



BLOOMSBURY
ACADEMIC COLLECTIONS
THE HISTORY OF THE
TRANSATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE

WEST AFRICA DURING THE ATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE

Archaeological Perspectives

Edited by
Christopher DeCorse



B L O O M S B U R Y

West Africa During the Atlantic Slave Trade

The History of the Transatlantic Slave Trade: Bloomsbury Academic Collections

These six facsimile titles from our imprints Cassell and Continuum offer a distinguished selection of titles analysing the transatlantic slave trade and its impact and repercussions. Covering economic, religious, cultural and political aspects of the slave trade from its very beginnings to the present day, this collection departs from focussing on slavery in the United States and instead deals with the impact of the slave trade on Africa, the United Kingdom and South America.

The collection is available both in e-book and print versions.

Other titles available in The History of the Transatlantic Slave Trade include:

A Slave's Place, A Master's World: Fashioning Dependency in Rural Brazil, Nancy Naro
Slavery Obscured: The Social History of the Slave Trade in an English Provincial Port, Madge Dresser
Beyond Ontological Blackness: An Essay on African American Religious and Cultural Criticism, Victor Anderson
Making the Black Atlantic: Britain and the African Diaspora, James Walvin
The Black Handbook: The People, History and Politics of Africa and the African Diaspora, E. L. Bute and H. J. P. Harmer

West Africa During the Atlantic Slave Trade

Archaeological Perspectives

Edited by Christopher DeCorse

The History of the Transatlantic Slave Trade
BLOOMSBURY ACADEMIC COLLECTIONS

Bloomsbury Academic
An imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing Plc

B L O O M S B U R Y
LONDON • OXFORD • NEW YORK • NEW DELHI • SYDNEY

Bloomsbury Academic
An imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing Plc

50 Bedford Square
London
WC1B 3DP
UK

1385 Broadway
New York
NY 10018
USA

www.bloomsbury.com

BLOOMSBURY and the Diana logo are trademarks of Bloomsbury Publishing Plc

First published in 2001 by Leicester University Press

This edition published by Bloomsbury Academic 2016

© Christopher R. DeCorse and contributors 2016

Christopher R. DeCorse has asserted his right under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act, 1988, to be identified as Author of this work.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or any information storage or retrieval system, without prior permission in writing from the publishers.

No responsibility for loss caused to any individual or organization acting on or refraining from action as a result of the material in this publication can be accepted by Bloomsbury or the author.

Every effort has been made to contact copyright holders of material reproduced in this volume. If any copyright holder has not been properly acknowledged, please contact the publisher who will be happy to rectify the omission in future editions.

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN: HB: 978-1-4742-9104-0
ePDF: 978-1-4742-9105-7
Set: 978-1-4742-8074-7

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

A catalog record for this book is available from the Library of Congress

Series: Bloomsbury Academic Collections, ISSN 2051-0012

Printed and bound in Great Britain

West Africa during the Atlantic Slave Trade

West Africa during the Atlantic Slave Trade

ARCHAEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES

Edited by

Christopher R. DeCorse

First published 2001

© Christopher R. DeCorse and contributors 2001

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN 0-7185-0247-7 (hardback)

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

West Africa during the Atlantic slave trade: archaeological perspectives / edited by Christopher R. DeCorse.

p. cm. — (New approaches to anthropological archaeology)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-7185-0247-7

1. Excavations (Archaeology)—Africa, West. 2. Africa, West—Antiquities. 3. Slave trade—Africa, West. I. DeCorse, Christopher R. II. Series.

DT473. W47 2001

966'.01—dc21

00-056345

Contents

<i>List of Figures</i>	vii
<i>List of Tables</i>	ix
<i>List of Contributors</i>	x
<i>Foreword</i> by Merrick Posnansky	xi
1 Introduction Christopher R. DeCorse	1
2 Tools for Understanding Transformation and Continuity in Senegambian Society: 1500–1900 Susan Keech McIntosh, with a contribution by I. Thiaw	14
3 Historical Process and the Impact of the Atlantic Trade on Banda, Ghana, c. 1800–1920 Ann Brower Stahl	38
4 The Effect of the Slave Trade on the Bassar Ironworking Society, Togo Philip Lynton de Barros	59
5 Change and Continuity in Coastal Bénin Kenneth G. Kelly	81

