline database based on published material. It compiles African earthen pottery within southern Africa's national boundaries, environmental zones and chronology. The database is structured around pottery ware and group classifications and their typological variables, including vessel form, rim morphology, decoration among other attributes. This is supplemented by technological attributes such as fabric and temper, as well as evidence from high resolution analysis where available. By converting published ceramic descriptions into a consistent set of typological variables, the project enables the comparison of ceramic traits across sites and time to identity where traditions persist, change or co-occur, and relates these patterns to mobility and interaction. More importantly, this database is designed to support statistical and GIS based analysis. Providing a framework for exploring regional diversity and non-linear trajectories of change and contributing to broader debates on Early Iron Age as a dynamic landscape of interconnected communities rather than a uniform process of cultural expression and movement.

43.5. Beyond the forager farmer divide: technology and worldview in first millennium CE southern Africa

Shadreck Chirikure, Mica B Jones, Russell Kapumha, Alice Williams

This conceptual paper explores technological practices in southern Africa during the first millennium CE, challenging linear narratives of technological progression from the Later Stone Age to the Early Iron Age. While farming communities are often associated with the introduction of novel technologies such as agriculture, metallurgy, and pottery production, evidence suggests some continuity and overlap with forager and pastoralist groups. Foragers maintained established practices such as the use of stone tools, yet the same tools such as grinding stones were also used by farmers. Therefore, the distinction between foragers, pastoralists and farmers was not strictly technological. Rather, it was rooted more deeply in differing worldviews and modes of interaction with the environment. Hunter-gatherers emphasized mobility and ecological integration, whereas farming communitiespursued more settled lifestyles pivoted on crop cultivation and livestock husbandry. Furthermore, the presence of shared technologies like pottery alongside evidence of barter and intermarriage points to sustained interaction and cultural exchange between these groups. Based on these and other overlaps, we argue that technological development in southern Africa must be understood as a dynamic, interconnected process rather than a unilinear transition from the simple to the complex.

43.6. You can remove my bones, but my spirit will remain in my house: Reflections on the management of grave relocation and reburials in South Africa

Trust Mlilo, Gilbert Pwiti

The rapid infrastructure and mining developments and other development projects in South Africa have affected graves and burial grounds that belong to different periods. Colonial and apartheid forced removals resulted in the dislocation of many indigenous populations from their traditional graves and burial grounds and descendant families have been struggling to trace and access their ancestral graves now located in private properties. Despite the promulgation of new laws and regulations, the management of graves and burial grounds as heritage has continued to pose serious challenges in post-Apartheid South Africa. Most of the contestations have revolved around the issue of compensation for grave relocation, accidental exposure of human remains and contestation within and between descendant families and communities. Part of our experience has revealed that in many cases, these contestations are fueled by third parties who use the local communities to advance their hidden agendas, often related to lucrative contracts, especially in cases of grave relocations that are undertaken in the face of mining developments. In this regard, it would appear that he legal and institutional frameworks have to date, failed to provide binding guidelines and mechanisms to control grave relocations. It is against this background that this paper addresses and examines several key questions that include issues of why grave relocation has been contested in South Africa, understandings of whose responsibility it is to manage grave relocations and whether relocation of graves should be compensated. In the final analysis, we examine the whole question with reference to the role of the dead in relation to the broader context of African kinship systems?

Session: 55 (Room 3)

55.1. Maritimity in Question: The Agentive Hinterland and the Decolonization of African Ocean Archaeology

Chapurukha M. Kusimba

The concept of maritimity — all the relationships binding human societies to the sea and the resulting landscapes, economies, and cultures — entered East African archaeology through a European intellectual genealogy that carries with it a set of assumptions poorly suited to the African evidence. In particular, the standard maritime archaeology framework presupposes a directionality (societies orient themselves toward the sea to become maritime), a unit of analysis (the coast and its immediately associated material culture), and an ontology of the ocean (primarily as medium of commercial connection) that together reproduce, in modified form, the colonial logic that located African civilization in its connections with the wider world rather than in its continental foundations. Drawing on decades of archaeological research in coastal and interior regions of eastern Africa, and studies on relational archaeologies of the sea, I propose an alternative framework: continental maritimity, which holds that African maritime identities, practices, and cultural forms were produced through the articulation of coastal and hinterland communities within regional systems of exchange, labor, kinship, and cultural production. The sea was one dimension of a social landscape, simultaneously oceanic and continental; the analytical unit appropriate to its study is the coast–hinterland interaction zone in its full geographical and temporal extent. The paper engages African Indigenous epistemologies of the sea to argue that decolonizing Africa's oceans requires not simply affirming African agency within maritime systems defined by others but rethinking those systems themselves.

55.2. Rhythimic sea: African maritimity, seasonal governance, and the decolonization of oceanic knowledge

Keith Murangiri

This paper interrogates the concept of "Maritimity" along the East African coast by examining how African coastal societies organized and governed the sea through seasonal rhythms rather than rigid land and sea differences. Challenging Eurocentric frameworks that define African maritime engagement primarily through trade, empire, or colonial archives, the study advances an African-centered understanding of the ocean as a space of belonging, and social production. Deriving from a maritime cultural landscape approach informed by Indigenous knowledge, oral traditions and archaeological evidence, the paper focuses on coastal centers from Lamu, Malindi and Mombasa. It explores how monsoon cycles structured patterns of aggregation and dispersal, producing alternating forms of governance, social identities, and ritual life. Governance is thus interpreted not as a fixed terrestrial institution imposed upon the sea, but as a dynamic maritime practice embedded in seasonal knowledge systems. By engaging theoretical insights from decolonial studies and anthropological perspectives on seasonal power, the paper argues that African maritimity was constituted through cyclical practices that blurred boundaries between land, sea, politics, environment and society. These practices shaped political economies, social identities, and cultural memory across time, leaving material and intangible traces within contemporary coastal landscapes. In reframing maritimity as rhythmic and experiential, this study challenges inherited colonial categories and contributes to broader efforts to decolonize African archaeology and heritage practice.

55.3. Quiet Lives and Calm Seas: Everyday Life Beyond Maritimity as Resistance. (15:50-16:05)

Megan Crutcher, Prince D. S. Kondeh, Samuel D. Togba

The sea, as a site of maritimity, is typically imagined as dynamic and turbulent, requiring human resistance and agency to shape and traverse oceans. Scholarship on Black and African maritime worlds often mirrors this framing, emphasizing resistance and agency: shipboard mutinies, refusals of enslavement, maritime commerce, the formation of maritime unions, the endurance of oceanic spiritual practices, and the maritime underground railroad. Drawing on Kevin Quashie's The Sovereignty of Quiet (2012), which argues for the importance of studying interior, quiet lives in Black history, this paper shifts from these public acts of defiance to quieter forms of being, knowing, and relating that also shaped African lives at sea. It takes as its focus the Kru Indigenous group of Liberia, who were renowned for their maritime wage labor on European and American vessels in the late eighteenth century and for their resistance to enslavement and to Liberian settler expansion in the nineteenth, to examine how the ocean also structured ordinary, intimate, and routine aspects of life. Through both historical and archaeological evidence, this paper highlights moments of care, rest, companionship, and mundane labor that often fall outside the frame of resistance. In reframing maritimity through these quieter vignettes, the paper argues for a fuller, more human account of people who often appear only as ancillary figures in colonial archives.

55.4. And Maritimity for All (those who live by the sea, use boats, and eat fish): Arguments from the Western Indian Ocean against "Maritime/Maritimity" as an Exclusionary Category

Rahul Chandrashekhar Oka

In this paper, I interrogate a claim by Fleischer et al. (2015: 103) that being a Maritime Society is "surely more than just living by the sea, using boats, and eating fish." This claim is founded on a question that seems absurd on its face: Can a society living on the sea shore for centuries, navigating their coastal waterways, and extracting resources from the sea for centuries, NOT BE MARITIME? And yet, this is exactly the conclusion drawn, that the Sabaki-speaking peoples living, sailing, and fishing on the East Coast of Africa for 10 centuries, BECAME MARITIME only after intensified Islamic commercial urbanism c. 1000 CE, which also (unfortunately) coincided with the influx of male Persian genes. I argue that posing such a binary categorical question is an unhelpful butterfly classification exercise at best and an exclusionary device at worst. A question with actual heuristic value would be: How maritime is a particular society? I posit that when 'maritimity' is correctly used, namely in tandem with "terrestriality," the resulting approach shows how humans living on or near seas and oceans extract resources and build societies through negotiated domestication of both their marine-scapes and landscapes. I use this maritime-terrestrial relational approach to compare and contrast East African (Swahili) and South Asian (Mapilla) adaptations during the Common Era (c. 100 BCE – present), to showcase how they were differentially and fully maritime throughout this period, by the criteria listed both by Westerdahl (1992: 5) and by Fleischer et al. (2015: 101).

55.5. Décoloniser la maritimité africaine: pour une géohistoire relationnelle des continuités fluvio

Sery Claude Patrick Fabien, Grodji Grâce Désirée Raymonde

Cette communication propose de repenser la notion de « maritimité » en Afrique de l'Ouest partir d'une approche décoloniale et géo-historique. Les mondes maritimes africains ont longtemps été appréhendés à travers des cadres euro-centriques qui privilégient l'océan comme espace de circulation marchande, d'expansion impériale et de projection de puissance. Une telle lecture tend à fragmenter les espaces aquatiques et à invisibiliser les logiques endogènes de structuration des milieux hydro-sociaux africains. La colonisation française a profondément reconfiguré ces dynamiques en imposant une maritimité extractive, orientée vers l'océan et structurée par les impératifs du commerce extérieur. Les fleuves et dans une moindre mesure les lagunes, ont ainsi été intégrés dans des dispositifs de domination et d'exploitation, au détriment des systèmes locaux de circulation et d'appropriation de l'eau ou fragmentés par des fronteires dessinées au crayon sans tenir comptes des réalités du terrain mais répondants aux impératifs de la colonisation. En croisant archives coloniales, sources cartographiques et analyses contemporaines des dynamiques transfrontalières, cette étude met en lumière les persistances de ces reconfigurations et leurs effets actuels. Elle plaide pour une redéfinition de la maritimitéafricaine comme un espace relationnel, dynamique et transfrontalier. À partir de l'étude des axes fluviaux Sénégal–Niger et des systèmes lagunaires ivoiriens, elle montre que les sociétés ouest- africaines ont historiquement construit des territorialités fluides, fondées sur des mobilités, des savoirs environnementaux et des pratiques économiques qui articulent étroitement les différents espaces aquatiques

Session: 56 (Room 4)

56.1. The Rock Art from Central Africa: its gazetteer and new insights

Clist Bernard

Rock art is known throughout Central Africa, although it has been studied in a very uneven way. Several styles, with differing techniques, are located on different surfaces, such as caves and rock-shelters walls and open air slabs and boulders. Possibly, open-air rock engravings were also painted, like the better preserved images in rock shelters in Congo and Angola. Since the mid-1990s, research has led to new discoveries, re-interpretations of old data, and Accelerator Mass Spectrometry (AMS) dating. The latter has been put to use in the CAR at the Nangara-Komba site with a date to circa 500 BP, in the western DRC where paintings are dated to the LIA and the time of the Kongo kingdom, at the Ndalambiri site of west-central Angola dated to circa 80 BP and at the Tchitundo-Hulo Opeleva site in southwest Angola dated to circa 1980 BP where it relates to the Late Stone Age or possibly to the Early Iron Age. The various rock art styles probably belong to at least two periods, as they do in Gabon, or in Angola. They are thus also a marker of regional social diversity. We must reinterpret them and test their fit with the pottery sequences we now have, after having untangled their chronology and styles based on updated national catalogues.

