Odd contradictions still abound in our thinking about the contributions of Africa to humankind’s culture, and in particular Africa’s place in the modern world. Few scholars now question the clear truism that modern human culture is a result of the biological and technological evolution of several millions of years. Even fewer people now question the fact that eastern and southern Africa from Harar in Ethiopia to the Southern Cape of South Africa may well be the birthplace of the modern human lineage and was indeed the only home known to our ancestors until about one million years ago. The cultural, technical, and biological link between Africa and the rest of the world thus goes back one million years since the first ancestors moved out of the continent. Yet, in modern times, we seem to devalue the significance of these original connections.

The limited data from prehistory indicates that most innovations in stone tool technology either first occurred in Africa and spread to Eurasia or occurred at more or less the same time in Africa as in the rest of the world, attesting to connections across vast areas even in the remotest periods of human history. The domestication of food plants and animals tells a similar story. Africans both domesticated their own crops, including tef, millet, sorghum, and coffee, and received domesticated animals from Eurasia, and other plant foods such as bananas and yams from southeast Asia as early as seven thousand years ago. The movement of food crop species into and out of Africa, even before the development of cities or metal technology, testifies to the great antiquity of economic links between Africa and the rest of the world. But such transfers were bi-directional: a millet of African origin became a staple food in southeast Asia in the first millennium B.C. American domesticates like maize and manioc were introduced in Africa by Europeans in the fifteenth century, but yams and bananas reached South America via Africa.

Genetic and linguistic evidence demonstrates the movement of peoples into and out of Africa, particularly in eastern Africa, the Horn, North Africa, the Middle East, the Indian Subcontinent, and Southern Europe, especially Spain. Afro-asiatic languages may have originated in Africa west of the Red Sea from where they spread out to the Middle East. Africa has long been centrally involved with the great achievements of the ancient world; the library at Alexandria passed on a tradition of mathematics and philosophy to the time’s
greatest minds including Plato. Between 500 and 1000 A.D., more than half of Africa’s peoples became converted to three organized religions, Islam, Christianity, and Judaism which have early origins at least partly influenced by African belief systems. In some parts of Africa, for example Ethiopia and Egypt, Christianity was established in the first centuries of first millennium A.D. The Rock Churches of Lalibela Ethiopia are clearly a major historical landmark in the history of Christianity. Yet in other parts of Africa, for example, east Africa, only several hundred miles south, Christian missions were not established until the nineteenth century. This points towards the diverse history of different parts of the African continent.

As early as the first century A.D., Africa’s trade relationships with Eurasia became more institutionalized and centrally controlled by growing state societies and significantly contributed to bi-directional biological and technical transfers in the Old World. Boat technology and camels made trade across the Indian Ocean with east Africa and across the Sahara with West Africa possible. Gold, salt, animal products, and spices were common commodities. In the North East, important urban centers including the kingdoms of Kush, flourished even later culminating during the fifth century AD, in Ethiopia’s colonization of Southern Arabia. In Eastern and Southern Africa, this trade stimulated the growth of cities along the East African coast and in the interior centered on the Shona kingdoms of Zimbabwe. In West Africa, trade led to the growth of the great West African kingdoms and states including Ghana, Mali, and Songhai. One sub-Saharan African group, the Almoravids, expanded beyond West Africa. In the twelfth century, they crossed the Saharan to conquer first Morocco and then Spain, where they established one of the most brilliant dynasties of the Islamic Middle Ages.

Turning to modern times, many of the most important cultural impacts of Africa have been made by Africans in the Diaspora. Many important innovations made by Africans in the New World in music, the sciences, medicine, and architecture are now recognized as major elements in our present world cultural heritage. Why then have these contributions not been embraced by all? Why does the negative image of Africa persist despite of the continent’s significant contributions to global history? How and in what ways is archaeology today contributing to emancipate Africa from this negative mindset? My paper will suggest ways archaeology and archaeologists may exploit the rich and deep time record in Africa to influence our thinking and writing about Africa.