6	Kanem-Borno: A Brief Summary of the History and Archaeology of an Empire of the Central <i>bilad al-sudan</i>	101
	Detlef Gronenborn	
7	State Formation and Enslavement in the Southern Lake Chad Basin	131
	Scott MacEachern	
8	500 Years in the Cameroons: Making Sense of the Archaeological Record	152
	Augustin F. C. Holl	
9	An Americanist Perspective on African Archaeology: Toward an Archaeology of the Black Atlantic	179
	Theresa A. Singleton	
	Index	185

List of Figures

- 1.1 West Africa: vegetation belts
- 1.2 West Africa: major ethnic groups
- 2.1 Features, regions, kingdoms, and archaeological sites mentioned in the text
- 2.2 Pottery from the Sine Ngayene area dated to the early second millennium and late second millennium pottery from the same area
- 2.3 Pottery from the Middle Senegal Valley dating to the recent period (AD 1600–1900)
 - 3.1 Place names mentioned in text
 - 3.2 Villages and sites in the Banda area
 - 3.3 Plan map of Makala Kataa. Excavated areas shown in black
 - 3.4 Iron Age 1 pottery from Makala Kataa
 - 3.5 Iron Age 2 pottery from the 1982 Banda Survey
 - 3.6 Woman headloading pottery, Banda-Ahenkro market, 1982
 - 3.7 Locally made pipes from Early Makala
- 4.1 Bassar in West Africa. Relationship to states of the Middle Volta Basin and Hausa kola routes c. AD 1800
- 4.2 Bassar region showing iron ores, chiefdoms centered on Bassar and Kabu, and specialist villages at contact (1890s)
- 4.3 Smelting furnace nearly four meters tall at Nangbani
- 4.4 Bassar smithing equipment
- 4.5 Bassar region c. AD 1600–1750
- 4.6 Bassar region c. AD 1825/1850
- 4.7 Bassar ceramics
- 5.1 Map of the Bight of Bénin indicating the sites and towns discussed in text, historic states mentioned in text, and the location of modern nations
- 5.2 Complete locally manufactured cooking pots, bowl rims, and a complete bowl excavated at Savi
- 5.3 Decorated locally produced earthenware rims excavated at Savi
- 5.4 Complete urn-shaped vessel, an elaborate earthenware pedestal, and an earthenware foot, all excavated at Savi
- 5.5 Terracotta or clay figurines excavated at Savi
- 5.6 Stone and clay beads from Savi
- 5.7 Copper bell and copper ring excavated at Savi
- 5.8 Sample of the variety of sizes and decorations present among locally manufactured tobacco pipes recovered at Savi
- 6.1 The Central *bilad al-sudan* with sites mentioned in the text
- 6.2 Map of the Chad Basin reconstructed after Ibn Saïd from the thirteenth century AD
- 6.3 Plans of the capitals and palaces of the fourteenth to eighteenth centuries
- 6.4 Ngala. Plan of the palace (inset) and stratigraphy
- 6.5 The ruins of Birni Gazargamo in 1854
- 6.6 Pottery from site of Gambaru, Kukawa, and Dikwa

- 6.7 View of the wall of Kukawa in 1892
- 6.8 Plans of the capitals of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries
- 6.9 View of *dendal* in the western town of Kukawa around 1853
- 7.1 Traditional states of the Lake Chad Basin
- 7.2 Major ethnic groups in and around the Mandara Mountains
- 7.3 Defensive wall at the Iron Age site of Manaouatchi-Gréa, northern Cameroon
- 7.4 Landscape of defense and domestication in the Mandara Mountains of northern Cameroon
- 8.1 Location map of the selected regional cases studied: 1) The Lékié-Yaoundé region in the southern forested zone; 2) The Western Grassfields; 3) The Western Adamaoua; 4) The Upper Benue Basin and the Fali region; 5) The Chadian plain
- 8.2 The southern forested zone: 1) The Lékié settlement cluster; 2) Location of the Matomb settlement cluster; 3) Location of the Babimbi settlement cluster
- 8.3 Distribution of settlements in the Western Grassfields: 1) Glazed Sherd Industry (GSI) settlement cluster; 2) Ndop Plateau Industry (NPI) settlement cluster
- 8.4 Furnace types recorded in the Western Grassfields
- 8.5 Settlement patterns at the climax of the Ndop Plateau Industry and settlement pattern in the Glazed Sherd Industry cluster
- 8.6 The Mayo Wodeo and Mayo Oumiare catchment basins, in the Western Adamaoua: distribution of settlements and land-use patterns
- 8.7 The Mayo Darlé catchment basin in the Western Adamaoua: distribution of settlements and land-use patterns
- 8.8 The Upper Benue Basin and the Fali region: general distribution of recorded archaeological sites
- 8.9 Spatial organization of the cemetery of Barki-Ngoutchoumi in the Fali region
- 8.10 Walled cities of the Chadian plain and inferred territorial organization