56.2. Palaeoenvironmental Perspectives of the Mukongoro and Nyero Rock Art sites in Eastern Uganda

Eugene Ayebare, Elizabeth Kyazike, Fatumah Mirembe, Julius B Lejju

Studies on rock art sites in eastern Uganda have often focused on the symbolic and authorship perspectives, with limited attention given to environmental contexts in which they were created. This project seeks to explore the environmental reconstruction of Mukongoro and Nyero rock art sites aiming at understanding the relationship between the past environment conditions and the production, preservation and cultural significance of rock art in the region. Through surveys, and targeted excavations, the study will integrate palaeoenvironmetal data to conduct geomorphological analysis, reconstruct past landscapes, and climatic conditions that influenced human occupation and artistic expressions at the two rock art sites. Guided by cultural ecology, the study will evaluate whether rock art motifs correspond to reconstructed ecological contexts and occupation patterns during the Mid-Holocene. In addition, the study will examine how environmental processes, including erosion, weathering, and human activity have affected the preservation and visibility of rock paintings over time. By integrating material culture, palaeobotanical evidence, and symbolic expression, the research will contribute to scholary debates on human and environment interactions, cultural adaptations and cultural heritage conservation in East Africa.

56.3. Rock art as source of music archaeology: insights from Zimbabwe

Joshua Kumbani

Music archaeology explores how people in the past engaged with sound and music, as well as their dance practices. Since the physical artefacts used for sound and music production are primarily made of organic materials like wood and skin, which decompose easily in the archaeological record, rock art offers a reliable source of information about these activities. This research includes a literature review of rock art publications, archival research using online databases such as ARADA,

and the utilisation of ethnographic sources. It also includes a systematic iconographic analysis of rock art imagery to identify, analyse, and categorise the depictions of musical instruments and dance scenes. The musical instruments represented in Zimbabwean rock art include rattles, flutes, trumpets, drums, and possibly a bullroarer. Additionally, various dancing scenes suggest ritual dances, such as trance dances and initiation ceremonies for boys and girls. These rich motifs provide insights into the music and dance practices of past hunter-gatherer communities.

56.4. L'art rupestre du secteur de l'Ahnet nord ouest de l' Ahaggar Algerie

Oubraham Djouher

Le Sahara Algérien a révélé un potentiel archéologique riche en industrie lithique, en céramique, en monuments funéraires et en centaines de peintures et de gravures rupestres. Ces œuvres réalisées sur des parois rocheuses en plein air, ou sur les murs d'abris sous roches Témoignent d'une dynamique de peuplement intense au cours du néolithique et post néolithique. Ces vestiges reflètent une diversité culturelle et des modes de vie, adoptés par des groupes humains face aux bouleversements climatiques et environnementaux qu'ont connues ces vastes régions durant l'holocène. Ce patrimoine a su résisté à l'épreuve du temps, malgré sa présence dans un environnement rigoureux ayant entrainé la disparition ou la dégradation totale ou partielle de nombreux sites et vestiges archéologiques. Cette communication expose les; les résultats des travaux de terrain effectués ces dernières années dans la région de l'Ahnet située au nord-ouest de l'Ahaggar au sud de l'Algérie. Cette zone qui recèle une densité de stations rupestre (gravures et peintures), distingués par sa diversité stylistique et thématique, témoigne des cultures et des modes de subsistance des groupes humains qui ont occupé ces territoires durant ces périodes préhistoriques et protohistoriques.

56.5. Lagunaires en Afrique de l'Ouest (XIXe–XXe siècle)

Pavel Onderka, Jiri Honzl

Jebel Qeili, an isolated igneous formation rising from the plains of Sudan, presents a unique convergence of African rock art tradition with Kushite royal ideology and visual culture. The site's cave sanctuary – formed by collapsed boulders into a chapel-like space – hosts a assemblage of images. At its core is a Meroitic painted panel depicting the god Amun, accompanied by his consort Mut and approached by a queen regnant and her male companion, alongside multiple other renderings of Amun on the cave walls. These canonically Kushite images coexisted with extensive animal figures and schematic motifs characteristic of broader regional rock art traditions, generating a stratified yet integrated visual field. The adjacent royal relief of Shorakaror deepens this complexity through incorporating a Hellenistic-style solar deity within the Meroitic iconographic framework. Jebel Qeili thus materializes an interaction between local tradition, official iconography, and transregional influences. The geomorphology of the site – an isolated formation rising from a flat plain – invites comparison with sacred mountains of the wider region such as the Kushite holy mountain of Jebel Barkal, while the cave sanctuary itself evokes what Bruce Williams has conceptualized as the gendered duality of mountain (exterior, masculine) and cave (interior, feminine) in sacred landscape of the Middle Nile region. The paper argues for the interpretation of Jebel Qeili as a sacred landmark of multi-layered meaning. It demonstrates how royal imagery was not imposed upon, but rather embedded within, pre-existing visual and autochtone spatial traditions – creating a complex dialogue between all of its individual features.

56.6. Animal Representations at Telem Fezza: Witnesses of a Humid Sahara during the Holocene

Yasmina Damouche, Iddir Amara, Ilhem Bentaleb, Djillali Hadjouis

The Telem Fezza cave, located in the Tassili-tan-Ahaggar region (Central Sahara), is distinguished by a substantial iconographic corpus covering its walls. These representations depict fauna that are today absent from this arid Saharan environment, such as giraffes, elephants, rhinoceroses, and cattle, sometimes associated with vulvar motifs. These figures provide significant evidence of the more humid environmental conditions that characterized the Sahara during the Holocene. The aim of this study is to examine these animal representations within their archaeological context to better understand the relationships between Neolithic groups, fauna, and the Saharan environment. The analysis relies on an approach combining the study of the engravings, observation of the production techniques, and examination of the archaeological context documented by ongoing excavations in the cave. Preliminary results highlight the diversity of species represented, as well as their spatial organization on the walls. The association of certain animal figures with symbolic motifs suggests meanings beyond mere naturalistic representation of the fauna. Furthermore, material remains uncovered during the excavations attest to human presence in the cave, indicating that it was likely an occupied space. These data suggest that the Telem Fezza cave served as a place where the daily activities of human groups combined with forms of symbolic expression. The study of this corpus thus contributes to a better understanding of the interactions between Holocene Saharan societies, the fauna, and environmental changes in the region.

56.7. Digital Archives and Rock Art: A Case Study in Putting an African Rock Art Archive Online

Benjamin W. Smith, Tyler M. Wilce

The Peter Genge Collection at the University of Western Australia contains some 12,000 digital files relating to rock art sites, mostly in south-west Zimbabwe, Africa. The records in the collection include: site cards; photographs; 35mm slides; sketches; notebook entries; and other ephemera. The collection was put together in the 1980s and 1990s and contains the only recordings of many sites, including of rock paintings that have since been damaged or destroyed. The collection is of enormous social and scientific significance. Our challenge will be familiar to many people; how can we bring this collection online and make it searchable so as to meet the aspirations of many different audiences? At the same time, we need to suppress some aspects of the collection to honour cultural sensitivities and protect the sites. In this paper we discuss the approaches we have taken to digitising this collection, and to rebuilding it as an online searchable digital archive

Session : 22 (Room 5)

22.1. Le bélier de l'Atlas saharien : de l'animal domestiqué à l'animal magnifié

Amara Iddir

Les gravures rupestres de l'Atlas saharien présentent un riche bestiaire, sauvage et domestique. Parmi ces espèces, le mouton (Ovis aries), souvent figuré sous la forme du «bélier à sphéroïde», constitue l'une des premières expressions symboliques des populations néolithiques. Ces représentations témoignent de l'importance du pastoralisme dans leurs modes de vie. Elles suggèrent également un environnement plus humide durant l'Optimum climatique holocène (11000-

5000 cal BP). Dès l'Holocène ancien (vers 9000 BP), les premières communautés pastorales s'installent dans la région. Les fouilles de la grotte d'Imi-n-Waqvun, dans les monts des Ksour (5300-4300 cal BP), ont révélé la présence de groupes néolithiques pratiquant l'élevage de bovins, ovins, caprins et chiens. Les ossements découverts, parfois brûlés ou fragmentés, présentent des traces de découpe attestant des pratiques de boucherie et de consommation. La présence de nombreux tessons de céramique, associés à ces restes fauniques, confirme une économie centrée sur l'exploitation animale comme principale source de protéines. Les poteries pourraient livrer, grâce à des analyses spécifiques, des informations sur leurs usages, tandis que leurs décors offrent des indices culturels. L'ensemble du territoire, des monts des Ksour jusqu'au sud tunisien, était parcouru par des groupes pratiquant la transhumance. Les nombreuses représentations de béliers, parfois associées à des figures humaines et dotées d'attributs particuliers, suggèrent une dimension symbolique ou rituelle. La récurrence de ce motif souligne le rôle central de cet animal dans les sociétés néolithiques de l'Atlas saharien.

22.2. The Ferlo, a marginalized and peripheral area in archaeological research in Senegal: Presentation of preliminary results

Demba Kebe, Yao Bonaventure Serge Loukou, Adama Harouna Athie, Djibril Thiam, Djidere Baldé

Cette présentation part d'un constat, le Ferlo est un espace- marge et marginalisé dans la classification des sites néolithiques et protohistoriques au Sénégal. Il synthétise les données archéologiques, et environnementales dans le but de «sortir» le Ferlo de sa marginalisation archéologique. La littérature scientifique et les datations radiocarbones obtenues, dans les marges occidentales de Dendoudi en 2024, montrent que la dynamique des implantations humaines aurait débuté vers 5000 ans BP. La phase aride, post 5e millénaire av. J.C. se traduit par une expansion du peuplement dans les zones «refuges» des marges orientales de Dendoudi- «Travau» et de la vallée du fleuve Sénégal, à la suite de l'assèchement des mares de cet espace. Les variations bioclimatiques ont influencé l'occupation anthropique. Le cadre environnemental de cet espace laisse supposer que le Ferlo est une des premières régions d'implantations humaines au Néolithique.

22.3. Linking Archaeology, Social Identity, and Sustainability while drawing on the Swahili Coast

Emmanuel Ndonye Muthama

Archaeology offers long-term perspectives on how African societies organized social life, managed resources, and navigated inequality, insights that remain critical for contemporary debates on sustainability and community well-being. This paper examines how social identities shaped patterns of resource access, authority, and resilience within Swahili Coast societies of Eastern Africa (c. 800-1500 CE), and considers the relevance of these dynamics for present-day sustainability challenges. Grounded in social identity theory, intersectionality, and practice-based archaeology, the study analyzes material culture, including architecture, ceramics, mortuary practices, and settlement layouts, as active instruments through which identities related to gender, status, and religious affiliation were constructed and maintained. The paper argues that these identities structured social hierarchies that influenced who benefited from trade, environmental resources, and political authority, with implications for collective well-being and long-term sustainability. Rather than viewing sustainability solely through environmental or economic lenses, this research highlights the social foundations of resilience, emphasizing how inclusion, exclusion, and negotiated identities shaped communal outcomes. By linking archaeological evidence to broader questions of governance, inequality, and social cohesion, the paper demonstrates how interpretations of Africa's

past can inform contemporary approaches to sustainable development, heritage policy, and community empowerment.