Morning, Saturday 22nd September

Contributions Session

Session Abstract

Much archaeological research in Africa is conducted with the aim of ‘reconstructing’ a specifically African past. In contrast, this theme asks what can be learnt about human activity in general, through the unique examples and case studies presented by Africa’s later past. African ethnography has long been central to understandings of human action/behaviour and throughout the 1970s and 1980s ethnoarchaeology conducted in Africa played an important formative role in the development of the New Archaeology and subsequently the post-processual movement (e.g. Hodder 1982; for a review see Lane 2005). However, in recent years, the centrality of African archaeological data has declined. Few recent theoretical works on African archaeology have been picked up and incorporated into the main corpus of archaeological knowledge and teaching (see McIntosh 1999 for a good exception).
This theme will review the use and status of various theoretical models in African archaeology and explore their possible contributions to global archaeology.

Introduction
Matthew Davies

Lessons from afar: African Archaeology in Global Perspective
Gilbert Pwiti

It goes without saying that as a discipline, archaeology as an academic pursuit in Africa originated from Western Europe. Until Africans began to train as archaeologists from the early 1970's, mostly in Western institutions, archaeological research was mainly conducted by Western scholars. For a long time therefore, methodological and theoretical approaches to African archaeology were characterized by Western ways of doing archaeology, Western ways of thinking about people and their ways of doing things. Against this background, African people were at the receiving end of most of the major cultural innovations in human history. Diffusion, migrations, assimilation and conquest among others were the most popular theoretical positions adopted in attempts to explain change through space and time as observable in the African archaeological record. By and large, Western trained African archaeologists themselves also seemed to embrace the archaeological traditions of their Western counterparts. This remained the position until the 1980’s, when as a result of greater experience and perhaps as a result of global trends, African archaeologists and Africanists from abroad began to question some of the dominant theory and to explore alternative ways of approaching the African past. Archaeology in Africa needed to have a firmer rooting in the different African contexts. The late Nigerian archaeologist Bassey Andah for example made a spirited call for the development of an African archaeological theory based on the African experience and placed within the African cultural, political and social contexts. Change began to be thought about in authoctonous terms where there was a turnaround from migrationist thinking, rejection of universal models of the nature and development of complex systems and their identification in the archaeological record as well as placement of technological processes within their respective ideological frameworks. It is against this background that this paper traces and attempts to identify trends in African archaeology that have contributed to global archaeology, including aspects of methodological approaches such as ethnoarchaeology.

Paul Lane, Department of Archaeology, University of York

This year, 2012, marks the thirtieth anniversary of the publication of two iconic, some might even argue seminal, early post-processual archaeology texts. These were Ian Hodder’s Symbols in Action, and Symbolic and Structural Archaeology, a collection of early post-processual papers which Ian Hodder also edited. Much has changed in the discipline in the intervening years, and many of the ideas and arguments that then seemed radical now form
part of mainstream archaeology, while others have metaphorically withered on the vine and have been abandoned. In contrast to the credit given to the influence of the work of social theorists such as Bourdieu and Giddens, and also that of certain symbolically and structurally inclined social anthropologists (Douglas, Levi-Strauss and Leech, especially) to the development of post-processual thinking, less attention has been given to the contribution made by ethnoarchaeology. This is curious since both texts, notably Hodder’s *Symbols in Action* but also several of the contributions in *Symbolic and Structural Archaeology*, drew extensively on the results of ethnoarchaeological fieldwork conducted in eastern Africa and elsewhere. Moreover, as post-processualism matured, ethnoarchaeological research, even in its embryonic post-processual form, has tended to be discounted – as is evident from the decline in its teaching in British universities, for instance. The resurgence in North America of what one might term a ‘Processual plus’ style of ethnoarchaeology may also be part of this trend. In an effort to redress this neglect, this paper offers a critical assessment of the lasting contributions that ethnoarchaeological research, in both its ‘processual’ and ‘post-processual’ guises has made to the development of archaeological thought over the last thirty years, with exclusive reference to work conducted in eastern Africa broadly defined.

**Material and Semiotic Agency among the Tswana**

*Zoe Crossland*

Current debates on materiality have a tendency to privilege the presence and agency of material things at the expense of questions of representation. When studying colonial contexts where battles over material practices and representations were issue, there is a need for an approach that can hold semiosis and materiality within the same frame. In this paper I consider the history of 19th century mission among the Tswana. I draw upon a Peircean semiotic orientation to explore the affective, material, and processual nature of changes in belief and practice.