List of Tables

- | | | | |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2.1 | Some important events of the second millennium in the Senegambia | 8.4 | Distribution of archaeological features in the Western Adamaoua |
| 8.1 | Major smelting sites from the southern forested regions | 8.5 | Some Chadian plain sites: walled cities with studied cemeteries |
| 8.2 | Iron production sites in the Ndop Plateau Industry (NPI) | 8.6 | General aspects of the distribution of grave goods in tested mound sites |
| 8.3 | Iron production sites of the Glazed Sherd Industry (GSI) | 8.7 | Slave trade on the Cameroonian coast as known from British Parliamentary Papers |

List of Contributors

Philip Lynton de Barros is Associate Professor of Anthropology, Behavioral Sciences Department, Palomar College, San Marcos, California.

Christopher R. DeCorse is Associate Professor, Department of Anthropology, Syracuse University, New York.

Detlef Gronenborn is Adjunct Professor, Seminar für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität, Germany.

Augustin F. C. Holl is Professor and Curator, Department of Anthropology, Center for Afroamerican and African Studies, Museum of Anthropology, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

Kenneth G. Kelly is Assistant Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of South Carolina, Columbia.

Scott MacEachern is Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Bowdoin College, Maine.

Susan Keech McIntosh is Professor, Department of Anthropology, Rice University, Texas.

Merrick Posnansky is Professor Emeritus, Department of History and Anthropology, University of California, Los Angeles.

Theresa A. Singleton is Associate Professor, Department of Anthropology, Syracuse University, New York.

Ann Brower Stahl is Professor, Department of Anthropology, State University of New York at Binghamton, New York.

Ibrahima Thidw is a Research Associate, Department of Anthropology, Rice University, Texas, and is currently excavating on Gorée Island.

Foreword

MERRICK POSNANSKY

Professor Emeritus, Department of History and Anthropology,
University of California, Los Angeles

In June 1995, in Harare, the capital of Zimbabwe, Historical Archaeology in Africa came of age. Its recognition came in the form of two sessions at the Tenth Pan African Prehistory Congress, when an historical archaeologist, Theresa Singleton, a specialist in African-American archaeology, was elected to the Council. This volume is further evidence of a maturing discipline, a synthesis of the achievements of archaeologists either working in the field, or speculating about the historical era in West Africa, using insights developed from archaeological research. Historical Archaeology in West Africa essentially has an Atlantic dimension. A dimension thrust upon it by the centrality of both the destructive and reconstructive nature of the Atlantic Slave Trade. A trade that displaced millions of Africans and transplanted them into a new world where they created vibrant cultures. With successful coping mechanisms, these New World communities kept alive the cultural traditions of their homelands in the face of a brutally imposed way of life, economic system, language, and technology. This volume provides the first fruits of the efforts of a dedicated generation of historical archaeologists to appreciate the broader dimensions of their work and materially add to our knowledge of one of the most significant eras in African history.