22.4. Coastal Communities of Gaza Province: A Sedentary Jeopardized by Extreme Climate Events

Inês M. Raimundo, Hilário Madiquida, Jânia Raimundo Mussagy, Solange Macamo

History and archaeology teach us that human civilisation is characterised by a shift from hunter-gatherer societies to farming to sedentary lifestyles. The narrative is that nomads were humans who roamed across different places in search of natural resources for survival. Sedentary is characterised as a period of sedentary life. Undoubtedly, a sedentary lifestyle favoured industrialisation, thus modern societies. However, this same modernisation has brought negative impacts, including the excessive use of natural resources, such as the diversion of resources into dam construction and deforestation for various purposes. In Mozambique, particularly in the Gaza Province, which comprises hinterland and coastal communities, the Limpopo River runs its entire length, displacing communities from upstream to downstream. For the last 50 years, since Mozambique's independence, the coastal communities of Gaza have been battered by violent cyclones and floods in very short periods of time, making nomadism the modus vivendi of these communities. One might ask: are these communities still living in hunter-gatherer societies? Studies on population displacements, within the scope of several studies we have conducted over the last 25 years in the communities of the Limpopo Valley, lead us to conclude that sedentary life has never been effective. This communication aims to enrich the archaeological debate on migrations in prehistoric Mozambique, from a geographical perspective on this phenomenon, through interdisciplinary studies.

22.5. Perspectives for Sustainable Management of Newly Discovered Prehistoric Sites and Ecosystems in the Mafragh Estuary (El Kala national park, Ramsar Site & Unesco MAB Reserve, N-E Algeria)

Latifa Sari

Multidisciplinary surveys have been conducted since 2013 in the Mafragh estuary, far northeastern Algeria, to address locally the issue of past human settlements and adaptative strategies to changing environments during the last twenty millennia BP. The project also aims to explore comprehensive strategies so as to mitigate climate change threats to both ecosystems and cultural heritage sites, notably coastal erosion and 2021-2022 dramatic wildfires. The considered area is of international importance being a unique mosaic of humid wetland ecosystems with diversified ecotones encompassing coastlines, riparian zones and forest boundaries. This diversity can be seen as the main driver to anchor prehistoric human settlement with abundant open-air dwellings and sheltered rock-art sites. This region is part of the entity administered as the El Kala National Park (PNEK), which is governed by a set of legislative texts on environmental protection. In addition, the Park benefits from dual protection as Man and Biosphere Reserve of UNESCO and RAMSAR site, thus ensuring preservation of a significant number of prehistoric sites located within the protected areas and corresponding buffer zones. Since April 2025, this safeguarded sector is on Algeria's Tentative List for possible inscription as a natural World Heritage site. A strategic sustainable management plan intended for prehistoric sites and biodiversity is being implemented taking into account: risk management in response to climate change, legal frameworks to prevent damage, destruction and natural calamities, and local authorities' capacity building and communities' raising awareness to ensure long-term preservation and foster local sustainable tourism.

22.6. Prehistory, Transdisciplinarity and Territorial Praxis

Luiz Oosterbeek

Prehistory, as a scientific field of research, emerged in the mid-nineteenth century, at the crossroads of what are now called the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences. This radically interdisciplinary dimension, that remains evident in the name of UISPP that refers to “prehistoric sciences” was complemented, from the beginning, by a structural component that is now called transdisciplinary: the construction of scientific data, which relies primarily in the quality of field work, was performed mostly by non-scholars (workers, students) that had to take decisions on what to preserve or not, based on a syncretic knowledge framework that combined their own cognitive background with the indications of researchers. This methodological framework offers unique contributions for societies in the present: revisiting the past to understand long term transformative processes and major cultural shifts, which is useful in current times of uncertainty; the illustration of the plasticity of borders and human mobility, which directly resonates with contemporary migrations; the crucial importance of training gesture and communication, which left fossil evidences in debitage sites or rock art experiments, which evidences the importance of education for human flourishing; the behavioral convergence of many cultures across the planet, which is a testimony of the unity of the species, itself expressed through a diversity of techniques and symbols that cannot conceal the shared human characteristics, which is particularly relevant in face of ethnocentric racial prejudice and xenophobia. This paper reviews major cycles of prehistoric transdisciplinary research and presents some contemporary contexts of its social impact.

22.7. Developing heritage industries to preserve the Archaeological sites in Mozambique: the case of Manyikeni Zimbabwe site

Marilio Wane, Hamido Atuia

In Mozambique, most of the Archaeological sites, including Zimbabwe sites are considered sacred places by local communities, as they connect them to their ancestors. This highlights the importance of this kind of heritage and the way they value them, that helps also for Conservation. In this paper, it is suggested the inclusion of intangible heritage within the site management procedures. However, it is emphasized also an integrative approach of heritage preservation that includes the development of cultural heritage industries to assist economically the locals, such as dances, gastronomy, crafts, storytelling to attract tourists and generate income, benefiting directly local communities. It is argued that to preserve the Archaeological sites it is not enough to preserve monument, but essentially to look also into intangible values that are directly related to local people. To address this issue, this article presents the example of the Manyikeni Zimbabwe site in the Province of Inhambane, Vilankulo District. The debate is inspired by the 2003 and 2005 UNESCO Conventions.

22.8. Pangwari Terracottas of Nigeria: Linking Nok Prehistory to Community Sustainability

Mary A. Oguntuase, Luiz M. Oosterbeek, Opeyemi L. Adewumi

The Nok Culture has gained international recognition for its exceptional artistic value and significant archaeological context, offering valuable insights into its cultural heritage. The terracotta sculptures from this prehistoric Nigerian culture reflect the creative ingenuity and technological development that predates the influence of colonialism. Initial discoveries of these sculptures, depicting human and animal forms, were made in the Nok Village area of Central Nigeria by Bernard Fagg. Despite

extensive research on the Nok terracottas, the Pangwari terracotta of southern Kaduna remains underexplored. Through terracotta artefacts such as a dugout canoe, therianthropic figures, and a seashell-adorned human head, this review reveals the prehistoric knowledge, beliefs, cultural expressions, aesthetics, and technological innovations of Nigerians before the colonial era as tangible evidence of adaptive human responses to environmental and social interactions. These artefacts document the sophisticated social structures, belief systems, creative styles, and technological know-how of early communities. In addition to revealing a variety of artistic styles, archaeological research on these materials helps ensure their preservation and continued significance in contemporary culture. The Pangwari terracottas demonstrate how prehistoric studies have contributed to the sustainability and welfare of modern African communities. Prehistoric knowledge is shared through participation within local communities, supported by heritage education, museum services, and community-based conservation efforts, which promote cultural pride, cultural continuity, and inclusive engagement in the scientific process. In conclusion, the significance of prehistoric African culture is demonstrated through the Pangwari terracottas and other Nok objects, which showcase the artistic, technological, and philosophical aspects of Nigerian precolonial culture.

22.9. Unearthing Africa's Sustainable Past

Temitope Comfort Funmilayo

Prehistory and archaeology provide critical perspectives for understanding how African societies in the past interacted with their environments and organized their livelihoods. Through the study of material remains, settlement patterns, and cultural landscapes, these disciplines reveal the adaptive strategies that enabled earlier communities to sustain themselves within diverse ecological settings. Such historical insights are increasingly important in contemporary discussions about sustainability, environmental management, and community well-being across Africa. However, the knowledge derived from Africa's archaeological and prehistoric records is often neglected in modern development discourse. Many contemporary development discourses depend largely on imported models that overlook indigenous knowledge systems and historically proven practices embedded in Africa's past. This neglect creates a disconnect between archaeological scholarship and the search for practical solutions to current socio-economic and environmental challenges facing African communities. Therefore, this paper argues that unearthing Africa's sustainable past can provide valuable pathways toward addressing these challenges. Archaeological evidence demonstrates that past African societies developed resilient systems of agriculture, craft production, settlement organization, and resource management that supported ecological balance and social stability. By revisiting and integrating these historically grounded practices in a critical fashion African communities can promote sustainable land use, strengthen cultural heritage preservation, and encourage locally driven development initiatives. Given the above position, archaeology and prehistory should offer more than historical reconstruction; they provide practical lessons for sustainable living and community resilience. Recognizing the relevance of Africa's deep past can inspire development approaches that are culturally informed, environmentally responsible, and beneficial to the long-term well-being of African societies.

22.10. Nouvelles perspectives sur l'Acheuléen mauritanien : variabilité technologique et cadres d'interprétation

Touré Ousmane

Les industries acheuléennes de Mauritanie, inscrites dans des environnements saharo-sahéliens fortement contraints et dynamiques, offrent un cadre privilégié pour interroger les relations entre systèmes techniques, adaptations humaines et durabilité à long terme. À partir d'une analyse technologique et techno-économique des assemblages lithiques fondée sur la chaîne opératoire, la gestion des matières premières et l'organisation des productions bifaciales et sur éclats cette communication propose de mettre en évidence les trajectoires techniques développées par les groupes humains dans des contextes écologiques contrastés (regs, vallées fossiles, marges dunaires, espaces littoraux). Les données montrent une variabilité structurée des systèmes de production, combinant façonnage bifacial, débitage et systèmes mixtes, ainsi qu'une gestion différenciée des ressources lithiques traduisant des stratégies d'optimisation, de mobilité et de maintenance des outils. Ces choix techniques témoignent d'une capacité d'adaptation fine aux contraintes environnementales et d'une inscription durable des groupes humains dans leurs milieux. Au-delà de l'analyse des objets, cette approche s'inscrit dans une perspective transdisciplinaire, articulant archéologie, géologie et paléoenvironnement, et s'appuie sur des données issues de prospections et de travaux de terrain impliquant chercheurs, étudiants et acteurs locaux. Elle contribue ainsi à souligner le rôle des recherches préhistoriques en Mauritanie dans la production de savoirs ancrés dans des preuves matérielles, mais également dans la valorisation des patrimoines africains et des dynamiques d'innovation technique anciennes. En mettant en lumière la diversité adaptative des sociétés acheuléennes, cette étude participe à une réflexion plus large sur l'unité et la diversité de l'humanité, et sur les apports de la Préhistoire à la compréhension des interactions durables entre sociétés humaines et écosystèmes dans les contextes africains.

22.11. "Gwaza-Muthini" as a Referent to Mozambican Cultural Heritage

Fernando M. Manjate

This paper is about "Gwaza-Muthini", an annual ceremony held on February 2 in Marracuene, Mozambique. It results from an ethnographic fieldwork in Marracuene, a district located some 30 km north from Maputo city, the capital of Mozambique. I attended the "Gwaza-Muthini" celebrations several times as part of my interest in the cultural heritage of this community and beyond. My study highlights how "Gwaza-Muthini" is both a traditional and modern ceremony that encompasses historical, cultural and political dimensions. Throughout this paper I emphasizes the importance of considering it part of Mozambican cultural heritage as a crucial element of identity, commercial interest, and, above all cultural recognition.

Session: 49 (Room 6)

49.1. Gerhard Liesegang's contributions to archaeology in Mozambique

Elcídio Macuácua, Júlio Machele, João Senda

Gerhard Liesegang, a historian associated with the Department of History, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at Eduardo Mondlane University, played an important role in the development of Mozambican archaeology, particularly through his integration of historical, archaeological and oral sources. His field surveys in the 1970s and 1980s, especially in Sofala and Cabo Delgado, identified

coastal sites with imported ceramics and structures related to pre-colonial maritime trade. His interdisciplinary approach connected material evidence to the documentary context and Indian Ocean networks, highlighting the importance of Mozambique in regional and transoceanic exchanges. In the Gaza empire, about which he wrote extensively, Liesegang also studied archaeological evidence of permanent residence and Nguni pottery. Liesegang was thus a link between history, archaeology, and linguistics, deepening the understanding of coastal dynamics, trade, and human mobility, themes that are also fundamental to studies on early communities, slavery, and connections in the Indian Ocean. His contribution to the appreciation and preservation of the national archaeological heritage is undeniable. The study is based on a review of literature, newspapers, interviews, mapping of archaeological sources from the Department of Anthropology and Archaeology laboratory, and research of primary and oral sources from the Historical Archive of Mozambique.