**African Urbanism**

*Paul Sinclair*

**African rock art research in the world: a perspective from the Rock Art Research Institute, Johannesburg**

*Ben Smith and Catherine Namono*

The Rock Art Research Institute has been at the forefront of African rock art research and has made significant contributions theoretically and methodologically. This paper draws largely on the contribution of David Lewis-Williams and considers advances in recording and reproduction of rock art, the application of an ethnographic approach to understanding symbolism, neuropsychology, the shamanistic hypothesis, myth and gender. Using case studies, we consider how rock art researchers have used these and other theoretical influences such as agency and structuration, body theory, feminism and marxism to broaden our understanding of rock art. We examine the controversies surrounding the application of some
of these approaches from southern Africa to Europe and consider why the application of proven African approaches should be met with such emotive responses from Europe.

**Discussant**

*Ann Stahl*

**Afternoon, Saturday 22\textsuperscript{nd} September**

**Complexity Session**

*Session Abstract*

The goal of this session is to explore how contemporary archaeology is engaging with political complexity in Africa via anthropologically and historically informed approaches. Recent work combining archaeology, oral history and (sometimes) texts, particularly in the middle belt of Africa, is providing new and nuanced ways of digging cultural complexity in Africa. Old historical and archaeological truisms, deeply embedded in the literature, are being questioned and re-interpreted. Social evolutionary organisational concepts – from ‘chiefdoms’ to ‘capitals’ to ‘empires’- are being challenged and more particularistic models put in place. For example, local traditions of political complexity (e.g. Mande, Kongo, etc…) are being explored as fundamentally shaping succeeding generations of political order, albeit descents with ongoing modification. However, inter-regional comparisons are still of fundamental importance at the level of attributes of political complexity as opposed to increasingly suspect, universal organisational categories. Such attributes can include modes of labour organisation, ideologies, systems of political succession, military structures, ‘castedness’ (or ‘non-castedness’), trade webs, settlement systems, subsistence economies, etc… Speakers for this session have been chosen from amongst those moving this agenda forward: making archaeology interface with the historic political traditions of Sub-Saharan Africa, showing the way into constructing regionally informed deep-time approaches.

**Introduction**

*New Archaeologies of Power in Africa: a farewell to Social Typologies?*

*Kevin MacDonald*

*Divine Power in the Voltaic Region: Modelling Inequality in Iron Age Burkina Faso*

*Stephen Dueppen*

The Voltaic Region of central West Africa is home to, among others, a variety of Gur-speaking populations living in political systems ranging from centralized states to small-scale egalitarian villages. While a rich ethnographic and colonial/postcolonial historical record exists for these societies, very little archaeological work has been conducted to examine their origins and developmental pathways. Recent archaeological research at the site of Kirikongo has explored a trajectory spanning periods with high degrees of exclusionary power in addition to those characterized by more corporate political systems, and provides insight into
the development of diverse modern Voltaic communities. During the 1st millennium AD, Kirikongo was the setting for the rise of institutionalized inequalities, with one house gaining control through legitimacy derived from divine sources of power to create a vertically organized political system. However, in the 12th century AD, political action by a larger social group, the community, rejected these inequalities and dispersed power among the community’s houses, but also through the adoption of a communalistic religious system also based in divine sources of power. A close examination of these processes, events and ideologies during the Iron Age can help us understand more broadly the developmental trajectories of neighbouring Voltaic groups. Drawing on insights from Kirikongo, I will examine archaeological, ethnographic and historical data from other Voltaic societies to explore the development of both egalitarian and exclusionary political systems in the region. I will then advance a preliminary reconstruction, based upon continuities and transformations, for regional political trajectories over the past two millennia.