Their contributions convincingly demonstrate that there is a need for Historical Archaeology, and have provided much of the critical

theory that was so obviously lacking in the early work that Chris DeCorse and I reviewed in 1986.¹

As we rejoice in this volume in a new era of Historical Archaeology it is perhaps pertinent to glance at the history of our discipline. Before 1960 there were few archaeologists in Africa, in fact less than ten over the whole of tropical Africa. Most looked after museums that served whole countries, such as Desmond Clark at the Livingstone Museum in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia), or myself at the Uganda Museum, and Bernard Fagg in Nigeria. We all had huge bailiwicks and extremely limited budgets for research. We covered countries bigger than most American states and we tried to do justice to all periods of time—from human origins to the colonial period—as well as collecting ethnographic items. As a consequence, a priority for research was placed on the need to discover more about the period which was completely unknown: the prehistoric period, which extended right into the middle of the second millennium AD and in some areas even into the nineteenth century. By the 1950s, however, in later archaeology there were three areas where the primary intention was to marry historical research with archaeological investigation. The objective was clearly changing from the incidental to the intentional. The first area was the East African seaboard, where James Kirkman had begun to explore stone ruins that were locally described as lost Arab towns. He documented coastal

sites from Somalia to Mozambique² where ruined mosques and stone graves indicated past towns, and began a long-term investigation of the town of Gedi near Malindi on the Kenya coast. In a paper in the *Antiquaries Journal* for 1957 he called his work Historical Archaeology. His pioneer work was supplemented by that of Neville Chittick. At the same time, on the then Gold Coast, Professor A. W. Lawrence, of the University College of the Gold Coast (the very first Professor of Archaeology in tropical Africa), was recording the post-1482 European fortified trading posts.³ He also perceived of his work as Historical Archaeology but his prime objective was the conservation and restoration of the monuments after clearance had taken place. In Uganda I was also calling my own studies of the principal sites of the Interlacustrine Kingdoms, where I was using oral history to locate and date sites, Historical Archaeology, after rejecting both 'protohistory' and 'ethnohistory' as defining terms.⁴ I justified my use, and incidentally inculcated the same in my students, on the basis of the validity of the oral traditions of the Interlacustrine states. These traditions guided us to sites, provided topographical details, gave us genealogies, filled us in on interstate conflict, struggles for succession, aspects of the economy, and even supernatural events. All were remembered, and thus recorded, using elaborate (rather than haphazard) systems of passing information down through the generations. It was the memorable unnatural events, like eclipses, which enabled us to tie our oral chronologies to a universal time-scale. Imports from the coast, such as beads and cloth, and the diffusion of new foods and pastimes such as tobacco smoking, provided links with more accessible events of coastal history. Though these were intentional historical archaeological activities they did not involve the creation of a new body of critical theory. However, in the work of Peter Schmidt who followed some of my initiatives, this was clearly the intention nearly two decades later when he wrote his book on his Tanzania research, which he entitled *Historical Archaeology : A Structural Approach in an African Culture*.⁵ Though the late 1960s witnessed an expanded use of oral traditions there was, in the early heady days of the newly independent states, an unwillingness to look at anything that smacked of colonial archaeology. The demand was for using

archaeology to discover African roots, to discover the glorious days which preceded the arrival of the Europeans, to create an African history based on discoveries about previously neglected African polities. In many ways Historical Archaeology in Africa had to await the arrival of new scholarship, particularly from the USA, where Historical Archaeology had such a charged development in the 1970s. It was to this generation that Christopher DeCorse belonged, who in the mid-1980s resumed initiatives on the Ghana coast that had stalled in the late 1960s.

In 1984⁶ I defined Historical Archaeology as 'archaeology undertaken in periods or for areas in which the principal source for contextual information is provided by documentary evidence.' This was a definition without chronological or geographical parameters. It could embrace an African as well as an American or Asian situation. It was obvious that as literacy patterns spread so Historical Archaeology would become more pervasive, but in my own interpretation of this definition the community being examined need not be literate to be considered historical though their chronological context required documentary underpinning. Historical archaeologists in Africa have convincingly shown the value of the oral tradition throughout Africa. Though many of its records may not be as concise chronologically as the written documents, they nevertheless provide a chronological order that can both stand on its own and be complemented by actual written documents. I realize that there may have been a gross inconsistency in my earlier writings in that as an historian I have always argued for a continuum in African history and taught my introductory classes with the subject matter being the story of humans in Africa, yet for archaeology I am arguing for a stricter division between prehistoric and historic societies. I am thus ascribing a greater importance to the global nature of much of what has been considered as Historical Archaeology in Africa. There is also the qualitative factor that the material culture in Historical Archaeology is much more varied and representative of a wider number of locales than is the subject matter of the prehistorians. Using documentary sources we can date our material with ease by knowing the date or relatively short period of manufacture at the workshop. Being workshop-made, much of the material

culture has less of the 'personality' or the fingerprints of their makers that we often ascribe to the products of prehistoric communities.