49.2. Rethinking Historical Sources for Mozambique in Language, Text and Memory (16th – 19th Centuries)

Eric Thuku Kariuki

Mozambique's historical past between the 16th-19th CE is deeply intertwined with contact between local communities and foreign influence across the Indian Ocean. Early documentation produced by missionaries, traders, navigators and colonial officials offer valuable descriptions of the societies they interacted with along the Mozambican coast and its hinterlands. However, these accounts were written within particular linguistic and cultural frameworks that influenced how African communities were described and understood. This paper proposes a critical analysis of theses sources by examining how language, narrative form and translation reshaped the recording of Mozambique's early history. I argue that historical sources on Mozambique 16th and 19th CE are not neutral records but linguistically and narratively constructed texts shaped by cross-cultural encounters. By approaching these texts as literary and linguistic artefacts rather than purely factual records, this study explores the ways in which meaning was constructed, negotiated and sometimes distorted through contact. Drawing on African sources like the Ajami manuscripts, Swahili and Bantu linguistic traces in written records, and oral traditions preserved by local communities this paper portrays the active role Africans played in recording, transmitting and interpreting their own history through histories of contact, trade, religious exchange and political transformation across Mozambique and the wider Indian Ocean. By combining linguistic analysis with literary documentation and oral historical perspectives, this paper argues for a more critical and inclusive analysis of historical sources. This interdisciplinary approach will contribute to broader archaeological and historical discussions about knowledge production, memory and African agency in the writing of Mozambique's past.

49.3. Uncovering the Voices of the Enslaved: The Registry Books of the Milandos Court in Nineteenth-Century Mozambique

Eugénia Rodrigues

Scholarship on slavery and the slave trade in the Indian Ocean has increasingly recovered the voices of enslaved individuals, primarily through records from missionaries, European officials, and colonial courts. This paper examines the value of the legal records produced by the Milandos Court in

recovering the voices of enslaved people in 19th-century Mozambique, which was then a Portuguese colony. The Milandos Court was a colonial institution with African roots, established to adjudicate claims by Africans against other Africans, as well as legal matters involving Africans and settlers. Headed by colonial officials, the Milandos Courts also included African legal experts who were tasked with applying the law according to local norms. These courts operated throughout the Zambezi Valley, although the best-preserved documents pertain to Quelimane. This paper examines the surviving documents of the Milandos Court, which operated in Quelimane, in search of the voices of the enslaved. The court received complaints on various matters, including protests related to enslavement practices that challenged the norms of local society and colonial legislation. Although filtered through layers of mediation, these brief registers reveal the voices of enslaved people. The Milandos Court records shed light on local enslavement practices and the resistance of enslaved individuals to these processes, illuminating complex economic and social dependency relationships.

49.4. Archival sources on XVIII century Mozambique available in the Mozambique National Archives

José Cláudio Mandlate

The aim of this paper is to share my experience of research in the Fundo do Século XVIII, a set of archival sources stored in the Mozambique National Archives. Those archival sources show different and interesting aspects of the daily lives of Portuguese merchants and priests who settled in Mozambique during the context of the so called Descobrimentos (late XV century), particularly along the coastal line. This research falls into the scope of social sciences. The research will rely on both primary and secondary sources.

49.5. Os prazos da coroa portuguesa, no contexto do surgimento dos Lugares Centrais do Vale do Zambeze, em Moçambique

Luísa Trindade Lovane, Solange Macamo, Eugénia Rodrigues

Com a ambição de construir um império, o sistema dos prazos sempre teve a intenção de controlar e ocupar efectivamente o território moçambicano. Nesse sentido, a sua principal preocupação era a exploração das minas de ouro nos territórios do Estado de Mutapa (Nwenemutapa), entre os séculos XV- XIX AD. Por outro lado, não se pode ignorar o interesse dos chefes africanos em criar a sua rede de comércio para a obtenção de bens exóticos, pela via do Zambeze com o Índico. Por essa razão, alguns deles enviavam embaixadores aos representantes portugueses, para estabelecer tratados comerciais com estes. Dessa maneira, ficava clara a necessidade da consideração dos interesses dos dirigentes africanos no que diz respeito ao estabelecimento de relações diplomáticas, económicas e sociais com outros povos. Com base nas fontes documentais escritas, essencialmente do Arquivo Histórico de Moçambique, o presente estudo caracteriza os prazos da Coroa Portuguesa estabelecidos no Vale do Zambeze, em Moçambique, como lugares centrais. Para contextualização, esta informação é complementada por alguns resultados publicados sobre a investigação arqueológica referente ao surgimento dos lugares centrais no Vale do Zambeze. O estudo usa as estações arqueológicas do Songo, M`bire NhantéKwè e Dégué-Mufa, este último que é também um prazo, datado do século XVII AD. Contudo a prática da escravatura levou ao declínio do sistema dos prazos.

49.6. Challenges of distant-past oral tradition in Mozambique: a case study from the Bazaruto Archipelago

Scott Dunleavy

Though the historical value of oral traditions is widely accepted for the recent past, the historicity of these sources for the distant past remains contested within modern scholarship. Today the most expansive examples of deep-time oral traditions emerge from the scholarship of North America and Oceania, with claims that historical memory extends back tens of thousands of years. Yet many scholars have questioned such seemingly sensational claims. David Henige, for one, has described these accounts as 'impossible to disprove yet impossible to believe'. In the context of much of the African continent, where written records are often scant, problematic, or absent, oral accounts have been crucial to reconstructing and decolonising historical narratives, and must be considered when researching the distant past, while acknowledging their often unfalsifiable nature. This paper presents new oral historical data from the Bazaruto Archipelago which, while contributing greatly the specific histories of migration, settlement and identity in that region, also provide a case study for the extent of historical memory within a distinct community of southern Mozambique. Here, oral traditions extend back only to the late nineteenth century, or three to four generations. By analysing the dynamics that have limited and affected this historical memory (e.g. migration, conflict, selective memory and contemporary vested interests) we can suggest potential methodological and epistemological challenges that impact deeper-time oral historical research within southern Mozambique specifically. Though some challenges may be insurmountable, alternative pathways may lie in critically utilising ethnographic research, particularly when supported by textual or archaeological data.

Session: 62 (Room 7)

62.1. A interconexão entre História e Arqueologia: Contribuições mútuas para a compreensão do colonialismo, resistência e descolonização em Moçambique

Ana Mpfumo

A história e a arqueologia, ao se interconectarem, oferecem uma compreensão mais profunda do passado moçambicano, especialmente nos contextos do colonialismo, resistência e descolonização. A história enriquece a interpretação arqueológica ao contextualizar achados materiais em narrativas mais amplas. Em Moçambique, sítios como a Fortaleza de Maputo e os padrões de povoamento em Manyika, quando cruzados com fontes históricas sobre o chibalo e a expropriação de terras, revelam estratégias de resistência ativa das comunidades. Por sua vez, a arqueologia valida e aprofunda narrativas históricas ao fornecer dados tangíveis. Vestígios de conflitos em Cabo Delgado e acampamentos da luta armada em Tete materializam a guerra de guerrilha, a logística da FRELIMO e a vida dos combatentes, complementando os relatos escritos e orais. Essa colaboração é essencial para dar visibilidade a períodos sem registros escritos e a grupos marginalizados, promovendo uma reavaliação crítica do passado africano e evidenciando a materialidade da opressão e da resistência.

62.2. O Ensino Rudimentar e a Educação Pelo Trabalho: Escola Missão Santa Teresinha do Menino Jesus de Liqueleva (1930-1974)

Arlindo Elias Mucavel

A presente trabalho tem como tema O Ensino Rudimentar e a Educação Pelo Trabalho: Escola Missão de Santa Teresinha do Menino Jesus de Liqueleva 1930-1974 e enquadra-se na área da História de educação em Moçambique. O objectivo desta pesquisa é compreender como o Ensino Primário Rudimentar através do trabalho foi um instrumento importante para a dominação política e económica portuguesa, tomando como caso particular o ensino missionário católico romano. Para a realização do estudo recorreu-se a pesquisa qualitativa, e consistiu na combinação de diferentes técnicas: a revisão documental e bibliográfica, e entrevistas semi-estruturadas. A pesquisa concluiu que o Ensino Primário Rudimentar a partir dos seus programas de ensino, conteúdos e prática educacional orientada para o trabalho manual, contribuiu na formação de trabalhadores agrícolas e artificies que viriam a garantir a rentabilidade da economia colonial, bem como a exploração e dominação política dos moçambicanos.

62.3. Decolonising Security in Africa: Reclaiming Indigenous Knowledge on Community Safety in Kenya

Caroline Ndila Kiragu

Beyond the state, dominant security frameworks in Africa remain deeply shaped by colonial legacies that privilege militarised, centralised, and externally derived models of order. This paper interrogates these inherited paradigms through the lens of Decolonial Theory, arguing that they often fail to reflect the lived realities, values, and priorities of African communities. In Kenya, this disconnect is evident in persistent insecurity, limited trust in formal institutions, and the continued marginalisation of local knowledge systems. The paper advances the argument that indigenous knowledge systems offer alternative and contextually grounded approaches to understanding and practicing security. Rooted in cultural norms, collective memory, and community governance structures, these systems emphasise relational accountability, restorative practices, and social cohesion. Mechanisms such as communal dialogue, kinship-based responsibility, and locally embedded conflict resolution strategies illustrate how communities have historically maintained order and managed conflict outside formal state structures. The study also situates insecurity within broader socio-economic and environmental dynamics, highlighting how marginalisation, resource pressures, and historical dispossession shape contemporary patterns of violence. It further critiques the limited adaptability of formal security institutions in addressing these complex, locally rooted challenges. The paper argues that decolonising security requires a fundamental shift toward plural, community-centred frameworks that recognise and legitimise indigenous epistemologies. Such a reorientation not only enhances the relevance and effectiveness of security practices but also restores African agency in defining and sustaining security in postcolonial contexts.

62.4. Movimentos de resistência à dominação colonial portuguesa: Caso de autoridade tradicional em Angónia, Tete, 1950-1954

Maria da Conceição da Costa Xavier Justino

O presente artigo, cujo objecto é trazer elementos relevantes de manifestações de resistência a ocupação colonial perpetradas pelas autoridades tradicionais no território moçambicano, concretamente no distrito de Angónia, no período compreendido entre os anos 1950-1954. Para

uma melhor compreensão, o mesmo vai contar com um amplo contexto histórico que inicia a partir do momento em há um encontro entre a presença colonial portuguesa e as lideranças locais, se pretende com este estudo apresentar as diferentes formas por estes adoptadas como sinal de contestação da presença colonial em seus espaços territoriais. Para o caso de Angónia, se procura estudar um caso especifico dum líder local, descrevendo sua trajectória histórica que culmina com sua deposição e deportação. Deste modo, teremos a primeira fase da ocupação efectiva, marcada pelo encontro entre as autoridades coloniais portuguesas e as autoridades tradicionais em Moçambique, em que se procura descrever os acordos estabelecidos para uma convivência equilibrada entre ambas, no sentido de manutenção de legitimidade mágico-religiosa e direito consuetudinário na gestão das comunidades locais, a segunda fase que seria de resistências a dominação e o surgimento de movimentos nacionalistas, com objectivo de reafirmação de uma identidade nacionalista advogadas por diferentes grupos motores. Perante este estado em vista, o propósito do artigo seria trazer evidências de iniciativas e reacções das autoridades tradicionais em Angónia, face da dominação colonial portuguesa.