Ambiguous Kingdoms: Critical Archaeologies of Political Landscapes in Siin (West-Central Senegal) during the Atlantic Era
Francois Richard

The figure of the 'centralized kingdom' has centrally organized the study of politics in coastal Senegambia during the Atlantic era. Building on recent archaeological research in Senegal, and focusing more specifically on the Siin province, this essay seeks to revisit this trope to begin a reflection on 1) the categories we use to make sense of political life in the past, and 2) the conditions and limitations of (state) power in Atlantic Africa. In Senegal, material archives appear to question some of the assumptions that have guided reconstructions of regional political experience. While notions of statecraft have usefully drawn attention to the consolidation of power in the hands of elites after the 17th century, they have also obscured other aspects of political life - most notably, the uneven relationships binding 'states' to their subjects. I suggest that a closer look at these nuanced political articulations can be achieved through the combined lenses of archaeology and ethnohistory, with the aim of elucidating the lesser known dimensions of Senegal's political pasts. I conclude by placing the analysis in conversation with the broader literature in West Africa during the second millennium AD, and discussing its implications for the study of politics and complex polities elsewhere

Advances of Historical Archaeology on the Idea and Materiality of Sociopolitical Complexity in Yoruba-Edo Region, ca. 800-1800
Akin Ogundiran

Yorubaland, a region that crosscut three modern countries in West Africa (Nigeria, Benin Republic, and Togo), covering an area of more than 180,000 square kilometers, and encompassing three vegetation zones – mangrove, forest, and savannah - was an active center of political innovations and social complexity for more than 1000 years. Although the archaeological investigation is spotty in this vast and diverse region, the incremental and cumulative research agendas of the past 50+ years now afford us the opportunity to provide critical synthesis of the dynamics of social complexity in Yorubaland, from ca. 800 to 1800
AD. This paper will foreground the evidence of materialization of everyday life and of the practices of power to examine three features of Yoruba social complexity: kingship institution, urban landscape, and economic diversifications (including crafts specialization). As a work of interpretive synthesis, this paper will go as far as the current evidence allows, and this means that some areas of the region will attract more attention than others. However, new questions will be raised and new answers will be provided, even if tentative, to old questions on the character and trajectories of social complexity in Yorubaland. The institutional continuity of many of the ancient Yoruba political centers into the present meant the availability of historical memory. Archaeologists have been in conversation with different aspects of Yoruba historical memory. The resultant interdisciplinary opportunities will be utilized in this paper to illuminate questions of historical processes and regional interactions that shaped the ideology, practice, and materialization of social complexity in Yorubaland.

The Roots of Power in Great Lakes Africa  
*Andrew Reid*

Whilst the fully formed political systems of Great Lakes Africa in the nineteenth century are well known, there remains difficulty in exploring the archaeology of how these polities came to be. Archaeological evidence is beginning to provide some basic data, which in conjunction with research on oral histories and comparative linguistics demonstrates an extremely complicated and changing cultural landscape. Meanwhile examination of the archaeological record of the later periods demonstrates that there are often nodes of power evident that received little attention in other sources. The roots of power in Great Lakes Africa can therefore be seen to be many, varied and potentially conflicting. Control of these roots of power was a major goal for all the major actors within a state. This paper will consider some of the ways in which these negotiations of power were played out.

Practices of distinction and Pre-colonial trade in Tanzania  
*Stephanie Wynne Jones*

Archaeologies of interaction and trade in pre-colonial Tanzania speak to a series of practices that were bound up with particular forms of material culture, producing societal identities through engagements with material forms and settings. These practices, recognisable archaeologically, may also have been the arena for the negotiation and experience of power relationships and provide an important complement to the partial and limited understandings of power structures we have from the historical sources.

The Swahili coast, in particular, has an increasing quantity of data suggesting that authority was linked to certain types of activity. Practices of inclusivity and of exclusivity can be traced back in the material record here to the late first millennium AD, and the evidence for differing forms of consumption provided by Early Tana Tradition ceramics. The importance of consumption as a community ritual then emerges with clarity in the evidence for feasting
from the eleventh century onwards, echoing through the histories and remaining important well into the colonial period.