In recent years there has been a stress on the global dimension of Historical Archaeology, which owes a great deal to influential teachers such as Jim Deetz, Kathleen Deagan, Peter Schmidt, and myself, who have all transcended the constrictions of American Historical Archaeology. The number of graduate students wanting to work on topics away from the USA has continued to grow. Vestiges still remain, however, of an Eurocentric approach with too much research emphasizing the archaeology of European expansion at the expense of other themes. This is inevitable, as we work from the known to the unknown. There is just as much justification for considering both Islamic archaeology or the Chinese expansion in Asia as Historical Archaeology. One uses the same kind of source data as one might use in seventeenth-century North American situations: ceramics made in specialized workshops, coins, metal goods, beads, and religious items such as pilgrim bottles, all of which display a remarkable uniformity over thousands of miles. We may not be able to read the texts in Arabic or Chinese but it is still text-aided archaeology. There is often a population and cultural continuity from past to present just as in North American sites. African Historical Archaeology now has a distinctiveness and integrity separate from Historical Archaeology in North America that allows us to compare it directly with other non-Western historical archaeologies.

What is refreshing in the papers in this volume is the attempt to move on from the Eurocentric and structuralist approaches to a more convincing attempt to look outward from Africa with the Europeans as only one intrusive and disruptive element. In all these cases we are returning to the African oral sources as primary, with the written sources as largely secondary. We are empowering our interpretations by using ethno-archaeology to take us back into time, comparing what we find in the ground with comparisons from other societies obtained by asking much more of what had previously been thought of as a static material culture. It is this questioning of the nature of evidence, whether produced by archaeologists or from the work of scholars in other

disciplines, which is the hallmark of the new African Historical Archaeology. We are moving from the simple descriptive questions of only a generation ago. These consisted of: What happened in the past? When did they occur? How did people live? What were the nature of their economic, social, and religious systems and lifestyles? The more interesting questions of power relationships, gender relationships, and symbolic significance are now helping to generate our research priorities, as they should as we move beyond the pioneering days of a little more than a generation ago. I suppose we have all been suffused in our scholarship by questions that derive from the softer of the social sciences and the advances in the behavioral sciences. We are interested in the value of imported materials not so much in purely functional terms but also in the ways they may have enhanced the status of their users. We are using documentary sources more effectively not just to amplify the archaeological record but to lead us to interpretations of motive and meaning and to address questions that recently were thought inaccessible. A further change from attempts at synthesis of only fifteen years ago has been the broadening of our geographical vision. At that time we looked at the era of the slave trade and Historical Archaeology from the perspective of the European coastal establishments. It was an Atlantic world that was in the vanguard of our perspectives. Our colleagues in the Americas have forced us to ask questions about what mental blueprints accompanied the slaves from Africa, how representative were the transplanted Africans of the societies they left behind. Our emphasis is firmly on the nature of the African societies that participated in the slave trade rather than on the mechanics of the trade. Superior prospection and dating techniques, multidisciplinary approaches, and a relentless search for comparative material to date previously undateable inland assemblages, have all facilitated access to and validation of Historical Archaeology in areas of the savanna and Sahel that we had relegated to the documentary historians. The editor, Christopher DeCorse, is to be complimented on bringing together a team of scholars who cover the whole of West Africa, from Senegal to Cameroon, and whose work represents the different faces of Historical Archaeology at the beginning of a new millennium. At a

time when regional syntheses of African archaeology are all too rare, even for the longer-studied prehistoric period, it is exciting to welcome a volume devoted to the archaeology for the historical period of West Africa that will certainly stimulate a new generation of scholars.

Notes

1 Merrick Posnansky and Christopher DeCorse (1986) Historical Archaeology in Sub-Saharan Africa—a Review. *Historical Archaeology*, 20: 1–14.