62.5. O Impacto do Colonialismo e a Ressignificação das Tradições Culturais no Processo de Independência e Descolonização em África: O Caso de Moçambique

Nicolau Rodrigues Chitlhango

A história do colonialismo em África, especificamente em Moçambique, é caracterizada como uma prática de dominação e imperialismo que atingiu o seu auge entre o final do século XIX e o início do século XX. Este processo não se limitou ao controlo político e económico; a Europa utilizou a sua cultura como um "pilar" para modificar sociedades e religiões locais. Durante este período, instituições tradicionais foram tomadas compulsivamente e qualquer resistência africana foi reprimida com violência, resultando no exílio ou morte de líderes notáveis. A dominação colonial fundamentou-se na humilhação e no enfraquecimento dos valores africanos. Em Moçambique, a política de assimilação impôs uma hierarquia que rotulava a cultura local como "inferior", proibindo manifestações artísticas para converter os colonizados aos valores portugueses e da Igreja Católica. Os movimentos de resistência, contudo, manifestaram-se também através da cultura. Danças tradicionais como o Xigubo serviram como ferramentas de preparação físico-militar dos guerreiros Nguni e símbolos de resistência contra a ocupação portuguesa. Com a independência em 1975, iniciou-se um processo de descolonização focado na formação do "Homem Novo", visando a reconstrução nacional e a revalorização das práticas moçambicanas. Actualmente, as danças tradicionais são vistas como reservas históricas de luta, embora enfrentem o desafio da globalização, que ameaça diluir estas identidades em prol de uma homogeneização cultural.

62.6. Abolition de l’esclavage et colonisation : dynamiques historiques et héritages dans la banlieue de Saint-Louis du Sénégal (XIXe-XXe siècle)

René Ndiana Faye

Le décret abolitionniste de 1848, dans son article 7, stipulait que « le sol de la France affranchit l’esclave qui le touche, est appliqué aux colonies et possessions de la République ». Ce contexte fut marqué par la mise en place d’un système colonial caractérisé par un passage d’un commerce illégitime (la traite des esclaves) à un commerce légitime (produits non humains). Cette transition s’accompagnait de nouvelles politiques d’exploitation économique, des résistances africaines, de l’émergence des religions révélées, et surtout des aspirations à l’émancipation des populations serviles. Ainsi, des esclaves d’origines diverses, dont des Bambara du Soudan français, migrèrent vers

la ville de Saint-Louis et ses faubourgs, devenus des espaces de liberté et d'asile pour les communautés serviles. Je propose une triangulation entre les sources archivistiques, les traditions orales et les preuves archéologiques, afin de cerner le processus d'abolition de l'esclavage. A partir de cette approche, je cherche à comprendre la manière dont les personnes en quête de liberté ont navigué dans un contexte colonial et dans l'éventail des négociations (sociales, politiques et économiques), des confrontations et des résistances. J'analyse également comment la macule servile continue d'affecter la vie des descendants d'esclaves fugitifs dans la banlieue saint-louisienne.

62.7. A história do colonialismo, movimentos de resistência e o processo de descolonização em áfrica a experiência das colónias portuguesas [Moçambique, Angola e Guiné-Bissau]

Roberto Momade Preto

A presente reflexão insere-se no âmbito do Programa da Conferência PanAfricana de Arqueologia de Maputo, 2026, que na sua 62ª Sessão são apresentadas intervenções ligadas ao processo histórico do passado colonial, cuja temática central é História do Colonialismo, Movimentos de Resistência e o Processo de Descolonização em África. Nesta comunicação, apresento de forma afunilada, o retrato histórico sobre o processo de descolonização em África, buscando experiências dos países africanos colonizados por Portugal. São convocadas como categorias, os Movimentos de Libertação Nacional como a Frente de Libertação de Mocambique (FRELIMO), o Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (MPLA) e o Partido Africano para a Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde (PAIGC), cujas unidades de análise são os países irmãos como Moçambique, Angola e Guiné-Bissau, respectivamente. Foram movimentos históricos de luta nacional liderados por Samora Machel (FRELIMO), Agostinho Neto (MPLA) e Amílcar Cabral (PAIGC). Em linhas gerais, são analisadas as tendências ideológico-revolucionárias construídas por cidadãos desses países unidos por uma causa nacionalista desde os primórdios tempos de formação dos movimentos que culminaram com a conquista da Independência Nacional. Fruto do trabalho abnegado dos filhos dessas nações, hoje soberanas, que muitos deles se desprenderam da carteira escolar, de formação profissional ou de postos de trabalho, para responder ao clamor ou encetar iniciativas libertadoras, cada um desses países apontados, tem a sua dignidade como povo, nação e luta para a prosperidade económica. A emergência de lutas pela libertação nacional nas colónias portuguesas em África foi consequência da intransigência das autoridades coloniais portuguesas que foram tão relutantes na questão da concessão da independência por via pacífica aos territórios colonizados durante vários séculos de exploração multidimensional. Os líderes africanos estabeleceram vários contactos com os governantes do Governo de Lisboa, mas, a resposta foi a repressão movida pela sua tenebrosa polícia política, a Polícia Internacional e Defesa do Estado (PIDE), como braço armado que também reprimiu qualquer tentativa de oposição ao governo de António Salazar mesmo na metrópole. Para a busca de subsídios que culminaram com a compilação desta informação, recorreu-se a leitura bibliográfica baseada em obras literárias de distintos autores como técnica de colecta de dados, conforme atesta a referência bibliográfica apresentada no final como listagem dos seleccionados.

62.8. "O preto vai à terra para se embebedar":1 a personificação da violência simbólica do discurso colonial e pós-colonial em Inhambane na historiografia"

Ieceu Carlos Sitoe

Os conceitos de memória, violência e trauma que este estudo procura evidenciá-los ao longo do texto são bastante caros na historiografia. A personificação da violência simbólica do discurso colonial e pós-colonial na historiografia é exemplo de uma pequena parte operacional da aplicação daqueles conceitos. Queremos mostrar as variadas gradações em termos dos seus impactos reais em Moçambique colonial e pós-colonial tendo como a região sul, apenas uma face dos problemas criados pela colonização europeia em África, numa clara participação nativista. Longe de pensar esse debate conceptual robusto e requintado, a pesquisa procura compreender a partir do espaço territorial de Inhambane colonial e pós-colonial, suas tendências de violência e trauma vaticinadas na historiografia. Para a realização desta actividade, além obviamente da revisão bibliográfica e visitas aos diferentes centros de pesquisa e aos locais históricos com vestígios, rastos e evidências da província de Inhambane, o estudo consistiu também na leitura e análise de fontes, designadamente: relatórios, atas, códices, textos e artigos da revista tempo, textos e artigos do jornal notícias.

Face ao resumo, observo e coloco as seguintes perguntas?

1. Resumo interessante.
2. Qual o problema que a sua comunicação pretende responder?
3. Ira pegar em varias obras historiográficas do Distrito colonial e Província de Inhambane para mostrar as evidências dos conceitos acima mencionados?

Session: 10 (Room 8)

10.1. Ngomeni Nhanimela: a newly identified Zimbabwe culture site in southern Mozambique and its implications for social complexity in the southern African region

Abigail Moffett, Pedro Moine, Hamido Atuia, Scott Dunleavy, Kelsi Kaviani, Osvaldo Marrame, Joanna Lawrence, Luís Chaúque, Cláudio Mandlate, Silva Mutombene, Celso Simbine, Solange Macamo

In this talk we present the preliminary results from our research at the newly identified site of Ngomene Nhanimela. Ngomene Nhanimela is a stone walled 'Zimbabwe culture' site located approximately 30km from the coastline in the province of Inhambane in southern Mozambique. Although known to local communities for some time the site was first visited by archaeologists in 2017. Over the past two years the Entangled research team, comprising of researchers and students from University of Eduardo Mondlane and the University of Cambridge, have undertaken fieldwork at Ngomene Nhanimela. Drawing on our ongoing research we discuss the settlement layout, chronology and material culture from Ngomene Nhanimela, presenting an initial assessment of the organisation of social and economic life at the site. Ngomene, which translates as 'house of stone' in

Xitswa, has both similarities and differences with other madZimbabwe culture sites across the southern African region, providing an important opportunity to both extend and challenge the concept of the 'Zimbabwe culture'.

10.2. Ancient DNA from Zimbabwe: genetic perspectives on population continuity and change across the Great Zimbabwe culture (7th century CE–present).

Imke Lankheet, Johanna von Seth, Andrea Soler i Núñez

Zimbabwe is home to one of southern Africa's earliest Iron Age civilizations: the ancient kingdom of Great Zimbabwe (1000 to 1800 CE). Its capital city, founded ~1,000 years ago, comprises the largest stone structure in precolonial southern Africa, and it documents centuries of social, economic, and political developments. However, the biological relationships and population histories of the people who inhabited this and surrounding sites remain poorly understood. Here, we present results from an ancient DNA study on individuals from archaeological contexts across present-day Zimbabwe, spanning the last 1,300 years. DNA was extracted from petrous bones and teeth of these remains, yielding genome-wide data for dozens of individuals. These individuals originate from different regions throughout Zimbabwe, including the archaeological sites assocated with Great Zimbabwe, and enable the first broad genetic assessment of populations linked to this archaeological tradition. Using genome-wide analyses, we investigated patterns of population continuity and change through time and explored the genetic relationships between ancient Zimbabweans and previously published ancient individuals from southern Africa, as well as present-day populations in the region. Preliminary analyses indicate that the genetic ancestry of the sampled individuals is predominantly associated with Bantu-speaking populations. By integrating genomic evidence with archaeological context, this study provides the first insights into the genetic composition of ancient Zimbabwe. It offers a new line of evidence for understanding demographic processes underlying the development and persistence of the Zimbabwe culture. It also situates these populations within broader regional histories of mobility and interaction in southern Africa.

10.3. Towards the Decolonisation of Heritage Interpretation: Tsindi, a Dzimbahwe Site in North-Eastern Zimbabwe.

Kelvin Machiwenyika, Thamary Mukuya, Esther Chipashu

Decolonising heritage interpretation has become a central concern in African archaeology and heritage studies, particularly in contexts where colonial-era narratives continue to shape the presentation of the past. Most of the interpretations available have tended to be auto tuned voices by western theories hence the need to revisit the concept. While Great Zimbabwe has been pivotal in challenging these narratives, the dominance of a single site has contributed to the neglect of smaller but significant dzimbahwe centres. This paper draws on Masters research conducted at Tsindi, a dry-stone walled site in north-eastern Zimbabwe, to examine how African-centred interpretive frameworks can reframe understandings of Zimbabwe culture sites. Integrating archaeological evidence, archival records, and oral histories from descendant communities, the study explores the social, political, economic, and cultural organisation of Tsindi from an African perspective. The paper argues that decolonising heritage interpretation requires moving beyond diffusionist and homogenising narratives toward locally grounded interpretations that foreground lived experience, memory, and cultural continuity

10.4. Integrating Local Heritage in Higher Education: Experiences from Zimbabwe

Malon Muronzi

Cultural heritage is a vital component of Zimbabwe's identity, with the country boasting a rich archaeological record and diverse traditional knowledge systems. However, teaching cultural heritage in Zimbabwean universities faces challenges such as limited resources, Eurocentric curricula, and disconnects between academia and local communities. This paper explores innovative approaches to teaching heritage in Zimbabwe, focusing on incorporating local heritage and traditional knowledge into pedagogy. The University of Zimbabwe's Department of Archaeology has developed community-engaged learning programs, where students participate in heritage conservation projects and interact with local communities to understand indigenous knowledge systems. For example, students collaborate with traditional leaders to document and preserve intangible heritage, such as oral traditions and cultural festivals. This approach enhances students' understanding of local heritage and fosters mutual respect between academia and communities. Additionally, incorporating heritage studies into tourism and planning curricula has promoted sustainable development and cultural preservation in Zimbabwe. Case studies from the Great Zimbabwe World Heritage Site demonstrate how local heritage can drive economic growth and community empowerment.Decolonizing cultural heritage education is another key aspect, involving revising curricula to prioritize African perspectives and traditional knowledge. Zimbabwean universities are incorporating local languages, histories, and cultural practices into heritage studies, promoting inclusivity and relevance. This paper highlights these experiences, showcasing how Zimbabwe's higher education institutions navigate challenges and leverage local heritage to enhance teaching, research, and community engagement. By integrating local heritage and traditional knowledge, Zimbabwean universities can contribute to sustainable development and cultural preservation while fostering interdisciplinary dialogue and decolonization.