Yet consumption is just one facet of a broader programme of practices of distinction, which shaped interaction with the material world on the pre-colonial Swahili coast. Objects were also caught up into very visible agendas of display and much more private memory practices, all constitutive of social prestige and differentiation. These uses of objects and their attendant social power shaped the ways that trade was incorporated into Swahili society. A link to contextual practice also allows an extension of our understandings of power to the less well-known trading networks of the interior, and provides a useful way of conceiving of those societies’ inter-relationships and how these might be traced archaeologically. This approach to materiality and distinction allows for the recognition of multiple forms of social power in pre-colonial Tanzania, using engagement with trade as an entry point for exploring locally-constructed practices of authority that incorporated material culture in different ways.

This paper will therefore give an overview of the practices of distinction recognisable on the Swahili coast, drawing on the interactions with the material world that enable archaeologists to glimpse historical power relationships. These practices will - where possible - be discussed with reference to the hinterland, providing a glimpse at the complexity of different forms of authority that might be reconstructed archaeologically.

Clouding Power? Rain-control and ideology in Mapungubwe state formation

Alex Schoeman

Earlier research interpreted the rise of the fourteenth century Mapungubwe state in southern Africa as an uncontested, linear, evolutionary process. In this model wealth from long distance trade, combined with a growing population, caused a series of internal changes that were controlled by a royal, political elite. In more recent years archaeologists started to recognise the dynamic, multifaceted and contested character of the Mapungubwe landscape. Key elements of this complexity started to develop in the tenth century, and the growth of the K2-Mapungubwe state fundamentally intertwined a complex set of social, economic, political and ideological transformations. The interwoven relationship between ritual, ideology and politics is used as the foundation for this study of the configuration of K2-Mapungubwe ideologies.

Elements of K2-Mapungubwe ideologies were accessed through the archaeology of regional rituals, which are viewed as materialised ideology. Specifically, archaeological research was conducted into the material culture and spatial manifestation of rain-control, the transition from ritual to residential sites, and the articulation of these sites with the regional landscape. Based on this research, this paper argues that the local manifestation of rain-control was shaped through interaction between the Leopard’s Kopje political elite, hunter-gatherers and other farming people on the same landscape in the context of a dynamic socio-political environment. Rain-control, however, is also materialised ideology, and consequently this study locates some of the ideological roots of the Mapungubwe state in earlier rituals and
socio-political processes. Thus, viewing rain-control material culture as materialised ideology facilitates new understandings of the ideological transformations that guided, aided and obscured the implications of Mapungubwe centralisation and state formation, as well as responses to this centralisation.

Discussant
*Andrew Reynolds*

Dinner
*Speech in Honour of Professor John Alexander*
*Intisar Soghayroun el Zein*

Morning, Sunday 23rd September

Connections Session

Session Abstract
Africa has often been presented as a passive recipient of external influence and isolated from the grand events of world prehistory. Recent research has, however, emphasised Africa's dynamic interactions with the wider world including the export of African crops and mineral resources and through the African Diaspora. Polities in Western and Eastern Africa, the Sahara and along the Nile Valley have long been integrated into global networks of trade and exchange and their role is increasingly appreciated (see Mitchell 2005 for a summary). Other regions too have contributed their influence and have interacted with regions beyond the African continent. The papers within this theme will review interactions between Africa and the wider world during the Holocene and present new and novel research into this theme within Africa. Papers include a focus on connections relative to domestic crops and animals, people/genes, languages, trade goods and ideas.

Introduction
*Peter Mitchell and Anne Haour*

The Northern Horn of Africa in the First Millennium BCE: Local Traditions and External Connections
*Rodolfo Fattovich*

The first millennium BCE was a crucial period in the history of the Horn of Africa. Hierarchical societies, apparently at a state scale of complexity, arose in the northern Horn (i.e., northern Ethiopia and Eritrea) at this time and were the background to the later Kingdom of Aksum, which dominated the whole region in the first millennium CE. In particular, epigraphic evidence suggests that a polity emerged in central Eritrea and northern Tigray (Ethiopia) in the mid-1st millennium BCE. This polity is recorded in the inscriptions with the name of DMT (Daamat?). Archaeological evidence in turn suggests that the DMT
polity was progressively replaced by a different one which emerged in the region of Aksum (Ethiopia) in the late 1st millennium BCE.