2 James S. Kirkman (1964) *Men and Monuments on the East African Coast*, London: Lutterworth.
 3 A. W. Lawrence (1963) *Trade Castles and Forts of West Africa*, London: Jonathan Cape.
 4 Merrick Posnansky (1959) Progress and Prospects in Historical Archaeology in Uganda. In *Discovering Africa's Past*, edited by Merrick Posnansky, Uganda Museum, Occ. Paper no. 4, 31–41.
 5 Peter R. Schmidt (1978) *Historical Archaeology: A Structural Approach in an African Culture*. Westport: Greenwood.
 6 In a paper given at the Society for Historical Archaeology at Colonial Williamsburg and later published in Posnansky and DeCorse 1986.

The Archaeology of Atlantic Africa

Preface to the 2016 Edition

By Christopher R. DeCorse

Since the original publication of this volume, research on the archaeology of Africa in the Atlantic world has burgeoned.¹ Nonetheless, the works represented here remain pivotal case studies in the archaeological examination of the West Africa during the Atlantic period. They are representative of a refocusing of research that has increasingly brought African archaeology to bear on the evaluation of the impacts that the Atlantic world and especially the slave trade had on African societies, and on the examination of the varied contexts from which enslaved Africans were taken. The era of the Atlantic slave trade is definitively demonstrated to have been a period of dramatic transformation in West African societies. The archaeological record delineates the expanding frontier of the Atlantic world, driven by the plantation economies of the Americas, and its intersections with earlier pre-Atlantic economies and the margins of the trans-Saharan trade. The studies also well illustrate the diverse nature of the contact settings represented and the varied nature of the changes that occurred in the African hinterlands far from the coastal enclaves of European trade. Equally important is the placement of these changes within the geographic scope and temporal depth of Africa's deeper, pre-Atlantic past.

Many of the areas treated in this volume have remained the focus of ongoing research, which has provided a great deal of new information, as well as opened new avenues of research. A number of contributors to this volume have pointedly brought their research to bear on wider discussions, underscoring the relevance of African research to general archaeological method and theory.² As observed in the Introduction, the vast majority of this research is inherently interdisciplinary, African and Africanist researchers long having integrated archival material, oral sources, and ethnographic data with studies of the archaeological record.³ Oral sources remain a key aspect of West African research, as European documentary sources afford scant information on the vast majority of West African interior until late in the second millennium AD. Notably, many of the sites of the African hinterland dating to the last five hundred years continue to produce very little in the way of European trade materials, even in archaeological contexts extending through the majority of the nineteenth century, thus providing poor indicators of the limits of Atlantic oriented trade networks and affording little in the way of chronology. This paucity of European trade materials is not an indication of the margins and impacts of European trade, but more likely a reflection of the nature of the trade materials represented; many of the key items of trade such as iron, cloth, metal goods—and slaves often having limited archaeological visibility.

Research in the Senegambia, surveyed in Chapter 2 by Susan McIntosh with contributions by Ibrahima Thiaw, has benefited from additional research by Thiaw that

has underscored the complexity of population migrations, identity formation, and sociopolitical transformations in the coast and hinterlands of the Senegambia during the Atlantic period.⁴ This work can be usefully contrasted with François Richard's ongoing research on the Siin in west-central Senegal. A small coastal kingdom that was not a major supplier of slaves, Siin provides a counterpoint to developments in the larger, surrounding polities.⁵ Also of note is Thiaw's archaeological work on Gorée Island.⁶ A European slave trading entrepôt located 18 kilometers off the coast of Dakar, Gorée has emerged as an iconic image of the trade that brought millions of enslaved Africans to the Americas. Thiaw's research has afforded insight into everyday life in this early Afro-European community and its varied component populations.

Ghana has remained a center of archaeological research and is among the best archaeologically known regions of West Africa.⁷ Ann Stahl's long term project in Banda, located in central, western Ghana, discussed in Chapter 3, has produced an impressive range of publications that has afforded an increasingly nuanced view of the region's intersection with the Atlantic world.⁸ This work highlights the varied, often improvisational responses to the emerging Atlantic world and slavery, including the use of varied ritual practices.⁹ A great deal of research undertaken in other portions of Ghana is uncovered in this volume.¹⁰ This is regrettable as a great deal of the work undertaken has specifically focused on African sites of the Atlantic period, as well as excavations at European trade posts and plantation sites.¹¹ Of particular note is the Central Region Project focusing on the Ghanaian Coast, which has specifically aimed at assessing the archaeological record of the second millennium AD.¹² This long term project has charted the rise and fall of coastal polities from the pre-Atlantic period into the post-colonial era, and the varied ways in which these changes are preserved on the landscape and in the material record. Among the most significant outcomes of the project is the increasing evidence for sociopolitical complexity in the southern forest during the first and second millennia AD. Represented by substantial settlement sites, earthworks, and distinctive ceramics, these well settled agricultural communities undergirded the societies that were present on the Ghanaian coast when the Europeans arrived in the fifteenth century.¹³