10.5. The Imitation Market: Replicas of Form and Power in Southern Africa, CE1500 – 1900

Muchen Zhou, Shadreck Chirikure

The Ndoro is an ivory-coloured pendant made from the flattened apex of a Conus virgo shell which has held enduring cultural significance across southern Africa since the late first millennium AD. Archaeological and ethnographic sources indicate that among Shona, Venda, Tsonga, and Valenge communities, Ndoro pendants function as powerful symbols of social status and spiritual potency. Alongside shell examples, ceramic replicas of Ndoro, likely produced in Europe and circulated through Portuguese trade networks, have been recovered from several sites in Zimbabwe, including Great Zimbabwe, Khami, Binga, indicating a temporal overlap with early Portuguese presence in the region. Despite its cultural, social and archaeological importance, the provenance and sociocultural significance of these replicas have not been thoroughly explored. This paper builds on these gaps to address several critical questions: (1) where were these ceramic replicas produced? (2) Did these replicas hold the same social, cultural, and economic significance as the original shells within their intended cultural contexts? (3) Furthermore, what are the sociocultural and economic impacts of these replicas on the original culture, particularly regarding value systems, social hierarchies, and local economies? By applying complementary scientific techniques in conjunction with historical and anthropological insights, the paper elaborates the complex interplay between material culture, international trade, and indigenous value systems in Southern Africa, offering new insights into the dynamics of cultural imitation and adaptation linked to Indian and Pacific Ocean globalization. .

10.6. Preliminary insights into farming at Ziwa: a multi-proxy investigation of the terraces of Ziwa National Monument in Nyanga Highlands, Zimbabwe

Tawanda Mushweshwe, Alex Schoeman, Olaotse Lokwalo Thabeng, Jasper Knight

The Ziwa National Monument in the Nyanga Highlands of Zimbabwe is an extensive precolonial terraced farming system constructed between the 12th and the early 18th century CE. These terraces represent sophisticated agricultural engineering designed to optimise productivity under variable subtropical highland climate conditions. This paper reports on multiproxy research aimed at reconstructing agricultural strategies employed by the farmers of Ziwa, focusing on the insights gained during foot surveys used to ground-truth the digitisation of Ziwa's terraces and related circular features using Google Earth, and on results from the excavations of geoarchaeological trenches in terraces. These preliminary results suggest a strong correlation between slope orientation, terrace type, distribution, and underlying geology.

10.7. The pre-colonial architectural heritage in Mozambique: towards the establishment of a value criteria for Zimbabwe settlements

Solange Macamo

In Mozambique there is a variety of pre-colonial architectural heritage considered monuments, a category attributed by Law to value them. The study towards understanding the origin of this heritage was updated during the Urban Origin archaeological project sponsored by Sida-SAREC project end 20 century. However, despite of the archaeological importance of the pre-colonial architecture for past reconstruction, particularly the Zimbabwe settlements, in most cases are left alone without a clear definition of their functions. Yet, several attempts were made by the Ministry of Culture to their inclusion in the National Inventory, but this remains an unpublished document, contributing negatively for their doubtfully value in the society. This paper first outlines the pre-colonial architectural heritage, according to their region. Secondly, it proposes a value criterion for Zimbabwe settlements. The study concludes that the value criteria can range from the archaeological, geographical and geological landscapes to the architectural styles, commonly attributed to the Zimbabwe settlements. However, an additional value criterion represents Bantu languages, by which Zimbabwe settlements are recognized and understood by local communities linked to their traditions that are passed orally through the generations. The presented results were obtained through several years of field work observations at the Zimbabwe settlements of Manyikeni, Songo and Niamara in south Central Mozambique. Valuing local languages contributes to the identification of more Zimbabwe settlements in Mozambique and to the reimaginations of the Zimbabwe culture too.

10.8. Reassessing Danamombe using multiproxy evidence: Insights from Radiocarbon dating, material analyses, and other archaeological datasets

Robert Nyamushosho

Situated within a network of monumental stone-walled settlements in southern Africa, Danamombe stands as one of the largest and most significant sites associated with what archaeologists term the Zimbabwe culture, which spans present-day Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Botswana, and South Africa. Despite intermittent scholarly attention over the past century, interpretations have often linked Danamombe to the Rozvi and portrayed it as a short-lived successor to Khami following internal conflict around CE 1644. This study reassesses Danamombe's settlement history using Accelerator Mass Spectrometry radiocarbon dating, Bayesian modelling, glass bead and glassware analysis, ceramic typology, and stable isotope analysis of faunal remains, together with data from the Kitchen Midden. Results indicate earlier occupation extending into the early twentieth century, challenging assumptions of abrupt abandonment after Nguni incursions. Evidence suggests Danamombe retained political and cultural autonomy during the Torwa period rather than deriving directly from Khami. Imported glass beads and a sword blade resembling European rapiers point to long distance trade links with the Indian Ocean and Europe, while abundant local goods reflect specialized production. Faunal evidence indicates a diversified economy centered on cattle, and patterns suggest resilience and continuity rather than collapse

10.9. Finding and dating Isamu Pati, an Iron Age site in Southwestern Zambia: The growing role of glass beads chemistry in southern Africa

Foreman Bandama, Laure Dussubieux and Chiamaka J, Chukwuma

The oxymoronic view of relatively tiny glass beads holding high value is not new but recent advances in glass beads chemistry have solidified the role of this proxy data in the culture history of southern Africa. As imports coming from Eurasia, glass beads typology and chemistry have been used to index time- and region-specific scales at archaeological sites in southern Africa. For Isamu Pati, an Iron Age site in Zambia that was first excavated and dated in the 1970s to the 10th-11th century CE, relocating this site and redating it has been a challenge due to the lack of geographic coordinates and the challenges in recalibrating the older c-14 dates with large error margins. New dates from a site that fits the locality of Isamu Pati are all calibrating to the post 15th century period, raising questions about the veracity of the location or the early dates. This is where glass beads chemistry becomes handy. To plug this gap and reconcile the conflicting c-14 date results, we analyzed 13 (the total recovered) glass beads from the 2024 excavation. The analyses were done through the Field Museum's Elemental Analyses Facility which has produced comparative data that locate our results within the regional context.

10.10. Re-collecting Great Zimbabwe's replicas

Rachel King

This paper draws on archives of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, their Secretary John Myres, and Gertrude Caton-Thompson's archaeological archives to explore the geopolitics of how objects from Great Zimbabwe were copied, displayed, and dispersed. Following excavations in 1929, the BAAS and British Museum hosted a related exhibition and produced a series of plaster casts of iconic objects from the site. These casts were sold or distributed as gifts to museums and other diplomatic partners around the world. I explore how the circulation of these copies shored up connections between Britain, its empire, and cultural partners while creating global imaginations of - and entitle.

Session: 57 (Room 9)

57.1. Underwater Archaeology in Madagascar: Challenges, Perspectives, and Contributions to the Understanding of Human Settlement

Andriamaherilala Jean aimé

The choice of underwater archaeology as a central theme is grounded in a reflection structured around the challenges, perspectives, and unity of the Malagasy world. This discipline is particularly relevant as it enables the exploration of still poorly understood aspects of Madagascar’s history, especially in relation to settlement dynamics and interactions between human societies and aquatic environments. Despite significant advances in archaeological research over the past two decades, particularly in the identification of prehistoric remains, underwater archaeology remains underdeveloped in Madagascar. Yet, it offers strong scientific potential due to the remarkable preservation of submerged remains, including habitation structures, artifacts, and shipwrecks, which are essential for reconstructing the island’s historical and cultural trajectories. The importance of this field is reinforced by Madagascar’s insular geography and its extensive coastline of approximately 5 000 kilometers. In addition, oral traditions, myths, and water-related narratives reveal a rich collective memory often linked to maritime or lake origins. Historical evidence of ancient migrations, especially Austronesian, as well as trade networks such as the spice route, further highlight the relevance of underwater investigations. However, the development of underwater archaeology faces major challenges, including site looting, heritage degradation, and a lack of trained specialists. Addressing these issues requires stronger legal frameworks, increased public awareness, specialized training programs, and enhanced regional and international scientific cooperation.

57.2. Céramiques de Teniky (Isalo): occupation humaine et échanges locaux dans le Sud malgache

Nasandratra Ny Aina Sarobidy

L'étude des céramiques du site archéologique de Teniky, localisé dans le Parc National Isalo à Madagascar, vise à caractériser des assemblages par une approche archéométrique. Elle combine l’analyse typologique, morpho-stylistique et pétrographique, afin de reconstituer les dynamiques d'occupation humaine du site et d'évaluer les interactions culturelles entre ses habitants et les communautés du Sud malgache. L’assemblage étudié, composé de céramiques locales non tournées,

fait l'objet d'une analyse quantitative fondée sur le décompte des fragments bruts et sur l'estimation du Nombre Minimum de Vases, complétée par une standardisation colorimétrique à l'aide de la charte de Munsell et par une caractérisation minéralogique des pâtes conduite en microscopie optique à lumière polarisée sur lames minces. L'hypothèse centrale suppose que les indices de standardisation technique décelables dans l'assemblage reflètent une communauté organisée et structurée, inscrite dans des réseaux d'échanges régionaux actifs. La confrontation des résultats obtenus avec les données disponibles pour les sites archéologiques voisins du Sud malgache permettra de documenter d'éventuelles convergences lithologiques, stylistiques et techniques, révélatrices de circulations de biens et de savoir-faire à l'échelle régionale.

57.3. Organisation spatiale ou aménagement de l'espace chez les. Anciens groupes du nord-est de Madagascar

Raharinoro Judith Christa

L'étude de l'aménagement de l'espace du nord-est de Madagascar met en évidence des pratiques d'organisation spatiale étroitement liées aux dynamiques sociales, économiques et environnementales des anciens groupes qui y habitaient et qui sont généralement connu comme des Betsimisaraka Antavaratra actuellement. Les sites archéologiques, tels que Benavony (Sambava), Nosy Mangabe (Maroantsetra) et ses alentours, révèlent une structuration du territoire qui combine habitat, zones agricoles, zones d'exploitations et espaces cérémoniels, témoignant d'une planification consciente adaptée aux contraintes naturelles et aux besoins communautaires. L'implantation des villages suit souvent des principes topographiques, favorisant l'accès aux ressources en eau, la protection contre les risques naturels, la circulation des individus et le transfert des technologies (la métallurgie, le travail de la pierre,). Les zones cultivées et exploitées sont intégrées à un système spatial qui reflète la hiérarchie sociale et la fonction symbolique de certains lieux, notamment les sites funéraires ou rituels. Cette organisation spatiale traduit une compréhension fine de l'environnement et un équilibre entre exploitation des ressources et préservation des espaces sacrés. L'analyse comparative avec d'autres régions de Madagascar montre la spécificité du nord-est dans l'adaptation de ses habitants, (souvent qualifié comme belliqueux, plus ou moins liberal, et peu voire difficile à organiser politiquement), au milieu forestier humide et dans la structuration des villages autour de pôles centraux à forte valeur sociale et économique.