The social, economic and ideological transformations, which marked the process of state formation in the region, are not yet well understood and explained. The occurrence of a few monuments and artifacts in South Arabian style, as well as royal and private votive inscriptions South Arabian writing from sites in Tigray and central Eritrea suggested that the DMT polity emerged as a consequence of a South Arabian (mainly Sabean) migration into or colonization of the African highlands in the early to mid-1st millennium BCE. Archaeological evidence, on the contrary, points to a more articulated picture characterized by the interaction of local people with different ceramic and lithic traditions and the emerging of an elite adopting South Arabian and possibly Nubian symbols of power in the mid-1st millennium BCE. The emerging of the proto-Aksumite polity at Aksum, on the contrary, can be quite safely ascribed to local people, with a cultural background apparently related to the late prehistoric regional traditions of the western Eritrean-Sudanese lowlands.

In this paper these hypotheses will be reviewed and an interpretation of the process of state formation in the northern Horn of Africa, based on the interaction between local people and their connection with the surrounding one, will be tentatively suggested.

East Africa and the early Indian Ocean World: Recent research and Multidisciplinary Perspectives

Nicole Boivin, Alison Crowther, Dorian Fuller, Richard Helm, Mark Horton, Ania Kotarba-Morley

Analyses to date of the role of East Africa in the early Indian Ocean world suggest a significant paradox. On the one hand, evidence from textual sources, biogeographic and linguistic studies and genetic analyses, for example, all suggest that Africa was part of the Indian Ocean world from an early date. The 1st century AD Periplus of the Erythraean Sea, for example, provides a relatively rich description of well established trade with southwestern Arabia that features regular visits to the East African coast south of the Horn, intermarriage of Arabs and Africans, and the import and export of goods and biological materials. Genetic and linguistic studies meanwhile confirm the colonization of Madagascar by peoples from Southeast Asia by the end of the first millennium AD and possibly earlier. Biogeographic and archaeological studies indicate the transfer of a great number of plants and animals to Africa from Asia in the pre-European period, while genetic studies increasingly suggest long term mixing and hybridization of foreign plant and animal species in East Africa and Madagascar. Yet, on the other hand, there is a virtual absence of hard archaeological data to support early contact between East Africa and the wider Indian Ocean world. There is no imported material on the East African coast south of the Horn that dates earlier than the 5th century AD, and the vast majority of imports are post-7th century in date. Not a single sherd of pottery or other item of material culture records the arrival of peoples from Southeast Asia. This paper will explore this paradox, outlining some possible explanations, as well as the results of more recent attempts to shed new light on East Africa’s role in the Indian Ocean world through systematic archaeological, palaeoenvironmental and genetic studies.
“The demise of the Orient”: Southern Africa in Regional and Intercontinental Trade, 900-1750 AD

Innocent Pikirayi

This paper presents re-visits the archaeological evidence attesting to the commercial links between southern and eastern Africa and the continent of Asia from the late first millennium to the middle of the second millennium AD. Noting that the early civilisations of southern Africa witnessed phenomenal growth and expansion propelled by this trade, their shifting regional character since the 12th century seems to have been a combination of human responses to the vagaries of fragile ecosystems as well as the changing patterns of trade in the much of the Indian Ocean zones involving eastern Africa, the Persian Gulf, the Indian subcontinent and the Far East, and the auriferous Zimbabwean plateau hinterland and adjacent lowlands. It is within this context that their demise as powerful political systems must be understood, and perhaps an indicator of how the pre-modern world, dominated by Asia, came to an end after 1500 AD, and European mercantilism defined the modern era.

Most studies view globalisation as a product of the early modern era, adding that international trade played a significant role in developing a globally integrated economy (Frank 1998). If globalisation is defined as the diminution or elimination of state-enforced restrictions or exchanges across borders and the increasingly integrated and complex global system of production and exchange that has emerged as a result – the unification of the world’s economic order through the reduction of trade restrictions – then, the impact of the integration of southern Africa or southern Zambezia (the Zimbabwe plateau and adjacent lowlands) into the global trade from the late first millennium AD onwards has been overlooked. Sesterens (1985) has defined a ceramic route linking China with south-east Asia, the Indian sub-continent, the Near East and eastern Africa between the 9th and the 14th centuries AD which involved continuous and complex maritime networks of commercial exchange, attesting to the existence of a pre-modern globalisation outside the well-known regions of Egypt, the Greco-Roman world, Han Dynasty China, the advent of the Mongol Empire and the Silk Route. Southern Africa has been part of commercial networks with western, southern and eastern Asia; its earliest civilisations based at Mapungubwe, Great Zimbabwe, Khami and other centres playing prominent role in the regional and global trade (Huffman 1972, Pwiti 1991, Wood 2005).