Philip de Barros' research on Bassar in the Togo hinterland (Chapter 4) still affords one of the best studies of indigenous West African iron production and its relation to state formation during the pre-Atlantic and Atlantic periods.¹⁴ Ongoing work by de Barros has provided a substantial amount of new data on iron working sites, including the collection of ethnoarchaeological data on production sites, bloom crushing mortars, and smithing *ateliers* in relation to settlements. These data have provided unique insight into iron production from the Early Iron Age into the post-colonial period. De Barros' work continues to reveal how slave trading impacted the Bassar polities and the movement of specialist iron workers. His future research is examining diet and mortuary practices within Bassar, as well as iron production and slag chemistry.

The work by Ken Kelly on the sites of Ouidah and Savi in the Republic of Bénin (reviewed in Chapter 5) has been the focus of additional research by Neil Norman, his research into

the archaeological record of the Kingdom of Hueda now spanning over two decades.¹⁵ Hueda, preceded by Allada, emerged as important intermediaries in the slave trade during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries through their respective control of the port towns of Jakin and Whydah. More recent work has included further study of the Huedan royal capital of Savi, but also of the wider sociocultural landscapes of which the settlement was part, charting the rise and demise of the polity within the context of an Atlantic focused trade. Research in Bénin's interior by Cameron Monroe, Klaves Randsborg, and Didier N'dah has offered fresh insight into the past of societies in the deeper hinterland.¹⁶ Of particular interest is Monroe's research on the Kingdom of Dahomey, which conquered Hueda and Allada in the eighteenth century. His archaeological work on the Abomey Plateau has revealed a series of Dahomean royal palaces that both expressed and enforced royal authority.

Portions of the areas of Nigeria and Cameroun discussed by Detlef Gronenborn (Chapter 6), Scott MacEachern (Chapter 7), and Augustin Holl (Chapter 8) have also been the focus of additional study. Collectively, these studies are all particularly interesting in their examination of the articulations of Islamic polities and populations with the emerging Atlantic economy in the Central Sudan and adjacent areas. Gronenborn's and MacEachern's focus is on the southern margins and hinterlands of the Lake Chad Basin. Incorporating portions of modern Nigeria and Cameroun, this region is notable as having been the focus of early Islamic states, the lineal descendants of which remain today. In Nigeria, new data on Takusheyi burials in the Bilad al-Sudan complement Gronenborn's discussion of Kanem Bornu. Although they slightly precede the opening of the Atlantic slave trade, the burials and related archaeological and historical data on the region wonderfully illustrate how deeply embedded the region was in the Islamic world prior to the arrival of the Europeans on the West African coast.¹⁷ This provides rich counterpoint to the rippling effect of the expanding Atlantic economy seen in the southern savanna and forest. In his work in the Mandara Mountains of Cameroun, MacEachern has recently reassessed his earlier interpretations presented in this volume that viewed the Mandara cultural landscape as having been largely shaped by predatory slave raiding during the Atlantic period.¹⁸ More recent data has led him to complicate this model, integrating environmental change and the role of earlier, pre-Atlantic polities and social hierarchies in shaping the landscapes of the Atlantic period. This complicating narrative provides a useful frame for assessing some of Holl's review of contrasting regions of Cameroun, as well as other contributions to this volume. In a different vein, Holl's recent work more generally discusses the wider context of European expansion and the circumnavigation of Africa, its aftermath, and consequences for the continent.¹⁹

Here it is important to underscore that great deal of research has been undertaken in many areas not covered in this volume.²⁰ One of the major gaps is discussion of the archaeological record of southern Nigeria. This region has long been the focus of research and understanding of the culture history and sociopolitical developments in this area during the second millennium AD has become increasingly refined. Graham Connah's seminal work on the archaeology of Benin City has been followed