57.4. Toward an archaeology by, for, and with Malagasy Communities: Methodological reflections on Community-Based archaeology applied to Vohemar, Northeast Madagascar

Rakotomahanina Soafara Ondie Flore

Post-colonial Malagasy archaeology has developed with respect for local contexts. The uniqueness and diversity of contexts in the "Malagasy World" have encouraged interdisciplinary research on the history of the island. Since the 1970s, community-based archaeology practices have been adopted in different forms, with varying degrees of engagement depending on the location and period. Some focus on combining archaeological remains with oral traditions, others involve ethnoarchaeology, some integrate local cultural practices, while others use mediation methods. These approaches are now part of current research practices in Madagascar, thanks to the commitment of local researchers to more ethical and sustainable research. They have significantly contributed to the knowledge of the "Malagasy World." Today, faced with emerging questions of the 21st century, including the verticality of researcher-community relationships, the role of local knowledge, and the

restitution of knowledge to communities, it is necessary to consider new perspectives for Malagasy archaeology. Without challenging these achievements, this paper proposes to examine the relational and epistemic dimensions of current practices. It will explore the diversity of community-based archaeology approaches and the possible asymmetries that may shape interactions between researchers and communities. The discussion will be illustrated by a doctoral project in Vohemar, in northeastern Madagascar, treated as a space for reflection, allowing methodological directions to be explored such as participatory fieldworks and data analysis or a common output outside of the academic publications. Particular attention will be given to how "descendant communities" can be seen as genuine epistemic partners, within a framework of co-producing archaeological knowledge.

57.5. Bioarchaeology and funeral practices in Madagascar: challenges and issues facing Malagasy society

Rakotomavo, Andritiana Lahatra

How can funerary archaeology develop within Malagasy society whilst addressing cultural, scientific and social constraints? Bioarchaeology provides a key approach to understanding Malagasy societies, in which practices relating to ancestors play a central role in social and cultural organisation. By drawing on the study of burials and human remains, it enables the analysis of historical dynamics, collective identities and interactions that continue to shape the Malagasy world. However, its development in Madagascar faces numerous challenges. Cultural constraints, particularly taboos (fady) relating to graves and respect for ancestors, limit access to sites and necessitate different approaches depending on regional contexts. Added to this are scientific and material difficulties, such as the condition of the remains, a lack of technical resources and restricted access to certain analytical methods. Against this backdrop, this paper examines the conditions necessary for the development of a funerary archaeology suited to the Malagasy context, capable of reconciling scientific requirements with socio-cultural realities. It highlights the current challenges facing the discipline, whilst emphasising the importance of collaborative approaches involving local communities, national researchers and international partners. Thus, the study of human remains and practices related to ancestors emerges not only as a means of understanding the past, but also as a space for dialogue and solidarity, contributing to the promotion of heritage and the construction of a collective memory within contemporary Malagasy society.

57.6. Pierres, savoir-faire et dynamiques du monde malgache: l'architecture en moellons de grès de Teniky (Isalo, XIe–XIIe siècles) entre défis, perspectives et solidarités

Rakotondrazafy ny Antso, Vincent Sernels, Guido Schreur, Radimilahy Chantal

Le site de Teniky, situé dans le massif de l'Isalo (sud de Madagascar) livre un témoignage exceptionnel : une architecture en moellons de grès blanc datée des XIe–XIIe siècles. Cet ensemble apparaît comme unique dans le paysage architectural malgache, sans équivalent connu pour cette période, et constitue un témoignage remarquable des capacités d'adaptation et d'innovation des sociétés anciennes de l'île. L'analyse de la chaîne opératoire, depuis l'extraction dans une carrière localisée à proximité jusqu'à la mise en œuvre architecturale, met en évidence une organisation technique structurée fondée sur une connaissance empirique du matériau et sur une mobilisation collective importante. L'exploitation des plans de faiblesse naturels du grès et l'absence de standardisation stricte traduisent un savoir-faire local optimisé, révélateur d'une tradition constructive propre au monde malgache. Au-delà de l'approche technologique, cette étude s'inscrit

dans les dynamiques plus larges du monde malgache dans l'océan Indien, en interrogeant les formes d'implantation, les choix techniques et les adaptations à des environnements contraints. Le caractère isolé et original de Teniky souligne à la fois la richesse des trajectoires locales et le manque actuel de référentiels comparatifs à l'échelle régionale. Ce cas met en lumière plusieurs défis majeurs pour l'archéologie de Madagascar : la dispersion des données, les inégalités dans l'accès aux ressources scientifiques et la vulnérabilité du patrimoine. Il ouvre également des perspectives importantes, notamment par le développement d'approches litho-architecturales intégrées, permettant de mieux comprendre les interactions entre techniques, sociétés et paysages. Enfin, cette recherche souligne l'importance des solidarités scientifiques et patrimoniales, à travers le renforcement des collaborations entre chercheurs malgaches et internationaux, ainsi que la nécessité d'une meilleure valorisation des sites auprès des communautés locales. En ce sens, Teniky contribue à une archéologie plus inclusive, capable de relier savoirs techniques, mémoire collective et enjeux contemporains du monde malgache.

57.7. Landscape archaeology: The resilience of Antananarivo's rice-growing landscape in the face of major development projects

Rasoarifetra, Bako Nirina

The rice-growing landscape of Antananarivo exhibits landscape and hydraulic resilience inherited from a long history of development, but this resilience is now being tested by major construction projects, landfilling, land fragmentation and the disruption of water flows.

57.8. L'empreinte des forbans: interactions entre sociétés littorales malagasy et réseaux maritimes (fin XVIIème – début XVIIIème siècle)

Sabe Nelas Fanny

Cette recherche doctorale propose une analyse l'intégration de la côte orientale de Madagascar dans les réseaux de commerce mondiaux à la fin du XVIIème siècle. Loin des mythes romancées, ce projet démonte comment les populations locales malagasy ont interagi avec la communauté de pirates cosmopolites pour transformer le littoral en un véritable hub logistique et culturel. La problématique centrale interroge l'organisation spatiale du territoire malagasy en comptoirs. Elle analyse comment les zones de troc et les structures de défense assuraient une souveraineté locale et une connexion fluide entre les marchés de l'arrière-pays (Foulpointe, Fénérive Est) et les flottes internationales. En privilégiant les traces matérielles face à une historiographie classique souvent biaisée, cette étude révèle l'intégration économique active de la Grande île. Le cœur de la thèse s'appuie sur des fouilles menées par l'équipe « Archéologie de la piraterie » sur le site stratégique de l'île Sainte Marie. Sur ce terrain, l'étude de la culture matérielle (vestiges d'habitat et des structures de défense) révèle la coexistence de la poterie malagasy avec des porcelaines chinoises et faïence européenne, preuve d'un métissage économique et d'un art de vivre hybride. Ce volet est complété par l'archéologie sous-marine pour rétablir la vérité sur le rôle moteur de Madagascar. Présenter ces travaux au PanAF 2026 souligne l'importance de ce patrimoine maritime pour la compréhension des réseaux commerciaux globaux.

57.9. Archaeobotany in Madagascar: Botanical Heritages and Frameworks for Future Contributions

Sarah Walshaw, Zoe Crossland, Chantal Radimilahy

Archaeobotany has been tasked with answering big questions in Madagascar archaeology, including the peopling of the island and regional subsistence strategies. Conversations in Africanist Archaeology are turning to professional fields such as heritage management, capacity building in African educational contexts, and building partnerships between academics and communities. In this paper we review some of the major drivers of archaeobotanical research to date and ask how the field can contribute to botanical heritage conversations more broadly. The Sacred Rice project examines historical relationships among plant communities, farmers, Malagasy royalty, and the emerging Indian Ocean world colonial context. As the project grows, we are broadening the scope of contributors and impact through: (1) capacity building at Université d'Antananarive through field training and laboratory facility enrichment; (2) student training at Columbia University to bring Madagascan plants and foodways into historical archaeological training; and (3) Malagasy community involvement, expert farmer collaborations, and local food culture celebration.

57.10. Teniky: a key site for the understanding of medieval peopling of southern Madagascar

Serneels Vincent, Schreurs Guido, Radimilahy Chantal

The archaeological site of Teniky, also known as "Grotte des Portugais", is located 200 km inland, inside the national park of the Isalo mountains (Madagascar). The architectural remains were first mentioned in the mid-20th century and briefly described but never dated. From 2021, new field work has been completed by a Swiss-Malagasy team, including mapping and description of the build structures and artificial caves, recovery of artefacts (ceramics, glass, slag) and excavations providing charcoal for dating. The settlement occupies a natural rocky amphitheater. Wide terrasses, up to 80 m long, reinforced by supporting stone walls, have been laid out at the foot of the cliff. More than 100 platforms were build over the slopes. Several artificial cavities have been dug in the sandstone cliff, including closed and open chambers with pillars. One large natural cave has been fitted out with two impressive walls made of squared stone. During the 2025 campaign, a walled settlement located in the valley of the river Sanahafo has been investigated. Based on 40 stratified 14C samples, the monumental constructions in the circus are dated of the 11th century CE. This is consistent with the range of recovered artefacts including China ware (Qingbai), Middle East ceramic (Sgraffiatto) and blown glass vessels. The site show evidence for earlier human presence and has been probably abandoned around 1200 CE. The purpose of the site, the mode of subsistence of the settlers, their cultural identity and the reason for their coming remain open questions.

57.11. Plant Remains and New Conversations in Highland Madagascar

Zoe Crossland, Sarah Walshaw, Jeremy Switzer, Chantal Radimilahy

The Sacred Rice project uses historical ecological methods to examine relationships among plant communities, farmers, and Malagasy royalty before and during the emerging Indian Ocean world colonial context. Rice looms large in Malagasy foodways: vary is the staple grain and anchor of every meal, and earthworks supporting rice agriculture, such as terracing, dams, and irrigation systems,

dominate the highland landscape near Antananarivo. Excavations in 2014, 2018 and 2019 were aimed at building multiple ways to find and examine traces of rice farming, processing, and consumption at the site of Ambohidahy (north of Antananarivo) and its environs. Archaeobotanical sampling of a 15th century midden targeted household production and consumption waste. We took 25 sediment samples for flotation and analysis from this midden in 2018. This presentation shares interim results documenting the importance of local factors in archaeobotanical recovery as well as preliminary findings of bean taxa as important signifiers of foodways beyond rice.

Session: 25 (Room 6)

25.1. The paleoecology of Paranthropus boisei as indicated by the fossil mammal fauna from Chesowanja, Kenya

Christina W. Mutinda, Rowan, J., Lazagabaster I.A., Ackermann, R.R., Manthi, F. K

Studies of the eastern African fossil record have provided valuable insights into how environmental changes during the Pleistocene influenced faunal turnover and the extinction of large mammal species. However, explaining the Early Pleistocene palaeoecology and extinction of the hominin Paranthropus boisei remains a significant challenge in human evolutionary studies. Here, we aim to enhance our understanding of the palaeoecology of P. boisei by analysing the Early Pleistocene mammal fauna recovered from Chesowanja, Kenya. During the 1970s and 1980s explorations, particularly in the Chemoigut Formation (~1.4 Ma), yielded P. boisei remains temporally close in time to the species' last known occurrence and a rich faunal assemblage. Despite these initial investigations, the palaeoecology of P. boisei from Chesowanja remains poorly understood. We describe our renewed fieldwork at Chesowanja, resulting in the recovery of additional hominin and faunal specimens that form the basis of the PhD thesis of one of us (CWM). The mammal fauna, particularly herbivore diversity, indicates the presence of extensive grassy ecosystems associated with the P. boisei remains. We discuss how the research at Chesowanja enhances our understanding of the palaeoecology and extinction of P. boisei, as well as broader insights into Early Pleistocene eastern African faunas.