Trans-Saharan Connectivity and the Garamantes of Southern Libya.

David Mattingly

There is a continuing debate about the scale and scope of pre-Islamic Trans-Saharan connections, with many scholars still inclined to deny that there was any significant early contact. More recently, enhanced information on the Garamantes of Fazzan, Libya's south-west province has re-opened the debate, with a new focus. The Garamantes can now be recognised as an advanced society - urban, agriculturally and technologically advanced – displaying many of the characteristics of a territorial state. Trade with the Mediterranean world appears to have been on a significant level and there is also evidence of pronounced contacts with sub-Saharan societies. The paper will present this evidence and raise questions about how the agenda for future research could advance debate most profitably.

The Archaeology of Trans-Saharan Contact: The Eastern Niger Bend
The modern historiography of northern Africa has become permeated by the virtually mythological suggestion of trans-Saharan contacts and trade in Punic and early Roman times. This situation has been largely a result of uncritical interpretations of Classic written sources and, in part, of a certain appetite for fantastic theories. In fact, except perhaps for the recent discovery of domestic sorghum and pearl millet in the Garamantes region of Libya, no archaeological finds point yet toward contacts between North and sub-Saharan Africa prior to the Common Era. For the following period, the archaeological evidence is infrequent but not inexistent. Based on a series of confidently dated finds from West African sites such as Siouré in Senegal, Jenné-Jeno in Mali, and Kissi in Burkina Faso, the present picture is one of initial, sporadic contacts around the beginning of the Common Era and of modest but intensifying exchange activities between the 4th and the 6th/7th century AD. As most of that early evidence comes from the site of Kissi at the eastern Niger bend, there is a good reason to suppose that the region has played a prominent role in early trans-Saharan exchange activities. More recent fieldwork at sites located at the right bank of the Niger River and some of its western tributaries in the Niger Republic adds to our growing knowledge on the subject and demonstrates the potential of the area for research on the archaeology of early trans-Saharan contacts.

Africanist and Diaspora Archaeology and Archaeogenetics: opportunities and challenges
Scott MacEachern

Over the last twenty years, technological advances in genetic analyses have revolutionised our understanding of prehistory in different parts of the world. Much of this work has been undertaken in Africa, primarily as an aspect of research on the origins of modern human beings. However, there has also been a significant amount of genetic research undertaken on issues of relevance to scholars working on Africa’s Holocene prehistory and history, dealing with topics as varied as trans-Saharan contacts, the Bantu Expansion, trading contacts between the Arabian Peninsula and the East African coast, and the relations between particular African and Diasporic populations, in the New World and elsewhere.

The results of this research can profitably be compared with data from archaeology, historical linguistics and other disciplines, to create a more complete picture of the African past. However, significant methodological and interpretive challenges remain. Probably most basic is the difficulty of identifying comparable units of analysis with such disparate data types. Other difficulties found in some genetic research include the use of simplistic models of ethnic identity, an emphasis on continental-scale processes of migration and interaction at the expense of research at more local scales, and a continuing tendency to use these data to situate some African populations (notably foraging communities) in a timeless past. Attention must be paid to these challenges, but progress is being made. Further progress will entail increased collaboration between Africanist and Diasporic archaeologists and geneticists, and greater understanding of the complexities of analysis and interpretation from both sides.
Discussant
Norman Hammond

Afternoon, Sunday 23rd September

Plenary Session: Resituating African Archaeology

Keynote Discussion Paper
Timothy Insoll

Keynote Discussion Paper
Mainstreaming Archaeology in Africa's Development Agenda
Kodzo Gavua

Keynote Discussion Paper
African Archaeology in Global Perspective
Brian Fagan

Concluding Remarks
Graeme Barker