25.2. Environmental Variability and Human Occupation in Central Mozambique: Case studies of Zimuara and Chessungalane

Daniel Hindson Martins, Alvise Barbieri, Jonathan Haws, Mussa Raja, Nuno Bicho

Central Mozambique's Stone Age record is poorly understood, and existing paleoenvironmental data are fragmentary, limiting reconstructions of past environments and highlighting the need for systematic research on the timing and nature of the MSA–LSA transition. This study adopts an integrated geoarchaeological approach, combining soil micromorphology and geochemical analyses, to reconstruct site formation processes and environmental dynamics at two open-air sites, Zimuara and Chessungalane. At Zimuara, lower strata corresponding to MIS 3-2 (~50-25 ka) exhibit compact red Bt horizons, reflecting in situ illuviation and multiple soil-forming cycles under alternating wetter and drier conditions. Overlying units (<25 ka) record a more extreme alternation between these phases and subsequent late Holocene aridification, including semi-arid conditions with episodic wet phases evidenced by gypsum neoformation and leaching signatures. Lithic layers suggest human occupations clustered around humid transitions. At Chessungalane, lower deposits dated to the

terminal Pleistocene–early Holocene (23–5 ka) formed under wetter conditions, indicated by pronounced slope-wash features, pH peaks in acidity, and elevated sand and gravel content, broadly correlating with the African Humid Period. Upper layers reflect mid-Holocene stability and drier conditions favouring soil development. High refit rates and micromorphology indicate limited post-depositional disturbance and good preservation of archaeological contexts. In conclusion, both sites record environmental fluctuations over the last 50 ka, with alternating human occupations embedded within this framework, while also contributing new geoarchaeological data to understanding of the Stone Age sequence in central Mozambique.

25.3. Reconstructing local palaeolandscape dynamics during the Middle Stone Age at Blombos Cave and Klipdrift Complex, South Africa: insights from geochronology, biomarkers, and landscape mapping

Ella Walsh, Simon Armitage, Christopher Miller, and Christopher Henshilwood

Cave sites along South Africa's coast provide key archives for understanding the early emergence of complex human behaviour in Middle Stone Age (MSA) Homo sapiens. Archaeological sequences in Blombos Cave (100 - 70 ka) and Klipdrift Shelter (65 – 60 ka) document shifts site use, subsistence strategies, and symbolic culture, with these sites containing Still Bay and Howiesons Poort technological complexes respectively. Changes in behaviour have often been linked to changing proximity to the coastline and regional climate variability, yet growing evidence from climate modelling studies suggests that environmental conditions likely varied at the local scale. Here, we reconstruct palaeoenvironmental conditions directly surrounding these two cave sites to examine local landscape dynamics. We targeted aeolianite, palaeosol, scree, and palaeobeach sequences for geochronological and palaeoenvironmental analyses. We present new luminescence ages to constrain the timing of landscape development, alongside sedimentological, mineralogical, and geochemical approaches to characterise the nature of depositional processes. Leaf wax biomarker analysis of palaeosol deposits, including quantification of n-alkane chain length distributions and stable isotope signatures provides a proxy for hydroclimate and biome conditions. These datasets are integrated with high resolution 3D drone mapping to reconstruct spatio-temporal patterns of palaeolandscape evolution around both sites. The combined record reveals alternating phases of landscape stability and instability during the Middle Stone Age. By linking these records with detailed analyses of within-cave sediments, this study offers a landscape-scale perspective on the environmental contexts for changing human behaviour at these sites.

25.4. Sedimentary facies analysis of Stone Age open-air sites in the Western Little Karoo, South Africa

Kurt Heinrich Wogau Chong, Karen L. van Niekerk, Philipp Hoelzmann, and Antoine Muller

The Western Little Karoo, southern Africa, is a vast semi-arid landscape, yet geomorphology indicates a past landscape shaped by diverse wetland systems. We investigate the presence of open-air sites and their association with different wetlands inhabited by Stone Age human groups. The paleolandscape analysis at the "Big Pan" study site was conducted using surface geomorphological mapping and sedimentary facies analysis. The geomorphology at Big Pan includes lunette dune systems, desert pavements, fluvial deltas, braided channels, and coppice dunes. Stratigraphic, chronometric, and multiproxy sediment analyses of a series of excavated test pits along the pan's southern shore display diverse sedimentary facies associations. The red sands (RS) and laminae

sands (LS) facies associations indicate an ephemeral fluvial system that prograded across the pan's plain ~70 kyr ago. The duricrust (DC), white sand (WS), and red silty-sand (RSS) facies associations in the lunette dune complex indicate an interplay of shoreline aggradation and deflation. The DC facies relates to relic shorelines formed during flooding and drying phases, while WS and RSS facies represent wind-blown deposits sourced from desert pavement areas and exposed pan surfaces during dry periods. Based on our facies analysis and age estimates, at least three lacustrine regression events at ~50 ka, ~33 ka, and ~5.2 ka were identified. We hypothesize that the Big Pan was an attractive locale for Stone Age hunter-gatherer groups when lacustrine conditions prevailed. This is supported by the presence of lithic artifacts on the pan shoreline from the Middle and Later Stone Age periods.

25.5. Exploring the Geospatial Distribution of Middle Stone Age (MSA) Assemblages from the Greater Laetoli Area to Understand Later Homo Land Use

Mali Saba

The Greater Laetoli area in northern Tanzania is well-known for its contribution to the understanding of human bio-cultural evolution from the Plio-Pleistocene through to the Mid-Late Pleistocene. Research undertaken in the area has yielded remains of Australopithecus afarensis, Paranthropus aethiopicus and early modern humans (Later Homo). In addition, the area preserves a rich Middle Stone Age (MSA) artefacts from which hominin technology, behaviour and activities can be inferred. However, the Middle and Upper Pleistocene periods have had little investigation. A study is being undertaken to redress this balance for which I analyze lithic artefacts to gain a better understanding of the relationship between sedimentary units, geomorphological landforms and the archaeological material of the MSA lithic industry. The collection of the material examined was collected during field survey in 2024 but for the current paper I deal with 135 lithic artefacts. A baseline information from the current analysis helps to understand hominin landscape use patterns as the distribution of MSA material across this landscape reflect.

25.6. Geoarchaeology of the Zimuara Stone Age Site (Central Mozambique): Sedimentological and Geochemical Evidence of Site Formation and Human Occupation

Milton Chirindza, Ana Gomes, Li Li, Nuno Bicho

This study investigatesZimuara archaeological site, located in Machanga District, Sofala Province, central Mozambique, through an integrated geoarchaeological approach combining sedimentological, geochemical, and archaeological analyses. As part of the European ERC-DISPERSALS project (Resilience and Innovation in Late Pleistocene SE Africa), the study aims to elucidate the formation of the archaeological matrixand to identify evidence of human occupation during the Stone Age. Sediment samples were systematically collected from two excavation profiles (A4 and ZIM). These samples were analysed using granulometric and geochemical techniques, including particle-size analysis by laser diffraction and lithogeochemical analysis using inductively coupled plasma spectroscopy (ICP). The analytical results were integrated with the spatial distribution of lithic artefacts to reconstruct depositional and occupational histories. The analyses identify the outcropping geology at Zimuara as eluvial runoff deposits with sandy-clayey composition. The stratigraphic changes observed in both profiles correspond to the A, E, and B horizons of an Argisol (argissolo), typical of sub-humid to humid temperate regions. This soil developed at a rate higher than the rate of deposition and is characterised by an essentially mineral

composition due to the presence of an illuvial clay-enriched B horizon. The site formedpredominantlythrough natural processes. Nevertheless, four phases of human occupation were documented during the Upper Stone Age: the oldest exceeding 40,000 years BP; two intermediate phases, the most intense tentatively around 40,000 years BP; and the most recent around ~6,800 years BP. Occupations around 40,000 and 6,800 years BP may be synchronous with those at other Mozambican sites and coincide with periods of more humid climate. The Zimuara site thus preserves a valuable stratigraphic sequence for understanding human occupation during the Late Pleistocene and Holocene in Mozambique.

25.7. 'Reflections' from archaeogeophysical surveys at two prehistoric Ethiopian sites

Peter Lanzarone, Ervan Garrison, Steven Brandt, Rene Bobe

This paper describes methods, results, applications, and learnings from ground-penetrating radar (GPR) surveys acquired at two prehistoric Ethiopian archaeological sites: The Fanta Stream Site and Mochena Borago Rockshelter. The two surveys were collected in very different aged sites and environments. Fanta is an open-air site located within Addis Ababa city limits. The site surrounds the banks of the Fanta stream which contains fossil-rich strata and surficial Acheulean stone artifacts. Mochena Borago is a late Pleistocene rockshelter located in the southwest highlands near the city of Sodo. Mochena Borago contains a dense collection of stone artifacts that spans from the late Pleistocene to the Holocene. Similarly, from a geophysical perspective, these are both prehistoric sites, where the primary objective of geophysical surveying was to map stratigraphic bounding units of paleontological and archaeological deposits. Subsurface geophysical imaging of historical sites typically focusses on imaging relict structures, which are generally easier to identify and interpret. Prehistoric sites can often be more complex to interpret with longer-term geological processes impacting the signal response and ultimate interpretation. Additionally, these sites have relatively deep deposits where sedimentary compaction may have reduced the dielectric contrast between stratigraphic units. We will outline our experiences conducting the surveys in Ethiopia, provide an overview of some of the unique processing sequences used on the resultant raw data as well as some innovative interpretation techniques that have applied at the sites.

USEFUL INFORMATION

Getting to Eduardo Mondlane University Campus.

University Location

The main campus of Eduardo Mondlane University (UEM) is situated in the central district of Maputo, Mozambique, and serves as the University's primary administrative and academic centre. It accommodates the Rectorate and the majority of the University's main faculties, including the Faculty of Sciences, the Faculty of Engineering, and the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences.

Address:
Eduardo Mondlane University (UEM)
Avenida Julius Nyerere, No. 3453
Maputo, Mozambique

Transportation

Road Transport
Maputo is accessible via an extensive network of intercity coach services connecting the capital with the country's principal towns and cities. Within the metropolitan area, delegates may use public buses, minibuses (*chapas*), taxis, or app-based ride-hailing services to travel throughout the city. Ride-hailing services are available through Yango. Public bus routes operated by the Municipal Transport Company of Maputo (EMTPM) can be consulted.

Rail Transport
Passenger rail services are operated by the Mozambique Ports and Railways Company (CFM). Information on routes, schedules, and fare can be consulted at:

Yango (Ride-hailing services in Maputo):
https://yango.com/en_mz/city/maputo

EMTPM – Empresa Municipal de Transportes Públicos de Maputo (Official Website):
https://www.emtpm.co.mz

EMTPM Public Transport Route Map (PDF):
https://trafego.emtpm.co.mz/images/Rotas/EMTPM_-_Rotas.pdf

CFM – Caminhos de Ferro de Moçambique (Passenger Transport Information):
https://www.cfm.co.mz/index.php/pt/documentos-e-media/tarifa-de-transporte-de-passageiros

Currency

The official currency of Mozambique is the Mozambican Metical (MZN).
Automated Teller Machines (ATMs), locally referred to as Multibank, are widely available throughout Maputo. Most major hotels, shopping centers, restaurants, and commercial establishments also accept international credit and debit cards, although carrying a modest amount of local currency is recommended for small purchases and transportation services.

Mozambique Flag

Emblem of Mozambique

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